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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
569TH MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
19 JANUARY 2016

PSC/PR/COMM. (DLXIX)

COMMUNIQUÉ

COMMUNIQUE

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 569th meeting held on 19 January 2016, adopted the following decision on the activities of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) for Sudan and South Sudan:

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the report of the AUHIP on its activities [PSC/PR/2.(DXXXIX)] and of the briefing made by the AU Commission, on behalf of the AUHIP Chairperson, former President Thabo Mbeki, on its on-going efforts to engage with the Government of the Republic of Sudan (GoS), political parties and armed movements in support of the peaceful resolution of conflicts in, and democratization of, Sudan, and to support the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement of 27 September 2012 between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan. Council **further takes note** of the statements made by the representatives of the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan, Ethiopia in its capacity as the Chair of Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the United Nations (UN), and the European Union (EU), as well as by Senegal in its capacity as an African member of the UN Security Council and those by the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council, namely, France, United Kingdom and the United States of America;

2. **Recalls** its earlier communiqués and press statements on the implementation of the various aspects of the mandate of the AUHIP and other related AU's efforts, including communiqués PSC/AHG/COMM/2.(CCCXCVII), PSC/AHG/COMM/1.(CCCLIII), PSC/PR/COMM.(CDLVI) and PSC/ PR/COMM.(DXXXIX), adopted at its 353rd, 397th, 456th and 539th meetings held on 25 January 2013 and 23 September 2013, 12 September 2014, and on 25 August 2015, respectively;

3. **Commends** the AUHIP and its members, namely, former Presidents Thabo Mbeki, Abdulsalami Abubakar and Pierre Buyoya, and the support staff, for their patient and unwavering engagement with Sudan, dating back to the establishment of the AU Panel on Darfur (AUPD) in July 2008 [PSC/MIN/COMM(CXLII)]. In this respect, Council **underlines** the commitment of the AU as a whole, and the AUHIP in particular, to assist the Sudanese nation to fulfil its potential. Council also **commends** the Chair of the IGAD, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia, for his continued engagement and support to the efforts of the AUHIP and commitment to the promotion of peace, security and stability in the Horn of Africa region;

4. **Expresses** appreciation for the important role of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, Haile Menkerios, the Special Envoy of IGAD, Lissane Yohannes and the role played by former Acting Joint Special Representative (JSR), Abiodun Bashua, in their overall efforts aimed at achieving peace, security and stability in the region, and **notes with satisfaction** the exemplary cooperation between them and the AUHIP. Council also

expresses appreciation for the support and assistance extended to the AUHIP by the AU bilateral and multilateral partners;

5. **Notes with appreciation**, the tireless efforts of the AUHIP towards ensuring a harmonized and focused action in support of the efforts of the Sudanese stakeholders to address the challenges confronting their country, including through support for negotiations to end the conflicts in Darfur and the Two Areas, namely states of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile and the efforts to support an inclusive National Dialogue. In this regard, Council **welcomes** the convening of the Talks, in Addis Ababa, from 19 to 23 November 2015, during which the representatives of the Government of Sudan (GoS), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM-MM) negotiated on the basis of draft agreements on cessation of hostilities covering the two states of Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile, as well as Darfur, tabled by the AUHIP. Council **further notes** that those Talks were convened with the important objectives of stopping the war and addressing the important issue of access to civilians in the conflict-affected areas to provide humanitarian assistance, as well as to pave the way for the participation of the armed movements in the National Dialogue and negotiations on comprehensive security arrangements and the political settlement of the conflicts in the Two Areas and in Darfur in a mutually agreed-upon sequenced manner;

6. **Notes** that those Talks were on the verge of reaching successful conclusions and hence **urges** that all efforts be made to bridge the gaps that remain. In this regard, Council **welcomes** the expressed commitment and readiness by all parties to continue to engage each other towards finalizing agreement on cessation of hostilities. Council **further urges** the parties to continue to cooperate fully with the Panel and to demonstrate the required political will to address the outstanding challenges;

7. As called for in communiqué PSC/ PR/COMM.(DXXXIX) adopted at its 539th meeting of 25 August 2015, Council **reiterates** its call for expediting all efforts aimed at concluding the Cessation of Hostilities Agreements for Darfur and the two States of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and ensuring that the National Dialogue Preparatory Meeting be convened as necessary steps to ensure a fully inclusive National Dialogue. Accordingly, Council **welcomes** the initiative of convening informal talks between the GoS and the Darfur movements, as well as with the SPLM-N, aimed at bridging the gaps on the key outstanding issues identified during the November 2015 negotiations mentioned above. Council **urges** the parties to make the necessary concessions to ensure that progress is achieved urgently;

8. **Notes** the important role that the State of Qatar continues to play in the search for lasting peace in Darfur, in particular its significant contribution for the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) and the Darfur Development Strategy (DDS), as well as the alleviation of the suffering of the population of Darfur, including the Internally

Displaced Persons (IDPs). In this regard, Council **appeals** to the State of Qatar to continue providing invaluable support in search for peace in Darfur;

9. **Reiterates** its support to the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and its leadership in the discharge of its mandate under very challenging circumstances. Council **further notes** the on-going tripartite discussions between the GoS, the AU and UNAMID and, accordingly, looks forward to an understanding being reached on the issue of how best to finalise the discussion on the UNAMID exit strategy;

10. **Reiterates, once again,** its support for the National Dialogue as announced by President Omar Hassan al-Bashir of Sudan, in January 2014, and **notes** the 10 October 2015 launch and ongoing proceedings of the National Dialogue. Council **reaffirms** the principle adopted by the Sudanese parties that the National Dialogue should be an all-inclusive Sudanese process intended to address and resolve the longstanding challenges faced by the Sudanese nation and based on the agenda of peace and national unity, economy, basic rights and freedoms, national identity, constitutional review and governance, as well as international relations. In this regard, Council **underscores** the imperative of holding the National Dialogue Preparatory Meeting to ensure a fully-inclusive National Dialogue in Sudan. In this regard, Council **strongly encourages** all parties to participate in the Preparatory Meeting as proposed by the AUHIP;

11. **Fully supports** the call by the AUHIP for the Sudanese parties to work towards extracting their country from its historic strategic challenges. Council **acknowledges** that an inclusive and holistic approach is pivotal in ensuring ownership of the outcomes of the National Dialogue by all Sudanese people;

12. **Calls upon** the parties to urgently reach agreements to facilitate and allow humanitarian assistance to reach those in need and to respect human rights and International Humanitarian Law. In this context, Council **further calls upon** the Parties to take all necessary measures to create conditions for the safe, voluntary and dignified return of the IDPs and refugees to their homes;

13. **Reiterates its call** to all concerned parties to cooperate with the AUHIP in all aspects of its mandate and to desist from any actions that would undermine confidence in the process or jeopardize the possibility of holding a credible and all-inclusive National Dialogue within Sudan;

14. **Encourages** Sudan and South Sudan to make renewed efforts towards the effective implementation of all aspects of the Cooperation Agreement signed on 27 September 2012. Council **further takes note** of progress being made in South Sudan towards the establishment of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) and **urges** the

AUHIP to engage the TGoNU, as soon as it is established, to assist and facilitate discussions on outstanding issues concerning the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement;

15. **Welcomes** the positive outcomes of the extraordinary meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) convened by the AUHIP in Addis Ababa on 13 to 14 October 2015, particularly, the decision by the Parties to accept the Map and the Centreline proposed by the Panel to facilitate the establishment of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ). Council **urges** the two parties to resume regular meetings of the JPSM as agreed and ensure progress in the work of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mission (JBVMM), and **calls** upon Sudan and South Sudan to extend full cooperation to the JBVMM for the implementation of its mandate;

16. **Reaffirms** the continued relevance of the Agreement on the Temporary Security and Administrative Arrangements for the Abyei Area of 20 June 2011 and its previous decisions on the situation in the Abyei Area and **underlines** the need for the Parties to live-up to their commitments under the June 2011 Agreement on Abyei, as well as to give a new impetus to efforts aimed at addressing the final status of the Area;

17. **Expresses concern that** the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) has not met since March 2015, and **encourages** it to meet regularly to carry out its important mandate with respect to the stabilisation of Abyei. Council further **commends** the United Nations Interim Force in Abyei (UNISFA) for its continued efforts to maintain stability in the Abyei area in the face of all the challenges it encounters and demands that the parties extend full cooperation to UNISFA. Council also **welcomes** the appointment of Major General Hassen Ebrahim Musa as new UNISFA Force Commander;

18. **Calls upon** the parties to cooperate towards stabilizing the situation in the Abyei Area, promoting harmonious co-existence between the communities of Abyei, including by convening the Inter-Communal Conference soonest, and ensuring the implementation of the outstanding administrative and security elements of the Temporary Arrangements Agreement. Council **urges** the Government of South Sudan to facilitate participation of its representatives in the Inter-Communal Conference as agreed;

19. **Commends** the AU Border Programme (AUBP) for facilitating a successful meeting between the Sudan and South Sudan from 6 to 8 October 2015, in Addis Ababa and **welcomes** positive outcomes of that meeting. Council **further welcomes** the renewed spirit of cooperation displayed by the members of the Joint Border Commission (JBC) and Joint Technical Committee (JTC) in executing their given mandates. Accordingly, Council **encourages** the Parties to continue to make the necessary progress with the assistance of the AUBP to address the outstanding issues relating to their common border;

20. **Expresses** appreciation for the tireless efforts of the AU Team of Experts (AUTE) on the Disputed Border Areas, chaired by Judge Abdulkadir Koroma of Sierra Leone, in engaging

the parties in fulfilment of its mandate to provide a non-binding Opinion on the status of the Disputed Areas. In this respect, Council **notes** that the AUTE has faced challenges and **also notes** the recommendation of the Chairperson of the AUHIP to the Chairperson of the AU Commission to terminate the mandate of the AUTE. Council **requests** the AUTE to submit its report to the AUHIP for consideration on the way forward;

21. **Recalls** the support expressed by the Assembly of the Union and the endorsement by Council of the Joint Approach by Sudan, South Sudan and the AUHIP, for comprehensive debt relief, the lifting of sanctions against Sudan, and development support for South Sudan, and **requests, once again**, the AUHIP to continue its efforts with a view to assisting Sudan and South Sudan achieve their shared vision of building Two Viable States living side-by-side in peace and working together on issues of common concern;

22. **Expresses** its unwavering support to the efforts of the AUHIP and **encourages** it to continue assisting the Sudanese people in their noble search for peace and stability with the full understanding that the dreams and aspirations of the Sudanese people, for a peaceful and secure Sudan, are strongly intertwined with the dreams and aspirations of Africa and the rest of the world;

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

2016-01-19

Communiqué , Peace and Security Council 569th Meeting Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 19 January 2016

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