

AFRICAN UNION

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**REPORT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL ON
ITS ACTIVITIES AND THE STATE OF PEACE
AND SECURITY IN AFRICA**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present Report of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa is submitted to the Assembly of the AU pursuant to Article 7(q) of the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU. The Report covers the period from the 28th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU, held in Addis Ababa, from 30 to 31 January 2017, to the 29th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union taking place in Addis Ababa from 3 to 4 July 2017. The report covers the activities carried out by the PSC during the period under review and provides an overview of the state of peace and security in the continent with respect to conflict and crisis situations, as well as the status of the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Furthermore, the Conclusions of the Retreat of the Peace and Security Council on the Implementation of the Conclusions of Successive PSC Retreats and the Related Adoptive Decisions from 2007 to 2016, held from 3 to 5 May 2017, in Kigali, Rwanda, are attached to this report for the Assembly's endorsement.

2. The PSC comprises fifteen (15) members with equal rights, in line with Article 5 (1) of its Protocol. The current membership of the PSC includes Algeria, Botswana, Burundi, Chad, Congo*, Egypt*, Kenya*, Niger, Nigeria*, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo, Uganda and Zambia*¹. In conformity with Rule 23 of the Rules of Procedure of the PSC, the PSC members have rotated the chairship of the PSC on monthly basis following the English alphabetical order of their country names. During the period under review, Rwanda, South Africa, Togo, Uganda and Zambia have chaired the PSC. For this month of July 2017, Nigeria is chairing the PSC.

3. Throughout the period under review the PSC pursued its efforts in addressing conflict and crisis situations, including through undertaking field missions to some conflict areas in the continent.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION

4. During the reporting period, the PSC remained seized with the conflict and crisis situations in the continent, as well as with various thematic issues related to the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa. In this context, the PSC held various meetings on conflict/crisis situations, including on: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Darfur (Sudan), The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Somalia, South Sudan and Western Sahara. The PSC also considered the activities of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the activities of the AU Panel of the Wise for the year 2016. Furthermore, the PSC considered the development of the African Standby Force and its Rapid Deployment

¹ * Denotes PSC Members with a three-year term mandate

Capability (ASF-RDC) and the African Capacity for the Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC), the draft Strategic Concept of Operations (CONOPS) of the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel, the operations of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram, the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA), as well as the ongoing efforts aimed at operationalizing the AU Peace Fund and the Partnership between the AU and the United Nations (UN) with respect to predictable financing of AU peace and security activities.

5. The PSC also held meetings on thematic issues such as: the role of women in protecting lives in challenging security environments in Africa, free movement of people and goods and implications for peace and security in Africa, protecting children from conflicts: highlighting the case of child soldiers in Africa, ending child marriages, cross border movements of peace spoilers and responses to the challenges, early warning and state of peace and security in Africa, post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa, peace, reconciliation and justice, prevention of hate crimes and the ideology of genocide in Africa, maritime security and safety in Africa and Peace, security and development of the blue economy in Africa.

6. During the reporting period, the PSC undertook two field missions, namely, to Somalia and Sudan (Darfur) from 23 to 26 March 2017 and 15 to 18 May 2017, respectively, to gather first-hand information on the situations in these two countries, in to order to find best means and ways of its contributing to efforts aimed at resolving the conflicts in these two countries. Also, the PSC held its annual Retreat in Kigali, Rwanda, from 3 to 5 May 2017 under the theme: the Implementation of the Conclusions of Successive PSC Retreats and the Related Adoptive Decisions from 2007 to 2016. During the Retreat, the PSC reviewed the implementation status of the Conclusions of its Retreats from 2007 to 2016. The Conclusions of the Retreat were adopted by the 688th meeting of the PSC held on 26 May 2017 and are herewith submitted for endorsement by this ordinary session of the Assembly of the Union.

7. The PSC met at ministerial level twice, at its 661st and 682nd meetings held on 23 February 2017 and 25 April 2017, respectively. The 661st meeting discussed two issues: protecting children from conflicts: highlighting the case of child soldiers in Africa; and free movement of people and goods and implications for peace and security in Africa, while the 682nd meeting was dedicated to maritime security and safety in Africa and Peace, Security and Development of the Blue Economy in Africa.

8. As per the practice of the PSC, chairpersons of the PSC for the different months represented the PSC in different activities of the AU, especially in meetings dealing with issues relating to peace and security in Africa. Notably, the Chairperson of the PSC for May 2017, of Uganda, represented the PSC at the Fourth Ordinary Session of the Fourth Pan-African Parliament, held in Midrand, South Africa, on 11 May 2017, which addressed peace and security challenges in Africa.

III. STATE OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA: CONFLICT AND CRISIS SITUATIONS

9. **Somalia**, with the support of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), achieved significant progress in the political and States institutions-building processes, with the holding of general elections that resulted in the establishment of a fully functional bicameral Federal Parliament, the election of a new President, the appointment of a Prime Minister and the establishment of a Cabinet. The State formation process has largely been completed, with elections held in most States, except in Somaliland and Galmudug State. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) is also making concerted efforts to fast-track constitutional reforms ahead of the 2020/2021 general elections.

10. On 16 April 2017, the FGS and State leaders signed a political agreement on a National Security Architecture (NSA) that was endorsed by the Somalia National Security Council on 8 May 2017. The NSA lays the foundation for the reform of the country's security sector aimed at establishing Somali National Security Forces (SNSF) with unified structures and policies. At the London Conference held on 11 May 2017, the FGS and 42 regional and international partners, including the AU, agreed on Security Pact and a New Partnership for Somalia, in support of Somalia's National Development Plan, founded on mutual accountability and with commitments to follow up on progress and results achieved, including at a Security Conference to be held in October 2017 and a High Level Partnership Forum (HLPF) within six months and on a regular basis thereafter. During the period under review, the AU intensified its efforts with regard to the situation in Somalia. On 18 March 2017, the Chairperson of the Commission and the Commissioner for Peace and Security visited Mogadishu, followed by the PSC field mission to Somalia that took place from 23 to 26 March 2017.

11. The President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, H.E. Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, at the invitation of the Chairperson of the Commission, in return visited the AU Headquarters, in Addis Ababa, on 4 May 2017. It is against that background that the AU and the FGS launched the Joint AU–Somalia Task Force to enhance coordination between the various partners in support of Somalia's NSA. The PSC, at its 684th meeting, held on 28 April 2017, renewed the mandate of AMISOM for an additional period of six months, pending the finalization of the joint AU-UN review on AMISOM. The joint AU-UN review process took place in Addis Ababa and Mogadishu from 17-29 May 2017. The review addressed questions relating to the tasks, functions, resources, actors, coordination and other requisite activities to be undertaken by October 2018, when AMISOM is scheduled to commence the draw down and gradually handover to the SNSF. The review also confirmed the much needed capacity building and logistic support to the SNSF, for them to be in a position to effectively take over gradually from AMISOM when the time for withdrawal will come. Despite the progress made, serious challenges still persist in institutional capacity for revenue collection, delivery of basic services, combating corruption, justice and rule of law, protection of human rights and promotion of reconciliation.

12. With regard to the security situation, Al-shabaab remains a serious threat to peace, security and stability in Somalia. The terrorist group continues to conduct asymmetric assaults on civilians, as well as on SNF and AMISOM troops. The resurgence in piracy activities, during the period under review, is of great concern. In addition, the drought situation has exacerbated the humanitarian situation in Somalia, which needs to be addressed urgently, with a view to finding relief for the very needy population in the country.

13. The Assembly may, therefore, wish to reiterate its appeal to AU Member States and the wider international community to sustain their political, financial and logistical support to Somalia and the AMISOM to enable the full stabilization of the country; appeal to the international community to provide sustainable financial and logistical support to Somalia's security reform that will enable the operationalization of the National Security Architecture. The Assembly may wish to recall the PSC Communique of 6 September 2016, calling on the UNSC to consider lifting the arms embargo imposed on Somalia, following its resolution 2244 (2015), as critical aspect of building Somali security institutions; expresses its concern at the threat that Al-shabaab continues to pose to peace, security and stability in Somalia; and further express its concern at the resurgence of piracy activities off the coast of Somalia. The Assembly may also wish to call on the AU and the international partners to coordinate their support through the agreed implementation mechanism of the New Partnership for Somalia and the Security Pact, in order to optimize the impact of joint efforts; and appeal to the international community for increased support in addressing the worsening humanitarian needs in the country.

14. In **South Sudan**, the security and humanitarian situation remains a cause for serious concern in the face of a stalled political process and the defections from both the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLM-IO) and formations of new armed movements, especially the National Salvation Front led by Lt General Thomas Cirilo. Given the foregoing, fighting has continued in various parts of the country. These defections and emergence of new armed groups inevitably pose more challenges to the implementation of the peace agreement. On a positive note, President Salva Kiir Maryadit announced a unilateral ceasefire and appointed members of the steering committee of the National Dialogue in May 2017. Unfortunately, the armed opposition groups have so far denounced the initiatives of the President, expressing lack of confidence in the President to honour such commitments. Meanwhile, in March 2017, the Chairperson of the Commission, the Commissioner for Peace and Security and the Commissioner for Political Affairs visited South Sudan and held extensive discussions with the President and the First Vice President of the country. During the visit, the AU delegation underscored the need for a cessation of hostilities in order to create an environment conducive for the National Dialogue as well as humanitarian access to the most affected areas.

15. Given the incessant fighting, food insecurity, famine and the growing numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) as well as refugees in neighbouring states continue to be a source of great concern. In February 2017, the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) declared famine in two Counties of Leer and Mayiandit. These developments diminished the expectation for a rapid end to violence during the period under review, and called for increased engagement by the stakeholders and guarantors to the Peace Agreement, as well as the region. Meanwhile, the joint summit meeting between the AU, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the United Nations (UN), held on 29 January 2017, was instrumental in launching a viable platform for exchange of information and harmonization of efforts on South Sudan. The meeting called for shuttle diplomacy by the AU High Representative for South Sudan, former President Alpha Oumar Konare. Consequently President Konare undertook missions to South Sudan in March and June 2017, urging for cessation of hostilities and calling for an inclusive National Dialogue. During his various meetings, he underscored to his interlocutors, that the National Dialogue offered a unique opportunity for returning to a sustainable path of peace, stability and reconciliation. He committed to continue supporting the people of South Sudan, the TGoNU and the leadership of the National Dialogue, to ensure the inclusivity, the independence, the transparency and the neutrality of the forum.

16. Recently, the peace process was given much needed impetus when the 31st Extraordinary Summit of IGAD, held on 12 June 2017, in Addis Ababa, called for the convening of a High Level Revitalisation Forum to discuss concrete measures to restore the permanent ceasefire and to develop a revised and realistic timeline and implementation schedule towards a democratic election to mark the end of the transition period. The IGAD Summit also condemned the violence that continues to be perpetrated by the government forces as well as other armed groups, especially that it also affects humanitarian workers. The meeting regretted the delays in the deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF) and thus decided to convene a meeting of Chiefs of Defense of Troop Contributing Countries and the TGoNU as well as the UN to discuss all outstanding issues and to agree on a definitive timeline for full deployment. Given deteriorating humanitarian situation, the meeting underscored that humanitarian assistance should therefore be provided to all citizens of South Sudan without any discrimination.

17. Hostilities in South Sudan have driven over a million refugees into neighbouring countries, especially Uganda. According to the officials of the Government of Uganda, this unprecedented mass influx is placing enormous strain on their public services and local infrastructure and requires urgent attention from the international community as the situation is becoming increasingly unbearable. As a consequence of this situation, President Museveni convened a two days Refugee Solidarity Conference on 22 and 23 June 2017, in Kampala, to raise funds in support to refugees in Uganda for the next four years. The Conference was also attended by regional leaders, the U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and other high-level international guests and donors. Furthermore, during the month of June 2017, President Yoweri Museveni engaged

South Sudan opposition forces with the aim of bringing them on board the peace process. Some of the opposition forces agreed to the proposal of laying down arms and working with the TGoNU while other groups have not yet agreed to these proposals.

18. In light of these development, the Assembly may wish to commend the sustained efforts of the AU High Representative for South Sudan, former President Alpha Oumar Konare assisting the various South Sudanese stakeholders in addressing their challenges, through constructive engagement, as agreed by the AU, UN and IGAD at their meeting held on 29 January 2017 and underscore the need for continued formal engagement as agreed by the three institutions; endorse the 31st IGAD Summit meeting decisions especially with regards to urgently convening the High Level Revitalisation Forum to the Peace Agreement; he Assembly may wish to strongly call for an inclusive, transparent and independent National Dialogue in South Sudan. Assembly may also wish to urge the international community to make more financial contributions towards addressing the dire humanitarian situation in South Sudan and neighbouring states and to call on the TGoNU, SPLM-IO and all other armed groups to observe international humanitarian law with regards to the humanitarian and workers, in order to create access and conducive environment for the humanitarian agencies to be able to deliver for assistance to the population in need. In this regard, the Assembly may wish to commend the efforts of President Yoweri Museveni and the Government of Uganda in addressing the challenges in South Sudan. Assembly may wish to call on government forces and armed groups to lay down their arms and engage in a constructive political process that aims at addressing the root causes of challenges faced by South Sudan.

19. The political and security situation **in Darfur** has improved markedly as confirmed by both, the Joint AU and UN Strategic Review Mission undertaken in March 2017, and the PSC field mission undertaken from 15 to 18 May 2017. The Strategic Review recommended a gradual and phased withdrawal of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) from certain areas of Darfur. The Joint Strategic Review report proposed a two-pronged approach to a new concept of operations that combines peacebuilding and peacekeeping tasks. The areas outside of the Jebel Marra and the affected vicinity, i.e. those where there has been less fighting for years, need a more peacebuilding oriented approach than the Jebel Marra. In those areas, UNAMID's role should be, in collaboration with the United Nations Country Team, to stabilise the situation, support the police and help build rule of law institutions while continuing to mediate intercommunal conflicts and investing resources in the residual Commissions/Funds of the former Darfur Regional Authority and follow up on SSR related issues and the implementation of the DDPD. However, it was recommended that a Jebbel Marra Tactical Force (JM TF) be created to secure the situation in the Jebbel Marra area where fighting sporadically takes place. The rest of the remaining force will be empowered with force multipliers to enable it to efficiently respond to any possible military flare-ups that may arise. The report of the review was adopted by the AU Commission Chairperson and the UN Secretary-General and subsequently submitted to the AUPSC and the UNSC in June 2017 as their Joint Report.

20. Given the call for a gradual and phased withdrawal, the initial reconfiguration of UNAMID, which has now commenced, will be carried out in two phases of six months each, resulting in the reduction of the strength of the military component by 44% and that of the police component by 30%, the closure of 11 team sites and the withdrawal of the military component from another 7 team sites, it being understood that the Mission shall retain adequate and mobile quick response capabilities to be able to respond to security challenges as they arise.

21. On **Sudan**, President Omar Hassan al-Bashir appointed First Vice President Bakri Hassan Saleh to also serve as Prime Minister in line with the outcome of the National Dialogue, in March 2017. Subsequently, on 11 May 2017 the new Prime Minister announced the formation of a new government of national unity, which is mandated to oversee the implementation of the recommendations of the National Dialogue until 2020. It will also be in charge of the constitutional and economic reforms, as well as the proposed national reconciliation process. During the period under review, progress has been made in the efforts of the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) to assist the Sudanese government, the armed movements and the opposition parties to engage in an inclusive political process. In this regard, the AUHIP and UNAMID Joint Special Representative continue to engage the Darfur armed movements in order to reconvene the negotiations to conclude a cessation of hostilities leading to permanent ceasefire, as proposed in the Roadmap Agreement signed in March and August 2016, by the Government of Sudan and the Darfur armed movements respectively. Unfortunately the Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) continues to refuse to join the mediation process posing major challenges to the peace process. It is to be noted that the United States Sanctions imposed on Sudan since 1997, which were partially lifted on 13 January 2017, are to be reviewed on 12 July 2017. The Governments of the United States of America and the Sudan have been cooperating on several areas, especially on the fight against violent extremism and this has paved the way for improved relations. The ease of sanctions, especially economic sanctions, on the Sudan would alleviate great strife currently faced by the innocent people of Sudan

22. In light of these developments the Assembly may wish to take note of the recommendations of the Joint Strategic Review Report submitted to the PSC and UNSC by the AU Chairperson and the United Nations Secretary General on the withdrawal and reconfiguration of the UNAMID forces and stress that the process should be carried out in a gradual and smooth manner, to ensure that the civilian population is not exposed to danger. The Assembly may also wish to commend Sudan for forming a new Government of National Unity and urge the new Government to intensify efforts, working with international partners, towards post-conflict reconstruction in the areas to be vacated by UNAMID. In particular, the Assembly may wish to take note of the steps already taken by the United States to ease the sanctions regime imposed on Sudan, and look forward for their complete lifting by 12 July 2017 review. Furthermore, the Assembly may wish to commend the AUHIP for its relentless efforts towards helping the Sudanese to reach peaceful solutions to their multiple challenges and also encourage

them to continue to foster an inclusive process to help the next stages of the peace process. The Assembly may wish to strongly urge armed movements to engage without further delay, in the negotiation process, demonstrating the required spirit of responsibility and desisting from its current intransigent attitude.

23. It should be noted that, **Sudan and South Sudan** rejuvenated the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) with a view to addressing outstanding security concerns between the two countries. In this regard, the AUHIP convened an extraordinary session of the JPSM on 14 -15 May 2017, which underscored the centrality of the establishment and full functioning of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) in order to secure the Sudan and South Sudan border. The two countries also agreed to convene the Joint Security Committee (JSC) to follow up the implementation of the JPSM decisions. Unfortunately in June 2017, South Sudan accused Sudan of harbouring South Sudanese rebels and, consequently, Sudan called for postponement of the JSC meeting to a time to be determined. Meanwhile, the fourth meeting of the Tripartite Committee of the Joint Approach to the International Community took place in Addis Ababa from 19 – 20 May 2017, and agreed to renew their joint efforts to secure the lifting of sanctions, debt relief and economic assistance from the international community. They developed a new outreach strategy which would include visits to the United States and key European Capitals.

24. The Assembly may wish to commend the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan for reaching agreements on the operationalization of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM). Meanwhile, given the postponement of the Joint Security Committee (JSC) requested by Sudan, the Assembly may wish to call for the urgent convening of this meeting without any pre-conditions, in order to address the outstanding issues between the two countries, especially as it relates to the establishment of the JBVMM. Assembly may also wish to urge the two countries to more regular meetings of the JPSM to address outstanding matters between Sudan and South Sudan.

25. The **Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC)** met on 30 May 2017, in Addis Ababa and agreed to support the efforts of the United Nations Interim Force in Abyei (UNISFA). It agreed to urge the two Governments to implement the June 20, 2011 Agreement on the Administration and Security of Abyei Area.

26. The Assembly may wish to urge the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to urgently implement the 20 June 2011 Agreement on the Administration and Security of Abyei Area, especially the establishment of the Council, Administration and Police Service. The Assembly may also wish to urge the two governments to commence discussions on the process of carrying out a referendum in Abyei in line with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005. The Assembly may further wish to commend the UNISFA for maintaining peace and stability in the Abyei area.

27. The situation between **Djibouti and Eritrea** has witnessed new developments during the period under review, in the aftermath of Qatar's decision to withdraw its peacekeeping troops from the Djibouti-Eritrea border. It is to be recalled that, in line with the Agreement signed on 6 June 2010, under the mediation of Qatar, the two parties agreed on the deployment of the Qatari troops along their common border. In this context, in a Press Release issued on 19 June 2017, the Chairperson of the Commission appealed for calm and restraint, and stressed that the AU is fully seized with the matter and stands ready to assist the two parties to normalize their relations and promote good neighbourliness within the framework of relevant AU instruments. The Assembly may wish to call for restraint and encourage the Chairperson of the Commission to pursue his efforts towards normalization of relations between the two countries. The Assembly may further wish to urge the two parties to extend their necessary cooperation to the AU efforts.

28. The question of the non-self-governing territory of **Western Sahara**, which was inscribed, in 1963, in the UN list of non-self-governing territories has remained unresolved, despite the adoption of a multitude of resolutions by the UN and the AU, calling for definitive measures to enable the people of Western Sahara to exercise their right to self-determination. Successive efforts by the international community towards the peaceful resolution of the dispute between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO, beginning with the OAU/UN Settlement Plan and through the current UN Security Council (UNSC) negotiating framework, mandated under the UNSC resolution 1754(2007), have remained stalemated as a result of persistent preconditioning to the talks although these preconditions had been explicitly ruled out by UNSC resolution 1754 (2007) which had mandated the talks, in the first place.

29. The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres proposed, in his April 2017 report to the UN Security Council, to re-launch the long-dormant peace process with a new dynamic and spirit. The UNSC, in resolution 2351(2017) supported his proposal and, while renewing MINURSO's mandate until 30 April 2018, again called on the parties to resume direct negotiations, within the earlier parameters it had specified, in order to enable the people of Western Sahara to exercise its right to self-determination. The crisis in Guerguerat which had emerged as a result of the-disruption of the *status quo* of the ceasefire regime in the area was defused by the Moroccan withdrawal of its forces and the subsequent redeployment of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) personnel, from the area. As for the issue of the return to full functionality of MINURSO, out of the 84 UN and AU personnel expelled by Morocco from the Territory, only 42 not including any of the AU personnel - have been allowed to return, leaving the optimal functionality of the Mission in serious doubt. On 25 May 2017, the UN Secretary General informed the UN Security Council of his intention to appoint Mr. Horst Köhler, former President of the Federal Republic of Germany, as his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara.

30. During the period under review, the policy organs of the AU remained seized with the issue. The Assembly of the Union, in its 28th session held in January 2017,

accepted the application of the Kingdom of Morocco to join the AU as its 55th member and expressed the hope that its membership to the Organization would bring positive dividend and definitive solution to the conflict. The Assembly also adopted decision Assembly/AU/6(XXVIII) during the same 28th ordinary session and expressed deep concern over the continued deadlock in the peace process and urged the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council to take appropriate measures towards the urgent resolution of the conflict. At its 668th meeting, held on 20 March 2017, the PSC reviewed the situation in Western Sahara and particularly called on the two parties, in their capacity as Member states, to engage in direct and serious talks to overcome the current deadlock in the peace process in compliance with the AU Constitutive Act. The PSC further decided to reactivate the Ad hoc Committee of Heads of State and Government on the conflict in Western Sahara, established pursuant to resolution AHG/Res.92(XV), adopted at the 15th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, held in Khartoum, Sudan, from 18 to 22 July 1978, the PSC requested the Chairperson of the Commission to undertake the necessary consultations for the finalization of the composition and the operationalization of the Ad hoc Committee. The Council also urged Morocco to allow the AU Observer Mission to return to Laayoune- Western Sahara.

31. In light of the foregoing, the Assembly may wish to reiterate its determination to find a durable solution to the conflict in Western Sahara, and call upon the two Member States, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, to engage in direct and serious talks and to extend necessary cooperation to the AU policy organs, the Commission and the AU High Representative for Western Sahara. The Assembly may further wish to welcome the commitment of the UN Secretary-General to re-launch the negotiating process with a new dynamic and a new spirit leading to the resumption of negotiations, in good faith and without preconditions, between the two parties with the aim of reaching a durable solution, which shall provide for the self-determination referendum of the people of Western Sahara in line with the relevant UN resolutions and the AU/OAU decisions.

32. During the period under review, **Libya** remained a source of great concern for the AU, in particular with regard to the challenges encountered in implementing the Libya Political Agreement (LPA) of December 2015. While there is broad support to the LPA by all political actors, there is also a realization that some provisions of this Agreement need to be reviewed. In this regard, it is to be noted that the Presidency Council and the House of Representatives have already initiated dialogue to agree on the scope and the specific clauses of the LPA to be amended. Towards that end, the process of selecting delegates from both the House of Representatives and the Presidency Council is well underway. It is against this background that the Libyan Political Dialogue, which continues to play an important consultative role, convened informally in January 2017, where the members proposed options for resolving the main contentious issues impeding the implementation of the LPA, including the composition and role of the Presidency Council and the supreme command of the Libyan National Army. Lack of meaningful political dialogue between the Presidency Council and the

House of Representatives continues to characterize the relationships. The increasing divisions within Libyan parties is also making difficult the search for solution to the crisis under the LPA.

33. The political paralysis is further aggravating the security and humanitarian situation in the country. The security situation in Tripoli, in particular, remains precarious, and unpredictable. Clashes between armed groups loyal to the Presidency Council and those opposed to it are putting the safety of the citizens of Tripoli in great danger. The attack on the convoy of Prime Minister Faiez Serraj, on 21 February 2017, by forces loyal to the General National Congress, is illustrative of the current situation. Fighting also occurred in other parts of Libya. There is also need for action aimed at preventing and combating terrorism, notably through the effective implementation of relevant African and international instruments.

34. The AU, through the AU High Level Committee for Libya, and the AU High Representative for Libya, is continuing to engage with the main Libyan stakeholders. Towards this end, the AU High Representative travelled to Tripoli, from 10 to 12 May 2017, Al Bayda and Benghazi, from 25 to 27 May 2017, and held extensive consultations on the political impasse with various Libyan stakeholders, including Prime Minister Faiez al-Serraj of the Presidency Council and General Khalifa Haftar, commander of the Libyan National Army. Similarly, the AU High Level Committee for Libya, at ministerial level, which includes the Commissioner for Peace and Security, visited Tripoli, Al Bayda, and Benghazi, from 31 May to 2 June 2017, with a view to assisting Libyan stakeholders to overcome the current political impasse, through an all-inclusive political dialogue in the coming months. The visit provided the opportunity for the Ministers to show AU's solidarity to the people of Libya and interact thoroughly with Libyan stakeholders to seek their views on the all-inclusive dialogue and the next steps in the peace process in Libya. The neighbouring countries of Libya and regional organizations are also doing their part to unify the various Libyan parties and restart the political dialogue. Algeria, Tunisia, and Egypt, in particular, are making continuing efforts by supporting an all-inclusive political dialogue. However, no breakthrough has been achieved to alter the current political dynamics.

35. Against this background, the Assembly may wish to urge the Libyan parties to overcome their current political differences, amend, consensually, the Libya Political Agreement, and start its implementation in a manner that will bring sustainable peace to the country. The Assembly may also wish to thank the Chair of the AU High Level Committee for Libya, President Denis Sassou Nguesso, of The Congo Republic, the AU High Representative for Libya, former President Jakaya Kikwete, the neighboring countries of Libya, as well as the United Nations, for their continuing engagement to address the security and related challenges in Libya.

36. **In the Democratic Republic of the Congo**, there are still controversies over the political arrangements for the implementation of the Agreement of 31 December 2016 particularly with regard to the designation of a Prime Minister. On 7 April 2017,

President Joseph Kabila appointed Mr. Bruno Tshibala, as Prime Minister of the Government of National Unity. The National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO), which led the discussions, felt that the appointment of Mr. Tshibala was not in line with the Agreement, while the *Rassemblement*, a coalition of opposition political parties, continues to reject the appointment of the Prime Minister, accusing the Presidential Majority of non-compliance with the Agreement. On May 9, 2017, Mr. Tshibala formed his Government comprising 59 members, with the priorities for the new government to support the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) for the organisation, as soon as possible, of free, fair and credible elections, the consolidation of peace and security throughout the country and taking into account the social needs of the people. The appointment of the Chairman of the National Follow up Council of the Agreement (CNSA), which is the other aspect of the Agreement, is still pending, as all the other political parties submitted their lists with the exception of the *Rassemblement* of Mr. Félix Tshisekedi.

37. With regard to the electoral process, the INEC has already registered 28063730 voters, including 13376592 women and 14687138 men. The climate of insecurity in the Kasai prevents the registration operations. In addition to the insecurity, the process faces financial and logistical challenges, thus compromising, according to the Chairman of the INEC, the organisation of Legislative and Presidential elections in December 2017, as per the political agreement of 31 December 2016. In the framework of the communiqué of the 671st PSC meeting held on 27 March 2017 and within the framework of the efforts of the AU, the Chairperson of the Commission dispatched from 29 to 30 May, in Kinshasa, a mission led by Ambassador Smaïl Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security, comprising in addition the representatives of the United Nations, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), Southern African Development Community (SADC), guarantor institutions of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Region. In the course of its visit, the mission held consultations with all Congolese key stakeholders, including the President of the Republic, Joseph Kabila. After the visit, the representatives of the United Nations and the AU have organised, on 7 June 2017, a meeting between the delegations of the Presidential majority and the *Rassemblement*, led by Felix Tshisekedi, thus opening a window of opportunity for the consensual implementation of the Agreement of 31 December 2016. President Kabila reassured the AU delegation that the electoral process will be entirely funded through Government budget.

38. With regard to the security situation, the recurring violence that has long characterised the Eastern part of the country has spreaded to the centre of the country, particularly to the Kasai provinces, where the Congolese Armed Forces confronted the armed militia of Kamwina Nsapu. This violence in the centre of the country led to the death of several hundreds of people and the exodus of several thousand others. The DRC has close to 2.2 million Internally Displaced Persons and 468,000 Congolese refugees in neighbouring countries. The climate of insecurity worsened with thousands of dangerous prisoners escaped following the attacks on the prisons of

Malaka, Kinshasa and Beni. In addition, the violence is accompanied, according to the United Nations, by an increasing number of human rights violations. It is in this context that the United Nations Security Council, by its Resolution 2348 (2017), adopted on 31 March 2017, extended the mandate of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Congo (MONUSCO) for one year, but whose military and police strength was reduced from 19815 to 16215.

39. The Ebola virus epidemic that was declared in Likati, at the border with the CAR, is under control, thanks to the action of the Congolese authorities and the mobilisation of partners, such as the AU, which has dispatched a team of experienced technicians there.

40. The Assembly may wish to appeal all Congolese actors to work for the preservation of the still fragile gains in the path of peace and stability in the DRC, in particular the effective and consensual implementation of the 31 December 2016 Agreement, with a view to organising elections, in December 2017. In this regard, the Assembly may wish to welcome the initiatives so far taken by the Chairperson of the Commission, including the dispatching, from 29 to 30 May, in Kinshasa, of a mission led by Commissioner for Peace and Security and comprising the representatives of the United Nations, the ICGLR, SADC, guarantor institutions of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Region, signed on 24 February 2013, in Addis Ababa. The Assembly may wish to commend the Government of DRC for its decision to ensure the financing of the electoral process through Government budget and to avail to the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) the necessary resources for the conduct of the electoral process and the organisation of elections. The Assembly may wish to call for the urgent appointment of the Chairman and Members of the National Follow up Council of the Agreement (CNSA) in order to establish the calendar of elections. The Assembly may wish to express deep concern at the prevailing security and humanitarian situation in the Kasai province. The Assembly may wish to stress the need to take all necessary steps to reenergize cooperation and the stabilisation process in the DRC and the region, in conformity with the Framework Agreement. The Assembly may wish to call on the United Nations, the troop-contributing countries to MONUSCO, the Guarantors of the Framework Agreement and the Member countries of the ICGLR and SADC to provide all the necessary support to this end;

41. The situation in **Burundi**, during the period under review has continued to be a source of concern for the AU, despite the calm observed in the country. The human rights situation, even if no longer on the scale of what was found in the course of the previous periods, continue to retain AU's attention. With regard to the political situation, the narrowing of the political space continues to be observed, despite few signs of openness to dialogue from the Government that initiated meeting with international partners from outside the region and encouraged some opposition members outside the country to return home. Furthermore, it is to be noted that members of a Commission to review the Constitution of the country have been appointed by President Pierre

Nkurunziza, following recommendations of the Burundian National Dialogue. On regional efforts, despite all the consultations conducted by H.E. Mr. Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania, the Facilitator of the inter-Burundian Dialogue initiated by the East African Community (EAC), there is no significant progress in the peace process, in particular with regard to the criteria for the participation in the talks. The last summit of the EAC, held on 20 May 2017, took note of the report of the Facilitator, who pursues his efforts towards the holding of a new round of consultation. On 27 April 2017, the Chairperson of the Commission wrote to the Chair of the EAC, H.E. John Magufuli of Tanzania, to recommend a more vigorous support to the Facilitator and offered the possibility to reactivate the High-Level Delegation of Heads of State on the issue. On 5 May, 2017, the UN Secretary-General appointed, former Head of State of Burkina Faso, Michel Kafando, as his Special Envoy for Burundi. The economic and humanitarian situation remains precarious, especially because of food insecurity, as well as the consequences of the EU sanctions, and continued flows of displaced persons and refugees in the neighbouring countries had been noted.

42. The Human Rights Observers are conducting some of their activities, while the military experts cannot fulfil their mandate regarding verification of the disarmament of armed groups, in collaboration with governmental authorities. The reason for this restrictive situation lies in the fact that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) negotiated between the Government and the African Union Commission is yet to be signed.

43. The Assembly may reaffirm its commitment to a peaceful resolution of the crisis in Burundi through the rapid and effective launching of an Inclusive Dialogue, under the aegis of the East African Community (EAC), with the support of the AU, under the leadership of the EAC Mediator, President Yoweri K. Museveni of Uganda, and his Facilitator, former President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania, and request all the Burundian stakeholders to participate actively in the dialogue, in good faith and without preconditions. The Assembly may wish to urge the Burundian authorities to take all necessary steps to build the widest possible consensus on the ongoing process of revising the Constitution, with the participation of all the stakeholders and on the basis of the Arusha Agreement of 2000. The Assembly may also wish to call for the rapid signing of the Memorandum of Understanding relating to the activities of the Human Rights Observers and the Military Experts of the AU.

44. The situation in the **Central African Republic (CAR)** has seriously deteriorated, during the period under review. The fighting between armed groups around the town of Bambari, in March 2017, which led to the intervention by the troops of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), were followed by new clashes in Alindao, in May 2017. During the same month of May 2017, five peacekeepers lost their lives in attacks in the Bangassou area. These violences, which aggravated the already worrying humanitarian situation throughout the country, also further testify to the institutional fragility, in particular with regard to security and legal institutions of the country. Consequently, the CAR

authorities are finding it difficult to restore public order and security on the national territory, with large areas falling under the control of anti-Balaka and ex-Seleka armed factions. The AU, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), with the support of Angola, Chad and Congo, continue their efforts towards the finalization and conclusion of a Peace Agreement with all the armed groups. On 19 June 2017, under the facilitation of the Sant'Egidio, armed groups signed in Rome, an agreement, including a country wide ceasefire. At the time of finalising this report, violent fighting was reported between armed groups in the area of Bria. The current rapidly deteriorating security situation has the potential to reverse the hard won gains made so far in the CAR peace process. The current rapidly deteriorating security situation has the potential of reversing the current momentum and the gains made so far in the CAR peace process.

45. In these circumstances, international assistance and pledges to finance the National Recovery Plan and Peacebuilding cannot materialise with a view to enable resumption of economic activity. Furthermore, the African Solidarity Conference for the CAR, organised by the Commission, in Addis Ababa, on 1 February 2017, did not yield positive outcomes. On 21 June 2017, a donor-partners meeting was held, in Brussels, under the auspices of the AU and the EU, with the participation of the World Bank and IMF, to confirm the financial commitments towards economic and social recovery in CAR.

46. The Assembly may wish to express its deep concern over the deteriorating security situation in the CAR and call for restraint. The Assembly may wish to request the Commission to pursue its efforts towards the African initiative for a peace and reconciliation agreement between the Government of the CAR and the armed groups. The Assembly may further wish to welcome the signature of an agreement on 19 June between the government and armed groups facilitated by the Sant'Egidio Community. The Assembly may also wish to condemn the attacks against MINUSCA and the destabilizing activities of armed groups and demand the latter to put an end to their illegal operations and to commit themselves resolutely in the DDR programs and pacification process of the country, including the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation. Finally, the Assembly may wish to urge the partners to continue their assistance to the CAR and AU Member States to take an active part in the ongoing post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts in the CAR.

47. The political and institutional crisis in **Guinea Bissau** intensified since the 28th ordinary session of the Assembly, in January 2017. It should be recalled that President Jose Mario Vaz, appointed a new Prime Minister, Mr. Umaro Mouktar Cissoko Embalo, on 18 November 2016, who formed his cabinet composed of representatives of the Party for Social Renewal (PRS) and some members of the African Party for the Independent of Guinea Bissau-and Cape Verde (PAIGC) on individual basis rather than through the party platform. The situation led to a new wave of measures against them by the PAIGC, which immediately rejected the appointment of the new Prime Minister accusing the President of violating the spirit of the Conakry Agreement of 14 October

2016. The Conakry Agreement provides that the Prime Minister should be appointed consensually and have the confidence of the President who should, in turn, form an inclusive Government based on the party representation at the National People's Assembly (ANP).

48. With the 2018 legislative and 2019 presidential elections looming, the crisis has become even more complex, thereby putting at risk the implementation of the Conakry Agreement brokered by Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as most political actors are now positioning themselves for the next elections. Pursuant to the PSC decision of 13 February 2017, an ECOWAS Ministerial Mission was dispatched to Bissau, from 23 to 24 April 2017, with a view to assess the status of implementation of the Conakry Agreement. The Mission concluded that the Agreement was not fully implemented by the signatories and recommended, among others, that in the event of noncompliance or lack of concrete steps to implement these decisions within 30 days, the ECOWAS Authority approves the imposition of targeted sanctions on individuals, groups of individuals and entities who obstruct the smooth implementation of the Conakry Agreement and their close collaborators with immediate effect. The 30 days deadline established by ECOWAS elapsed without concrete progress by relevant stakeholders on the implementation of the Conakry Agreement. At its 51st Summit of ECOWAS, held on 4 June 2017, in Monrovia, Liberia, the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS decided to extend the mandate of the ECOWAS Military Force (ECOMIB) in Guinea Bissau for three months to allow for full implementation of the Conakry Agreement by the political stakeholders in the country and urged the President of the Republic to comply with the provisions of the Agreement. The situation in the country is becoming more complex, with protesters demonstrating in the streets of Bissau since March 2017, demanding for the resignation of President Jose Mario Vaz as a way of resolving the crisis.

49. In light of the above, the Assembly may wish to call on all Bissau Guinean political actors to respect and implement the Conakry Agreement, without any further delay. The Assembly may also wish to urge all parties to refrain from actions or statements that could escalate tensions and incite violence.

50. In **Liberia**, the period under review witnessed continued peace consolidation efforts, in the aftermath of the handover of security by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to the Liberian Government, on 1 July 2016.

51. The major preoccupation of Liberian stakeholders is the upcoming October 2017 general elections. To this end, the AU office in Monrovia has been requested to provide necessary support to the government. Preparations are underway and the voter registration has been completed. An AU Pre-Election Assessment Mission was dispatched to Liberia in April 2017 by the Chairperson of the AU Commission to consult with stakeholders, assess the ongoing preparation towards the elections, and recommend the possibility of deploying an AU Elections Observer Mission. Capacity building plans are equally underway for electoral officials and other staff of the Liberian

National Elections Commission (NEC). Challenges confronting the electoral process relate mainly to the 2014 National Code of Conduct which, if or when implemented, may disqualify some presidential candidates from contesting the elections. Also, the issue of dual nationality may also disqualify some presidential aspirants. Another issue that may cause disquiet is the 10-year residential clause imposed by the Liberian Constitution for political aspirants, which may see some candidates being affected.

52. Security arrangements by the Liberian Government have so far helped maintain peace and stability in the country, despite logistical and capacity challenges confronting Liberian security agencies. The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has also made arrangements towards complementing efforts of the Liberian security agencies, should the need arise. Formed Police Units (FPUs) from Nigeria and China will be retained until after elections, and considerations are being made for the Nigerian Government to also deploy some 250 soldiers to complement efforts towards holding peaceful and successful elections in October 2017.

53. In light of the forgoing, the Assembly may wish to encourage all Liberian stakeholders to continue working together towards a consolidating peace in their country, in particular through creating conditions conducive for the holding of peaceful and transparent elections, with the support of the region and UNMIL.

54. While enjoying high economic growth and tangible results in its socio-economic recovery, during the reporting period, **Côte d'Ivoire**, witnessed a mutiny of a group of soldiers, demanding back payment of financial packages by the Government. An agreement has been concluded on the modalities of the claimed allowances between the Government and the mutineers.

55. In its resolutions 2283 and 2284 (2016), the UN Security Council, respectively, terminated the sanctions regime in Côte d'Ivoire and extended the mandate of the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) for the final time, until 30 June 2017, at which date the closure of the Mission should be completed.

56. In light of the foregoing, the Assembly may wish to strongly condemn this mutiny and reiterate its support to the Government for its efforts aimed at consolidating reconciliation, which will enable the strengthening of peace and stability in the country that will maintain high economic growth for the benefit of the Ivorian people.

57. During the period under review, **The Gambia** continued to make progress on the path of normalcy and constitutional order, following the post-election crisis in December 2016 and January 2017. Parliamentary elections were held on 6 April 2017, with the United Democratic Party of President Barrow winning an absolute majority. With regard to the security situation, the period under review witnessed a general calm all over the country. Notably, there was a peaceful protest by citizens in Kanilai, home town of former President Yahya Jammeh. The 51st ECOWAS Summit held on 4 June 2017 in Monrovia, extended the mandate of ECOWAS Mission in the Gambia (ECOMIG) for an

additional period of twelve (12) months. With regard to post-crisis reconstruction and development, the efforts of countries of the region, through ECOWAS, with the support of the international community, are underway. In this regard, the PSC, at its meeting held on 29 March 2017, decided to dispatch an AU needs assessment technical mission to the country. The Mission conducted assessment on three priority areas identified by the Government of The Gambia: national dialogue and reconciliation, security sector reform, and socio-economic transformation. In the communique of its 694th meeting held on 15 June 2017, the PSC, after consideration of the report of the assessment mission, expressed AU's readiness to support and accompany the new authorities of the Gambia and its people in their reconstruction efforts.

58. Therefore, the Assembly may wish to commend the new authorities in The Gambia and ECOWAS for their joint efforts aimed at promoting lasting peace and stability in the country and encourage them to continue on this path. The Assembly may also wish to reaffirm the AU's full support to the post-crisis reconstruction and development process in the Gambia and invite Member States, for those with means, to second experts in SSR, justice and development.

59. The situation **in Mali and Sahel**, during the period under review, was marked in particular by the continuing efforts to implement the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, resulting from the Algiers Process. On 10 February 2017, faced with the continuing challenges confronting the Process, Algeria, the lead Mediator and Chairman of the Follow-up Committee on the Agreement (CSA), after consultations with members of the Mediation and the CSA, resolved to convene a high-level meeting of the CSA to give a new impetus to the efforts aimed at implementing the Agreement. The meeting resulted in the establishment of a new timetable, for the Interim Authorities and the Joint Patrols under the Operational Mechanism for Coordination (MOC). Thus, after several postponements, the Interim Authorities were established in Kidal, Gao and Menaka, from 28 to 2 March 2017. In Timbuktu and Taoudeni, the process was delayed for a long time, due to the opposition of some factions to the setting up of the Interim Authorities, which were finally installed on 20 April 2017. With regard to the MOC, the first patrols were carried out in Gao, on 23 February 2017, with the assistance of MINUSMA, more than a month after the terrible terrorist attack on the regrouping camp for the Malian forces and the combatants from the signatory groups of the Agreement. Preparations are still under way for the establishment of the MOC in Kidal. The other highlights of the period under review include the holding of the National Accord Conference, from 27 March to 2 April 2017, in Bamako, following the resolution of a number of differences between the Government and some signatory groups. The conclusions and recommendations of the Conference, which subsequently formed the basis to the drafting of a Charter of Peace, Unity and National Reconciliation that has been handed over to the President of the Republic. In addition, at the time of finalising this report, the Government had decided to postpone the holding of the constitutional referendum initially scheduled to take place on 9 July 2017.

60. With regard to the security situation, the period under review was marked by a growing number and increasing complexity of terrorist attacks against the Malian armed forces, MINUSMA and the French Operation Barkhane, as well as against civilian populations, not only in northern Mali, but also in the central part of the country. With growing insecurity in the central part of the country, the Government adopted an Integrated Security Plan for the Central Regions. On 2 March 2017, the terrorist groups of Ansar Din, the Macina Liberation Front, Al-Mourabitoun and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb announced their merger into a single entity, known as the Support Group to Islam and Muslims, under the leadership of Iyad Ag Ghali, founder of Ansar ed Din.

61. Given the increased insecurity caused by terrorist and criminal groups, the countries of the region took a number of initiatives. Thus, following the establishment of the Joint Multinational Force of the Authority for Integrated Development for the Region of Liptako Gourma *Autorité de développement intégré de la région du Liptako-Gourma*, on 24 January 2017, which the Assembly had welcomed at its last ordinary session, the G5 Sahel Heads of State set up, on 6 February 2017, a Joint Force to combat terrorism, violent extremism and transnational organised crime in the Sahel. On 13 April 2017, the PSC, in the communiqué of its 679th meeting, endorsed the Concept of Operations of the Joint Force. In its Communiqué, the PSC called upon the UNSC to authorise and support the G5 Sahel Joint Force, within the framework of the ASPA and the Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. The European Union pledged a contribution of € 50 million to the Joint Force. The Commission provides technical support to the G5 Sahel Secretariat in the implementation of the PSC decision and the operationalization of the Force. Furthermore, it should also be noted that, from 3 to 10 June 2017, the Chairperson of the Commission, accompanied by the Commissioner for Peace and Security and the Commissioner for Political Affairs, paid a visit to countries of the Sahel region (Niger, Chad, Mauritania, Mali and Burkina Faso).

62. The Assembly may wish to once again urge all Malian parties to redouble their efforts to overcome the challenges related to the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which is the only framework that can make it possible to achieve lasting peace and reconciliation in Mali. In this regard, the Assembly may wish to welcome the progress made during the period, especially the establishment of the Interim Authorities and the convening of the National Reconciliation Conference. The Assembly may wish to reiterate its condemnation of the terrorist attacks against the civilian populations, the Malian and international forces of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Mission for Stabilization in Mali (MINSUMA) and the French Operation Barkhane. The Assembly may wish to commend the courageous initiative of the G5 Sahel, namely Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad, which led to the establishment of the G5 Sahel Joint Force. The Assembly may wish to further welcome the adoption by the United Nations Security Council of resolution 2359 (2017) on the deployment of the G5 Joint Force and may wish to express its appreciation to the European Union for the financial support to the initiative of the G5 Sahel. The Assembly may request the Commission to organise, as soon as possible, a meeting of the

countries members of the Nouakchott Process to discuss their support for the G5 Sahel initiative within the framework of the AU Strategy for the Sahel Region;

IV. COMBATING TERRORISM, RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

i) Counter terrorism

63. Terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to peace, security, stability and an impediment to development in the affected Member States and regions. Terrorist groups particularly those affiliated to Al-Qaida and to the so-called Islamic State (IS), continued to be active in Somalia, Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel region. The influence of the IS has exacerbated an already fragile situation and continues to reshape the security challenges faced by the continent. The alliances and networks built by these groups also include transnational organized crime networks. The financial gains resulting from these illicit activities are in turn used to support terrorist activities, and expand their networks. The scourges of both the Foreign Terrorist Fighters and recruitment of terrorists through the internet have been propagated significantly. It is to be noted that, with the support of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services (CISSA), and now the AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) Member States and regions are working closely to design comprehensive national/regional strategy to combat terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism. Furthermore, the ACSRT is restructuring its Focal Points from individuals to institutions, to be identified by Member States, for easy communication and easy follow-up. In addition, both the ACSRT and CISSA continue to provide regular briefings to the PSC to allow update of AU action against terrorism and violent extremism, including with regard to the AU decisions on foreign fighters and radicalization. The Commission, in close cooperation with the countries concern, is to reenergize the Nouakchott and Djibouti Processes.

ii) Efforts against the Boko Haram terrorist group

64. The Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF), comprising of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) member countries, namely Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad, plus the Republic of Benin, continues to operate in 4 Sectors, delineated along the international borderlines of the Member States, with its HQs in N'Djamena, Chad. Its strength is 10,602. The MNJTF operations have degraded the Boko Haram terrorist group through offensive operations. This includes the disruption of Boko Haram supply lines, recapturing of several key towns and areas previously under Boko Haram control and rescuing of hostages. Despite the MNJTF success and achievements. Boko Haram still poses a threat to MNJTF and to the civilian population in the affected areas. The challenges faced by MNJTF include funding and logistics and the lack of counter Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) capability.

65. The PSC, at its 639th meeting held on 29 November 2016, renewed the mandate of the MNJTF from 31 January 2017, for another period of twelve months. The MNJTF

continues offensive operations with numerous surrenders by Boko haram fighters, and also equipment of the terrorist group has been destroyed or captured.

66. The Assembly may wish to commend the Lake Chad Basin countries namely Nigeria, Niger, Cameroun and Chad, plus Benin for the significant progress made in the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group. The Assembly may further wish to express its concern about the humanitarian situation, in the North East of Nigeria, resulting from the security situation, and calls on the international community to provide the necessary assistance commensurate to the needs of the affected people in the area.

iii) Efforts against the Lord's Resistance Army

67. The Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA), particularly its military component, the Regional Task Force (RTF), has seriously downgraded the LRA capacity. The LRA does not, therefore, currently pose a direct military threat to any government in the region. However, the impact of the group's continued violence against defenseless civilians in the affected areas remains a serious concern. During the 6th Ministerial Meeting of the Joint Coordination Mechanism of the RCI-LRA, held in Addis Ababa, on 30 March 2017, chaired by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Uganda and the U.S. Government announced that they would disengage their troops from the RTF. Subsequently, South Sudan also announced that it would no longer continue to host the Headquarters of the RTF on its territory. In this context, Uganda offered to host the RTF Headquarters in Koboko, in the northwestern part of its territory. Indeed, Uganda and US Special Forces started withdrawing their troops in April 2017, leaving behind a security vacuum that the LRA and other negative groups have been exploiting to carry out attacks on the UN Mission in CAR, humanitarian agencies and vulnerable and defenseless civilians. In this regard, it is to be noted that Uganda offered to train CAR armed forces. It is to be noted that, following these developments, the EU reduced by half its initial funding pledge for the RCI-LRA for 2017 from 12 to 6 months, pending the completion of the review of the RCI-LRA CONOPs.

68. The Assembly may wish to call on the RCI-LRA Member States to continue demonstrating a strong political will towards the Initiative through, among others, contributing adequate financial and logistical resources. The Assembly may also wish to invite Member States with the capacity to do so, to train, equip and mentor at least two battalions of the CAR Army and four Formed Police Units in order to enable them to assume greater responsibilities in ensuring the security and protection of civilians in the LRA-affected parts of their country. The Assembly may further wish to encourage the Commission to expeditiously convene another Summit of the RCI-LRA Member States to provide guidance on the future of the RCI-LRA.

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE (APSA)

69. During the period under review, the Commission, working in collaboration with the RECs/RMs, has continued its efforts towards ensuring that all APSA components work in synergy and harmony to promote peace and security in Africa.

a) Development of the African Standby Force (ASF) and its Rapid Deployment Capability

70. With regard to the development of the African Standby Force (ASF) and its Rapid Deployment Capability, it should be recalled that the 26th Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in January 2016, decided that the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) will continue its mandate pending the AMANI AFRICA II Field Training Exercise After Action and the Evaluation Mission to be undertaken by the Commission and the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms to the Regional Economic Communities to verify the state of readiness of Regional Standby Forces (Assembly/AU/De.589 (XXVI)). In implementing this Assembly decision, the AU Commission and the RECs/RMs are undertaking pledges verification missions to the five regions of the continent. The verification team will be led by Professor Ibrahim Gambari. The verification visits to the RECs/RMs are scheduled as follows:

- ECCAS 19 – 21 July 2017
- NARC 24-26 July 2017
- SADC 31 July – 02 August 2017
- EASF 22 – 24 August 2017
- ECOWAS 02-04 October 2017

71. Furthermore, the Commission has developed a Common Costs document with respect to aspects of AUPSOs to be funded from the AU Peace Fund. The Document is to be considered by the STCDSS later this 2017. Other concrete steps taken by the Commission to accelerate ASF development include the revision of the ASF Doctrine for it to include development of an African Doctrine on peace support operations that suits the changing circumstances in Africa; the launching of the African Standby Capacity Roster; the launching of the Civilian Strategic Support Group (CSSG) and the Police Strategic Support Group (PSSG); the strengthening of Conduct and Discipline capacity in on-going operations; commencement of the procurement process for the ASF Command, Control, Communication and Information System (ASF C3IS) equipment and the initial operationalisation of the Continental Logistics Base (CLB) in Douala, Cameroon, that will be inaugurated soon. In addition, a six-month rostering system of the ASF Regional Standby Forces has already been put in place to facilitate action as may be required following a decision of the Assembly or the PSC. Currently, the East Africa Standby Force is on standby till December 2017.

b) Update on the African Capacity for the Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC)

72. It should be recalled that the AU Commission convened the ACIRC Military Experts, Chiefs of Defense Staff and Ministerial meeting in Luanda, Angola, from 6 to 8 December 2016. The Ministerial meeting considered and approved ACIRC Work plan for 2017/2018.

73. Rwanda took over from Angola the responsibility of a Framework Nation (FN) in January 2017. They further conducted Command Post Exercises (CPX) successfully to confirm ACIRC status of readiness. The Commission has planned a meeting in the Republic of Uganda in July 2017 at the level of Ministers to review progress in line with the Luanda ACIRC Declaration of Ministers, considered the After Action Report of CPX conducted in Rwanda and review the new Deployment Roster. The Republic of Chad will take over from the Republic of Rwanda the FN responsibilities as from July to December 2017. The ACIRC Force, as part of its Work Plan, maintains Combat Readiness by planning and to conduct a CPX in Chad by August 2017 and a Field Training Exercise (FTX) in Tanzania thereafter.

c) Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD)

74. Within its quick impact/peace strengthening efforts, the Commission, through its Liaison Offices, provided support to the CAR, Guinea Bissau, Somalia and Madagascar. In addition to the needs assessment undertaken to the CAR, the Commission organized a Solidarity Conference on 1 February 2017 to raise both financial and in-kind support for the recovery and reconstruction of the CAR. Despite consultations and robust engagement with Member States, the CAR Solidarity Conference did not yield the expected outcomes, in terms of mobilizing financial resources. This illustrate one of the bottlenecks facing implementation of the PCRD. From 13 to 19 May 2017, the Commission deployed a technical needs assessment mission to The Gambia led by former President Pierre Buyoya of Burundi and AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel. In the communique of its 694th meeting held on 15 June 2017, the PSC expressed the AU's readiness to support and accompany the new authorities of the Gambia in the reconstruction efforts.

75. In light of the above, the Assembly may wish to call the RECs/ RMs and Member States to prioritize implementation of the AU PCRD policy framework, and to re-commit themselves to the African Solidarity Initiative, placing it as a priority in the spirit of African solidarity. The Assembly may also call upon partners to support PCRD activities of the AU.

d) On the AU Peace Fund

76. On 30 May 2017, the PSC at its 689th meeting endorsed the enhanced governance and accountability framework of the Peace Fund and the management structure, the proposed eligibility criteria and fund management principles as recommended in the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission, taking into consideration representation of AU Member States in the governance structures of the Peace Fund, based on regional representation and the modalities to implement it, in addition to the operating costs of the fund. In the same communiqué, the PSC, also endorsed the Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on United Nations Security Council Resolution 2320 which along with the UN Secretary-General's Report on proposals for support AU PSOs through UN assessed contributions (S/2014/454) provides a detailed framework for the use of UN assessed contributions for AU PSOs authorized by the UN Security Council. On 15 June 2017, the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, and the AU High Representative for the Peace Fund and the financing the Union, Dr. Donald Kaberuka, as well as the UN Secretariat briefed the UN Security Council on the two reports. In the communiqué of its 689th meeting the PSC also requested the Chairperson of the Commission, including through his High Representative to take forward the political engagement with United Nations and relevant partners towards securing a substantive UNSC resolution on the use of UN assessed contributions to support AU PSOs in 2017.

77. The Assembly may wish to take note with satisfaction of the steps taken towards the implementation of its decisions with regard to the AU Peace Fund. The Assembly may wish to endorse the communiqué of the 689th meeting of the PSC, in particular, the governance structures and the eligibility criteria of the Peace Fund, as well as the scope of operations to be submitted, on a case by case basis, for authorization by the UN Security Council and subsequent financing through UN assessed contributions. The Assembly may wish to thank those Member States that have already paid their annual contribution to the Peace Fund and urge those, which have not yet done so, to expedite of their contributions. The Assembly may wish to pay tribute to the High Representative for the Peace Fund and the Financing of the Union, Dr. Donald Kaberuka, for his relentless efforts towards operationalization of the AU Peace Fund;

e) AU-UN Framework on Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security

78.

On 19 April 2017, the Chairperson of the Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations signed the United Nations - African Union Framework on Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. This Framework elevates the existing partnership between the two organizations at a more strategic, predictable and systematic level, based on a common understanding of their shared objectives and comparative strengths. The Framework provides an overarching basis for collaboration on the full continuum of issues related to the prevention, management and resolution of conflict, which would allow for more collaborative and joint action from the very earliest

indications of possible conflict, through preventive diplomacy, mediation, peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peacebuilding. The AU Commission and UN Secretariat are now focused on the implementation of all aspects of the Framework.

79. The Assembly may wish to welcome the signing, on 19 April 2017, of the AU-UN Framework on Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, and may wish to encourage the Chairperson of the Commission to continue engaging the UN towards greater support to the AU's Peace efforts, in line with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. In this regard, the Assembly may wish to request the Chairperson of the AU Commission, including through his High Representative to take forward the political engagement to secure, in the course of 2017, a substantive UN Security Council Resolution on the use of assessed contributions to support AU mandated or authorized missions in 2017.

f) AUC-RECs/RMs

80. During the period under review, steps were taken towards the continued implementation of the AU/RECs/RMs Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the area of Peace and Security of 2008. The AU Commission and the RECs/RMs Secretariats are implementing the APSA Roadmap (2016-2020) adopted in November 2015, which aims to promote coherence in the operation of all APSA components and contribute to Africa's ongoing efforts towards silencing the guns in Africa by 2020, a key priority under the first ten-year implementation plan of AU Agenda 2063.

81. In this context, the AU Commission and the RECs/RMs have also begun coordinated efforts in implementing various aspects of the AU Master Roadmap on Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020, which was developed by the PSC during its Retreat in Lusaka, Zambia, in November 2016, and endorsed by the Assembly during its Ordinary Session in January 2017. At the time of finalizing this report, it had been planned to convene AU Commission/RECs/RMs meeting, in Addis Ababa, further to enhance cooperation in the area of peace and security in Africa.

g) Continental Early Warning and Conflict Prevention

82. The Commission has continued its efforts to enhance its capacity to provide timely information and analysis through the development of various products, including the production of early warning reports and regular horizon scanning briefings to the PSC. During the reporting period, the Commission organized a consultation with African Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), from 18 to 19 May 2017, with the objective of strengthening collaboration in the area of early warning and conflict prevention and facilitating information exchange. The Commission has also taken steps to popularize and implement the Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework (CSCPF), particularly, the Country Structural Vulnerability/Resilience Assessment (CSVA) and the Country Structural Vulnerability/Resilience Mitigation Strategy (CSVMS) tools, which are designed to assist Member States in their efforts to address the structural causes of conflict. The Commission has continued to provide technical assistance to Member

States in the establishment and strengthening of national peace infrastructures, including the setting up of early warning systems and situation rooms. In this respect, five Member States are setting up their national early warning systems with the support of the Commission.

h) AU Border Programme (AUBP)

83. During the period under review, the AUBP has continued to pursue delimitation and demarcation operations with over twenty Member States. Those operations comprised physical demarcation and delimitation (Rwanda-Uganda, Togo-Benin) and collection of relevant documentation relating to borders. Some have completed the demarcation and are in the process of signing a Treaty of demarcation of their shared boundary (Botswana-Namibia). A process is underway with regard to riparian countries of the Lake Tanganyika. On cross-border cooperation, the AUBP is pursuing efforts aimed at advocating for the signing and ratification of the AU Convention on Cross-border Cooperation (Niamey Convention). With regard to capacity building, assistance was provided to Namibia and Botswana in the drafting of a demarcation treaty on their common border following a joint request addressed to the AU Commission. The Commission also organized a training workshop on border treaties drafting, from 8 to 10 March 2017, in Arusha, Tanzania. Furthermore, the Commission, taking into account the transversal and complex nature of border issues, is in the process of finalizing a Draft African Union Border Governance Strategy that will be submitted to validation process of Member States later in 2017.

84. The Assembly may wish to encourage Member States to redouble efforts with a view to complete the process of delimitation and demarcation of African borders.

i) Security Sector Reform (SSR)

85. It is essential to stress that any SSR process should be based on the national context, and in line with the AU Policy Framework on SSR, adopted in 2013. The Commission continues to provide technical support to Madagascar in its SSR efforts, particularly in finalizing the five-year SSR Strategic and Operational Plans. In this context, the Commission has also deployed, in collaboration with implementing partners, a SSR Advisor to Madagascar to assess the challenges posed by the Dahalo cattle rustlers and provide policy recommendations. Pursuant to the PSC communiqué of 15 June 2017, the AU will deploy Experts to support Gambia in its SSR programme, following the assessment mission referring to in para 56 of the Report. The AU is also deploying SSR efforts in CAR.

j) Disarmament

86. The Commission has launched Phase II of the AU DDR Program which will focus on three components: 1) Operational support to Member States; 2) Institutional strengthening and partnerships; and 3) Knowledge Management. As part of the

execution of the Program, the Commission has identified country-specific priorities that will be addressed through the AU field presence. The Commission is also planning a regional stabilization conference on DDR in the Lake Chad Basin in support of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) in developing collaborative measures aimed at harmonizing DDR interventions. Also, the Commission has renewed its efforts towards addressing the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) across the continent. Recognizing the critical need for transparent and effectively regulated arms trade, the Commission sensitized and mobilized Member States in the Central Africa region to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty without further delay during a workshop held on 8-9 May 2017 in Ndjamena. Furthermore, the Commission has also worked with RECs and Regional Bodies, on developing a Plan of Action on SALW, which responds to the priorities identified in the AU Roadmap of practical steps for silencing the Guns. The Plan of Action will be presented to the PSC later this year 2017. The Commission launched a continental study to map illicit arms flows across the continent which will be finalized and presented to the PSC in the course of 2017. Furthermore, the Commission launched a training assistance program and a roster of regional experts to support Member States in enhancing the physical security and management of arms and ammunition.

k) Mine Action

87. At its 584th meeting, held on 29 March 2016 in Addis Ababa, the Peace and Security Council requested the Commission to assist Member States in mine action, including facilitating the exchange of expertise and resources among them. Against this backdrop, and to facilitate inter-African cooperation in the field of mine action, the Commission developed the Mine Action Survey, which aims to identify the mine action needs and challenges faced by Member States, as well as the technical and material resources and capabilities that they can avail. Based on the information that will be provided by Member States, the Commission will be better able to mobilize assistance and coordinate the exchange of expertise and resources.

l) Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and Non-proliferation

88. AU and RECs/RMs efforts continue to be consolidated in the area of disarmament, non-proliferation and WMD. It is to be noted that Niger deposited the instrument of ratification of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba), on 22 February 2017, bringing the total number of State Parties to 41. The African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) convened its First Extraordinary Session on 10-11 March 2017 in Addis Ababa, to address various aspects regarding the operationalization of its Secretariat, the implementation of AFCONE program of work 2016 to 2019, and priority activities as identified by its previous ordinary sessions.

m) Activities of the Panel of the Wise

89. In pursuance of Article 11 of the PSC Protocol, the Panel of the Wise, during the period under review, has devoted its attention to undertaking preparatory work for the

deployment of its members to countries preparing for elections, in line with Assembly Decision 254, to conduct good offices and mediation missions, especially in area of potential crisis. In parallel to its missions, the Panel also briefed the Peace and Security Council on 13 March 2017 on its annual activities, early warning and conflict prevention opportunities and challenges. The PSC briefing was also the opportunity for the Panel of the Wise to submit the outcome of the Fourth Retreat of the Pan African Network of the Wise (PanWise), which took place from 12 to 14 November 2016 in Constantine, Algeria, under the theme “Women at the Peace Table and in the Field: Prevention and Mediation”. The retreat resulted in the establishment of a Continental Inter-Generational Association of African Women in Mediation. At the same meeting, the PSC welcomed the progress made in the development of the Modalities for the Establishment of the African Network of Women in Conflict Prevention and Peace Mediation (FemWise). In this context, the PSC requested the AU Commission to submit the Modalities to the relevant bodies for finalization and adoption, as well as to accelerate the operationalization of FemWise. The Panel was also invited by the United Nations Security Council to provide a briefing to it on 27 March 2017, in New York, on its conflict prevention efforts and partnership opportunities with regard to the operationalization of FemWise.

90. Notably, as the term of office of the current members of the Panel of the Wise came to an end in June 2017, the Chairperson of the Commission has started consultations with Member States and eminent personalities, in line with the relevant provisions the PSC Protocol, to propose to the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, in July 2017, the names of personalities who could be invited to join the Panel this year for a three-year mandate. The proposals would also include suggestions to further enhance the capacity of the Panel in order to consolidate and further enhance its capacity and effectiveness.

n) Coordination between the PSC and the African Members of the UN Security Council A3

91. In the framework of the PSC communiqués on the conclusions and recommendations of the High Level seminars on Peace and Security held in Oran, Algeria, the PSC and the A3, with the support of the Commission and the AU Mission to the UN in New York, are deploying continued efforts to enhance coordination, with a view to promote AU peace and security agenda at the UN level. In this regard, the Assembly may wish to welcome the commitment of the A3 Group, namely Egypt, Ethiopia and Senegal to continue to promote and defend African common interests and positions on peace and security issues within the UN Security Council. The Assembly may also wish to commend Egypt, Coordinator of the A3 for the period January to April, and Ethiopia, Coordinator for May to August, for providing updates to the PSC on the activities of the A3 since January 2017. The Assembly may wish to congratulate Cote D’Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea for their election as African Members of the UN Security Council for the period 2018/2019 and look forward to their contributions towards fostering AU’s common interest and concerns in the UN Security Council.

o) Women, Children, Peace and Security in Africa

92. During the period under review, the PSC continued to work closely with the Commission, including the AU Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security in Africa, on issues relating to women and children in conflict situations in Africa. The PSC, with the support of the Commission, continue to include issues relating to women, children, peace and security in Africa, as a cross cutting issue, in its various decisions on conflict situations, as well as the inclusion of women on peace and security processes on the continent. In this context, the PSC convened open sessions at its 659th and 692nd meetings held on 16 February 2017 and 13 June 2017, respectively, on the role of women in protecting lives in challenging security environments in Africa and ending child marriages, respectively. The PSC also devoted its 661st meeting, held at ministerial level, on the theme “protecting children from fighting adult wars: highlighting the case of child soldiers in Africa”.

VI. CONCLUSION

93. Although during the period under review, some progress has been made in the quest for peace, thanks to Africa’s efforts, through its Member States and RECs, with continued support of partners, the continent continues, to face daunting challenges in the area of peace and security. While some encouraging developments may have been witnessed in The Gambia, in Somalia and Darfur, the situations in South Sudan, the DRC and the CAR, and the evolution of the situation along the border between Djibouti and Eritrea following the withdrawal of Qatari forces compel the urgent attention of the AU. No need to stress that lives continue to be lost, injuries sustained, and property and infrastructure destroyed due to the continuation of armed conflicts and crises in some parts of the continent. Africa and its people continue to suffer the consequences of arms proliferation, terrorism and violent extremism. Terrorist attacks have resulted in more losses in human lives, injuries, increased number of displaced persons and refugee flows. The risk of relapse has manifested itself in some post-conflict situations, which need particular attention and responses from the Assembly. At the same time, the effects of climate change, especially drought have had severe economic and humanitarian consequences, and continue to hamper efforts towards socio-economic development in Africa. Furthermore, the PSC and the Commission will continue to draw necessary attention on electoral processes and elections within the continent, in line with the Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, as well as all other AU relevant decisions with regard to the prevention of election-related violence and conflict. There is also need for renewed efforts from the AU and the international community to unlock impasses in situations such as the right for the people of Western Sahara to self-determination through a referendum. There is need for the Assembly to reaffirm the centrality of prevention in the promotion of peace and security, as well as a strong nexus between these two and socio economic development in Africa. During the period under review, the PSC, , dedicated several meetings to consider better ways and means of strengthening existing AU mechanisms and tools in the area of conflict prevention within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture.

94. Within the framework of the Agenda 2063, the AU is committed to silence the guns by year 2020. It is an imperative that the APSA works at full capacity and required speed in order to maximize chances of attaining this objective. Member States, the RECs/RMs, and all other relevant stakeholders, need to mobilize the required level of commitment and engagement, and provide the necessary support towards silencing the guns in Africa. Preventing crisis and conflict and consolidating peace where it has been achieved are indicative of the long journey that Africa has yet to complete towards a conflict-free continent.

**Assembly/AU/4(XXIX)
Annex**

CONCLUSIONS

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

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**RETREAT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF SUCCESSIVE
PSC RETREATS AND PSC DECISIONS FROM 2007 TO 2016
3 – 5 MAY 2017
KIGALI, RWANDA**

PSC/Retreat/10

CONCLUSIONS

**RETREAT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE
AFRICAN UNION (AU-PSC) ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
CONCLUSIONS OF SUCCESSIVE PSC RETREATS AND
RELATED PSC DECISIONS FROM 2007 TO 2016
3rd - 5th MAY 2017, KIGALI, RWANDA**

CONCLUSIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

- a) The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) held its Tenth Retreat from 3 to 5 May 2017 in Kigali, Rwanda. The Retreat was dedicated to the review of the status of implementation of the conclusions of successive PSC Retreats and related PSC decisions from 2007 to 2016.
- b) The Retreat was officially opened by H.E Louise Mushikiwabo, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda. Ambassador Mull Sebuja Katende, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda to the AU and Chairperson of the PSC for the month of May 2017, chaired the Retreat.
- c) The Acting Director of the Peace and Security Department of the AU Commission, Dr. Admore Kambudzi, delivered remarks on behalf of the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui.
- d) After extensive deliberations, the Retreat reached the following Conclusions:

II. ISSUES RELATING TO PSC WORKING METHODS AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF PREVIOUS PSC DECISIONS

A. Implementation of collaborative Articles of the PSC Protocol (Art. 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20)

1. The PSC agreed to:
 - a) Hold an annual consultative meeting with all AU organs/entities whose mandates include issues relating to the promotion of peace and security in Africa;
 - b) Hold separate annual consultative meetings with RECs/RMs and ECOSOC (on behalf of CSOs) and;
 - c) Automatically include the annual consultative meetings, above, in the Indicative Annual Programme of PSC Activities.

B. Sustaining the functioning of PSC Subsidiary Bodies/Sub-Committees
(Military Staff Committee (MSC), Committee of Experts (CoE), Committee on Sanctions, Committee on Counter-Terrorism and Committee on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa):

2. The PSC agreed:

- a) To reactivate the functioning of PSC Subsidiary Bodies/Sub-Committees and ensure that they function continuously;
- b) That the Committee of Experts and the Military Staff Committee shall be composed of all the 15 Members of the PSC and shall be chaired by a representative of the country holding the PSC chairmanship of the month;
- c) That PSC Members will urgently nominate their representatives to the PSC Sub-Committees (Committee on Sanctions, Committee on Counter-Terrorism and Committee on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa) on the basis of regional representation, one from each of the five regions;
- d) To use all the four (4) working languages of the Union. However, in extreme circumstances where the use of all four (4) languages is not possible, English and French will be used, in line with the adopted Generic Terms of Reference of PSC Subsidiary Bodies/Sub-Committees;
- e) That the PSC Sub-Committees (Committee on Sanctions, Committee on Counter-Terrorism and Committee on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa) will determine their methods of work including the selection of their chairpersons, taking into account the principles of consultation and regional rotation; and
- f) That Subsidiary bodies/Sub-Committees shall determine their respective monthly work programmes.

C. Briefing to the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) by the PSC Chairperson on the activities of the PSC of each month

3. The PSC agreed that:

- a) Each outgoing PSC Chairperson shall brief the PRC at the end of each month in accordance with the PSC Protocol. This briefing shall be automatically included in the PSC monthly programme of activities;

- b) The Secretary of the PSC and the Secretary-General of the AU Commission shall coordinate to ensure successful briefing by the PSC Chairpersons to the PRC, under the guidance of the PRC Chairperson;
- c) The Secretary of the PSC will coordinate with the Secretary General of the Commission to ensure that the PSC briefing to the PRC is included in the regular monthly programme of the PRC, in the last week of the month. However, in the event that the PRC has no space in its monthly programme, the PSC Chairperson shall consult with the Chairperson of the PRC to determine a convenient date for the briefing;
- d) The PSC Secretariat shall compile all relevant working documents from PSC meetings during the month for the briefing to the PRC and circulate them to all AU Member States, at least three working days before the briefing; and
- e) Each PSC Chairperson shall prepare his/her own briefing report to the PRC and submit it to the PSC Secretariat, so that it is circulated as part of the relevant working documents for the briefing to the PRC.

D. Legal standing of outcomes of PSC Retreats

4. The PSC agreed that:

- a) All conclusions of PSC retreats shall be formally adopted through a communiqué in a formal meeting of the PSC.
- b) After their formal adoption by the PSC, the core elements of the conclusions will subsequently be submitted to the Assembly of the Union in the form of a draft decision for adoption.

E. Presence of the Chairperson of the PSC during the Month

5. The PSC agreed that In line with the provisions of the PSC Protocol, it is mandatory for the PSC Chairperson to always be available at the AU Headquarters to steer the activities of the PSC during the course of the month. However, in cases where the substantive PSC Chairperson may be compelled by circumstances beyond his/her control to be absent from the AU Headquarters, the next Member in line (incoming Chairperson) shall assume the acting chairmanship, in accordance with rule 24 (3) of the PSC Rules of Procedure.

F. Implementation of Swapping Arrangements

6. The PSC agreed that:

- a) Swapping should not be a norm. However a PSC Member who is not able to chair the PSC during his/her designated month, shall formally communicate to the PSC Secretariat in time for necessary arrangements to be made to ensure normal, smooth and continuous functioning of the PSC. PSC Member States intending to swap their months of chairing shall inform the PSC Secretariat in good time; at least one month in advance. Such a swapping arrangement will be on the basis of the next Chair in the queue in accordance with the English alphabetical order;
- b) The PSC Secretariat shall formally inform all PSC Member States, through a Note Verbal, on the agreed swapping arrangements; and
- c) In the event that no swapping arrangement can be put in place, the PSC Member concerned shall forfeit their turn to Chair the PSC.

G. Preparation for PSC Retreats

7. The PSC agreed that it shall determine its agendas, work programmes and working documents for its retreats.

H. Elaboration of Annual Indicative Programme of Activities

8. The PSC agreed that:
- a) The PSC Secretariat shall prepare a Draft Annual Indicative Programme of Activities of the PSC;
 - b) The Committee of Experts shall ensure alignment of the Draft Annual Indicative Programme of Activities with the Monthly Provisional Programme of Work;
 - c) The PSC shall consider, for adoption, the Draft Annual Indicative Programme of Activities; and
 - d) In view of the dynamic nature of the peace and security issues and in line with the provisions of the PSC Protocol, Ad-hoc activities may be included in the PSC Annual Indicative Programme of Activities.

I. Elaboration of Provisional Monthly Programmes of Work of the PSC

9. The PSC agreed that:
- a) The incoming PSC Chairperson shall submit, for consideration and adoption by the PSC, the draft Provisional Programme of Work of the PSC for the month, at least two weeks before assuming the chairmanship; and

- b) The Committee of Experts, in collaboration with the PSC Secretariat, shall support the incoming chairperson of the month in aligning the Programme and ensuring that mandatory and previously agreed activities are accommodated.

J. PSC working documents

- 10. The PSC agreed that the PSC Secretariat shall circulate all working documents to the PSC Members in all the four (4) AU working languages, at least three (3) working days before a PSC meeting.

K. Outcomes of PSC meetings

- 11. The PSC agreed that:

- a) It shall be guided by the provisions of the PSC Protocol to determine the appropriate format of outcome of its meetings;
- b) The PSC Committee of Experts shall meet, by end of August 2017, to make proposals on the appropriate format of outcomes of PSC open meetings and PSC closed meetings for consideration by Council;
- c) The current format of outcomes of PSC meetings, that is, Communique and Press Statement will, for the time being, remain in use;
- d) The PSC shall continue to use the Silence Procedure on outcomes of meetings. Where the silence procedure is broken and there is no understanding reached, the PSC shall reconvene to resolve any outstanding matters;
- e) The outcome of PSC meetings shall be based on consensus reached during the PSC meetings; and
- f) Where consensus cannot be reached, the matter shall be resolved through voting in accordance with Article 8 (13) of the PSC Protocol.

L. Publicity of Outcomes of PSC meetings

- 12. PSC agreed that:

- a) The power to authorize the publication of agreed PSC decisions and outcomes shall be a prerogative of the PSC Chairperson;
- b) The outcomes of PSC meetings shall continue to be posted on the AU Websites, AU Commission Tweeter and Facebook accounts;

- c) AU Commission shall provide outcomes of PSC meetings to relevant national news agencies of AU Member States to publicize in their respective countries and in accordance with the AU communication strategy;
- d) Missions should be encouraged to upload PSC documents/outcomes on their respective mission websites, as well as websites of their respective ministries of Foreign affairs; and
- e) The PSC Chairperson will brief the media, when deemed necessary by Council, at the end of each PSC meeting.

M. Implementation of various PSC decisions

13. The PSC agreed that the Committee of Experts shall, every six months, before the Ordinary Session of the Assembly, submit a matrix of implementation of all PSC decisions for consideration by the PSC.

N. Interaction with RECs/RMs

14. The PSC agreed that:

- a) It shall hold consultations with all relevant RECs/RMs on matters of peace and security. In this regard, the PSC shall re-launch the annual consultative meeting with the RECs/RMs, in line with the Abuja Retreat Conclusions; and
- b) It shall maintain the practice of inviting all RECs/RMs concerned with an issue under discussion by the PSC to participate whenever necessary on specific country/conflict situations; and
- c) It shall programme annual consultative meetings with the RECs/RMs.

O. Criteria for Effective Membership of the Peace and Security Council

15. The PSC agreed:

- a) That the PSC Committee of Experts will make proposals for consideration by Council to review the compliance of Members in meeting the requirements for effective membership to the PSC in accordance with Article 5(2) of the PSC protocol; and
- b) That those Members of the PSC who may not meet some of the above mentioned requirements due to circumstances beyond their control or any unforeseen reasons, will accordingly inform the Council.

P. Interactions with AU Special Envoys/Representatives

16. The PSC agreed that:
- a) All AU Special Envoys/Representatives will attend/participate in PSC meetings and provide briefings on their specific areas as may be required by the PSC;
 - b) The chairperson of the PSC will attend all retreats held by the Commission with AU Special Envoys/Representatives to consider matters of peace and security;
 - c) There shall be monthly consultations between the PSC Chairperson and the Chairperson of the AU Commission to discuss matters related to the promotion of peace and security. In this regard, the PSC Chairperson shall brief the PSC on outcomes of his/her consultation with the Chairperson of the Commission;
 - d) The PSC will hold its consultative meetings with AU Special envoys/Representatives back to back with consultations held between the Special Envoys/Representatives and the AU Commission; and
 - e) The Secretary of the PSC shall consult with the relevant officials of the AU Commission on possible dates for convening the back to back interactions with the Special Envoys/Representatives, and report back to Council for necessary action.

Q. Cooperation and Coordination between the PSC and the African Members of the UN Security Council (A3)

17. The PSC agreed to implement the decisions already adopted by the Assembly on this matter.

R. Cooperation with the United Nations and other International organizations

18. Annual Joint Consultative meetings

The PSC agreed to:

- a) Ensure adequate and timely preparations including effective follow-ups and timely responses. The PSC Secretariat shall support Council in this undertaking;
- b) Ensure that all relevant working documents for the joint consultative meetings/ interactions between the PSC and the UN Security Council are

directly communicated between the PSC Chairperson and the President of the UN Security Council and copied to the PSC Secretariat;

- c) Ensure that all PSC Member States speak with one voice during the joint consultative meetings; and
- d) Ensure assertiveness in promoting and defending Africa's common positions.

19. Informal Interactions with the Representatives of the P5 based in Addis Ababa

The PSC agreed:

- a) That informal interactions with the Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council (P5) shall be organized twice a year;
- b) To utilize its Joint consultative meetings or the purpose of enhancing the understanding of African peace and security issues by the P5;
- c) On day to day issues, the P5 Members based in Addis Ababa will be invited to participate in PSC meetings whenever necessary.

S. The AU Peace Fund

20. Revitalizing the AU Peace Fund

The PSC agreed that:

- a) The Peace Fund Task Force, put in place by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, should work closely with the Committee of the Ten Ministers of Finance (F10) on revitalizing the AU Peace Fund;
- b) The Peace and Security Department shall develop two reports for consideration by the PSC: The first report, to be submitted to the UNSC, shall focus on the issue of 75% to be funded from UN assessed contributions while the second report shall focus on alternative options of funding Africa's peace and security;
- c) The Peace Fund Task Force will submit its reports to the PSC for consideration in May 2017. The report on the 75% UN contribution will be submitted to the UN Security Council in time for consideration in September 2017;
- d) The AU Commission shall develop transitional mechanisms for managing the Peace Fund and shall accordingly report to the PSC in September 2017; and

- e) Africa must endeavour to raise the 25% contribution for peace support operations as committed.

T. Human Resources challenges faced by the Peace and Security Department in providing support to the PSC

21. The PSC agreed that:

- a) The AU Commission should urgently recruit interpreters and translators dedicated specifically to PSC work;
- b) The restructuring of the Peace and Security Department, including the PSC Secretariat, should be done on the basis of a scientific study;
- c) The PSC Committee of Experts shall study the Report on Peace and Human Resource Outlook and Gaps/Needs submitted during the PSC retreat in Kigali and the Report commissioned by the AU Sub-Committee on Structures in 2015/2016 and submit recommendations for consideration by the PSC;
- d) The Peace and Security Department - working together with Finance Department, Strategic Planning Department and Administration and Human Resource Department -shall work closely together in preparing and submitting to the PSC, a report on the restructuring of the Peace and Security Department; and
- e) The study on restructuring of the AU Peace and Security Department should be guided by the AU Assembly decisions on institutional reform which are aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the African Union.

U. Interaction between the PSC and relevant AUC Departments

22. The PSC agreed that:

- a) The AU Commissioner for Peace and Security will hold regular and exclusive briefing sessions with PSC Ambassadors on sensitive peace and security matters; and
- b) The PSC shall receive quarterly briefings from the Department of Political affairs and other relevant AUC Departments on issues relating to peace and security in Africa.

III. GENERAL PEACE AND SECURITY ISSUES

23. Implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)

The PSC agreed that:

- a) The PSC Secretariat will undertake a study on the implementation of APSA and submit a report by the end of September 2017 for consideration by the PSC; and
- b) Regular reporting on operationalization of APSA to Council should be included in the PSC Annual Indicative Programme of Activities.

24. Operationalization of the African Governance Architecture (AGA)

The PSC agreed that:

- a) Briefings by the Department of Political Affairs on Elections, Democracy and Governance will be included in the Annual Indicative Programme of Activities of the PSC.

25. Compliance with the Lome Declaration on the Framework for OAU/AU Response to Unconstitutional Changes of Government

The PSC agreed that:

- a) The Office of the Legal Counsel should provide an update to Council on the implementation of the AU Assembly decision requiring the Specialised Technical Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs to elaborate on a definition for '**Popular Uprisings**' in relation to the Lome Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government.

26. Participation of the PSC in AU Election Observer Missions

The PSC agreed that:

- a) The AU Department of Political Affairs should provide to the PSC an annual calendar for elections in Africa;
- b) The AU Department of Political Affairs should provide the PSC with modalities for selection of AU Election Observers/Monitors and the AU criteria for evaluating the outcome of elections;
- c) The list of AU Election Observers and Election Monitors to be deployed in AU Member States should include members of the PSC who shall specifically focus on peace and security issues relating to the elections; and

- d) A roaster for participation of PSC members in election observation/monitoring should be developed by the PSC Secretariat for approval by Council.

27. On Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development

The PSC agreed that:

- a) The AU Commission should prepare a report for consideration by the PSC on the review of the PCRD Architecture including the establishment of the PCRD Centre;
- b) Those Member States that are interested to host the PCRD Centre should expedite the consultations regarding its location and report to Council by October 2017; and
- c) The PSC Department should provide a progress report on the issues relating the PSC Committees on PCRD for Burundi, the DRC and South Sudan.

28. Training of AU Mediators and Development of a Database of African Mediators

The PSC agreed that:

- a) The training of African mediators should be prioritized in order to enhance preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention efforts for Africa;
- b) Criteria and standards should be developed on the calibre of personnel to be deployed for mediation and conciliation, and the criteria should include gender sensitivity;
- c) An AU Mediation Support Unit (MSU) and a roaster of mediators should be established and run by competent professionals; and
- d) A database and a roaster of AU mediators should be established at the AU Commission in order to ease the process of selecting and assigning African mediators to conflict situations around the continent.

29. Efficient undertaking of Humanitarian Activities by the PSC

30.

The PSC agreed:

- a) To improve its efficiency in undertaking humanitarian activities in accordance with Article 6(f) and Article 15 of the PSC Protocol; and

- b) That Council shall make recommendations for financial contributions to alleviate humanitarian situations. In this regard, the Department of Political affairs shall develop and make available to the PSC, guidelines for the provision of humanitarian assistance by the Union.

31. Guidelines on Mandate, Command and Control of AU Peace Support Operations

The PSC agreed:

- a) On the need to establish a multi-disciplinary Committee to develop guidelines for elaboration of the mandate, command and control of AU Peace Support operations. In this regard, Council tasked the PSC Secretariat to organize a workshop of the multi-disciplinary committee by 30 September 2017 and subsequently report to the PSC.

32. Budget of the PSC

The PSC agreed that:

- a) The PSC Secretariat should provide a detailed annotated budget, including earmarked funding by partners as well as a report on execution levels, by 30 May 2017; and
- b) The PSC Secretariat should urgently work on the PSC budget for 2018 and present it to Council before submission to the PRC Sub-Committee on General Supervision and Coordination on Budgetary, Financial and Administrative Matters for consideration.

IV. CONCLUSION

33. The PSC expressed appreciation to H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, for granting a courtesy to members of the Council, and for the words of wisdom that he shared with them.

34. Additionally, H.E. Mull S. Katende Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda to the African Union thanked the Government and people of the Republic of Rwanda for hosting the Retreat, and for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to PSC members and to the participants from the AU Commission.

Kigali, Rwanda: 5 May 2017.

DRAFT
**DECISION ON THE REPORT OF THE PEACE AND
SECURITY COUNCIL ON ITS ACTIVITIES AND THE
STATE OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA**

1. **TAKES NOTE** of the Report of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) on its activities and the state of peace and security in Africa;
2. **COMMENDS** the PSC, the Commission and the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution for their commitment and efforts towards peace, stability and security in Africa. In this regard, the Assembly **TAKES NOTE WITH APPRECIATION** of the intensive efforts deployed by the Chairperson of the Commission in support to peace processes within the continent;
3. **CONGRATULATES** President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed for his election as President of the Federal Republic of Somalia. The Assembly **WELCOMES** the continued progress made in Somalia while recognizing the challenges still facing the country. The Assembly **REITERATES ITS APPEAL** to AU Member States and the wider international community to pursue and intensify their political, financial and logistical support for Somalia and the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to enable the full stabilization of the country, in particular for the security reform that will enable the operationalization of the National Security Architecture. The Assembly **RECALLS** the PSC communiqué of 6 September 2016, calling on the UN Security Council to consider, following its resolution 2244 (2015), lifting the arms embargo imposed on Somalia, as a critical aspect of building Somali security institutions. The Assembly **EXPRESSES ITS CONCERN** at the threat that al-shabaab continue to pose to peace, security and stability in Somalia, and, **ONCE AGAIN, STRONGLY CONDEMNS** the terrorist attacks by al-shabaab on innocent civilians, AMISOM and Somali forces. The Assembly **FURTHER EXPRESSES CONCERN** at the resurgence of piracy activities off the coast of Somalia. The Assembly **CALLS ON** the AU and international partners to coordinate their support through the implementation mechanism of the Security Pact, as agreed at the London Conference, held on 11 May 2017, with a view to optimize the impact of joint efforts aimed at, in particular, supporting the Somali National Security Forces. To this effect the Assembly **WELCOMES** the establishment of the AU-Somalia Joint Task Force that should be the best channel to harmonize support by partners. The Assembly **EXPRESSES ITS DEEP CONCERN** at the dire humanitarian situation prevailing in Somalia and **APPEALS** to the international community for increased support in addressing the assistance needed by the affected Somali people;
4. **EXPRESSES ITS DEEP CONCERN** over the continued deterioration of the situation in South Sudan and **CALLS UPON, ONCE AGAIN,** South Sudanese parties to demonstrate leadership and to rise up to their responsibility towards ending the long suffering of their own people. The Assembly **WELCOMES** the launching of the National Dialogue initiative by President Salva Kiir Mayardit and **URGES** the South Sudanese stakeholders to ensure its inclusivity

independence and impartiality. The Assembly **COMMENDS** the AU High Representative for South Sudan, former President Alpha Oumar Konare, in its efforts to assist South Sudanese stakeholders in addressing their challenges, through constructive engagement, as agreed by the AU, the UN and IGAD at the meeting of 29 January 2017 and **UNDERScores THE NEED** for continued formal engagement by the three institutions. The Assembly **ENDORSES** the decisions of the 31st IGAD Extraordinary Summit held on 12 June 2017, in particular the urgent convening of the High Level Revitalisation Forum of the Peace Agreement. In this regard, the Assembly **COMMENDS** the efforts of President Yoweri Museveni and the Government of Uganda in addressing the challenges in South Sudan. The Assembly **CALLS UPON** government forces and armed groups to lay down their arms and engage in a constructive political process that aims at addressing the root causes of challenges faced by South Sudan. The Assembly **EXPRESSES ITS CONCERN** over the humanitarian situation in South Sudan and **URGES** the international community to provide the necessary assistance to the needy people in South Sudan and the neighbouring countries. In this regard, the Assembly **CALLS ON** the Transitional Government of National Unity, SPLM-IO and all armed groups to strictly observe international humanitarian law with regard to humanitarian agencies and workers, with a view to create or facilitate access and delivery of the humanitarian assistance to the population in need;

5. **WELCOMES** the significant improvement noted in the political and security situation in Darfur, as well as the outcome of the National Dialogue and the formation of a new Government of National Unity, and **URGES** the Sudanese authorities to continue their outreach efforts. The Assembly **TAKES NOTE** of the recommendations of the AU-UN Joint Strategic Review Report submitted on the withdrawal and reconfiguration of the UNAMID forces and **STRESSES** that the process should be carried out in a gradual and smooth manner, to ensure that the civilian population is not exposed to danger. The Assembly **UNDERLINES THE NEED** for the international community to extend the necessary support to the Government of Sudan in its efforts towards post-conflict reconstruction in Darfur, in particular in the areas to be vacated by UNAMID. In particular, the Assembly **TAKES NOTE** of the steps already taken by the United States to ease the sanctions regime imposed to Sudan, and **LOOK FORWARD** for their complete lifting by 12 July 2017 review. Furthermore, the Assembly **COMMENDS** the AU High-Level Implementation Panel for its relentless efforts towards helping the Sudanese to reach peaceful solutions to their various challenges and **ENCOURAGES** it to continue to foster an inclusive process to help the next stages of the peace process. The Assembly **STRONGLY URGES** all armed movements to engage, without further delay, in the negotiations process;
6. **COMMENDS** the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan for reaching agreements on the operationalization of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM). In this regard, the Assembly **CALLS ON** for the urgent convening, without pre-conditions of the postponed meeting of the Joint Security Committee (JSC), in order to address the outstanding issues

between the two States, especially as it relates to the establishment of the JBVMM. The Assembly **URGES** Sudan and South Sudan to hold more regular meetings of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism to address outstanding matters between the two countries;

7. **CALLS FOR** the urgent implementation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement on the Administration and Security of Abyei Area, especially the establishment of the Council, Administration and Police Service. The Assembly **PAYS TRIBUTE** to the United Nations Interim Security Force (UNISFA) for Abyei for its contribution to the maintenance of peace and security in the Abyei area;
8. **CALLS ON** Djibouti and Eritrea to exercise restraint in their border dispute. The Assembly **ENCOURAGES** the Chairperson of the Commission, with the necessary support of the two countries, to pursue his efforts towards normalization of relations and good neighbourhood between Djibouti and Eritrea;
9. **REITERATES** its determination to find a durable solution to the conflict in Western Sahara, and **CALLS ON** the two Member States, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, to engage in direct and serious talks and extend the necessary cooperation to the AU policy organs, the Commission and the AU High Representative for Western Sahara. The Assembly **WELCOMES** the commitment of the UN Secretary-General to re-launch the negotiating process, with a new dynamic and a new spirit leading to the resumption of negotiations, in good faith and without preconditions, between the two parties with the aim of reaching a durable solution, which shall provide for the self-determination referendum of the people of Western Sahara in line with the relevant UN resolutions and the AU/OAU decisions;
10. **EXPRESSES ONCE MORE ITS CONCERN** at the persisting political impasse and the security situation in Libya. The Assembly **URGES** the Libyan parties to overcome their current political differences, with a view to readjust consensually the Libya Political Agreement, so that to enable its early implementation, in a way that will facilitate conditions conducive to an all-inclusive dialogue for sustainable peace and reconciliation in Libya. The Assembly **PAYS TRIBUTE** to the AU High-Level Committee for Libya, chaired by His Excellency Denis Sassou Nguesso of Congo, and **WELCOMES** the visit in Libya by an AU Ministerial delegation, including the Commissioner for Peace and Security. The Assembly **ALSO COMMENDS** the efforts by neighbouring countries, as well as by the AU High Representative for Libya, former President Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania, and the United Nations, for their continuing engagement in the search for a lasting solution to the Libyan crisis;
11. **APPEALS to** all Congolese actors to work for the preservation of the still fragile gains in the path of peace and stability in the DRC, in particular the effective and consensual implementation of the 31 December 2016 Agreement, with a view to organising elections, in December 2017. In this regard, the Assembly **WELCOMES** the initiatives so far taken by the

Chairperson of the Commission, including the dispatching, from 29 to 30 May, in Kinshasa, of a mission led by Commissioner for Peace and Security and comprising the representatives of the United Nations, the ICGLR, SADC, guarantor institutions of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Region, signed on 24 February 2013, in Addis Ababa. The Assembly **COMMENDS** the Government of DRC for its decision to ensure the financing of the electoral process through Government budget and to avail to the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) the necessary resources for the conduct of the electoral process and the organisation of elections. The Assembly **CALLS FOR** the urgent appointment of the Chairman and Members of the National Follow up Council of the Agreement (CNSA) in order to establish the calendar of elections. The Assembly **EXPRESSES ITS DEEP CONCERN** at the prevailing security and humanitarian situation in the Kasai province. The Assembly **STRESSES THE NEED** to take all necessary steps to reenergize cooperation and the stabilisation process in the DRC and the region, in conformity with the Framework Agreement. The Assembly **CALLS UPON** the United Nations, the troop-contributing countries to MONUSCO, the Guarantors of the Framework Agreement and the Member countries of the ICGLR and SADC to provide all the necessary support to this end;

12. **REAFFIRMS** its commitment to the peaceful resolution of the crisis in Burundi through the rapid launching of an inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue, under the aegis of the East African Community (EAC), with the support of the AU, under the leadership of the EAC Mediator, President Yoweri K. Museveni of Uganda and his Facilitator, former President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania and **REQUESTS** all the Burundian stakeholders to participate actively and unconditionally in this process. The Assembly **CALLS UPON** the Burundian authorities to take all the necessary steps to build the widest consensus possible on the ongoing process of revising the Constitution, with the participation of all stakeholders and on the basis of the Arusha Agreement of 2000. In this regard, the Assembly **REAFFIRMS** the readiness of the AU High Level Delegation of Heads of State to assist in efforts aimed at finding a lasting solution to the crisis in Burundi. The Assembly **CALLS FOR** the rapid signing of the Memorandum of Understanding relating to the activities of the Human Rights Observers and the Military Experts of the AU;
13. **EXPRESSES ITS DEEP CONCERN** about the deteriorating security situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) and **STRONGLY CONDEMNS** the attacks against civilians and the troops of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Mission for Stabilization in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), as well as the destabilising activities of the armed groups, and **DEMANDS** that they commit themselves resolutely to the DDR programmes and the pacification process of the country. The Assembly **REAFFIRMS ITS FULL SUPPORT** to the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in CAR and **CALLS ON** all Central African stakeholders, the UN and other partners to support this process. The Assembly **WELCOMES** the signing in Rome, on 19 June 2017, under the facilitation of the Sant'Egidio community, of an agreement between armed groups, including a country wide ceasefire. The Assembly **URGES**

Member States and partners to pursue and increase their assistance to the CAR and to contribute to stabilisation, post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts in the country;

14. **CALLS ON** all political actors in Guinea Bissau to respect and implement the Conakry Agreement, without any further delay and **URGES** all actors to refrain from actions or statements that could escalate tension and incite violence. The Assembly **COMMENDS** the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for its continued efforts towards sustained peace and stability in Guinea Bissau;
15. **ENCOURAGES** all Liberian stakeholders to continue working together towards consolidating peace in their country, in particular through creating conditions conducive to the holding of peaceful, free and transparent elections, with the support of the region, through ECOWAS, and the international community as a whole;
16. **STRONGLY CONDEMNS** the mutiny in Cote D'Ivoire and **REAFFIRMS THE IMPERATIVE** for the defense and security forces to strictly remain subordinated to the civilian authorities. The Assembly **REITERATES ITS SUPPORT** to the Government for its efforts aimed at consolidating reconciliation, which will enable the strengthening of peace and stability in the country, with a view to maintain high economic growth for the benefit of the Ivorian people;
17. **COMMENDS** the new authorities in the Gambia and ECOWAS for their joint efforts aimed at promoting lasting peace, stability and socio economic recovery in the country and **ENCOURAGES** them to continue on this path. The Assembly **REAFFIRMS** the AU's full support to the post-crisis stabilization, reconstruction and development process in the Gambia and **INVITES** Member States, for those with means, to second experts in SSR, justice and development, in line with the decision of the 694th meeting of the PSC. The Assembly **COMMENDS** the Chairperson of the Commission for the dispatching of a High-Level Needs Assessment Mission in the Gambia;
18. **URGES ONCE AGAIN** all the Malian parties to redouble their efforts to overcome the challenges facing the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which is the only framework that can make it possible to achieve lasting peace and reconciliation in Mali. In this regard, the Assembly **WELCOMES** the progress made during the period, especially the establishment of the Interim Authorities and the convening of the National Accord Reconciliation Conference. The Assembly **REAFFIRMS ITS FIRM CONDEMNATION** of the despicable terrorist attacks against the civilian populations, the Malian and international forces of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Mission for Stabilization in Mali (MINSUMA) and the Operation Barkhane. The Assembly **WELCOMES** the timely initiative of the G5 Sahel, namely Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad, which led to the establishment of the G5 Sahel Joint Force. The Assembly **FURTHER WELCOMES** the adoption by the United Nations Security Council of

resolution 2359 (2017) on the deployment of the G5 Joint Force and **EXPRESSES ITS APPRECIATION** to the European Union (EU) for the financial support to the initiative of the G5 Sahel. The Assembly **REQUESTS** the Commission to organise, as soon as possible, a meeting of the member countries of the Nouakchott Process to discuss their support for the G5 Sahel initiative, within the framework of the AU Strategy for the Sahel Region;

19. **STRESSES** that terrorism continues to be one of the greatest threats to peace, security, stability and development in the AU Member States and in the Regions and **NOTES** that terrorist groups affiliated to Al- Qaeda and others to the so-called Islamic State (IS), continued to be active in Somalia, in Libya, in the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel region. The Assembly **REAFFIRMS ITS CONVICTION** that success in the fight against terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism and transnational organised crime, is only possible with cooperation, solidarity and collective action. In this regard, the Assembly **STRESSES THE NEED** for Member States to implement the relevant African and international counter-terrorism instruments and to draw on existing cooperation frameworks, particularly the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) and the Committee on Intelligence and Security Services in Africa (CISSA) and the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL). The Assembly **STRESSES** the important role of the Nouakchott and Djibouti Processes, which should be reinforced in order to fully play their role in efforts aimed at enhancing cooperation and coordination in the fight against terrorism;
20. **CONGRATULATES** the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) of the Member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), namely Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad, plus the Republic of Benin, for the significant progress made in the fight against the terrorist group of Boko Haram and **ENCOURAGES** them to pursue their efforts, with the support of the AU and the international community. The Assembly **EXPRESSES ITS CONCERN** about the humanitarian situation in the North East of Nigeria, resulting from the security situation and **CALLS ON** the international community to provide the necessary assistance, commensurate to the needs of the affected people in the area. Furthermore, the Assembly **NOTES WITH APPRECIATION** that, thanks to the efforts of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA-RCI), particularly its military component, the Regional Task Force (RTF), is no longer a direct military threat to the States of the region. In this respect, the Assembly **COMMENDS** the countries of the region for their invaluable contribution to this effort and **STRESSES THE NEED** to do everything possible to avoid that the withdrawal of the Ugandan and US forces compromise the gains made. The Assembly **CALLS ON** the Member States of the RCI-LRA to continue their action against the LRA, with the support of the AU Member States, UN and Partners;
21. **RECOGNIZES** the progress made in the operationalization and implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), in synergy with the African Governance Architecture (AGA). The Assembly **ENCOURAGES** the RECs/RMs, the AU Commission, with the support of the

United Nations, the EU and other partners, and the participation of civil society, to pursue the efforts towards ensuring the full functioning of all APSA components, under the guidance of Peace and Security Council. The Assembly **TAKES NOTE** of the steps taken with regard to the African Standby Force, in particular the review of its doctrine and the upcoming verification of pledges made by the regions. The Assembly **LOOKS FORWARD** the early inauguration of the Continental Logistic Base in Douala, Cameroon. The Assembly **ALSO TAKES NOTE** of the activities conducted in the context of the African Capacity for the Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC), in particular with regard to the status of readiness in line with the Luanda Declaration of December 2016;

22. **CALLS ON** the RECs/ RMs and Member States to prioritize implementation of the Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy (PCRD) and to re-commit themselves to the African Solidarity Initiative, placing it as a priority in the spirit of African solidarity. The Assembly **EXPRESSES ITS APPRECIATION** to AU partners and **CALLS ON** them to pursue and intensify their support to AU's PCRD activities;
23. **REAFFIRMS THE IMPERATIVE NEED** for Africa, within the framework of APSA, to encourage and strengthen its action in crisis and conflict prevention. In this regard, the Assembly **URGES** the Peace and Security Council, the Panel of the Wise and the Commission, in relation with Member States and RECs/RMs, in close cooperation with the United Nations and other relevant actors, to redouble efforts for conflict prevention, in particular with regard to conflict and violence related to elections in the continent, in line with the relevant provisions of the protocol relating to the establishment of Peace and Security Council and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance;
24. **TAKES NOTE WITH SATISFACTION** of the steps taken towards the implementation of its decisions with regard to the AU Peace Fund. The Assembly **ENDORSES** the communiqué of the 689th meeting of the PSC, in particular the governance structures and eligibility criteria of the Peace Fund, as well as the scope of operations to be submitted, on a case by case basis, for authorization by the UN Security Council and subsequent financing through un assessed contributions. The Assembly **THANKS** those member states that have already paid their annual contribution to the Peace Fund and **URGES** those who have not yet done so to expedite the payment of their contributions as soon as possible. The Assembly **PAYS TRIBUTE** to the High Representative for the Peace Fund and the Financing of the Union, Dr. Donald Kaberuka, for his relentless efforts towards implementing the AU Peace Fund;
25. **WELCOMES** the signing, on 19 April 2017, of the AU-UN Framework on Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, and **ENCOURAGES** the Chairperson of the Commission, including through his High Representative for the Peace Fund and the Financing of the Union, Dr. Donald Kaberuka, to continue engaging the UN towards greater support to the AU's Peace efforts,

in line with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. In this regard, the Assembly **REQUESTS** the Chairperson of the Commission to take forward the political engagement to secure, in the course of 2017, a substantive UN Security Council Resolution on the use of assessed contributions to support AU mandated or authorized missions in 2017;

26. **WELCOMES** the commitment of the A3 Group, namely Egypt, Ethiopia and Senegal to continue to promote and defend African common interests and positions on peace and security issues within the UN Security Council, in line with the conclusions of the Oran High Level Retreats. The Assembly **COMMENDS** Egypt and Ethiopia for providing updates to the PSC on the activities of the A3 since January 2017. The Assembly **CONGRATULATES** Cote D'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea for their election as African Members of the UN Security Council for the period 2018/2019 and **LOOK FORWARD** to their contributions towards fostering AU's common interest and concerns in the UN Security Council, in line with the AU Assembly decision of January 2016;
27. **ENDORSES** the conclusions of the Retreat of the Peace and Security Council on the Implementation of the Conclusions of Successive PSC Retreats and the Related Adoptive Decisions from 2007 to 2016, held from 3 to 5 May 2017, in Kigali, Rwanda.

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