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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
403rd MEETING
26 OCTOBER 2013
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.(CDIII)

COMMUNIQUÉ

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 403rd meeting held on 26 October 2013, adopted the following decision:

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the statements made by the representatives of the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan;
2. **Recalls** communiqué PSC/MIN/COMM.1(CCCLXXXVII) Rev.1, adopted at its 387th meeting held on 29 July 2013, in which it decided to undertake a visit to Abyei to express support to the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and the people of the Area;
3. **Expresses its deep disappointment and regret** that it was unable to undertake the visit to Abyei, as planned, on 26 and 27 October 2013, and discharge its duties in accordance with the Peace and Security Council Protocol, due to the insistence of Sudan that the visit be postponed for contrived security reasons, noting, in this respect, the discrepancies in the analysis, by the Parties, of the situation prevailing in Abyei. Council **considers** this to be an obstruction to the discharge of its responsibilities, and **recalls** that its visit to Abyei, initially planned to take place from 22 to 23 October 2013, was postponed out of deference to President Omar Hassan Al Bashir of Sudan and President Salva Kiir Mayardit of South Sudan, who were planning to meet in Juba, on 22 October 2013, as well as to enable the leaders of the Misseriya community, who were not in Abyei at that time, to be present for the visit;
4. **Reiterates its deep concern** at the prevailing situation in Abyei, and **stresses** the need for active and continued African involvement in support of the efforts aimed at addressing the challenges at hand in Abyei. Council **further reiterates** that its visit to Abyei is aimed at defusing tension on the ground, including averting any unilateral actions, and creating a conducive environment for the peaceful resolution of the final status of Abyei. Council **stresses** that those who obstructed its visit should bear full responsibility for any resulting negative development in the Area;
5. **Welcomes** the full cooperation extended by the Government of South Sudan and the understanding it has demonstrated in the face of the repeated postponements of the visit to Abyei. Council **urges** the Government of South Sudan to continue to demonstrate utmost restraint, and **notes with satisfaction** its appeal to the Ngok Dinka community to refrain from any unilateral actions in Abyei;
6. **Recognizes** the frustrations arising from the delay in organizing the Abyei referendum that was supposed to take place at the same time as the self-determination referendum in South Sudan, in accordance with the Abyei Protocol of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). In this regard, Council **reiterates** its earlier decisions on the Abyei issue, in

particular its full acceptance of, and support to, the Proposal submitted by the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), on 21 September 2012. Council **once again welcomes** South Sudan's acceptance of the Proposal and **notes** that Sudan has not yet accepted it. Council **calls on** the two countries to intensify their efforts to come to an agreement on the final status of the Abyei Area on the basis of the AUHIP Proposal, with the support of the Panel. Council **strongly urges** the UN Security Council to extend its full support to the AUHIP Proposal, which is the best way forward in addressing the challenges at hand;

7. **Calls on** the two countries expeditiously to implement the 20 June 2011 Agreement on the Temporary Administrative and Security Arrangements for the Abyei Area, including the immediate establishment of the organs in charge of the management of the Area. In this respect, Council **welcomes** the decision reached by the two Presidents during their Summit meeting of 22 October 2013. Council **reiterates** that Abyei should be a weapons-free-zone, as well as its request that the Sudanese Police Force stationed in Diffra should be withdrawn without any further delay. Council **further requests** the implementation of a disarmament programme in the Area;

8. **Warns** all stakeholders in Abyei to refrain from taking any unilateral action likely to complicate the situation, and, in this regard, **calls for** maximum restraint;

9. **Welcomes** the outcome of the Summit meeting between the Presidents of Sudan and South Sudan, on 22 October 2013, in Juba, and **stresses** that the decisions agreed upon on that occasion will further enhance the normalization of relations between Sudan and South Sudan, in line with the landmark Cooperation Agreement of 27 September 2012;

10. **Stresses** that the AU has demonstrated utmost solidarity with Sudan and South Sudan, since the latter's independence. Council **further stresses** that, in all its actions it has taken into account Sudan's challenges. In this regard, Council **reaffirms** its commitment to finding African solutions to African problems;

11. **Recalls** its mandate as provided in the Peace and Security Council Protocol, and **decides** to undertake its visit to Abyei, from 5 to 6 November 2013;

12. **Demands** that Sudan must refrain from obstructing its work and extend full cooperation in support of the AU's efforts to manage and resolve the situation in Abyei. In this respect, Council **reminds** Sudan of its obligations under the Peace and Security Council Protocol, in particular Article 7, paragraphs 3 and 4;

13. **Commends** the laudable work of UNISFA in maintaining security in the Area and **expresses its deep appreciation** to the Force for its support in facilitating Council's field mission to Abyei;

14. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.

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