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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
532ND MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
10 AUGUST 2015

PSC/PR/BR.(DXXXII)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 532nd meeting held on 10 August 2015, had an exchange of views on the Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (HIPPO), entitled “Uniting Our Strengths for Peace, Politics, Partnership and People”.

Council recalled the Common African Position on the United Nations (UN) Review of Peace Operations, adopted at its 502nd meeting held on 29 April 2015 [PSC/PR/2(DII)].

Council acknowledged that the Report of the HIPPO provides a comprehensive approach to strategic and operational aspects of peace operations. In this respect, Council welcomed the four strategic shifts required, as identified in the Report, for the international community to successfully adapt to the changing nature of conflict, namely: the need for a political approach; the need to view peace operations as encompassing a continuum of options ranging from the deployment of special envoys to the deployment of peacekeeping operations; the need to forge partnerships with regional organizations, in order to exploit fully the comparative advantages of each organization; and the need to adopt a field-focused and people-centered approach.

Council also expressed support for the call made in the Report to devote greater effort and more resources to conflict prevention and mediation efforts, an approach that is in accordance with Council’s own position.

Council expressed appreciation to the HIPPO for taking into account many of the views expressed in the Common African Position, as transmitted to the UN for the consideration of the HIPPO in the preparation of its Report. Council highlighted the following issues in particular:

- that the core principles of peace operations, namely consent, impartiality and limited use of force, remain relevant, but that they need to be interpreted with flexibility in the face of new challenges;
- that prevention of conflicts should be given paramount importance and, hence, the primacy of political solutions;
- that partnership with regional organizations is key to operating in the future in order to be able to address some of the constraints facing the UN, and that the legislative basis for partnership resides in Chapter VIII of the UN Charter;
- that the strategic partnership being forged with the AU is identified as a template for the UN’s relations with regional organizations generally; and
- that, in light of the slowness of deployment of forces to the ground, the UN should take into account the capacities being developed by the AU, such as the African Standby Force (ASF), to speed up the deployment of peace operations.

Council expressed support for the principles that should underpin this partnership, namely consultative decision-making; division of labor based on respective comparative advantages; joint analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation; an integrated response to the full conflict cycle, including prevention; and transparency, accountability and respect for international standards, as concordant with the principles endorsed in the African Common Position and other documents related to partnership between the UN and the AU.

Council expressed appreciation to the HIPPO for its resuscitation of the recommendations of the Report of the AU – UN Panel on Modalities for Support to AU Peacekeeping Operations (the “Prodi Report”) with regard to the funding of UN Security Council authorized AU-led peace support operations. Council acknowledged that the recommendation made by the HIPPO for the use of UN assessed contributions on a case-by-case basis, including for the costs associated with the deployment of uniformed personnel, marks a significant step, and urged that this proposal be endorsed by the UN decision-making organs. In this regard, Council requested the AU Member States, through the African Group in New York, to ensure effective follow-up within all relevant organs and committees of the UN.

Council looks forward to the report of the UN Secretary-General on how to take forward the important recommendations made by the Panel. In this respect, Council requested the Commission to work closely with the UN Secretariat, including, as articulated in the Secretary-General’s letter of 2 January 2015 to the President of the Security Council on lessons learned on the transitions from AU peace operations to UN peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic and Mali: (i) the conduct of a lessons-learned exercise to review and assess the various mechanisms available to improve the predictability, sustainability and flexibility of financing AU peace operations authorized by the Security Council; (ii) the joint identification of context-specific benchmarks that could be used to determine the conditions under which a transition should take place, given the needs in the country and the situation on the ground; and (iii) the development of a creative and flexible transition toolbox embodying a common vision that the AU and the UN would employ, when and where appropriate, to inform future transition processes.

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