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REPORT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
ON ITS ACTIVITIES AND
THE STATE OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA,
FOR THE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 2019 TO FEBRUARY 2020

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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 Union pursuant to Article 7(q) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council. The Report covers the period from the 32nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 10 to 11 February 2019, to the 33rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly taking place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 9 to 10 February 2020.

2. 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 on the Continent with respect to conflict and crisis situations, which are presented within their respective five AU geographic regions, namely Central Africa, Eastern Africa, Northern Africa, Southern Africa and Western Africa. The report further provides details on the status of the implementation of various key and thematic issues of continental scope within the framework of continuous implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA).

3. It is noteworthy that this report is being submitted to the Assembly of the Union at a critical juncture, where upon the AU and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), with the support of the United Nations and other partners, are intensifying and enhancing efforts aimed at more effectively implementing AU strategies to end conflicts on the Continent, thereby silencing the guns within the perspective of creating conditions towards the realization of a conflict-free, integrated and prosperous Africa as envisioned in Agenda 2063.

4. Equally important is to recognize in this context, the fact that this report is being submitted to the Assembly at a time when the scourge of terrorism, violent extremism, transnational organized crime and trafficking has assumed an unprecedented scale of expansion and intensity within the Continent. Beyond the situations in the Sahel, Lake Chad Basin and the Horn of Africa, terrorism is now outspreading to other parts of Africa hitherto spared by the scourge. Thus, terrorism has now become the primary enemy and threat to the Continent and its people and economy. In this regard, terrorism requires a robust, systematic and comprehensive response by the African Union working in close collaboration with all the stakeholders within the Continent.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

5. During the reporting period and in pursuance of the mandate outlined in its Protocol, the PSC has undertaken various activities as indicated below:

A. Induction training for the newly elected Member States of the Peace and Security Council

6. It is the established practice of the PSC that, following an election of new Members of the Council, an induction training workshop is organized with a view to preparing the newly elected Member States on the work of the PSC in all aspects and the working methods of the PSC before they assume their seats in the Council. Thus, it is by extension, an orientation event. It should be recalled that, during its 34th Ordinary Session held from 7 to 8 February 2019, and in line with its mandate, the AU Executive Council elected/re-elected five new Member States to serve for a three-year term mandate with effect from 1 April 2019. The newly elected/re-elected five Member States were Algeria, Burundi, Kenya, Lesotho and Nigeria. Accordingly, the PSC organized the induction training workshop from 27 to 30 March 2019, in Zanzibar, in the United Republic of Tanzania.

B. Meetings on Conflict/Crisis Situations, Post-Conflict Issues And Mandate Renewals

7. In discharging its mandate during the reporting period, the PSC remained actively seized of various conflict and crisis situations, as well as post-conflict issues in the Continent. It also devoted significant attention to consider various thematic issues related to the promotion of peace, security and stability in the Continent, as well as renewal of mandates of various missions on the ground. The PSC also held its 4th Informal Joint Seminar and 13th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting with the Members of the United Nations Security Council; a consultative meeting with the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission; a consultative meeting with the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights; a joint meeting with the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs); a Retreat on its Working Methods and undertook two field missions to conflict and post-conflict areas in the Continent.

8. The PSC held meetings on the following country situations: Central African Republic, Darfur (Sudan), The Gambia; Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Madagascar, Mali/Sahel, Somalia; South Sudan and Sudan. The PSC also considered the status of implementation of Assembly Decisions Assembly/AU/Dec.679 (XXX) and Assembly/AU /Dec.695(XXXI) on the harmonization of the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) within the Framework of the African Standby Force (ASF) and, in this context, expressed its deep concern over the delays in the implementation of the Matrix as of 31 July 2019. Furthermore, the PSC renewed the mandate of the Multinational Joint Task Force Against the Boko Haram terrorist group for another period of twelve (12) months, effective from 31 January 2020. The PSC also renewed the mandate of the G-5 Sahel Joint Task Force

for twelve months from 12 April 2019 to 12 April 2020. In addition, the UN Security Council extended the mandate of UNAMID until October 2020, in line with the PSC Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCCXLVI)] adopted at its 846th meeting held on 13 June 2019, taking into account the views of the Transitional Government of Sudan on the matter.

9. Also during the reporting period, the PSC considered the maritime boundary dispute between the Federal Republic of Somalia and the Republic of Kenya.

10. Furthermore, the PSC held meetings on thematic issues during the reporting period, which include:

- i. Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020;
- ii. Climate Change Funding in line with the Africa Adaptation Initiative (AAI) to Contribute towards Peace and Security;
- iii. Draft Resolution on Silencing the Guns in Africa, to be Considered by the United Nations Security Council;
- iv. Illicit Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Its Impact on Efforts towards Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020;
- v. The Role of Women in Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding with particular focus on the Contribution of Women Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and Returnees in Africa;
- vi. The Nexus between Maritime Security, Safety and Development of Sustainable Blue Economy in Africa;
- vii. Prevention of the Ideology of Hate, Genocide and Hate Crimes in Africa; International Disarmament with Particular Focus on the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW);
- viii. Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism in the Lake Chad and the Sahel regions: Strengthening AU support to the MNJTF and G5 Sahel Joint Force and Consideration of the G5 Sahel Joint Force Mandate;
- ix. Children Affected by Armed Conflicts in Africa;
- x. Durable Solutions to Internal Displacement in Africa;
- xi. Organized Transnational Crime, Peace and Security in Africa;
- xii. Health Epidemics of International Concern;
- xiii. Cyber Security;
- xiv. The Plight of African Migrants in Libya;
- xv. The Status of Implementation of the African Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development in Africa (Lomé Charter);
- xvi. Protection of Civilians from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas (EWIPA); Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons;
- xvii. Outbreak of Ebola in the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC);
- xviii. xviii. Natural and Other Disasters on the Continent: Beyond the Normative Frameworks;

- xix. State of Foreign Military Presence in Africa: Implications on the Implementation of the Common African Defence and Security Policy;
- xx. Elections in Africa;
- xxi. Harmonization and Coordination of Decision-making processes/Division of labour between the PSC and the Policy Organs of the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa;
- xxii. Construction of the SADC Standby Force Regional Logistics Depot (RLD);
- xxiii. Brainstorming Session on the concept of “popular uprisings “ and its impact on peace and security in Africa;
- xxiv. Africa Amnesty Month; Climate Change and its Impact on Small Island Developing States;
- xxv. Acts of Xenophobic Violence against African Migrants in South Africa;
- xxvi. The Interdependence Between Peace, Security and Development: Towards a Collective Engagement for Action;
- xxvii. The Role of Women in Social Changes and Peace Building: Time for Recognition;
- xxviii. Living Together in Peace; and
- xxix. Youth, Peace and Security in Africa; and
- xxx. National Reconciliation, Restoration of Peace and Rebuilding of Cohesion in Africa.

11. At the time of the finalizing this Report, the PSC had scheduled a meeting on the situations in Libya and Sahel that was to be held at the level of Heads of State and Government on 8 February 2020, on the margins of the 33rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly.

C. Meetings with other African Union Organs

12. On 8 August 2019, the PSC held a consultation with the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) pursuant to Article 19 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. Furthermore, on 10 September 2019, the PSC also held, for the first time, an interactive session with the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the working relationship between the PSC and the Commission in the context of Article 2 of the PSC Protocol within the spirit of enhancing coordination on peace and security efforts. The Assembly may wish to commend the PSC and the Commission for their interaction and encourage them to further strengthen their coordination on peace and security matters in Africa.

D. Informal Joint Seminars and Annual Joint Consultative Meetings

13. As part of the institutionalized and regularized interactions and also within the context of implementation of the UN-AU Framework Agreement for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, signed in April 2017, the PSC held its 4th Informal Joint Seminar and 13th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting with the Members of the UN Security Council

on 21 and 22 October 2019 respectively, during the reporting period. Discussions during the Joint Informal Seminar focused on the modalities for conducting joint field missions in Africa with a view to fostering a shared analysis and understanding of the dynamics of the country situations that would be on the programmes of work of both Councils. The PSC decided that, with regard to the agenda item on Financing AU Peace Support Operations, a common African position was to be developed by the Committee of Experts with the support of the Commission and submitted to the PSC for its consideration and subsequent consideration and adoption by the Assembly. The agenda of the 4th Informal Joint Seminar included: Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020 and Modalities for conducting joint field missions in Africa. While the agenda of the 13th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting included situations in Libya, South Sudan, Mali and the Sahel and Implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic. However, the Joint Communiqué for the Annual Joint Consultative Meeting is yet to be adopted, since Members of the UNSC requested for more time to finalize their internal consultations.

14. Due to the overloaded calendar of activities of the Council, the 3rd Informal Joint Seminar and 12th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting between the PSC and the European Union Political and Security Committee, including a joint field mission, that were supposed to have been held and conducted during the reporting period, were postponed to the first quarter of 2020.

E. Meeting with the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission

15. The PSC devoted its 893rd meeting held on 11 November 2019 to an annual interaction with the UN Peacebuilding Commission (UNPBC). The two sides exchanged views, shared their experiences, best practices and lessons learned in post conflict stabilization, reconstruction and development, as well as overall peacebuilding efforts in Africa. They stressed the need for enhanced support, especially financial, of peace building efforts in the continent.

F. Meeting with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

16. The PSC, at its 904th meeting held on 16 January 2020, received a briefing by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Peter Maurer on roles and activities of ICRC in Africa. During the meeting, the PSC acknowledged the commitment and engagement of ICRC in Africa in implementing its mandate based on its seven fundamental principles, namely, humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality, geared towards ensuring that human dignity and life in armed conflicts and other situations of violence in Africa remain protected. Council stressed on the need for additional efforts to mobilize resources towards the protection of civilian populations affected by armed conflicts and other situations of violence in Africa.

G. Field Missions to Conflict and Post-Conflict situations in Africa

17. The PSC undertook two field missions, namely, to South Sudan from 5 to 8 March 2019; and from 28 to 31 July 2019 to The Gambia. The PSC, from 16 to 19 June 2019, dispatched its Troika to Bissau, to work closely with the Government of Guinea Bissau, the ECOWAS, the UN and other international partners in finding a solution to the crisis in –the country. In all of these field missions, the PSC expressed the AU solidarity to both, the peoples and governments, reaffirmed the continued support of the AU in the search for durable solutions to the challenges faced by the countries visited. Notably, the PSC gathered first-hand information which significantly enabled the Council to adopt better informed decisions on the situations in each of the countries visited. In all cases, the Council underscored the importance of inclusive and genuine dialogue as the only viable approach towards finding lasting solutions to the challenges being faced.

H. Annual Retreats of the PSC

- Retreat of the PSC on on the comprehensive African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) Study and the working methods

18. The PSC held its Eleventh Retreat from 29 to 31 October 2018, in Cairo, Egypt, on the ‘Comprehensive African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) Study and the Working Methods of the PSC’. Indeed, the Retreat took place within the context of deliberating on the outcomes of the Comprehensive Study on APSA from 2002 to 2018, which integrated a review of the implementation of the African Governance Architecture (AGA), from 2012 to 2018. Also, the Retreat was guided by Assembly decision [Assembly/AU.Dec.635] adopted in January 2017, which took note of “the recommendations for the proposed reforms to further strengthen the African Union, which among others contained the need for “the Peace and Security Council (PSC) to be reformed to ensure that it meets the ambition foreseen in its Protocol, by strengthening its working methods and its role in conflict prevention and crisis management”.

19. Notably, the deliberations gave more focus on recommendations on enhancing the effectiveness of the PSC, particularly in the area of conflict prevention; crisis management; working methods; and took note of the proposal of the Kingdom of Morocco announced during the Retreat on the establishment of an African Peace and Security Institute dedicated to academic training, research and studies and promotion of AU policies in the domain of peace and security. On this issue of the institute, the Retreat underscored the need for compliance with AU procedures for introduction and consideration by competent AU organs of proposed new AU structures and requested the Kingdom of Morocco to develop and submit a concept note to accompany this proposal in the process of its consideration by the competent AU organs.

20. At the end of its Retreat, the PSC agreed on the Conclusions which were later adopted at its 880th meeting held 16 September 2019, through Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCCLXXX)]. The Assembly may wish to endorse the Conclusions of the Retreat which are attached to this Report. The Assembly may wish to request the AU relevant policy organs to follow up on the implementation of the contents of the Conclusions of the Retreat.

- **PSC Retreat on “Strengthening the Work of the Peace and Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Peace Consolidation in Africa” and PSC Working Methods**

21. The PSC convened its 12th Retreat in Rabat, in the Kingdom of Morocco, from 24 to 26 June 2019 on the theme “Strengthening the Work of the Peace and Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Peace Consolidation in Africa”. The Retreat consolidated the achievements of previous PSC retreats on its working methods since 2007 and, following extensive deliberations, the PSC adopted the Manual on the Working Methods of the Council, which represents a major step in the conduct of business in the PSC. The Manual on PSC Working Methods and the Conclusions of the Retreat, adopted by the PSC at its 861st meeting held on 22 July 2019, are herewith attached as Annex to this report. In this regard, the Assembly may wish to endorse the Manual and the Conclusions of the Retreat.

i. Annual High Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa

22. From 13 to 14 January 2020, in Libreville, Gabon, the PSC convened the Annual High Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa on the theme “Silencing the Guns in Africa: Creating Conducive Environment for Children in Conflict Situations”, at Ministerial Level. Essentially, and in line with the established practice of the PSC, the main purpose of the High Level Seminar prepared the incoming African Members of the United Nations Security Council (A3), namely, Niger and Tunisia before they assume their seats in the Security Council in January 2020, on pertinent peace and security issues of interest to Africa and its people. Notably, the Seminar identified concrete actions that should be taken by Member States and the relevant AU Organs, in cooperation with the international community, with a view to ensure better protection of children in conflict situations in Africa. Furthermore, the Seminar also agreed on action to be taken by the PSC and the A3 in order to enhance cooperation and collaboration in championing African common positions, interests and concerns in the UN Security Council agenda. The objective sought is to prepare these new members for them to more effectively promote, advocate and defend Africa’s interests within the UN Security Council decision making process. The Assembly may wish to consider and endorse the Conclusions of the Seminar, which are herewith attached.

ii. Activities of the PSC Sub-Committees: Committee of Experts and Military Staff Committee

23. During the reporting period, the PSC Sub Committees, namely Committee of Experts (CoE) and the Military Staff Committee (MSC) continued to provide support to the PSC. The CoE has provided its technical support to the PSC, in particular in the preparation of PSC documents ahead of PSC meetings. The CoE participated in the preparation of the 13th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting between the PSC and the UNSC in which the Committee engaged the Experts of the UNSC during the preparation stage to agree on the agenda items and the development of the initial draft of the joint

communiqué. The CoE also held a meeting to review the outcome report on the Study on Youth, Peace and Security and the Framework on the role of youth in peace and security. Furthermore, the CoE has held several meetings to implement assignments given by the PSC.

24. The MSC, on its part, apart from its regular meetings on several issues as per the assignments given by the PSC, undertook a field mission to the ASF Continental Logistics Base (CLB) in Douala, Cameroon from 11 to 12 April 2019 assessed the conditions of the equipment stored at the Base and provided advice on how the equipment can be utilized. In line with the PSC decision, the MSC developed a matrix of implementation of the recommendations provided in the MSC field mission report on the use, protection and distribution of the equipment available in the CLB in Douala, as well as the finalization of the Regional Logistic Bases. The MSC also developed a matrix on the harmonization of ACIRC within the Framework of the ASF. Furthermore, the MSC developed a common position paper on the issue of foreign military presence and foreign military bases in Africa, which, at the time of finalization of this Report, was still to be submitted to the PSC for its consideration.

III. STATE OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

25. The peace and security landscape of the African continent has been marked by varying evolutions in the different conflict and crisis situations since the 32nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union held from 10 to 11 February 2019. Below are presented, within each of the five AU geographic regions the various conflict and crisis situations.

A. Central Africa

26. The situation in the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** has continued to improve during the reporting period. Nevertheless, on 30 October, the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) launched a new offensive against FDLR and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). Despite the above, the leaders of the Region continued to engage the parties to foster mutual trust and confidence-building measures as part of the efforts by the Guarantors of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement for the DRC and the Region. The leaders have also continued to further strengthen cooperation and collaboration between and among the countries of the region, particularly, the defence and security forces of the region for better coordination in the fight against the persistent threat of negative forces and armed militia groups in the region, which are undermining peace and livelihoods of communities.

27. Meanwhile, H.E President Tshisekedi continued to facilitate increased cooperation and transparency between the DRC's neighbors. During his regional visits and conferences, President Tshisekedi stressed the need to "build bridges, not walls" with the DRC's neighboring countries. During the first six months in Office, President Tshisekedi visited the Republics of Angola, Burundi, Kenya, Namibia, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. One of his key messages was sustained commitment to the

unified strategy to address the armed combatants' challenge. Furthermore, in June 2019, President Tshisekedi formally requested accession for the DRC into the East African Community (EAC). The PSC, at its 903rd meeting held on 10 January 2020, received a briefing on the situation in the Great Lakes region, and alluded to the improved conditions in the situation in the DRC, while at the same time urging for international support to sustain these positive gains.

28. On 3 May 2019, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Office of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region (OESG-GL), in conjunction with the Rwanda Development Board, convened a regional consultative meeting in Kigali, Rwanda which called for the promotion of the role of the private sector in support of peace and stability in the region.

29. It should be noted that, the north-eastern part of the DRC has continued to grapple with the Ebola virus disease outbreak since August 2018, that has so far claimed more than 2,200 lives. In this connection, the Africa Centres for Disease Control (African CDC) is closely following the outbreak and providing technical support to the DRC.

30. The Assembly may wish to commend the efforts being deployed by H.E. President Felix Tshisekedi and other leaders of the region to foster peace and stability in the DRC and also to promote good neighbourliness between and among the countries of the region, including in the fight against Ebola. The Assembly may wish to urge the Chairperson of the Commission to expedite the appointment of a new AU Special Representative for the DRC, to facilitate direct high-level and continuous engagements with the Government of the DRC. The Assembly may also wish to express its gratitude to MONUSCO, as well as bilateral and multilateral partners of the DRC, for their multifaceted support for the stabilisation of the DRC, as evidenced by the peace and stability gains made in the Kasai region. The Assembly may wish to call on AU Member States, international organizations and international community to support the current efforts of the DRC in infrastructure development and socio-economic recovery notably in the regions affected by the conflict and to urge Member States to provide assistance to the efforts against the Ebola Virus outbreak. The Assembly may wish to call the international community to provide financial support to the DDR programme in DRC and encourage all partners to also participate in the Conference for Trade and Investment of the Great Lake region scheduled to take place in Kigali, March 2020.

31. The AU, through the PSC, has continued to follow the evolution of the political and security situation in the **Republic of Burundi**. The impasse over the Inter-Burundian Dialogue and preparations for the general elections scheduled for May 2020, continued to have an impact on political developments in Burundi. In this regard, the AU Commission has continued to work closely with the East African Community (EAC) to support the Burundian parties to re-launch the Inter-Burundian Dialogue. There is a need for an inclusive dialogue that fosters a climate conducive for the consolidation and preservation of peace and stability in preparation for the conduct of transparent, free and fair elections in 2020.

32. Given the persistent challenges, the Facilitator of the Inter-Burundian Dialogue, Former President Benjamin Mkapa of the Republic of Tanzania, resigned from his role in February 2019. Meanwhile, President Yoweri Museveni of the Republic of Uganda, who continues to serve as the EAC Mediator for the Burundi peace process, continued exploring new ways and means to renew impetus in the peace process.

33. In order to create a conducive environment for the coming elections, on 16 August 2019, the President's Senior Communications Adviser, the President's Deputy Spokesperson and the Secretary-General of the Government held a press conference under the theme "2020 elections: challenges and prospects" where, they urged the Burundians to remain calm and to avoid actions that could disrupt the elections and cause renewed instability. Subsequently, on 20 August 2019, for his part, President Nkurunziza stated that the three goals he had set to achieve at the commencement of his term in Office have been fully achieved, namely: (a) restoration of peace, security and justice for all; (b) monitoring good governance and democracy; and (c) inclusive and sustainable development. He remarked that Burundi was becoming more financially independent and self-sufficient. He called on Burundians to guard against destabilization in the country. At political level, preparations for the 2020 election are underway and the Government had already launched national fund-raising campaign for the elections, while the bodies responsible for the organization of elections are gradually being putting in place and partial voter registration has begun.

34. On his part, the Chairperson of the Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, received a high-level Burundian delegation on 3 October 2019, at the African Union Headquarters, to exchange views on how the AU could better support the Burundi efforts to enhance peace, security and stability. In this regard, the Chairperson underscored the fact that Burundi was going through a crucial moment in its history as it prepares for its general elections in 2020. He underscored the necessity to ensure that these elections would be free, fair and inclusive in order to sustain the country's stability. He reiterated the AU's support for all efforts towards a lasting, peaceful and consensual solution to the challenges faced by Burundi.

35. Meanwhile, also in August 2019, the opposition had called for a postponement or a boycott of the elections, stating that preparations for the elections were taking place in a climate of fear and shrinking political space and highlighted hate speech, acts of harassment and restrictions on civil and political rights, such as the freedom of expression. On 10 September 2019, eight former members of the Conseil National pour le Respect de l'Accord d'Arusha, de la Constitution de 2005 et l'Etat de Droit (CNARED) created a new opposition platform in exile named the « Coalition des Forces de l'Opposition burundaise pour le Rétablissement de l'Accord d'Arusha ». It should also be noted that, in August 2019, the Burundian political party leaders' and provincial governors signed a one -month truce, during which they sought appropriate ways to end political intolerance. Subsequently, a follow-up meeting chaired by the First Vice-President and the Minister of the Interior, was convened on 24 September in Bujumbura.

36. It is noteworthy that during the period under review, the security situation remained relatively stable. Following the complaints registered by some political leaders and bishops about the political and security situation in the country, the Burundian authorities have sent messages appealing the youth politically affiliated, to refrain from any acts of violence and intolerance. On the other hand, the Government set up a monthly consultation framework between the Minister of the Interior, leaders of political parties and provincial governors, to regularly review the situation and propose the necessary improvements.

37. On the humanitarian front, some positive signs have continued to emerge. During the period under review, there was a gradual return of refugees and internally displaced persons under the supervision of the authorities of the country. It should be noted that, Burundi has recorded significant refugee returns, in particular since the signing of the repatriation agreement with the Government of Tanzania.

38. The Assembly may wish to commend President Pierre Nkurunziza for living up to the commitment made to respect the Constitution with regard to presidential terms limit. The Assembly may also wish to commend the Government of Burundi on the practical steps taken in addressing the country's challenges, as well as initiating the preparatory process for the elections, especially the establishment, on 31 August 2018 of an Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), according to the Burundian Electoral Code; and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of 13 members, according to the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, signed on 28 August 2000; the adoption of the Kayanza Roadmap for the elections; and the publication of the electoral calendar by CENI, among others. The Assembly may urge the Government, as well as the political parties to work together for the smooth conduct of the 2020 elections. The Assembly may also wish to call on the Government to enhance its efforts in creating a conducive political environment that allows exiled political opponents to return and participate freely in the electoral process. The Assembly may further wish to call on the Government and opposition groups to intensify efforts to finalize a consensual and inclusive agreement that is consistent with the spirit and content of the Arusha Agreement. The Assembly may also wish to call on the EAC, the AU and the UN to closely align efforts in order to give the much-needed impetus to the political process in Burundi. The Assembly may also wish to commend the work of the AU Human Rights Observers and Military Experts deployed in the country since 2015. The Assembly may, once again, wish to reiterate its call on the European Union lifting of the sanctions it imposed on Burundi, in order to enhance the opportunity for socio-economic recovery in the country. The Assembly may wish to call on the international community to provide the necessary economic and financial support with a view to consolidate peace, stability and development in Burundi.

39. The overall situation in the **Central African Republic (CAR)** has been marked by reduction of violence across the country, since the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (APPR-RCA). The effective redeployment of State authority continues in several localities or Prefectures. For example, all 16 Prefects have taken office, and 66 of the 71 Deputy Prefects have been deployed, despite difficulties related to the lack of infrastructure for their functioning and

the security situation in several Prefectures. The first phase of the training of the Special Joint Security Units (USMS), which was launched on 16 October 2019, in Bouar, in the North West of the country, in the presence of the President of the Republic, H.E. Faustin Archange Touadera, ended in mid-December 2019. Consultations are underway for the launching of the second phase and the deployment of the first trained batch.

40. However, despite the substantial progress made in the implementation of the Peace Agreement, several challenges still remain in relation to the national DDRR programme and in general, meeting the commitments and deadlines set out in the APPR by the Government and the signatory armed groups. The massacres in Ouham-Pende (Lemouna, Koundjili and Bohong) in May 2019, clashes between the elements of the Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique (Popular Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic) (FPRC) and the Mouvement des Libérateurs centrafricains pour la Justice (Central African Liberators for Justice Movement (MLCJ), in September 2019, in Birao, clashes between elements of the Unité pour la paix en centrafrrique (Central African Peace Unit) (UPC) and the Central African Armed Forces (FACA), in November 2019, in Bambari, as well as between elements of the Mouvement patriotique pour la centrafrrique (Patriotic Movement for the Central African Republic) (MPC) and the FACAs in Kaga Bandoro, which resulted in loss of life, were strongly condemned. Despite sporadic attacks by armed groups in the country, the restoration of peace should be welcomed in the PK5 District, where following the action of the Joint FACA, FSI and MINUSCA Force, after the deadly attacks of December 2019 against the traders. The same operation continues in several sectors across the country.

41. The AU and the partners of CAR continue to encourage the Government and the other Central African parties to promote a climate of confidence for the effective implementation of the Peace Agreement. From 4 to 7 October 2019, Ambassador Smaïl Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union, Jean Pierre Lacroix, Under Secretary General of the United Nations, in charge of Peacekeeping Operations, and the Director General- Africa- of the European Union External Action Service, undertook their second Joint Mission to the Central African Republic. At the end of their consultations with President Faustin Archange Touadera, and the actors concerned, the 3 officials called for the honouring of the commitments to the implementation of the Peace Agreement, appealed to the international community for its strong mobilisation around the funding and support for the 2020-2021 electoral deadlines.

42. The close cooperation between the stakeholders of the Executive Monitoring Committee (EMC) of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (APPR-RCA), co-chaired by the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission, Ambassador Matias Bertino Matondo, as well as of the convening, on 3 December 2019, in Bangui, of the Sixth session of the EMC should be welcomed. The EMC is currently experiencing some functional difficulties, and this impacted on its seventh session which was planned 20 January 2020. These include the adoption of a new law on decentralisation, the revision of the ordinance on political parties, the adoption of a law on the status of former Heads of State, the immediate

implementation of the modalities for free movement and removal of illegal barriers, preparation of a transhumance management plan at the national and sub-regional levels.

43. The main challenge for 2020 remains the timely organisation of the presidential elections. To this end, the entire political class is mobilising itself. The former Presidents of the Republic in exile, François Bozizé and Michel Djotodia, returned to their country to participate in the political process. The CAR Government set up, on 6 December 2019, a “Strategic Committee to Support the Electoral Process” in order to pool efforts for regular monitoring of each step and provide support for the action timetable, established by the National Elections Authority (ANE). The AU Member States and the international community are called upon to provide technical and financial support for the proper organisation of these elections, and to support the execution of socio-economic development, recovery and peace building projects in the CAR. Similarly, the protracted political and security crisis had undermined the foundations of the socio-economic development of the CAR and requires the mobilisation of all the resources of the Continent to redress the situation. In particular, the CAR should continue to receive attention and support in order to implement its post-conflict reconstruction activities as it emerges from conflict.

44. At the humanitarian level, the UNHCR counted from January to September 2019, the spontaneous return of more than 357,000 refugees and Internally Displaced Persons to their respective regions, despite the deplorable situation noted in the Birao Camp, where the tension between two armed signatory groups to the APPR persist against the background of inter-ethnic conflict. The humanitarian needs have been reduced from 2.9 million to 2.6 million US dollars and according to trends published by the UNHCR, 30,000 will return to their regions in 2020.

45. The Assembly may wish to urge all Central African stakeholders to make every effort to organise the 2020-2021 national elections on time, in strict compliance with the Central African laws and the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation of 6 February 2019. The Assembly may wish to commend President Faustin Archange Touadera for his efforts to build inclusive consensus in his country, notably through dialogue he initiated with the former Heads of State of CAR, namely, François Bozizé, Michel Djotodia and Catherine Samba-Panza, In this regard, the Assembly may wish to urge the Central African parties to intensify dialogue, with the support of the Guarantors of the Agreement. The Assembly may also wish to request AU Member States and the international community to provide technical and financial support to the Central African authorities for the effective organisation of the elections and economic reconstruction and development of the CAR. The Assembly may wish to emphasize the importance for the international community to fulfilling the financial pledges made in support development projects to promote the peace dividends. The Assembly may also wish to commend the efforts of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, and particularly Egypt, in its capacity as Vice-Chairman of the UNPBC and the Kingdom of Morocco, Chair of the UN Configuration of the CAR, for their efforts and commitment in mobilizing support for the peace efforts in the CAR and in defending the interests of African countries on the UNPBC agenda, including through the African Group in New York.

46. The situation in the **Republic of Cameroon** is characterized by the socio-political crisis that began in October 2016 in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon, which mutated into armed conflict at the end of 2017. Seven armed militias positioned themselves in most rural areas of these regions. The national security forces, indeed, reacted slowly, but since mid-2018, have impacted on the separatists with attendant humanitarian challenges. Despite these efforts, the situation has continued to manifest military confrontation.

47. Initiatives to promote dialogue have continued to emerge when in July 2018, Anglophone religious leaders (Catholic, Protestant and Muslim) announced a plan to hold an Anglophone General Conference as a first step towards an inclusive national dialogue. The majority of Anglophones favored this initiative, though with pre-conditions.

48. On 10 September, His Excellency, President Paul Biya proposed a national dialogue aimed at addressing the two-year conflict between his Government and Anglophone separatists with the parties holding onto preconditions. Indeed, the Dialogue offers an array of hope for the Cameroonians to find common ground towards addressing their national challenges, particularly the situation in the north-west and south west regions, as there can be no military solution to the crisis. What is more critical in the recent peace efforts is the acceptance of a neutral facilitator which the AU represents. The Chairperson of the Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, undertook a visit to Cameroon on 26 November 2019 for consultations with the Cameroonian national authorities on issues relating to the dialogue and how to pave the way for a durable solution to the challenges being faced. The AU Commission has committed to supporting the National Dialogue to assist the Cameroonian stakeholders overcome the challenges at hand and meet the aspirations of all the constituent regions of the Republic. The elections planned for February 2020 are expected to further enhance participation of all stakeholders in the political process.

49. The Assembly may wish to note with appreciation the efforts of the Government of Cameroon towards the convening of the National Dialogue, including the dispatch of the peace caravan within the country, and the granting of special status to the insurgency-ridden western part of the country in the spirit of giving peace a chance. The Assembly may further wish to commend the Government for releasing the political leaders and prisoners of the separatist self-declared “Ambazonian Republic” from the north-west and south west regions. The Assembly may wish to encourage the Chairperson of the Commission to continue his efforts in assisting the Cameroonian people to find a durable solution to the crisis in their country and report to the PSC.

B. Eastern Africa

50. The situation in **The Comoros** is marked by the efforts to address the challenges related to the presidential election which were organised on 24 March 2019 to elect the

President of the Union and the Governors of the Islands. The Election Observation Missions of the African Union, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Standby Force and the East African Community (EAC), deployed their missions to The Comoros to observe the aforementioned elections, issued a Joint Statement in which they declared not being in a position to pronounce on the transparency and credibility of the election of 24 March 2019. After the provisional results were announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) on 26 March 2019, acts of violence broke out and resulted in loss of life.

51. It is in this context, on 29 March 2019, the Chairperson of the Commission issued a press statement, in which he, inter alia, took note of the Joint Preliminary Statement of the International Election Observation Missions, urged the Comorian authorities, as well as all other political actors, to exercise the utmost restraint, called upon the latter to quickly establish an inclusive dialogue, in order to find together the ways and means that could make it possible to preserve the gains made following the long separatist and institutional crisis experienced by The Comorian Archipelago and to find a consensual solution to the current challenges; stressed that any contestation of the election results must be done exclusively through legal channels and reiterated the availability of the AU, as an extension of the efforts made in the run-up to the elections, to assist the Comorian actors find a negotiated solution to the situation. On 3 April 2019, the Comorian authorities reacted to the statement made by the Chairperson of the AU Commission.

52. As for the Observer Mission of the League of Arab States, it stated that the elections were conducted peacefully despite the incidents. In turn, on 31 March 2019, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) congratulated the people and the Comorian Government, as well as the CENI, on the organisation of peaceful elections. The SADC encouraged both national and international stakeholders to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of The Comorian.

53. On 2 April 2019, The Comorian Supreme Court proclaimed the final results of the presidential and the Governors of Islands elections. The outgoing President, Azali Assoumani, won the ballot with 59.09% of the vote.

54. The Coordination of the Opposition submitted, on 10 September 2019, to The Comorian Supreme Court a request for unconstitutionality against Law No 19-001/ AU authorising the President of the Union of the Comoros to take, by ordinance, the texts relating to the organisation of the elections of the Members of Parliament in the Union of the Comoros, deliberated and adopted by the Assembly of the Union, on 3 September 2019.

55. The first round of the legislative and municipal elections was organised on 19 January 2020 in The Comoros. The Comorian opposition boycotted the said elections. It is important to note that the latter had announced, on 7 October 2019, its non-participation in said elections justifying its decision with the lesson learnt from the past elections, during which electoral processes were vitiated by massive fraud and non-compliance with the electoral code. The second round is scheduled for 23 February 2020.

56. At the invitation of the Government of the Union of The Comoros, the Chairperson of the Commission decided to deploy, from 13 to 24 January 2020, an Election Observation Mission (MOEUA), composed of 30 observers, in that country for the first round of the aforementioned elections. This Observer Mission was led by Mr. Bernard Makuza, former Prime Minister and former President of the Senate of the Republic of Rwanda.

57. In its preliminary statement, on 21 January 2020, the AU Mission, inter alia, stressed that the first round of the election of the Representatives of the Nation took place in a political atmosphere marked by the lack of consensus among the political actors, which resulted in the non-participation of the political opposition, and that the boycott of the opposition weakened the inclusive and competitive nature of the said election. The Mission noted the lack of interest of the people, which resulted, in several places, in an unusual lack of excitement among voters, both during the election campaign and on the polling day. In this regard, the Mission urged the actors to continue to work for peace and unity in the Union of The Comoros. It also made a number of recommendations aimed at improving future political and electoral processes in the Union of The Comoros.

58. The Assembly may wish to reiterate the readiness of the AU to continue its facilitation in The Comoros, with a view to solving all pending issues and encouraging the AU Commission and the PSC to continue supporting The Comoros in its efforts for political dialogue in order to settle, by consensus, all pending issues. The Assembly may also urgently appeal to all The Comorian stakeholders to return to the negotiating table, and without preconditions, with a view, among others, to finding a negotiated solution to their differences, thereby promoting political stability and reconciliation in the country. Finally, the Assembly may encourage the President of the Union of The Comoros to intensify the process of releasing political prisoners and promoting consensus in the conduct of the affairs of the State.

59. The situation in **Somalia** has continued to make progress on the road to political, security, economic and social recovery. This progress is a result of Somalia's continued focus on national priorities that are guided by the National Development Plan (NDP) and Somalia Transition Plan frameworks. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) has continued to steer national priorities as part of peace consolidation and also to create conditions for socio-economic revival. Nonetheless, Somalia still needs the support of the AU, IGAD and the partners to harness and sustain ongoing efforts towards effective stabilization, post-conflict reconstruction and development across the country. More so, as Somalia remains challenged by the Al-Shabaab terrorist group which continues to launch attacks on State institutions, civilians and AMISOM, while at the same time posing a threat to the region.

60. The AU, through AMISOM, has continued to support the efforts of the Federal Government to ensure inclusive politics, particularly the enhancement of its relations with the Federal Member States. This included supporting the preparation for the state-level elections in Jubaland and efforts by the FGS and Jubaland authorities to address the

political situation in the immediate aftermath of the elections. Cooperative relations between the Federal Government and its Federal Member States are not only essential, but are also central to the resolution of disputes that could assist Somalia in its trajectory towards stabilization and sustainable peace. In this context, AMISOM continues to support all efforts for improved security conditions and enabling environment to facilitate political stabilization, reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction processes across Somalia.

61. During the reporting period, there has been remarkable progress made towards reconciliation in Galmudug State, including inter-clan and intra-clan reconciliation, as well as prospects for the conduct of credible regional elections to serve as a good basis for long-term stability. The reconciliation process in Dhusamareeb supported by the deployment of AMISOM troops in August 2019, which included all clans and key political stakeholders of Galmudug State, has enabled discussions on the future of the state and the type of relations they want to establish. The Dhusamareeb process is a commendable step that can be built on, and aligned adequately to fit the contexts of other states to facilitate reconciliation across Somalia.

62. The PSC, with the support of the Commission, has remained engaged to assist Somalia expedite its efforts to guarantee stability and extend state authority across the country. In this regard, the AU has continued to support the work being done in the context of the Somalia Transition Plan and the National Development Plan towards stabilization, recovery, democracy and prosperity. Also notable is the progress made on the constitutional review process through the finalization of the review of 15 chapters of the Provisional Constitution. In November 2019, plans were put in place to conduct nationwide public consultations and civic engagement in this regard. Options are being developed to deepen federalism, including fiscal federalism to guarantee inclusive politics and effective governance across Somalia. In September 2019, a High Level Event on Somalia was convened in New York on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly. On the occasion, the Chairperson of the Commission urged the Government of Somalia to facilitate universal suffrage by 2020/2021, through its parliamentary committee on the development of the Electoral Law to expedite the finalization of this law. He also urged it to expeditiously revise and adopt the Political Parties' Law, as well as the establishment of the security task force for federal elections, which was since established in October 2019. The meeting called on the international community to assist with the debt relief in support of the country's efforts to revive the economy.

63. There has been significant effort towards improving cooperation between the Federal Government and most of its Federal Member States and enhancing contacts with a wide spectrum of political actors, most notably the establishment of the regional security offices has been contributing factor in the improved cooperation. This is crucial to facilitate the implementation of national priorities that are guided by the Somalia Transition Plan and National Development Plan (NDP) frameworks. This also includes efforts towards enhancing security and stability across Somalia. Force generation and integration of regional forces to further build the Somalia National Army and Security Forces to fight side by side with AMISOM, as part of implementation of the Somalia Transition Plan, is

extremely critical. These efforts have generated positive results in areas liberated from Al Shabaab, in particular, in the Lower Shebelle region. The continued enhancement of the Somali security forces remains of paramount importance, given the fact that, by February 2020, AMISOM is expected to reduce its troop strength by another 1000, as part of its draw-down. In this context, it is essential that the Federal Government effectively enhances its plans for the takeover of security responsibilities, following the handover to be done by AMISOM in 2021.

64. On its part, the PSC has severally stressed that any future drawdown or reconfiguration of AMISOM, as well as the handover of locations is guided by the actual conditions on the ground. This should also be based on the capacity and capability of the Somali Security Forces to guarantee security and stability. This insistence is for the purpose of safeguarding the hard won gains in Somalia, gains which came through huge sacrifices by AMISOM with the support of the Member States of the Union. The AU Commission has continued to urge the UN and partners to work with AMISOM in ascertaining the pace of force generation and integration of regional forces of FMS into the Somali National Security Forces.

65. Despite the reduction of its troop levels, and, responding to the prevailing security demands in the theatre of operations, AMISOM has continued to protect population centres, secure the Main Supply Routes (MSRs) and provide convoy escorts to ensure safe movement of people, goods, the distribution of humanitarian assistance, and allow the FGS and FMS carry out their functions of governance, and conducting targeted offensive operations to disrupt and degrade Al Shabaab. In this context, it should be highlighted that, although its capacity has been severely degraded by combined operations of AMISOM and the Somali Security Forces, the Al-Shabaab terrorist group continues to pose serious threats to Somalia and its people, AMISOM and the region at large.

66. AMISOM has also continued implementing quick impact projects to generate peace dividends to the grassroots population. In addition, AMISOM has continued to align its posture across Somalia and so far, three out of five AMISOM sectors have established mobile contingents to ensure quick reaction to threats within their area of operations. Side by side with our operational activities in the military front, AMISOM police has continued to support the enhancement of the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Internal Security and HirShabelle regional state through training and mentoring of Federal and regional state police officers. The deployment of AMISOM civilian component in the regions has seen some progress during the period under review.

67. The Assembly may wish to encourage the FGS, as well as the other stakeholders, to continue to promote consensual solutions and to always engage in an inclusive and genuine national dialogue to address their challenges. The Assembly may wish to call on all international partners to assist the Somalis in this regard and avoid any external interferences that goes against efforts to end the conflict in the country. The Assembly may also wish to call for the need to expedite the generation of adequately required Somali Security Forces to undertake joint operations with AMISOM, hold newly liberated

territories, protect population centres, and secure the Main Supply Routes (MSRs) as these efforts will create conducive conditions that would allow Somalia to effectively takeover security responsibilities from AMISOM by 2021.

68. The situation in the **Republic of Sudan** has continued to improve, following the signing of the 'Constitutional Agreement' on 17 August 2019, by the Transitional Military Council (TMC) and the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC); albeit with challenges. As may be recalled, in December 2018, the Government of Sudan imposed emergency austerity measures to redress the ailing economy. These measures led to demonstrations in the country over falling living standards and subsequent public demands for the removal of former President Hassan Omar al-Bashir and his Government. On 9 April 2019, President Hassan Omar al-Bashir was ultimately removed from office in a Coup d'Etat by the Military. This situation resulted in the AU Peace and Security Council, guided by the AU doctrine on unconstitutional changes of Government, issuing a communique on 15 April 2019, in which it called on the newly established Military Transitional Council (TMC) to install a transitional civilian authority. The PSC underscored that failure to install such a government would lead to Sudan's suspension from participating in all AU activities. The Sudanese Military failed to pave the way for a civilian-led transitional Authority within the PSC-set timeframe. This led to the PSC, on 6 June 2019, suspending the Republic of Sudan from participating in all AU activities. On the occasion, the PSC reiterated its demand for the establishment of a civilian-led Transitional Authority as the only way to allow the Sudan to exit from its crisis.

69. In light of these developments in Sudan, the AU Commission undertook several strategic initiatives aimed at strengthening the Sudan peace process. Among others, the Chairperson of the AU Commission visited Sudan and held talks with stakeholders on the need for the restoration of civilian rule. Within the IGAD framework, the Ethiopian Prime Minister, Dr. Abiy Ahmed also visited Sudan on 7 June 2019. The AU Commission and IGAD thereafter made a significant contribution to secure a peace agreement between the stakeholders. Furthermore, the Arab Republic of Egypt, in its capacity as Chair of the Union, deployed efforts, including the convening a Consultative Summit of Regional Partners on 23 April 2019, in Cairo, Egypt, in search of peaceful solutions to the crisis in Sudan. Subsequently, a follow-up meeting at Ministerial level was convened in June 2019, in Addis Ababa, aimed at encouraging dialogue among the Sudanese parties.

70. After extensive negotiations, the TMC and FFC, consistent with the provisions of the political declaration, signed the Constitutional Document on 17 August 2019. The Agreement provides that the joint military-civilian Sovereign Council is to govern Sudan for 39 months. The Constitutional Document also outlines the priorities of the transitional period, which include the establishment, and outlines the functions, of the transitional institutions, which include the Sovereignty Council, the Transitional Government, the Judiciary, National Commissions, including Peacebuilding Commission, and the Committee to investigate the 3 June 2019 killings. The Transitional Government includes Sudan's first female Minister of Foreign Affairs, Asmaa Abdallah. In view of these positive developments in Sudan, the PSC lifted the suspension of Sudan from participating in AU activities, on 6 September 2019. The Sudanese parties should be encouraged to ensure

strict implementation of the Khartoum Agreement on the establishment of the new civilian transitional Government and transitional institutions, where in particular, at the end of 21 months, the Sovereign National Council will then be headed by a civilian leader for the next 18 months, to be followed by elections at the end of the transitional period.

71. Meanwhile, the AU, in collaboration with the United Nations and the Government of Sudan, hosted a High-Level Event on Sudan on 27 September 2019 on the margins of the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly. The High-Level Event was attended by delegations from 57 Member States, six international organisations and UN entities. It provided a timely opportunity for the new Government in Sudan to lay out its vision for the forthcoming transition period, including its challenges and needs, and to seek support from the international community.

72. During his remarks to the High Level Dialogue, Sudanese Prime Minister Abdallah Hamdok spelled out the immediate priorities of his Government, namely to stop the war and build a comprehensive and inclusive peace with the armed groups in Sudan, including in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan (the Two Areas); address the economic crisis and take action to steer Sudan towards a path of economic recovery, restructure and reform state institutions; strengthen the rule of law and develop multi-layered transitional justice processes; combat corruption and commence the process of recovering stolen assets; and enhance and ensure the well-deserved participation of women in governmental structures and processes. Prime Minister Hamdok outlined some of the challenges he expected to encounter in taking forward these priorities and expressed his expectations of the assistance that will be required from external partners, including from multilateral institutions, during this time.

73. On the occasion, the participants of the meeting expressed their full support to the Sudanese Transitional Government and encouraged them, as well as all other stakeholders, to work collectively towards the successful conclusion of the transitional period, while emphasizing the importance for the international community to remain united in support of the national authorities. They also expressed support to the AU and IGAD to continue their efforts accompanying Sudan during the transitional period. The meeting called for the removal of all economic sanctions and delisting of the Sudan as a state sponsor of terrorism, given that failure to assist the Sudan in this regard risks undermining the country's nascent peace and socio-economic recovery.

74. During the period under review, the Transitional Government has continued to take measures to address negative situations that occurred during the rule of former President Omar al-Basher. As a consequence, the former President has remained in prison since his ouster in April 2019, facing charges of corruption, illicit financial gains and bribery. Meanwhile, in November 2019, as the new administration continued to make changes to ensure the return of peace and stability in the country, the transitional Government approved a law ordering the former National Congress Party (NCP) of former President Hassan Al Basher to be dissolved and its assets confiscated as demanded by the citizens. The Government also imposed a ban on the use of any "symbols" of the former regime for the next 10 years. Furthermore, in November 2019, the Transitional Government

enacted laws to replace previous ones that negatively impacted on the citizens, particularly women.

75. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Hamdok visited the United States of America, in early December 2019, to engage the authorities on how to address key concerns, especially the removal of Sudan from the US List of State Sponsors of Terrorism, related economic challenges and restoring diplomatic relations. The Government of Sudan maintains that the terrorist sponsor designation undermines the new government and punishes it for the crimes of the previous regime. It is a known fact that removing Sudan from the terror list will allow the new Government to seek debt relief and allow for increased international and regional investment and trade. The Government of Sudan is struggling to address the enormous debt burden, hovering around 60 billion dollars and to also attract trade and investment. It remains a fact that the economy is on a downward spiral and prices of basic foods and medicines are rising.

76. The Prime Minister's visit to the United States of America, while it did not facilitate the removal of the Sudan from the List of state sponsors of terrorism, it, at least, allowed for mutually beneficial diplomatic consultations on how to end these pressures. Furthermore, the visit also resulted in a diplomatic rapprochement with the two countries agreeing to elevate the diplomatic representations. Notably, the USA downgraded its diplomatic representation in Sudan in 1994.

77. As for the issue of armed movements and according to the 39 months–Agreement, of August 2019, the transitional government has six months to complete peace agreements with all armed groups in Sudan. These peace talks have commenced under the leadership of President Salva Kiir of South Sudan in Juba. In this regard, the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smaïl Chergui, undertook a one-day visit to Juba on 25 November 2019 and met President Salva Kiir. During their meeting, the Commissioner assured the President of the AU support to the peace process. In this regard, the AU played a critical supporting role to the mediation efforts undertaken from 10 to 20 December 2019 in Juba.

78. During the reporting period, the AU Commission, in partnership with United Nations undertook a visit to Sudan from 7 to 9 October 2019 to consult the leadership of Sudan and underscore the continued support of both Organizations during the transitional period. Subsequently, the AUPSC was briefed on this visit on 10 October 2019. In this context, the PSC agreed that UNAMID should continue its operations in Darfur and will further maintain the same level of uniformed and civilian personnel while advancing other aspects of its draw-down. Thus UNAMID will continue to focus its support towards: a) the peace process, b) putting in place mechanisms to support the peace agreement that is expected to be signed in December 2019, and c) the Peace Commission. The AUPSC underscored that it was therefore, important that adequate resources are availed for the Mission to carry out its mandate in line with immediate priorities listed above.

79. The 13th Ordinary Summit of the IGAD Heads of State and Government was held on 29 November 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the chairmanship of H.E. Dr. Abiy

Ahmed Ali, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The meeting elected the Republic of Sudan as the Chair of IGAD, and expressed its confidence that under the leadership of Sudan, IGAD will reach new heights in realizing regional integration and political cooperation among countries of the region. The Summit further appreciated and thanked the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for the pivotal role it played in steering and spearheading the work of IGAD as the Chair for over a decade.

80. Given the above context, the Assembly may wish to commend the Sudan for having been elected as Chair of IGAD and reaffirm its support for the new role of Sudan and its continued cooperation in working for peace, stability and development of the region and the continent. The Assembly may wish to commend the Transitional Sovereign Council and the Transitional Government of Sudan for their ongoing cooperation, commitment and coordinated engagement in addressing the multiple challenges facing the country. The Assembly may further wish to encourage all Sudanese stakeholders to maintain the momentum thus far mobilized, particularly strong coordination and cooperation among the transitional authorities, as this would restore the confidence of the people of Sudan in national institutions. The Assembly may wish to pay tribute to the efforts deployed by the Chairperson of the Union, H.E. President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi of Egypt, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, in his capacity as Chair of IGAD, as well as by the Chairperson of the Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat and also commend the work done by the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the Commission, Professor Mohamed El-Hacen Lebatt, the Special Representative of the Chairperson in Sudan, Ambassador Mohamed Bellaiche, and the Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Ambassador Mohamud Dirir towards finding a solution to the crisis in Sudan. The Assembly may also wish to welcome the hosting in South Sudan, under the auspices of President Salvar Kiir, of the talks relating to Sudan peace process between the Transitional Government and, in this regard, to appreciate the efforts being deployed by the IGAD and countries of the region. Furthermore, the Assembly may also wish to consider appealing to the international community to lift all economic and financial sanctions on Sudan, as well as remove Sudan from the list of State sponsor of terrorism, with a view to enhance economic development, encourage foreign investments and promote sustainable peace in Sudan. The Assembly may wish to request the Chairperson of the Commission to continue with his efforts in supporting Sudan during the transitional period.

81. The Assembly may wish to commend both the Government of Sudan and UNAMID for their collaborative efforts and commitment in implementing the UN Security Council resolution 2429 on the drawdown and also commend the UNSC for extending the mandate of UNAMID until 31 October 2020 through UNSC resolution 2495. The Assembly may further wish to underscore the significance of sustaining the peace in Darfur through investment in sustainable development projects. In this regard, the Assembly may wish to also encourage the AU Commission, together with the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and UNAMID, to undertake strategic initiatives that will ensure effective resource mobilisation, including funds for Darfur's stabilisation and development. The Assembly may further wish to encourage the UN to provide financial support towards peacebuilding, development and stability programmes in Darfur.

82. During the reporting period, the situation in the **Republic of South Sudan** was characterized by the continuation of stand-off between warring parties over the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity. Since the signing, on 12 September 2018, of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), the PSC has constantly followed developments on the ground and met several times and encouraged the South Sudanese parties to honour their commitments and relieve the people of South Sudan from the despair that continues to grip their lives. The AU Commission has continued to partner with various stakeholders and IGAD in their efforts towards the full and effective implementation of the R-ARCSS. The AU Commission undertook a joint mission co-led by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui and the UN Under Secretary General Mr. Jean Pierre LaCroix to South Sudan on 10 and 11 May 2019, for consultations with the stakeholders over the need to effectively implement the Agreement and pave the way for the establishment of an interim Government. The Ambassadors of AU High-Level Ad hoc Committee on South Sudan (C5), namely Chad, South Africa, Nigeria and Rwanda, as well as the representative of Algeria also participated in the mission. The mission underscored the importance of commitment and devotion by the Parties to comprehensive implementation of the R-ARCSS; as the only means to end the crisis in their country. The PSC also undertook a field visit to South Sudan from 5 to 8 March 2019 in which it expressed the AU solidarity to both, the peoples and governments, reaffirmed the continued support of the AU in the search for durable solutions to the challenges faced in their country. Notably, the PSC gathered first-hand information which significantly enabled the Council to adopt better informed decisions on the situations in South Sudan.

83. In July 2019, on the margins of the inaugural meeting of the AU Heads of State and Governments and the Regional Economic Communities, in Niamey, Niger, the C5 met at the level of Ministers and deliberated on the situation in South Sudan. Given the international concern over the possibility of non-formation of the Transitional Government by 12 November 2019, the C5 Ministers decided that they would visit South Sudan to encourage the stakeholders to form the Interim Government on 12 November 2019. Finally, the C5 agreed to visit South Sudan on 5 November 2019. However, the visit was postponed in light of the then planned Entebbe Summit that was scheduled for 7 November 2019. In this context, President Cyril Ramaphosa, the Chairperson of the C5, dispatched the Deputy President of South Africa, H.E. David Mabuza, from 12 to 16 November 2019 to Uganda, Sudan and South Sudan. During this mission, the Deputy President underscored the continued continental support through the C5 to the peace process. At the time of finalizing this Report, the C5 had agreed to convene a meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government, on the margins of the 33rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly to review the evolution of the situation in South Sudan.

84. Meantime, from 7 to 11 September 2019, President Salva Kiir and Dr. Riek Machar held a historic first face-to-face meeting since the signing of the Revitalized Agreement, in Juba. The two further met again on 21 October 2019. At both meetings, the two discussed pressing matters of state, including Security Arrangements, Number and Boundaries of States, as well as funding to fast-track the implementation of the extended

pre-Transitional Period for the formation of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) ending on 12 November 2019.

85. In light of the stalled implementation process of the R-ACRSS, on the 7 November 2019, the Guarantors of the Agreement convened, at Summit level, in Entebbe, Uganda under the auspices of President of the Republic of Uganda, H.E. Yoweri Museveni. The Republic of South Sudan was represented by H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit, while Republic of Sudan was represented by the President of the Sovereign Council, H.E. Abdalfatah Alburhan and the SPLM-IO was represented by its Chairperson Dr. Riek Machar Teny. The meeting agreed to extend the Pre-Transitional Period by hundred (100) days to enable critical pending pre-transitional tasks to be completed.

86. On 9 November 2019, the IGAD Council of Ministers convened a meeting, in Addis Ababa, and endorsed the outcomes of the Entebbe meeting. During that meeting, the AU underscored the urgent need for the South Sudanese to address all the key outstanding pre-interim tasks. It further underscored the need to ensure there shall be no further extensions in order to meet the aspirations of the people of South Sudan for a stable government. The PSC at its 905th meeting held on 27 January 2020, received a briefing on the situation in South Sudan and reiterated its call to the Transitional Government of South Sudan for the formation of the R-TGoNU before/by 22 February 2020 deadline.

87. The Assembly may wish to commend H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda and the Head of the Sovereign Council of the Sudan, H.E. Abdel-Fatah Al-Burhan for convening the Entebbe Summit. The Assembly may further wish to commend H.E. President Salva Kiir and Dr. Riek Machar for reaching consensus during the 7 November 2019 Entebbe Summit. The Assembly may also wish to urge the Government of South Sudan to expeditiously disburse the remaining funds for the implementation of the Peace Agreement as per the commitment made by President Salva Kiir Mayardit, in May 2019. The Assembly may wish to commend those Member States which have extended financial and material support to the Government of South Sudan, including Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa and, in this context, the Assembly may further wish to appeal to other Member States to also make contributions. The Assembly may also wish to call on the larger international community to further extend financial, material and logistical support to the South Sudan peace process, especially the transitional security arrangements to assist the speedy cantonment, screening, training and deployment of the South Sudanese Necessary United Forces (NUF); for the protection of officials during the interim process of the Peace Agreement.

88. The Assembly may wish to demand the necessary respect of 22 February 2020 for the formation of the transitional Government and express concern about the critical pending pre-transitional tasks that are crucial for the formation of the R-TGoNU, particularly relating to Transitional Security Arrangements and the determination of the number and boundaries of states. The Assembly may also wish to call on the Parties to continue holding dialogue to address pending issues, critical to the full implementation of the Revitalized Agreement and the establishment of the R-TGoNU. The Assembly may

wish to reaffirm the solidarity of the African Union with the people and the Government of South Sudan in their aspirations to restore lasting peace and stability in their country.

C. Northern Africa

89. The situation in **Libya** has largely been marked by recurring violations of the ceasefire by the forces allied to Government of National Accord and those of the Libyan National Army (LNA) led by General Haftar. The situation is further compounded by the increasing foreign political and military interference in the country.

90. At its 844th meeting held on 24 April 2019 on the situation in Libya, the PSC demanded an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and strongly urged the warring parties to exercise utmost restraint, place the supreme interest of Libya and its people above all else and, immediately resume dialogue as the only viable approach towards finding consensual and sustainable solution to the current challenges facing the country. Furthermore, the PSC, at its 857th meeting of 5 July 2019, held in Niamey, Niger, also considered the situation in Libya and the plight of African migrants in that country. The Council emphasized the central role of the AU, working closely with the countries of the region, in the search for a durable solution to the crisis in Libya. In addition, the PSC, at its 883rd meeting held on 27 September 2019, in New York, at Ministerial Level, reiterated its deep concern about the seriousness of the situation prevailing in Libya and its dangerous repercussions on the security and stability of the region and the Continent as a whole. The PSC underscored its conviction of the need for an effective and urgent involvement of the AU in the search for a lasting political solution to the crisis in Libya, providing conditions for a dignified life and reconciliation to the Libyan people.

91. Notably, from 12 to 13 March 2019, the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui and UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Peacebuilding, Rosemary DiCarlo, conducted a joint visit to Libya where they met with the President of Presidential Council and the High State Council in Tripoli, the President of the House of Representatives and the Leader of the Libyan National Army in eastern Libya. The visit underscored the need for a political dialogue to address the multiple challenges facing Libya, including the issue of the migrants. Subsequently, the Chairperson of the Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, also undertook a working visit to Libya from 1 to 2 April 2019, accompanied by the Commissioner for Peace and Security. The AU also participated in the Libya Quartet meeting held on 31 March 2019, on the margins of the League of Arab States Summit in Cairo, Egypt, where it re-emphasized its position on the appointment of a joint AU-UN Envoy for Libya, with a view to enhancing coordination and strengthening the efforts of the two organizations, on the basis of a single roadmap to be elaborated by that joint envoy, as a tool for provision of unified support to the peace efforts of the Libyans.

92. On 7 July 2019, the African Union High Level Committee on Libya held its meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government, at the initiative of its Chair, H.E. President Denis Sassou Nguesso, on the margins of the inaugural AU-RECs Coordination Summit in Niamey, Niger. The Committee reiterated the centrality of the AU in the search for a

durable solution to the crisis in Libya, and appealed to the Libyan stakeholders to create a conducive environment for promoting dialogue and national reconciliation with the support of the PSC, the AU Commission, and the neighbouring countries. The Committee also reaffirmed the imperative for all to respect the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Libya. The Committee also emphasized the call for the appointment of a joint AU-UN Envoy for Libya.

93. On the other hand, the UN-AU Joint Task Force on Peace and Security also held its 17th consultative meeting at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, on 21 September 2019 and amongst other issues, discussed the situation in Libya and also reiterated the call for the appointment of a joint AU-UN Envoy for Libya. However, during the 13th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting of the PSC and the UN Security Council, the latter showed reluctance to accept the AU proposal regarding the appointment of the Joint Envoy. On 27 September 2019, at its 883rd meeting, the PSC, at Ministerial level, requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission, in line with the PSC Protocol, to play his role and to take necessary concrete measure, in close consultation with the UN, to ensure the effective involvement of the AU, with a view to resolving the Libyan crisis.

94. The situation in Libya continues to escalate and is being compounded by the involvement of external players, as well as violation of the UN Security Council arms embargo. It is against this background that, on 3 January 2020, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, expressed deep concern over the deterioration of the situation in Libya and the continuing suffering of the Libyan people. He reiterated the African Union's unwavering commitment to an inclusive political solution in which all political and social actors play the leading role. He further called on the international community to join efforts with Africa to promote a rapid and peaceful resolution of this crisis, which could have dangerous consequences for the country, the region and the continent as a whole.

95. Subsequently, on 8 January 2020, the Presidents of the Russian Federation and Turkey issued a joint statement calling upon all parties in Libya to stop hostilities on 12 January, declare a sustainable ceasefire and immediately come together around a negotiating table. The parties, consequently, formalized a ceasefire agreement in Moscow on 13 January 2020 and agreed to determine a battle line to ensure they comply with the ceasefire conditions, as well as to ensure safe access, delivery, storage and distribution of humanitarian assistance to those in need. On 19 January 2020, HE President Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of the Republic of Congo, and Chairperson of the AU High-Level Committee on Libya, HE President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt (Chairperson of the AU), the AU Commission Chairperson, H.E Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, other international partners also participated at that meeting.

96. There is need for the AU to enhance its efforts by continuing to use lessons learnt from interventions in other African countries faced with ever-changing dynamics. The AU has to further enhance its own mediation capacity and develop a concrete intervention roadmap beyond ad hoc consultative meetings. Inter-Libyan national reconciliation

dialogue should be implemented by the AU, enlisting the efforts of the neighbouring countries, in partnership with the larger international community, in order to find sustainable peace in Libya.

97. At the end of the Berlin Conference, the Libyan parties affirmed their strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya. They agreed that only a Libyan-led and Libyan owned political process can end the conflict and bring lasting peace. They further committed to a comprehensive settlement plan for Libya, including effective implementation of the UN Security Council arms embargo. In addition, the document on Libya is to be approved by the UN Security Council and become part of the political settlement process. Meanwhile, Conference participants committed to refrain from interference in the armed conflict or in the internal affairs of Libya and urged all international actors to do the same. At the time of finalizing of this report, the PSC had scheduled a meeting on the situation in Libya and the Sahel, to be held at the level of Heads of State and Government, on 8 February 2020 with a view to forging an AU comprehensive strategy for the resolution of the crisis in Libya.

98. The Assembly may wish to welcome the cessation of hostilities by the Libyan parties and encourage them to finalize a permanent ceasefire. The Assembly may further wish to endorse the Communique of the 8th Meeting of the AU High Level Committee for Libya, held on 30 January 2019, in Brazzaville, Congo, which strongly condemned the continued fighting in Libya and the external interference that continue to undermine peace efforts in Libya. The Assembly may also wish to welcome the Berlin Conference outcomes, especially the commitment by international partners to refrain from interference in the armed conflict or in the internal affairs of Libya and urge all international actors to do the same. The Assembly may further wish to call on the AU High Level Committee for Libya to support the all-inclusive Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process as a way forward to a permanent ceasefire, and also, as a pre-condition to the reconciliation forum. The Assembly may wish to also reaffirm the AU position that there is no military solution to the current crisis in Libya and may wish to call for enhancement of efforts towards finding a political and peaceful settlement of the conflict in Libya in line with the provisions of the Agreement signed by the Libyan parties in 2015, in Skhirat, Morocco. The Assembly may wish to reiterate the call to the UN for the appointment of Joint AU/UN Envoy for Libya in the interest of harmonized, coordinated and strengthened efforts. The Assembly may further wish to call for more cooperation and coordination by the AU, EU, UN, League of Arab States and the Libyan stakeholders, so as to expedite the search for a lasting solution to the current crisis. The Assembly may also wish to request the Chairperson of the Commission to play his role and to take the necessary concrete measures, in close consultation with the UN, to ensure the effective involvement of the AU, with a view to resolving the Libyan crisis. The Assembly may wish to commend the role of the neighboring countries of Libya in the search for a solution to the current crisis, including the recent meeting held on 23 January 2020 in Algiers, Algeria. The Assembly may also wish to call the Chairperson of the AU Commission to take the necessary steps, in close coordination with the UN, with a view to ensure that the AU and UN efforts are closely coordinated.

D. Southern Africa

99. It is notable that **Southern Africa** is enjoying relative peace and stability. These are key elements that should buttress the region's efforts towards accelerated development and integration. Also, given the devastation caused by Cyclone Idai in March 2019, in Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, leading to several thousand killed, many injured and destruction of infrastructure and property, the region could also seek to maximise usage of its stable situation to enhance mitigation strategies against natural disasters and droughts. But more importantly, the region is not spared from the scourge of terrorism, allied with violent extremism and transnational organized crime, as well as illicit proliferation of arms/weapons and trafficking.

100. While there is a relative peace and stability in the region, it is worth commending the efforts made by the Mozambican stakeholders, namely the Government and RENAMO, which signed a Peace Agreement in August 2019 with a view to bringing to an end armed hostilities between Government forces and RENAMO. This Agreement represented a milestone in the national efforts in Mozambique to end years of conflict in the country. In this context, the Chairperson of the Commission issued a press statement on 2 August 2019, hailing the Agreement as a historic milestone towards silencing the guns in Mozambique. Furthermore, the northern part of Mozambique, including its border areas with the neighbouring Tanzania, face the risk of overspill of terrorist activities from those regions of the continent that are already afflicted by this scourge.

101. During the month of September 2019, there were acts of xenophobic violence against African migrants in South Africa. The PSC was immediately seized of the situation. In this context, the PSC convened its 879th meeting, on 11 September 2019, to receive a briefing on the situation. The PSC expressed concern on the xenophobic violence, and commended the Government of South Africa for its swift action to address the situation, as well as its determination to take measures to prevent further escalation of the situation. The PSC requested the Chairperson of the Commission to fully engage the Government of South Africa on the acts of xenophobic violence, in order to assess the situation of African migrants in South Africa. Furthermore, the PSC urged the AU Commission to expedite the holding of a Continental Conference, in collaboration with all AU Member States, that will serve as a platform to thoroughly highlight the issue of xenophobia, including its root causes, with a view to finding a collective Continental approach on how best to prevent its recurrence on the Continent.

102. The Assembly may wish to commend countries of the region for sustaining peace and stability, including through enhancement of good governance, combating corruption and illicit financial flows and reinforced inter-state cooperation, which manifests the collective commitment in the region to silencing the guns. The Assembly may also wish to encourage countries of region to enhance mitigation strategies against natural disasters and drought and to continue working together to countering terrorism, violent extremism, radicalization, trafficking and trans-national organized crime. The Assembly may further wish to commend the Mozambicans for successful organization of peaceful elections in October 2019 and encourages them to continue their efforts in implementing

the Peace Agreement and advance peace, reconciliation and stability in the country, which would generate conditions more conducive for socio-economic recovery and development.

E. Western Africa

103. During the period under review, the **Republic of Guinea Bissau** successfully conducted legislative elections on 10 March 2019. This move was seen as a great stride that resonated hope for resolution of the protracted institutional political crises that the country faces since 2015. However, the refusal of the President to appoint a new Prime Minister after the elections and his failure to announce a date for the presidential election plunged the country into another wave of institutional crisis until the intervention of the AU, ECOWAS and the partners.

104. Given the gravity of the situation, the PSC, from 16 to 19 June 2019, dispatched its Troika to Bissau, to work closely with the Government of Guinea Bissau, the ECOWAS, the UN and other international partners in finding a solution to the crisis in the country, including the preparation for the holding of the upcoming presidential elections and for the envisaged technical support for the revision of the Constitution. The Troika visit succeeded in extracting a commitment from the President of the Republic, who fixed 24 November 2019 as date for the presidential election and 29 December for a possible second round. Following the election conducted in Guinea Bissau, the PSC at its 905th meeting held on 27 January 2020, received an update in the situation in the country. The PSC welcomed the successful holding of a peaceful first round of presidential elections in Guinea-Bissau on 24 November 2019 and the run-off on 29 December 2019, as well as the statements issued by the African and international election observer missions on Guinea Bissau. On 22 January 2020, ECOWAS issued a Communique in which it, among others, recommended to all organs and institutions involved in the electoral process in Guinea Bissau to finalize their work in order to complete the electoral process. Subsequently, on 27 January 2020, the PSC, at its 905th meeting, appealed to the Supreme Court of Guinea Bissau to fully play its constitutional role in this electoral process, with the required due diligence, as well as with the urgency it deserves given its importance for the maintenance of peace, security and stability in Guinea Bissau, bearing in mind that the elections have been declared free, fair and credible by all African and international election observers. Furthermore, on 30 January 2020, following its visit to Guinea Bissau, the ECOWAS Ministerial Follow-Up Committee issued a Statement which, inter-alia, requested the relevant legal bodies in Guinea Bissau to fully play their role with a view to finalize the electoral process latest by 7 February 2020.

105. In spite of this progress, the PSC has remained seized of the situation and has continued to express deep concern over the prevailing political instability and insecurity, which continue to threaten constitutional order in Guinea Bissau, despite relentless efforts by the ECOWAS, the AU and the larger international community. Also, Council expressed its deep concern over the increase scourge of drug trafficking and related crimes, originating from South America, and its impact on the sub-region and the continent Group.

106. On 28 October 2019, the President of Republic, Mr. Jose Mario Vaz, issued Presidential Decree No 12/2019 removing the Prime Minister, Mr. Aristides Gomes and his Government, replacing him with Mr. Faustino Fudut Imbali as the new Prime Minister. ECOWAS, thereby issued a communiqué on 29 October condemning the removal of the Prime Minister and his Government and considered it illegal as it contravened the decision reached at the Summit of the ECOWAS Heads of State on 29 June 2019, in Abuja and its provisions. ECOWAS reiterated its support for the Prime Minister, Aristides Gomes and his Government. In conformity with the ECOWAS position on this dismissal of PM Gomes, the Chairperson of the Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, also expressed his deep concern regarding the political situation in the Guinea Bissau, reiterating his support to the ECOWAS position. The illegally appointed Prime Minister has since resigned.

107. On a related note, the National Electoral Commission of Guinea Bissau declared the preparedness of the country to hold the presidential election on 24 November 2019 as scheduled. In this respect, the PSC encouraged the NEC to remain independent and impartial in the discharge of its constitutional mandate with a view to ensuring a conducive environment for the conduct of the presidential election. The electoral campaign commenced on 2 November 2019 with 12 presidential candidates validated by the Supreme Court of Guinea Bissau to be in the presidential race.

108. The PSC endorsed the outcome of the ECOWAS Extraordinary Summit held on 8 November 2019 in Niamey, Niger, in particular, the decision to send a mission of Heads of State and Government to Guinea Bissau, led by the Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, H.E. President Mahamadou Issoufou of the Republic of Niger, and comprising the Presidents of Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana and Nigeria, as well as the visit to Bissau by the Chiefs of Defence of some of the ECOWAS Member States on 14 November 2019. Both initiatives signalled a strong warning, and were undertaken in solidarity with the people of Guinea Bissau ahead of the presidential election.

109. The PSC has commended the Guinea Bissau defence and security forces for maintaining their professionalism and neutrality in the face of the continued political and institutional crisis, and encouraged them to uphold their non-interference stance, as Republican forces, and urged them to remain purposefully apolitical throughout and beyond the electoral process.

110. Meanwhile, the Chairperson of the Commission deployed the African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) ahead of the Republic of Guinea Bissau 24 November 2019 Presidential Election. This was to ensure that the AUEOM conducted a comprehensive observation and analysis of all relevant aspects of the electoral process. This was to demonstrate AU's commitment to support Guinea Bissau's elections and democratization process to ensure that the conduct of elections contributes to the consolidation of democratic governance, peace and stability. It should be noted that, on 4 February 2020, the National Electoral Commission made an announcement, following

the request of the ECOWAS for verification of results of the presidential election, that former Prime Minister of Guinea Bissau Umaro Embalo is the winner of the election.

111. The Assembly may wish commend the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government for their continued commitment and efforts in finding a lasting solution to the prolonged political and institutional crisis in Guinea-Bissau. The Assembly may also wish to welcome the successful holding of a peaceful first round of presidential elections in Guinea-Bissau on 24 November 2019 and the run-off on 29 December 2019 and congratulate the Bissau Guinean authorities and people for the successful conduct of elections. The Assembly may also wish to call for a genuine all-inclusive dialogue, among all political actors, as the only viable alternative for finding durable solutions to the current crisis. The Assembly may further express deep concern over the drug-trafficking and related crimes in Guinea Bissau, which remain a major destabilizing factor and contribute to the fuelling of instability in the country. In this regard, the Assembly may appeal to the Government of Guinea Bissau to further strengthen national law enforcement mechanisms, in order to enable them to more effectively discharge their mandate, in particular in addressing drug-related crimes. In line with the announcement made by the National Electoral Commission of Guinea Bissau, regarding the outcome of the presidential elections, the Assembly may wish to congratulate Mr. Umaro Embalo for having being elected as President of Guinea Bissau.

112. The situation in **The Gambia** has remained relatively peaceful since the return to constitutional order. The considerable progress made in terms of policies and institutional reforms reflects Government's commitment towards promotion of stability in the country. In particular, the National Security Policy adopted and launched by the Government in June 2019; establishment and operationalization of the National Human Rights Commission, as well as, the Constitutional Review Commission and the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission are considerable steps towards consolidating democracy and security in the country.

113. Despite of the improved political situation in The Gambia, there has also been tensions caused by disagreements between the Government and its coalition partners over the three-year tenure Agreement entered into before the election of 2016. Overtime, some differences emerged over the frequent changes of Government officials, especially the removal of the former vice-president Ousmane Darboe. Darboe is the leader of the main political opposition, the United Democratic Party (UDP), in the Gambia and his removal has deepened the already existing rift within the governing coalition. In this regard, the risk of further political polarization has remained high in the country.

114. The conclusions of the Gambian Constitutional Review Commission established to draft a new Constitution that addresses the flaws contained in the 1997 Constitution were expected in December 2019. This process offers an opportunity for laying a solid foundation for a new national-political dispensation, with strong institutions. It also offers an opportunity to address the issue of gender equality and allow full participation of women in national activities. The constitutional process also offers the country the chance to lay a foundation for fostering lasting peace and national reconciliation in the country. It

should also be noted that, the PSC undertook a field mission to The Gambia from 28 to 31 July 2019 in which it underscored the importance of inclusive and genuine dialogue as the only viable approach towards finding lasting solutions to the challenges being faced.

115. The AU Commission, through the African Union Technical Support Team to the Gambia (AUTSTG), continued to provide technical support to thematic areas, as defined by the Gambian authorities, such as Security Sector Reform, Rule of Law and transitional Justice. The deployment of the AUTSTG has been welcomed by the Government and the people of the Gambia. The AUTSTG continues to provide inputs focusing on civil oversight and governance of security structures, the establishment of security structures, and mandate of the Military as well as Intelligence, into a joint report to support the Constitution Drafting Committee. As a result, the PSC at its 844th meeting held on 24 April 2019, considered the request of the Government of the Gambia for an extension of the AUTSTG until August 2020.

116. Given the Government's primary role in project implementation, the AU Commission is currently working in collaboration with the ECOWAS and other partners to provide bilateral support to the Gambia. The Government has undertaken to expedite the implementation of all transition tasks, particularly the various reforms, given that the civil service reforms will help to enhance the capacity of the Government to more effectively discharge its mandates.

117. In light of the above, the Assembly may wish to commend the efforts of the Republic of The Gambia towards consolidating democracy in the country through the current reforms process which will significantly contribute towards promoting stability and economic growth. In this context, the Assembly may also wish to commend AU Commission for its continued support to the efforts of the Government of The Gambia. The Assembly may also wish to encourage the Government to continue engaging in dialogue with the aggrieved ex-coalition members and political parties in order to promote political stability and create a conducive environment for the economic growth of the country. The Assembly may further wish to commend the continued work of the Commission through the AUTSTG and other mechanisms and encourage its continued support to the Gambia.

118. The situation in **Mali and Sahel** region has continued to witness enhanced efforts by the Malian parties to ease political tension and facilitate the implementation process of Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, emanating from the Algiers process. The country is meanwhile confronted by increase in terrorist attacks and with inter communal violence.

119. The AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel has continued to consult with the Malian parties to resolve differences and ensure a return to dialogue. The meeting of 26 February 2019, between the Head of State and the leader of the opposition helped to defuse tensions, and paved the way for dialogue over political and institutional reforms. The efforts by the AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel, together with other key

actors contributed to the appointment of a new Prime Minister on 22 April 2019. This was followed by the signing of a Political Agreement between the republican opposition and the presidential majority on 2 May 2019. Subsequent to this Agreement, an all-inclusive Government, which included the republican opposition, was formed on 5 May 2019. One of the key points of the roadmap of the new Government is convene the inclusive National Dialogue in order to address the challenges facing the country, to seek consensual solutions in connection with major national issues, including political and institutional reforms, the implementation of the Peace Agreement and the security in central and northern parts of the country. In this respect, the President of the Republic has appointed a team of Facilitators whose mandate is to lead an inclusive dialogue.

120. Indeed, some progress has been registered such as the adoption on 12 July 2019, of the new revised roadmap of priority areas at the 36th session of the Agreement's Follow-up Committee; the adoption of texts on the territorial police; the promulgation of the National Entente Law; the adoption of a decree on the progressive transfer of competences for the operationalization of the interim authorities at all levels, the effective provision of funds dedicated to the functioning of the authorities interim. In addition, the law on the fundamental principles of creation, organization and control of the Northern Regions Development Zone and the creation of a development fund for the operationalization of this zone have also been adopted.

121. In the area of defense and security, gains have also been made, including the adoption of a draft decree on the modalities for the awarding of ranks; the command functions and reclassification of the ex-combatants of the signatory movements in the corps of the State; especially in the Armed Forces and Security; the acceleration of the DDR process with the integration of 668 former deserters from the national armed forces who had joined the armed groups in 2012; the reduction of clashes between signatory movements; the completion of the training of more than 1,000 elements from the profiled MOC units as part of the accelerated DDR process, and their integration into the Defense and Security Forces of Mali.

122. Despite these achievements, the implementation process of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali still faces some challenges, namely the transfer of funds to local authorities and the redeployment of the administration to the north of the country due to security and absence of appropriate financial services. There has also been an intensification of terrorist attacks targeting both the country's defense and security forces, international forces (MINUSMA, Barkhane and G5 Sahel Joint Force) and civilian populations, particularly in the central region. The southern regions, including Koulikoro were also affected by the terrorist attacks during the reporting period. Another major challenge is the intensification of conflicts between the Peulh community and the Dogon hunters, in the center of the country. These inter-communal conflicts marked by cycles of reprisals have caused hundreds of victims, and led to significant material damage in Koulogon, Ogossagou, Soban Da, Gangafani and Yoro.

123. In the meantime, the Malian Government's efforts to address inter-communal violence in the central region, especially the visit of the President of the Republic, are to

be noteworthy. Furthermore, other crucial measures to deal with this situation, included the adoption of a decree establishing the Crisis Management Policy Framework in central Mali and the official launching of this framework; the appointment of a High Representative of the President of the Republic for the central Region, in the person of the former President of Mali, Prof. Dioncounda Traoré, numerous visits by the Prime Minister to the region, the deployment of soldiers and gendarmes, the signing of a cessation of hostilities agreement between the communities in the region as presided over by the Prime Minister, the first ever visit of members of the parliament and the launch of centre for disarmament program.

124. The inclusion of the national dialogue was finally organized in October 2019, in the presence of the former President Amadou Toumani Touré, with a good participation and very encouraging results. The Foreign Minister of Algeria, Chair of the follow-Up Committee of the Peace Agreement, on his part organized the session in Bamako, on 19 January 2020 with the presence of the Commissioner for Peace and Security and representatives of the guarantors and partners. The meeting was a good opportunity to review the state of implementation of the Agreement and make the required recommendations for a renewed investment by all the parties in better implementing the Peace Agreement.

125. At the same time, the political situations in the **Republics of Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea** were heavily influenced by the upcoming presidential elections. This is more so, given the lingering disputes that continue to influence the electorate of these two countries. In Côte d'Ivoire, the challenges relate to the composition and powers of the Independent Electoral Commission. In Guinea, concerns revolve around the prospect of constitutional review. There have been waves of protests that resulted in violent clashes between police and protesters. In Burkina Faso, a political dialogue was organized by the President of the Republic in view of the 2020 presidential election in order to establish national consensus on the management of the security crisis.

126. **Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger** are the target of unprecedented terrorist attacks, including on defence and security forces with a high level of casualties, signaling additional means and arms for terrorist groups. These developments are combined with the manipulation of inter communal violence in order to dislocate and disturb the very fabric of the local societies. Adaptation and an appropriate strategy and renewed solidarity with the countries of the Sahel is an urgent necessity, in line with the decisions of the ECOWAS Summits of Ouagadougou in September and Abuja in December 2019. The terrorist groups continue their attacks and indiscriminate killing of civilians and abduction of children with massive displacement of civilians to IDP and refugee camps. The PSC, at its 901st meeting held on 13 December 2019, welcomed the Bamako Declaration on Access to Natural Resources and Conflict between Communities adopted on 29 November 2019, in Bamako, Mali, as adopted by the AU Ministerial meeting. The PSC also requested the Commission to implement the recommendations contained in the Bamako Declaration, in particular paragraphs 13 and 14 of the Declaration and brief the Council on a regular basis.

127. It is in this context that the AU continues to pursue efforts to support regional security initiatives. As such, MISAHEL organized a regional seminar in partnership with the Government of Mali and UEMOA on border security. In addition, as part of its support efforts to the G5 Sahel Force support efforts, the PSC renewed the mandate of the G5 Sahel and the Multinational Joint Task Force and deployed an assessment mission to Mali to explore means to improve the AU's contribution to this Force. The AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel carried out fact-finding missions to Niger, Burkina Faso and Mauritania where he discussed with the local authorities and various actors on the political and security situation. In the context of strengthening regional cooperation, MISAHEL and the AU Commission organized the Nouakchott Process meeting and the meeting of the Ministerial Platform for Coordination of Strategies of the Sahel.

128. Regarding the overall humanitarian situation, the Sahel has experienced displacements of the population, due to terrorist attacks and inter-communal violence.

129. The Assembly may wish to express condolences to the countries of the Sahel for the lives lost due to terrorist attacks and other incidents of inter-communal violence and offer the continued support of the AU through its various organs and programs. The Assembly may wish to express concern over the persistent acts of terrorism, the growth of banditry, trafficking of all types and cross-border crime in the Sahel region. The Assembly may also wish to call for the respect of the rule of law, and the continuation of national reconciliation, in order to promote democracy and good governance and facilitate the organization of peaceful and credible elections in 2020. The Assembly may wish to commend the Malian parties for the progress in the inclusive national dialogue and encourage them to continue reforms that build confidence amongst the communities, within the framework of the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which emanated from the Algiers Process. The Assembly may further wish to call for continued support and advocacy efforts for regional initiatives, including the ECOWAS initiatives to counter the proliferation of terrorism in the Sahel, through enhanced financing with the pledge of 1 billion US dollars during the Ouagadougou Summit held on 14 September 2019. The Assembly may wish to welcome the Bamako Declaration on Access to Natural Resources and Conflict between Communities adopted on 29 November 2019, in Bamako, Mali, as adopted by the AU Ministerial meeting.

IV. THEMATIC ISSUES UNDER THE AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE (APSA)

A. Progress towards operationalization of the African Standby Force

130. It should be recalled that at its 785th meeting held on 20 September 2018, the PSC emphasized the need for the Commission to expedite the process of harmonization of ACIRC with the ASF in full compliance with the letter and spirit of Assembly decisions 679 and 695 and directed the Military Staff Committee (MSC) to make appropriate recommendations, including timelines and roadmap to guide the PSC on how to overcome the challenges facing the harmonization of the ACIRC within the ASF

Framework. Furthermore, at its 821st meeting held on 9 January 2019, the PSC adopted a roadmap with timelines as had been proposed by the MSC. In this context, the PSC directed the Commission, working closely with the MSC, as follows:

- The AU Commission should send letters of appreciation, not later than end of January 2019, to all ACIRC Volunteer Countries/Nations for their contributions to the promotion of peace, security on the Continent, and also encourage them to find ways and means aimed at availing their assets to their respective RECs/RMs;
- The Commission, through the Office of the AU Legal Counsel, should review all existing legal frameworks between the AU and the ACIRC Volunteer Nations and submit a report to the PSC, by March 2019;
- The Commission should revitalize the ASF Structure within the Peace and Security Department, by 31 May 2019, with appropriate staffing and proper job descriptions;
- The Commission should convene a coordination meeting, not later than end of June 2019, between the Commission, ASF and ACIRC Planning Cells, as well as the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), on the implementation of Assembly Decisions 679 and 695, as well as relevant PSC Communiqués;
- The Commission should notify all AU international partners and organizations, by June 2019, on the integration of ACIRC within the ASF;
- The Commission should report to the 33rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly in February 2020 on the completion of the harmonization of ACIRC within the ASF.

131. In addition, the PSC requested the MSC to develop the Matrix with a timetable, as well as implementation and monitoring responsibility for the Roadmap and that the PSC Chairpersons for the months of January to July 2019, in coordination with the Commission, should provide monthly progress reports on progress made during the course of their chairship of the PSC on the harmonization of the ACIRC within the framework of the ASF. These Chairs, with the support of the Commission, provided updates during the period mentioned above. In these updates, the PSC consistently expressed concern over the slow pace of the implementation of the Matrix.

132. During the 870th meeting of the PSC held on 20 August 2018, the Commission informed the PSC that the ACIRC Volunteering Nations Ministers of Defence were to meet in Pretoria, South Africa, over the period from 31 August to 2 September 2019, to discuss and agree on the implementation of Assembly decision 718, which calls for harmonization of the ACIRC within the framework of the ASF. In addition, during the month of September 2019, the PSC organized an interactive discussion with the Chairperson of the Commission during which the harmonization of ACIRC within the framework of the ASF was raised by the PSC. The Chairperson of the Commission provided responses and agreed on the need to accelerate this harmonization process.

133. Meanwhile, the Ministers of Defence of the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis convened their meeting in Pretoria, South Africa, from 31 August to 3 September 2019, and deliberated on practical ways to implement the provisions in the relevant Assembly decisions and PSC communiqués on the harmonization of the ACIRC within the framework of the ASF. The meeting adopted a Declaration and a Roadmap to guide the ACIRC in conducting its harmonization within the Framework of the ASF. In the main, the Roadmap provides for winding down of ACIRC by 30 June 2020. Furthermore, the Declaration indicated the need for an ACIRC meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government, on the margins of the 33rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union to take place on 9-10 February 2020.

134. In continuation of its efforts towards the full operationalization of the ASF, the Commission commenced efforts to finalize the draft AU-RECs/RMs Memorandum of Understanding on the operationalization and deployment of the ASF as directed by the meeting of the AU Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STCDSS), held on 12 October 2018, in Addis Ababa.

135. The MSC, on its part, in the implementation of the assignment given to it by the PSC, undertook a field mission to the ASF Continental Logistics Base in Douala, Cameroon from 11 to 12 April 2019, to assess the conditions of the equipment stored at the Base and provide advice on how the equipment could be utilized. Upon return, the MSC presented a report with recommendations, which were endorsed by the PSC for urgent implementation. At the same time, the Commission has continued its efforts towards the establishment of the ASF Regional Logistic Depots with a view to providing the full infrastructural setup for future ASF operations. AU Member States continue to provide additional support to the CLB via seconding personnel at own costs.

136. The Commission has also commenced a programme to conduct the Training of Trainers for the CLB, particularly in asset management, equipment maintenance and other relevant aspects. It should also be highlighted that the Command, Communication and Control arrangement of the ASF has been streamlined, following the signing of the relevant documents by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui and the Minister of Defense of the Republic of South Africa, H.E Nosiviwe Noluhandu Mapisa-Ngakula, in August 2019. This streamlining will enable the ASF to operate in a set-up linking the AU Headquarters and the ASF regional standby brigades (EASF, ECCAS, ECOWAS, SADC and NARC).

137. The African Union Policy on Conduct and Discipline for PSOs and the African Union Policy on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse for PSOs are now in place for application. The two policies highlight the AU's commitment to ensuring that its PSO personnel implements the mandates in accordance with the highest standards of conduct and discipline, and respect for international humanitarian and human rights law. Furthermore, the Commission elaborated the draft African Union Peace Support Operations Doctrine, which it presented to the 12th Ordinary Meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STCDSS) held in

Cairo, Egypt, from 15 to 19 December 2019. This is to ensure synergy in AU's response to management of conflicts. In this regard, the STCDSS directed that further inputs from Member States be obtained and incorporated into the draft Doctrine, for further consideration by the next STCDSS ordinary meeting. Also, the Peace and Security Department completed the drafting of the new Concept of Operation of the ASF, which was also presented to the STCDSS meeting in Cairo. Therefore, with these continued developments, the AU and the ASF Regional Standby Brigades continue to enhance the deployability of the ASF, a much awaited strategic step in the Africa's efforts to transform itself into a conflict-free continent.

138. The PSC has constantly reiterated the importance for the RECs/RMs to fully participate in this exercise, taking into account the successful deployments, within the Framework of the ASF, in parts of the Continent, namely in Lesotho (SAPMIL) by the SADC, in the Gambia (ECOMIG) and in Guinea Bissau (ECOMIB) by the ECOWAS. Indeed, these deployments have demonstrated the deployability of the ASF as a vital asset for prevention, intervention conflicts, rescue operations in disaster situations and support operations against epidemic/pandemic outbreaks such as the Ebola virus outbreak.

139. The Assembly may wish to commend the PSC for its continued efforts towards the full operationalization and deployment of the ASF, including the continued provision of strategic guidance for the harmonization of ACIRC within the ASF Framework. The Assembly may also wish to commend the ACIRC Volunteer Nations for their continued compliance with the relevant decisions of the Assembly and the communiqués of the PSC to accomplish the harmonization process. The Assembly may wish to call on the ACIRC Volunteer Nations to speed up the process of harmonization of ACIRC into framework of the ASF, as soon as possible. The Assembly may further commend the Commission for the efforts deployed in the development of various policies for the functioning of the ASF, particularly the new Doctrine for Peace Support Operations, as well as towards the establishment of the ASF Regional Logistic Depots. The Assembly may also commend the ASF Regional Standby Brigades for the continued efforts to ensure readiness for deployment.

B. Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development

140. The Commission, in implementation of PSC communiqués, has continued to strengthen efforts in the area of post-conflict reconstruction and development. More so, inspired by the recognition that several conflict-afflicted countries are on the track to emerge towards a post-conflict status, which demands the firm support of the African Continent for such countries to consolidate peace and achieve socio-economic recovery.

141. Regarding the **African Union Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development**, it is worth noting that on 11 December 2019, on the margins of the Aswan Forum, the AU Commission and the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt, signed the Host Agreement of the AU Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development. Meanwhile, in line with the Decision 1058 of the 35th Ordinary session of Executive

Council of July 2019, the deployment of a start-up team from the AU Commission to fast-track the operationalization of the Centre was undertaken from 15 to 19 December 2019. The mission exchanged views with the Egyptian Government on various aspects of the Centre. At the time of finalising this Report, the two sides continued their consultations to ensure the rapid operationalization of the Centre. Furthermore, the PRC Sub-Committee on Structural Reforms deliberated, on 15 January 2020, on the operationalization of the Centre and endorsed the proposals made by the AU Commission, such as the structure, mandate and vision of the Centre, as well as the launch of the recruitment of personnel and mobilization of resources, on the basis of the approval to be provided by the Assembly of the Union in February 2020.

142. In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, the Commission's Liaison Office continues to provide support to the Africa Centre for Disease Control (African CDC) which is closely following the Ebola outbreak in the north-eastern part of the country, given the threat the disease poses to peace and stability in the country.

143. In **The Gambia**, the Commission managed to deploy a Technical Support Team in response to a request from the Government to the PSC on 29 March 2017, and following an AU Technical Needs Assessment Mission (TNAM) to the country within the framework of the Inter-Departmental Task Force on PCRD, from 13-19 May 2017. Since its deployment, the AUTSTG provided technical expertise in the development of the National Security Policy which has been adopted and ratified; the structuring of the Office of the National Security Adviser; the restructuring of the Ministry of Defence; the reorganization of the Gambia Armed Forces; the development of training and operations manuals, as well as improving Civil-Military Cooperation. The Council extended the mandate of the AUTSTG for an additional period of twelve months ending August 2020. Within the framework of implementing the SSR Policy Framework, from 12 to 14 December 2018, the Commission organized a Consultative Dialogue in Banjul. This was held under the theme "Enhancing the Integration of Rule of Law, Security Sector Reform, Transitional Justice and Governance into Stabilization Efforts: Lessons for Silencing the Guns by 2020". The report of the Consultative Dialogue was launched on 25 October 2019 at a High-Level breakfast meeting which brought together Permanent Representatives of the PSC Member States, Member States contributing personnel to the AUTSTG, RECs/RMs, Commission officials, experts and partners. The report identified amongst others, challenges such as the weak national leadership of SSR processes, weak strategic coordination, lack of comprehensive understating of SSR, necessity of cost-benefit analysis of integrated approaches and lack of sustained monitoring and evaluation capacities.

144. In **Guinea Bissau**, the Government recognized that the reform of the defence and security sectors is at the heart of the country's challenges and has firmly committed to SSR and DDR in its development priorities for the period 2015-2020. As for **Madagascar**, the Commission has continued to play a critical and instrumental role in political negotiations after the presidential elections of May 2019 to diffuse tensions. In its efforts to consolidate progress, the Commission undertook an assessment mission within the framework of the Inter-Departmental Task Force on PCRD in May 2019. Accordingly, with

the support of the AU, the SSR process in Madagascar has provided a regular platform for discussions on security and political challenges between key national stakeholders since 2014.

145. Subsequent to a request from the Government of **Mali**, the Commission, through its mission in Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), successfully provided technical assistance for DDR and SSR processes in the country during the reporting period. In November 2018, the Commission deployed a DDR/SSR expert to support the implementation of accelerated DDR programmes towards reconstituted national defence and security forces, through the Operational Coordination Mechanism. Furthermore, on 6 November 2018, the National DDR committee with the support of the MISAHEL, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and other international partners, launched an accelerated DDR and Integration process. In the Sahel region, the Commission is currently supporting MISAHEL in the revision of the AU Strategy for the Sahel. The strategy, modelled on the Regional Stabilization Strategy for the Lake Chad Basin, consists of three pillars, namely security, governance and development.

146. Furthermore, during the reporting period, the Commission continued to support the Federal Republic of **Somalia** in its efforts towards peacebuilding and implementing state-building priorities, in spite of the numerous challenges.

147. In **South Sudan**, in partnership with the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Commission supported the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) signed on 12 September 2018. Additionally, the deployment of gender experts from the FemWise network to the Liaison Office in Juba in October 2019 is a further demonstration of the Commission's intent to promote women's participation in political dialogue, peace and security. On 6 September 2019, the Commission donated 140 assorted tents for accommodation, restaurants and storage facilities in support of the cantonment and training of the Necessary Unified Forces (NUF) for the formation of one national army as a critical pre-condition for sustainable peace in the country.

148. In **Sudan**, the Inter-Sudanese political agreement was reached on 17 August 2019 and the subsequent establishment of a transitional government marked the beginning of a new era that will require the Commission's PCRD assistance. Additionally, the drawdown of the African Union United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNMID) shall require PCRD activities to avoid conflict relapse. In August 2019, a high-level mission led by the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, visited Khartoum to support the women of Sudan in their fight for the establishment of a democratic and inclusive system of governance. Meanwhile, the deployment of gender experts from the FemWise network to the Liaison Offices in Khartoum in October 2019 is a further demonstration of the Commission's intent to promote women's participation in political dialogue, peace and security.

C. Mediation Support Unit

149. It should be noted that the African continent has placed primacy on conflict prevention as a key axe to be followed. In this context, and in response to the growing demands in Africa for sustainable and institutionalize mediation efforts and implementation of relevant AU decisions, the African Union Commission operationalized a Mediation Support Unit (AU MSU) in March 2019. Located within the Peace and Security Department, the MSU is a Commission-wide structure to coordination and strengthen the mediation efforts of the AU by providing substantive technical, operational and logistical support to AU-led and AU-supported mediation processes. To date, the MSU is staffed with a Coordinator, a Senior Policy Officer, a Knowledge Management and Resource Mobilization Expert, and a Political Analyst and Mediation Expert.

150. The MSU has already started developing the technical skills and institutional capacity of the AU in order to respond more effectively to key challenges related to mediation/mediation support. Notably, the challenges include the absence of a systematic coordination within the Commission and with the RECs/RMs, inadequate capacity for specialized mediation across various thematic areas, and the lack of a knowledge management system.

151. In line with the above-stated objectives, the MSU has embarked on the development of various tailored capacity-building tools, including thematic curricula and Handbooks. Specifically, the MSU validated the AU's Advanced Mediation Training Handbook during a workshop with RECs/RMs in mid-June 2019, and it is in the process of updating the 2014 AU Mediation Handbook (2014), and developing a Facilitators' Guide for trainings for AU-led and supported mediation initiatives, and a Strategic Plan. The policy documents will be shared with the RECs/RMs.

152. The MSU held another meeting with RECs/RMs in mid-September 2019, resulting in key conclusions on practical measures to enhance coherence, coordination and complementarity of mediation efforts with RECs/RMs and other stakeholders, including the possibility of establishing a Joint Standby Roster of Mediation Experts; development of a continental Knowledge Management System; joint analysis for a common understanding of conflicts; and joint development of strategies to support AU Lead Mediators in order to mitigate challenges of parallel mediation during peace processes.

153. Furthermore, the MSU has deployed efforts to deepen its partnership with Friends of the MSU, the UN, EU and other stakeholders. In this regard, the MSU held a meeting with Friends of the MSU on 14 March 2019 and another on 28 June 2019. Likewise, a delegation of the AU MSU undertook a familiarisation visit to the United Nations in New York in October 2019, where they identified synergies, and agreed on a number of areas of mutual collaboration and support. Staff of the MSU and other Divisions of the PSD have also received capacity enhancement training and experience sharing seminars organized by partners such as FBA, Clingendael of The Netherlands, and Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) of Finland in support of the AU MSU.

154. The Assembly may wish to commend the Commission for operationalizing the MSU and call for its effective utilization, henceforth, in providing technical and operational support to all AU-led and supported mediation efforts. The Assembly may further wish to call on AU Member States to support efforts aimed at enhancing coherence, coordination and complementarity between the AU and the RECs/RMs, particularly through their respective mediation mechanisms, in order to optimize successes in managing or resolving conflicts in Africa.

D. Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR)

155. The African Union recognizes Security Sector Reform (SSR) and Governance, and Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), as critical conflict prevention and resolution tools. In this regard, during the reporting period, the Commission continued to provide technical support to Member States to conduct their SSR and DDR activities.

156. The support to the Republic of Mali was provided within the framework of the 2015 Peace Agreement. The Commission's support to Mali, among others, consists mainly in factoring SSR in its National Security Strategy. In the Central African Republic, the Commission supported the national DDR/SSR Coordination Office in sensitize the representatives of Defence and Security Forces, armed groups and heads of decentralized DDR/SSR coordination entities. Focus is on ensuring that the operationalization of the Specialized Mixed Units (USMS) provided for under the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation, includes aspects of DDR and SSR in order to have a holistic implementation of the Agreement.

157. In Somalia, the military pressure on Al Shabaab terrorist group by the Somalia National Army and AMISOM has led to increased numbers of Al Shabaab defectors. In response, the Government has put in place a National Defectors Program to screen defectors to ascertain whether their levels of engagement with the terrorist group, and whether or not they still pose a threat to society. As a result of the increasing numbers of child defectors coming through the National Defectors Program, the Somali Federal Government requested the Commission to support the development of a framework for screening children. In this regard, the Commission has provided technical support to the Somali National Intelligence and Security Agency (NISA) to develop standard operating procedures that will guide in the screening of children as part of the support in the treatment and handling of disengaged terrorist fighters.

158. The Commission has also engaged the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on its SSR agenda. The first consultative meeting with various stakeholders was held in Addis Ababa in December 2019, in which key priority areas of action were identified. These will guide next steps in the support that the Commission will provide.

159. In the support to the member countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), and within the Regional Stabilization Strategy for areas affected by Boko Haram, the Commission has held a series of workshops with some Member States towards

developing a strategy on Screening and Prosecution, including specific support to the Multinational Joint Task Force in developing Standard Operating Procedures in handling persons associated with the Boko Haram terrorist group.

160. The Commission has also been supporting the SSR process in Madagascar since 2015. This support has contributed to the mediation and stabilization processes in the country. The Commission is now engaging with the authorities in order to strengthen coordination of the SSR process as part of the efforts to maintain the momentum gained. The Commission held an expert meeting to sensitize the newly elected Malagasy authorities, which resulted in reaffirmation of commitment to the SSR process.

E. Fight against Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons

161. The easy availability and access to illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) continues to be a major challenge to peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts in the continent. This is because their easy availability leads to individuals and groups resorting to armed violence to solve disagreements and conflicts. At its 830th meeting held on 18 July 2019, on proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, and while noting the study conducted by the Commission's Peace and Security Department and the Small Arms Survey entitled "Weapons Compass: Mapping Illicit Small Arms Flows in Africa", the PSC endorsed the recommendations of the joint mapping study. It also encouraged Member States, the Commission, RECs and RMs, to further enhance their respective capacities towards undertaking integrated and comprehensive measures to address this scourge in line with the regional and international instruments.

162. Also at its 832nd meeting held on 14 March 2019, the PSC received a briefing from the Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA) on the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons and Its Impact on Silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020. The PSC, among others, underlined the link between proliferation of weapons and corruption, illicit financial flows, transnational organized crime, terrorism, poaching and illegal exploitation of natural resources, and encouraged Member States to redouble their efforts aimed at promoting good governance, transparency, accountability and high level of professionalism across all sections of society, including governance of security and defence institutions. The PSC in its 860th meeting held on 18 July 2019 highlighted the urgency for Member States to enact appropriate regulations and administrative procedures to ensure effective control over the production, export, import, transit or retransfers of small arms and light weapons in order to prevent illegal manufacture of, and illicit trafficking in, small arms and light weapons or their diversion to non-authorized actors, such as terrorist groups, in line with Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

163. In this regard, the Commission, and in line with AU Strategy on the Control of Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, has established a Standing Committee on SALW and DDR as part of the efforts to enhance cooperation and synergy in the fight against proliferation SALW and in DDR. The Standing Committee, chaired by the Commission will, among others, coordinate the

efforts of RECs and RMs and other stakeholders in the fight against proliferation SALW as a contribution to Silencing of the Guns. [The Assembly may wish to commend the efforts of the AU Commission to enhance cooperation and synergy in the fight against illicit SALW and in DDR; stress the urgency for Member States to end the supply of SALW to unauthorized non state actors, and act for disarmament of these armed groups to put to an end of their actions which are threatening peace, security and territorial integrity of Member States; encourage Member States, the AU Commission, RECs/RMs with small arms mandate to further enhance their respective capacities towards undertaking integrated comprehensive measure to address this scourge in line with the regional and international instruments; unequivocally condemn all violations of arms embargo currently in Africa, particularly as the result in supplies to terrorist groups and criminal networks, undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States]

F. Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs)

164. Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) are part of the common security threats to AU Member States as stated in the Common African Defense and Security Policy. It should also be recalled that at the 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration of the Union of 2013, the Assembly undertook to maintain a nuclear-free Africa and called for global disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The African Commission on Nuclear Energy continues (AFCONE) has continued to work to support States parties to use nuclear energy in the areas of health, agriculture, education and energy, within the framework of the African Nuclear Weapons-Free Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba).

165. On the other hand, bio-terrorism remains a major threat in the Continent. The Peace and Security Department has deployed efforts, working closely with the Africa Centres for Disease Control, on the security of the samples of these pathogens in order to ensure that they do not end up in the hands of terrorists and other unauthorised hands.

166. Similarly, the possible use of toxic chemicals by terrorists remains a concern. In this regard, the Commission has worked and continues to work with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to support the capacities of Member States in the control of scheduled chemicals in the continent.

G. Prevention and combating of terrorism and violent extremism

167. As highlighted in the introduction of this Report, terrorism and its expansion within the Continent is now the single most destructive and disruptive scourge. The persistence of terrorism and violent extremism in the continent is a major concern for the AU as it remained the primary threat to peace, security, stability and development in the continent during 2019 and continues to be so. While the Central, Eastern, Northern and Western Africa regions recorded the most terrorist attacks and incidents, the Southern Africa region which, had in the past not recorded any incidents of terrorism, has begun to consistently record terrorist attacks and extremist incidents.

168. The Member States, RECs, RMs and the Commission, with the support of Partners, continue to exercise various strategic and operational initiatives at the national, regional, continental levels to mitigate the situation. The phenomenon has however, developed into a complex cocktail of ideology-driven acts of violence, transnational organized crime and insurgency. This is manifested in the multiplicity of armed groups with varying motives that are spreading and unleashing violence across the continent, causing death, displacement, destruction and disruption of communities and their economies.

169. In spite of the combined efforts within the Continent, the threat continues to mutate, thus challenging the response strategies in place. What is of concern in this context, is the rising phenomenon of inter-communal violence, especially between herders and farmers. Terrorists and extremists are taking advantage of this situation to continue their destructive activities. Furthermore, the gradual expansion of violent extremism into new territories by violent extremist groups is also of concern. Also the recent trends in which these groups launch attacks on the military and other security agencies is a change in tactics from previous attacks on soft targets.

170. The continued prevalence of a number of structural and governance gaps tend to make it rather very challenging to speed up the creation of the necessary socio-economic conditions that could prevent the spread of actions and influence of the terrorist groups. There is need to strengthen inter-state and regional cooperation in supporting the efforts of the various governments in this regard.

171. The Commission, including through the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), has continued to support the affected Member States in the areas of capacity building and strengthening institutions and capacities of relevant personnel. Of high significance in the AU efforts in preventing and combatting terrorism is the arrangements such as the Nouakchott and the Djibouti processes which provide Member States platforms for information and intelligence sharing as vital tools in combatting terrorism and extremism. In order to enhance AU efforts in the prevention and fight against terrorism and violent extremism, it is urgent to activate the PSC sub-committee on counter terrorism, in line with the PSC communique [PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCCXII)] adopted at its 812th meeting, held on 23 November 2018.

H. Combating Transnational Organized Crime

172. Transnational organized crime is a growing threat to peace, security and stability in the continent, affecting both state and human security. This is because criminals and their networks are taking advantage of modern technologies that have eased communication and transportation, and they now carry out illegal activities over increasing wider geographical areas. Transnational organized crime is an ever-changing industry, adapting to markets and creating new forms of crime. It transcends social, cultural, and geographical boundaries, and one knows no borders or rules.

173. Whereas money is often the primary motivation for individuals engaging in the various illegal activities, transnational organized crime is now an attraction to other groups like insurgents, extremists and terrorists who engage in illicit activities to finance violence, and other abuses like trafficking in humans. The growing evidence of linkages between criminal groups and terrorist networks aggravates the situation. This scenario has been observed mainly in the Sahel region.

174. In this regard, the Commission, including through the newly established African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), as a specialized institution on police cooperation, continues to facilitate enhanced cooperation among the police agencies of African Union Member States. So far, 48 Member States have established their AFRIPOL National Liaison Offices as provided for in the AFRIPOL Statute. The AFRIPOL Secretariat has trained the heads of the National Liaison Offices on their roles and responsibilities. Information Technology experts have also been trained on the African Police Communication System (AFSECOM). The basic communication equipment was given after the training. AFSECOM system enables sharing of information and data as part of the efforts to enhance cooperation in preventing and combating all forms of transnational organized crime. AFRIPOL has also been providing forums for exchange of views on, and trainings for police agencies in priority crime areas like combating cybercrime, counter-trafficking of drugs and arms, and anti-money laundering.

175. AFRIPOL has also established the Working Group on Cybercrime to provide advice to AFRIPOL Secretariat on technical, legal, policy, institutional and related matters on cyber security. This was in fulfillment of the recommendation adopted by the Second General Assembly of AFRIPOL that was held in Algiers, Algeria, in October 2018. The Secretariat is also working with the police agencies of the Member States to establish the working groups on transnational organized crime and on terrorism.

176. As part of the engagement with the AU Policy Organs, the AFRIPOL Secretariat also briefed the AU Peace and Security Council at its 845th meeting held on the 25th April 2019 under the theme "Threat of Transnational Organized Crime, Peace and Security in Africa". The PSC, among others commended the efforts by AFRIPOL to build and strengthen the capacities of the police agencies of the Member States, and underscored the need to further enhance the capacity of national justice systems, cooperation between and among border police and financial intelligence units, as well as to involve civil society and local communities in efforts aimed at preventing and combating terrorism and organized transnational crime. AFRIPOL Secretariat will endeavor to focus its capacity building programs in these areas.

177. It is understood that as long as transnational crimes continue to yield high profits with limited risks for criminals, it will continue to grow. It is in this regard that enhanced cooperation among the police agencies in the continent and beyond is prioritized by AFRIPOL, and AFRIPOL is entering into cooperation agreements with similar police cooperation agencies globally in order to increase interdictions and arrests of criminals wherever they go. The AU has signed a cooperation agreement with INTERPOL on cooperation with AFRIPOL, which will enable AFRIPOL to access the 17 databases of

INTERPOL. The two institutions have also developed a Joint Work Plan on common priorities, with the aim to strengthen the cooperation between the two parties in the area of combating criminal activities on the African continent.

178. The AU will also sign letter of Intent with AMERIPOL, which will provide a framework for mutual cooperation between AMERIPOL and AFRIPOL. AFRIPOL also continues to engage with other police cooperation institutions like EUROPOL, ASEANAPOL and GCC-POL. AFRIPOL is also engaging on cooperation with the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX) in areas of common interest such as border management and the fight against cross border crime.

179. In this regard, the Assembly may wish to welcome the initiatives by AFRIPOL in combating transnational organized crime, including in fighting trafficking of illicit arms, drugs, and contraband. The Assembly may wish to call upon the Commission to hasten the staffing of the AFRIPOL Secretariat to enable it to deliver on its mandate effectively. In this regard, the Assembly may wish to commend Algeria for seconding officers to AFRIPOL Secretariat and call upon All Member States to second officers to the Secretariat as provided for in the AFRIPOL Structure.

I. Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)

180. During the period under review, the AU continued to enhance its efforts with regard to continental early warning and early action. In this connection, the PSC received the latest horizon scanning briefing by CEWS in December 2019. Significant progress has also been made in enhancing collaboration with the early warning systems of the RECs/RMs through information exchange and implementation of joint activities.

181. As part of the implementation of the Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment (CSVRA) and the Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategy (CSVMS) Report of the Republic of Ghana, and following a request from the Government, the Commission is working closely with the Government of Ghana to provide the necessary support in the implementation of the Mitigation strategy. In this regard, the Assembly may wish to encourage member states to provide the necessary support to the Republic of Ghana and those countries that have not yet requested for support to fully take advantage of the structural conflict prevention tools developed by the Commission. Support to Member States in the establishment and strengthening of National Peace Infrastructures (NPIs), including early warning and response mechanisms, was carried out as part of the implementation of the decisions of the PSC on structural conflict prevention. The AUC provided data collection and analysis tools and software, as well as trainings on information gathering and early warning methodologies to seven (7) AU Member States.

J. Panel of the Wise (PoW)

182. The Panel of the Wise (PoW) and its subsidiary organs, the PAN-WISE and FEM-WISE, which is the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation, have

also continued to implement their Preventive Diplomacy and conflict prevention initiatives. The Panel of the Wise (PoW) held their Statutory Meeting on the margins of the High Level Retreat for AU Envoys in Djibouti on 28 October 2019. A PanWise thematic workshop on Migration Peace and Security was organized from 28 to 29 November 2019. In order to further enhance efforts towards conflict prevention in the Continent, it is essential that there should be regular interaction between the PSC and the PoW. In this context, these interactions could be conducted twice a year.

183. The 3rd FemWise Africa General Assembly Meeting also took place on 26-27 November 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the theme 'Silencing the Guns by 2020: Consolidating and Sustaining the Operational Structures of FemWise – Africa'. The objective of the meeting was to review the progress on the Operationalization of the Network and to initiate the process of establishing the regional and national Chapters of the FemWise- Africa Network. So far, 395 members have successfully completed the accreditation process and have been formally accepted into the Network, and are ready to be deployed across the continent for mediation and conflict prevention missions. Since 2018, the Secretariat has organized three induction and basic mediation training sessions at the AUC headquarters. The Secretariat has developed a Framework for the decentralization of the Network through the Establishment of Regional and National Chapters. In this regard, ECOWAS launched ECOWAS-FemWise in November 2019 in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

184. The AU Commission has deployed members of FemWise-Africa on short and long-term deployments. Short-term deployments have mainly been for election observation missions in Benin, Mauritania, Senegal, Nigeria, DRC, Mauritius and South Africa. Long-term deployments of 1 year took effect from September 2019 with two (2) members deployed to the AU Liaison Office in Khartoum, one member to the AULO, in Juba, and one member to the AUC Headquarters in Addis Ababa to support the work of Sudan and South Sudan Desk. Processes are underway to deploy more members to other contexts.

K. African Union Border Program

185. Through the African Union Border Program (AUBP), the Commission has been supporting Member States in facilitating a series of joint boundary meetings, including between Zimbabwe and Mozambique; South Sudan and Sudan; Zambia and Zimbabwe; Botswana and Zimbabwe; Uganda and South Sudan and the Riparian States of Lake Tanganyika – Tanzania, Zambia, Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo, aimed at delimiting and demarcating their common boundaries in order to meet the 2022 deadline for the demarcation of all African boundaries, as set by the Ministers in Charge of Border Issues, in line with the Declaration on the African Union Border Programme and the Modalities for pursuit and acceleration of its implementation.

186. The AUBP has also disseminated an annual questionnaire to all African Member States on the status of their boundaries to update the existing database. As of now, the AUBP has only received five (5) replies from Member States. The Programme has also sent out questionnaires to assess the capacity building needs of its Member States to

manage their borders. The purpose of this assessment is to establish a baseline for the development of AUBP's training and research programme. In addition, AUBP commissioned the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) to conduct a study on current border and territorial conflicts in the Horn of Africa. It is expected that this study will provide an inventory of border conflicts and propose concrete measures for their management and resolution by the authorized organs of the African Union. Lastly, the 5th AUBP-RECs/RMs Coordination Meeting on Border Governance in Africa held in September 2019 with the major aim of reinforcing and consolidating partnership, coordinating efforts on border related issues, and reviewing the progress of implementation of the AUBP-RECs/RMs Roadmap 2018-2022.

L. Women, Peace and Security

187. The PSC has remained active in the promotion the issue of women, peace and security in Africa. As it has been its tradition, the PSC held several meetings on the role of women in peace and security issues in the Continent with close engagement with the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security.

188. During the reporting period, the Continental Result Framework (CRF) for monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, was launched on 4 February 2019, during the 32nd Assembly of the AU Heads of State and Government, following its adoption by the PSC at its 772nd meeting held on 16 May 2018. Subsequently, the Special Envoy undertook a number of activities in the course of 2019 to disseminate the CRF, to enhance its visibility and recognition and to advocate for its use by Member States. The first report of the Chairperson of the Commission on CFR was presented to the PSC at its 887th meeting held on 17 October 2019. Council commended the report and emphasized that it creates a base for Member States to streamline the role of women in peace and security issues in national programmes. Council encouraged all Member States to engage the Office of the Special Envoy on the use of the CRF.

189. Furthermore, during the reporting period, the PSC held at its 862nd meeting on 23 July 2019 in which Council agreed to organize annually an Open session on conflict-related sexual violence, which will serve as an annual forum for taking stock of progress made and challenges being faced in the efforts aimed at ending sexual violence in armed conflicts.

190. The Assembly may wish to appeal to AU Member States to take the opportunity of the year 2020, under the theme 'silencing the guns in Africa' to take stock of the progress made in the implementation of the Continental Results Framework as the African mechanism for measuring fulfilment of commitments by Member States, in line with relevant provisions of AU Agenda 2063 relating to Resolution 1325 (2000) and AU policies on prevention and combating sexual violence.

M. Implementation of the Gender, Peace and Security Programme (GPSP)

191. The Commission's Gender, Peace and Security Programme (GPSP) continued to increase participation in peace and security and enhancing protection in conflict and post-conflict situations. In October and December 2018, GPSP field visits were undertaken in the Sahel region with a view to evaluating and documenting challenges encountered, successes achieved, best practices, and lessons learned with regards to projects related to gender mainstreaming and the WPS agenda. In the CAR, the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Family and Child Protection in collaboration with Commission's Liaison Office seized the occasion of the International Women's Day to popularize and promote the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR signed in February 2019. The International Women's Day was successfully used to set in motion a series of initiatives related to the popularization of the Khartoum Agreement and the role of women in the implementation of the peace process.

192. Experience has shown that efforts should be intensified to ensure that PCRD issues are addressed in a holistic manner, including those relating to abuse, trauma and other psychosocial needs of victims of violent conflicts. There is a strong imperative to commit necessary resources to address these indirect effects of conflict. In the same light, there is a need to realign ongoing AU stabilisation efforts with the PCRD policy to ensure holistic and fit for purpose approaches in our interventions. These efforts should be invariably guided by appropriate AU policies which would simultaneously avoid unnecessary overlaps in our strategic interventions.

193. The Assembly may wish to encourage Member States to contribute towards the African Solidarity Initiative Resource Mobilization Framework. The Assembly may wish to encourage the NEPAD/AU Development Agency to liaise closely with the Commission, the AU Humanitarian Agency and the AU Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development to ensure coherence and synergy of post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts. The Assembly may further wish to encourage more strategic engagement by member states on SSR processes to ensure well-coordinated, resourced, structured approaches and develop sustained monitoring and evaluation capacities in countries emerging out of conflict.

194. The Assembly may wish to recall previous decisions and pronouncements on women, peace and security in Africa. The Assembly may wish to encourage Member States to implement the AU Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP) to achieve sustainable peace, justice, reconciliation, social cohesion and healing in line with Article 4 (o) of the Constitutive Act of the AU, which calls for peaceful resolution of conflicts, respect for the sanctity of human life, and the condemnation and rejection of impunity.

N. Children in armed conflict in Africa

195. The African Union Peace and Security Council has recognized the protection of the rights and welfare of children as an imperative for sustainable peace and security in

Africa. To ensure better protection of the rights and welfare of children in situations of conflicts, the PSC has adopted several decisions with varying policy implications. In addition, the Assembly, in February 2019, requested the Commission to develop a continental monitoring, reporting and accountability mechanism, as well as establish a child protection architecture as a subset of the APSA. In addition to PSC and Assembly decisions, specific regional treaties on children, international treaties with implications for the protection of children, as well as UNSC Resolutions provide numerous policy frameworks for the protection of children in situations of conflict. Implementing these decisions and resolutions by the Commission could be daunting in the absence of a one-stop-policy document that brings together and contextualize all these decisions and resolutions in a manner that provides clear, concise and concrete guidance for action by leaders and personnel

196. Furthermore, the PSC has been championing the issue of protection of children. It has institutionalized and regularized an annual open session on the plight of children in conflict contexts in Africa. During such open sessions, the PSC always receives reports from the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and other various stakeholders including Save the Children. It is in the same vein that the 7th High Level Seminar held in Libreville in January 2020 discussed issues relating to the protection of children in conflict situations in Africa. It can be recalled that over the past few years, the PSC has repeatedly stressed the need for all concerned stakeholders to strictly comply with the various continental and international human rights frameworks, including, in this respect, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Furthermore, the PSC has also repeatedly underscored the importance for all Member States to guarantee economic, social and cultural rights including to children refugees and those in the camps of internally displaced persons.

197. During the period under review, the AU Member States continued to reinforce the efforts and actions to champion the rights of children in Africa. To this effect, some Member States, namely, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, as well as partners, established a Group Friends of Children Affected by Armed Conflict.. The Group aims at coordinating efforts of the AU and partners in protecting the rights of children on the Continent. It should also be noted that, efforts are also underway to appoint a Special Envoy on Children in Armed Conflicts, in line with the persistent request by the PSC to the Chairperson of the Commission.

198. On its part, the AU Commission, through the Peace and Security Department has undertaken the following activities towards ensuring the protection of children in the Continent:

- completed the integration of child protection into AU Peace Support Operation documents, such as the draft AU Peace Support Operation Doctrine and Draft Guidelines to TCCs/PCCS;
- conducted advanced child protection training of 25 Child Protection Practitioners from 21 African countries. Three of these have already been deployed to AU Peace Support Operations;

- conducted training for 21 senior ASF military, police and civilian leadership on child protection and a training on child protection for AUC staff members and formed the African Union Coordination Group on Children in Situations of Conflict;
- working with the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, developed a harmonized child protection training manual; and
- established the AU Working Group on Children in Situations of Conflict bringing together AU family, the UN and non-governmental agencies, institutions and organizations; also formed the AUC Child Protection Focal Points bringing together focal persons from the different AUC departments.

199. The Assembly may wish to commend the AU Member States and the AU Commission for the progress made in ensuring that the issue of protection of children is cross cutting in the work of the AU and the RECs/RMs, as well as in Member States. The Assembly may also wish to commend the efforts of partners in supporting AU's efforts and request them to coordinate their efforts through the AU Commission with a view to achieving the set goals. The Assembly may wish to request the AU Commission to integrate child protection into Silencing the Guns project/campaign and the theme of the AU for the year 2020. The Assembly may further wish to request the AU Commission to develop a comprehensive policy on child protection in AU peace support operations that will provide clear, concise and concrete guidance on the roles, responsibilities of and specific tasks that are required from AU peace support operation leadership and personnel to better protect children in situations of conflict and effectively address legitimate security concerns of member states that arises from the roles children play in conflicts in Africa and submit to the PSC for its consideration. The Assembly may wish to reiterate its call for the Chairperson of the Commission to appoint a special envoy for children in armed conflict.

O. Youth, Peace and Security

200. The Youth for Peace (Y4P) Africa program of the AU-PSD seeks to implement Article 17 of the Africa Youth Charter (AYC) of July 2006 and UNSC resolution 2250. It aims to dissuade youth from violence and facilitate their meaningful participation in all spectrums of peace and security. In furtherance of the Assembly Decision of February 2019 (Assembly/AU/Dec.718 (XXXII)) and the AUC Chairperson's '1 Million By 2021 Initiative', the program has facilitated training for youth in peacebuilding including conflict analysis, dialogue and mediation, as well as human rights and gender, amongst others. In collaboration with relevant departments within the AU Commission and RECs/RMs, the Y4P Africa Program has advanced efforts to implement communique [PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCCVII)] adopted by the PSC at its 807th meeting held on 8 November 2018, dedicated to Youth, Peace and Security (YPS). These include finalizing a continental framework on YPS; conducting the continental study on the roles and contributions of youth to peace and security and the selection of five (5) regional African Youth Ambassadors for Peace (AYAP).

201. During the 895th meeting of the PSC held on 15 November 2019, on youth, peace and security, the Y4P Africa program presented the five selected AYAP to Council for its

endorsement. The Y4P program also presented progress reports on the draft continental framework on youth, peace and security and the study on the roles and contributions of youth to peace and security, which were reviewed by the Committee of Experts of the PSC from 17 to 19 December 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya. The Documents will be then presented to the PSC for consideration.

202. Furthermore, as part of efforts to effectively implement the program, a five-year (2020 – 2024) continental strategic plan with clear milestones is being developed in tandem with the draft continental framework and its implementation plan. In summary, the Y4P programme has renewed the new impetus on the involvement of youth in peace and security issues in the Continent and this progress need to be encouraged.

203. Moreover, as part of the support to the Government of Ethiopia to empower the youth to play a constructive role in the peace and security efforts of the country as well as to foster national unity, cohesion, peace and stability, the AU Y4P Africa program in collaboration with the Ministry of Peace organized a workshop to facilitate the promotion of intra and cross-regional inclusive youth dialogue and experience sharing of best practices in the area of nation building, governance and peacebuilding.

204. In this regard, the Assembly may wish to request the AU Commission to institutionalize the program within the Peace and Security Department with the designation of dedicated desk to coordinate the efforts of all stakeholders and facilitate its full operationalization, with a view to meet the increasing expectations of youth across the continent. Furthermore, the Assembly may wish to endorse the five African Youth Ambassadors for Peace representing the five regions of the AU and encourage them to continue to promote the role of the youth in the Continent on peace and security issues in line with the relevant AU instruments.

P. Climate Change and peace and security in Africa

205. The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) has also been seized of the threat of climate change. In this respect, the Council dedicated its 877th meeting held on 10 September 2019, to an open session on the theme: “Climate Change and its impacts on Small Island Developing States. At that meeting the PSC reiterated its call for the support to international and regional commitments and agreements on climate change, in particular the Paris Agreement and, in this regard, called upon the international community to fulfil the pledge of USD 100 billion per year, to finance climate change actions at national, regional and international levels. The PSC requested the relevant AU organs and the Chairperson of the AU Commission, in consultation with Members States, to explore innovative means and ways of financing climate actions in Africa, including partnering with the private sector to fill in the current funding gap, in order to provide the three Commissions emanating from African action Summit (Marrakech 2016), the African Adaptation Initiative (AAI), the African Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI) and the Initiative for Adaptation of African Agriculture (AAA) with all necessary support.

206. The PSC noted with deep concern that Small Island Developing States are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change including rising sea levels, coastal erosion, ocean acidification and weather extremes. In this regard, Council underscored the need for Member States to increase investments in adaptation and resilience programmes and underlined the need for integration of Blue Economy as a key component of national development and investment plans and programmes, in order to build resilience against the negative effects of Climate change.

207. The PSC also devoted its 828th meeting, held on 19 February 2019, to an open session on the theme: “Climate Change Funding in line with the Africa Adaptation Initiative (AAI)”. At that meeting, the PSC reiterated its call to the Member States to accelerate the implementation of all existing international and regional commitments and agreements relating to the mitigation of the adverse effects of climate change, including the Paris Agreement, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (2015-2030).

208. In light of the foregoing, the Assembly may wish to express deep concern over the lack of necessary resources for addressing the negative impact of climate change ; reiterate the call for sustained support for international and regional commitments and agreements on climate change, in particular the Paris Agreement. The Assembly may also wish to call upon the members of the international community to fulfil the pledge of USD 100 billion per year, to finance climate change actions at national, regional and international levels. The Assembly may wish to stress the importance of coordination and complementarity of initiatives, as well as the need for better institutional cohesion between the different entities working on climate change and underlined the need for the AU Commission to be more actively involved in the continental institutional architecture on climate change, to play a central role and to integrate climate change in all its activities, in particular in the areas of early warning and prevention of conflicts and violent crises linked to climate change. Furthermore, the Assembly may wish to direct the relevant AU organs and the Chairperson of the AU Commission, in consultation with Members States, to explore innovative means and ways of financing climate actions in Africa.

Q. Nexus between development, peace and security in Africa

209. The Peace and Security Council has also been paying attention to the nexus between development, peace and security. In this context, the PSC devoted its 883rd meeting, held at ministerial level on 27 September 2019, on the margins of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, to consideration of «*the Interdependence between peace, security and development: towards a collective engagement for action*».

210. At that meeting, the PSC welcomed the initiatives taken by the Lake Chad Basin Region, through the Regional Strategy for the Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience of the Boko Haram-affected Areas, as well as the comprehensive approach adopted by the G5-Sahel and the decision adopted on 14 September 2019, by the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States

(ECOWAS) on the fight against terrorism, which decided to mobilize one billion US dollars for a comprehensive and holistic action plan to fight against terrorism in the region. The PSC called for effective implementation of the AU Policy Framework for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), emphasized the need for the AU to continue mobilizing a united African front against the negative effects of climate change at the national, regional, continental and global levels, through resilience and adaptation, within the context of the 2015 Paris Agreement and the support for existing African initiatives and strategies, such as the first African Summit for Action, held in Marrakech on 16 November 2016 and its three Commissions dedicated to the Sahel Region, the Congo Basin and the Island States.

211. Furthermore, the PSC underlines the imperative of mainstreaming the dimension of peace, security and development in the continued implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to silence the guns in Africa, given its positive impact on the stabilization of the Continent. The Council requested the Chairperson of the Commission to further enhance the collaboration and coordination between the different departments within the AU Commission and AU Specialized Agencies to support the PSC, taking into account the interdependence between peace, security and development, whilst carrying out its mandate, and requestd the Chairperson of the Commission to submit, annually, a report on the measures being taken to this end.

212. In this regard, the Assembly may wish to underline the increasing link between peace, security and development as well as the climate change effects in the Continent, request the Chairperson of the Commission to further enhance the collaboration and coordination between the different Departments within the AU Commission and AU Specialized Agencies to support the PSC, taking into account the interdependence between peace, security and development, whilst carrying out its mandate; and for the Chairperson of the to submit an annual report on the measures taken to this end.

V. CONCLUSION

213. This report has sought to update the Assembly on the developments on Africa's peace and security landscape during the period from February 2019 to February 2020. While some countries in conflict, as well as those at the post conflict stage, have witnessed progress, others have continued to lag behind and thus require sustained attention of the PSC and all the Member States. The situations in Libya and South Sudan require very urgent attention in order to put them back on the path of sustainable peace and development.

214. Indeed, current continental approaches towards managing and resolving conflicts cannot be considered a panacea. Therefore, there is an urgent need for the AU to continue to explore new strategic approaches to conflict management and resolution in the ever changing political and security landscape on the Continent. This should help the PSC to deal with emerging threats such as the scourges of terrorism, violent extremism, transnational organized crime and trafficking, as well as the negative impacts of climate change, which have assumed an unprecedented scale of expansion and intensity within

the Continent. Furthermore, the efforts deployed during 2019 to strengthen the work of the PSC on conflict prevention and peace consolidation, and the combined promotion of development, peace and security in Africa, is a welcome development that should be nurtured and sustained.

215. The establishment of the African Union Center for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Cairo, is indeed, a significant achievement that will assist countries emerging from conflict to consolidate their peace and advance their socio-economic agenda. Despite the gains made, the Continent continues to face a plethora of problems, including external political and military interference, which is not consistent with the AU texts and policies on defence, peace, security and safety within the Continent. This growing phenomenon is a concern that the Assembly should pay attention to, with the urgency it deserves, given its implications for the future stability, cohesion and solidarity in the Continent.

216. Lastly, in line with vision and provisions in the AU Constitutive Act and the PSC Protocol, for Africa to have a single mechanisms for its defence, peace, security and safety, it is welcome evolution that the AU and REC/RMs have continued to pay high attention to the imperative of the full operationalization of the ASF, including harmonization of the ACRIC within the ASF. Efforts to develop various policies for the functioning of the ASF, particularly the new Doctrine for Peace Support Operations, as well as towards the establishment of the ASF Regional Logistic Depots are highly commendable. In this connection, continued efforts to ensure readiness for deployment of the ASF Regional Standby Brigades are also encouraged.

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

The Assembly,

1. **TAKES NOTE** of the report of the Peace and Security Council on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa and **ENCOURAGES** the Peace and Security Council (PSC), working with the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), with the support of the African Union (AU) Commission to continue enhancing efforts to prevent, manage and resolve conflict and crisis situations. The Assembly further **URGES** the PSC to continue providing strategic guidance on the implementation of post-conflict stabilization, reconstruction and development programmes in countries emerging from conflicts;

2. **COMMENDS** the efforts being deployed by H.E. President Felix Tshisekedi and other leaders of the region to foster peace and stability in the DRC and also to promote good neighbourly relations with and between the countries of the region. In this context, the Assembly **REITERATES** the imperative of full implementation of the 2013 Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. The Assembly **EXPRESSES** its gratitude to MONUSCO, bilateral and multilateral partners of the DRC, for their continued support for the stabilisation of the DRC, as evidenced by the recent peace and stability gains made in the Kasai region. The Assembly **CALLS** on AU Member States and the larger international community to continue to support the current efforts of the DRC, including in infrastructure development and socio-economic recovery, particularly in the regions affected by insecurity. The Assembly **ENCOURAGES** Member States to also support efforts in the fight against the Ebola Virus disease outbreak in parts of the DRC. The Assembly **CALLS ON** the international community to provide financial support to the DDR programme in DRC and encourage all partners to also participate in the Conference for Trade and Investment of the Great Lake region scheduled to take place in Kigali, March 2020.

3. **ACKNOWLEDGES** the steps taken by the Government of Burundi in addressing the country's challenges, particularly with regard to preparations for the upcoming elections in 2020, including the establishment, on 31 August 2018 of an Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI), in line with the Burundian Electoral Code; and a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of 13 members, in accordance with the 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement; the adoption of the Kayanza Roadmap for the elections; and the publication of the electoral calendar by CENI, among others. The Assembly **COMMENDS** President Pierre Nkurunziza for honoring his commitment not to enlist his candidature in the upcoming 2020 presidential election. The Assembly **CALLS UPON** the Government and opposition groups to intensify efforts to finalize a consensual and inclusive agreement that is consistent with the spirit and content of the Arusha Agreement. The Assembly **ENCOURAGES** the East African Community (EAC), the AU and the United Nations (UN) to closely align efforts in order to give the much-needed

impetus to the political process in Burundi. The Assembly **COMMENDS** the work of the AU Human Rights Observers and Military Experts deployed in the country since 2015 for contributing to promoting cohesion and peace in the country. The Assembly **REITERATES ITS CALL** on the European Union to lift the sanctions imposed on Burundi, in order to create conducive conditions for facilitating socio-economic recovery in the country.

4. URGES all Central African stakeholders to ensure that the 2020-2021 general elections are organized as scheduled, in strict compliance with Central African laws and the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation of 6 February 2019. In this context, the Assembly **COMMENDS** President Faustin Archange Touadera for his efforts to build inclusive consensus in his country, notably through dialogue he initiated with the former Heads of State of CAR, namely, François Bozizé, Michel Djotodia and Catherine Samba-Panza, based on the Peace Agreement as the sole reference of this dialogue. The Assembly **ACKNOWLEDGES** the progress made in the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation; **COMMENDS** the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui for his continuous efforts together with the United Nations Under-Secretary for Peacekeeping and **URGES** the Central African parties to intensify dialogue, with the support of the Guarantors of the Agreement. The Assembly **COMMENDS** the countries of the region of their support to the implementation of the Peace Agreement and the convening of the Joint Commissions to this end. The Assembly **URGES** the MINUSCA to support the deployment of the AU Observers; **FURTHER URGES** the Peacebuilding Commission in particular, Egypt, in its capacity as Vice-Chairman of the UNPBC and the Kingdom of Morocco, Chair of the UN Configuration of the Central African Republic (CAR), , for their efforts in support of the CAR and in defending the interests of African countries on the UNPBC agenda, including through the African Group in New York, as well as the international partners to deliver the support promised to the AU Mission in Bangui and the launching of development projects. The Assembly **REQUESTS** the AU Member States and the larger international community to provide technical and financial support to the Central African authorities, in order to facilitate the successful organization of upcoming elections and economic reconstruction in the CAR.

5. COMMENDS the Government of Cameroon for convening the National Dialogue and dispatching the peace caravan within the country, as well as granting of special status to the western part of the country ridden with instability in the spirit to give peace a chance. The Assembly **ALSO COMMENDS** the Government for releasing the political leaders and prisoners of the separatist self-declared “Ambazonian Republic” from the north-west and south west regions. The Assembly **REQUESTS** the Chairperson of the Commission to continue his efforts in assisting the Cameroonian people to find a durable solution to the crisis in their country and to regularly report to the PSC.

6. REITERATES the readiness of the AU to continue its facilitation role in The Comoros, with a view to solving all differences among the stakeholders and **ENCOURAGES** the PSC, with the support of the AU Commission to continue accompanying The Comoros in its efforts to advance political dialogue to find consensual solutions for the challenges

being faced. In this context, the Assembly **APPEALS** to all Comorian stakeholders to return to the negotiating table without any preconditions with a view, among others, to finding a negotiated solution to their differences, in the interest of promoting political stability and reconciliation in the country. The Assembly **ENCOURAGES** H.E. President Azali to resume dialogue with the opposition with a view to improving the political situation in the country and to release all political prisoners in order to promote consensus in the conduct of the affairs of the State.

7. TAKES NOTE of the steady progress in Somalia and, in this regard, **ENCOURAGES** the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS), as well as the Federal Member States (FMS), to continue to promote consensual solutions to the challenges facing their country. The Assembly **APPEALS** to international partners to continue to assist the Somalis and to refrain from any actions that may undermine current efforts to end the conflict in that country. The Assembly **UNDERScores** the need to expedite the generation of adequate Somali Security Forces to undertake joint operations with AMISOM, hold newly liberated territories, protect population centers, and secure the Main Supply Routes (MSRs), with a view to creating conducive conditions that will enable the Somali national defence and security forces to effectively takeover security responsibilities from AMISOM by 2021. The Assembly **COMMENDS** AMISOM and Somali Security Forces for downgrading the capacities of the Al Shabaab terrorist group and **LOOK FORWARD** to continue this close collaboration in the fight. The Assembly **STRONGLY CONDEMN** the terrorist attacks perpetrated in Somalia and against AMISOM. Furthermore, the Assembly **EXPRESSES** its condolence to the bereaved families and **WISHES** speedy recovery to the injured. The Assembly further **COMMENDS** the Troop and Police Contributing Countries of AMISOM for their sacrifices and commitments towards the restoration of peace and stability in Somalia.

8. CONGRATULATES The Sudan for having been elected as Chair of IGAD and reaffirm its support for the new role of Sudan and its continued cooperation in working for peace, stability and development of the region and the continent. The Assembly **COMMENDS** the Transitional Sovereign Council and the Transitional Government of Sudan for their ongoing cooperation, commitment and coordinated engagement in addressing the multiple challenges facing the country. The Assembly **ENCOURAGES** all Sudanese stakeholders to maintain the momentum thus far mobilized, particularly strong coordination and cooperation among the transitional authorities, as this would restore the confidence of the people of Sudan in national institutions. The Assembly **PAYS TRIBUTE** to the efforts deployed by the Chairperson of the Union, H.E. President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi of Egypt, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, in his capacity as Chair of IGAD, as well as by the Chairperson of the Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat for their coordinated efforts towards finding a solution to the crisis in Sudan. The Assembly **WELCOMES** the hosting in the Republic of South Sudan, under the auspices of President Salvar Kiir Mayardit, of the negotiations between the Sudan Transitional Government and Sudan armed movements, and **EXPRESSES** its appreciation for the efforts being deployed by the IGAD and countries of the region. The Assembly **STRONGLY APPEALS** to those countries which imposed economic and financial sanctions on the Republic of Sudan to immediately and totally remove the sanctions. In this context, the Assembly

CALLS ON the Government of the United States of America (USA) to remove Sudan from its List of State Sponsors of Terrorism (SST), in order to facilitate flow of investments in Sudan to promote sustainable peace and development. The Assembly also welcomes the steps being taken by the Government of Sudan to attract investors and in this context acknowledges the dialogue that has been opened between the Governments of USA and Sudan to address these issues. The Assembly **REQUESTS** the Chairperson of the Commission, in coordination with IGAD, to continue with his efforts in supporting Sudan during the transitional period.

9. COMMENDS the Government of Sudan and UNAMID for their collaborative efforts and commitment in implementing the UN Security Council resolution 2429 on the drawdown and also commend the PSC and the UN Security Council for extending the mandate of UNAMID until 31 October 2020. The Assembly **UNDERScores** the significance of sustaining peace in Darfur through investment in sustainable development projects. In this regard, the Assembly **STRONGLY ENCOURAGES** the AU Commission, together with the United Nations, to undertake strategic initiatives that will ensure effective resource mobilization, including funds for Darfur's stabilization and development. In this regard, the Assembly **STRESSES** that the draw down should be completed in such a way that it preserves the gains being made in Darfur, within the overall search for peace, stability and development in Sudan.

10. ACKNOWLEDGES the efforts deployed by H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda and the Head of the Sovereign Council of the Sudan, H.E. Abdel-Fatah Al-Burhan in convening the Entebbe Summit in November 2019, which, among other, extended by hundred days the pre-transitional period for the South Sudanese stakeholders to address pending issues before the formation of a Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU). The Assembly **COMMENDS** H.E. President Salva Kiir Mayardit and Dr. Riek Machar for reaching consensus during the Entebbe Summit. The Assembly **COMMENDS** the Government of South Sudan for the disbursements made for the implementation of the Peace Agreement and **ENCOURAGES** it to complete the disbursement. The Assembly **COMMENDS** the African Union High-Level Ad Hoc Committee for South Sudan (C5) comprising its Members namely, South Africa as Chair, Algeria, Chad, Nigeria and Rwanda for their continued support to the South Sudan peace process, including through regular visits undertaken in the course of 2019. The Assembly also **COMMENDS** all Member States which have extended financial and material support to the Government of South Sudan, including Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa and, in this context, the Assembly **APPEALS** to other Member States to also make contributions. In the same context, the Assembly **ALSO APPEALS** to the larger international community to further extend financial, material and logistical support to the South Sudan peace process, especially the transitional security arrangements to facilitate the process of cantonment, screening, training and deployment of the South Sudanese Necessary United Forces (NUF), for the protection of officials during the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

11. UNDERScores the imperative of the formation of the Transitional Government by 22 February 2020 and **EXPRESSES CONCERN** over the delays in pending pre-

transitional tasks that are crucial for the formation of the R-TGoNU, particularly those relating to transitional security arrangements and the determination of the number and boundaries of states. The Assembly **STRONGLY CALLS** on the South Sudanese parties to continue dialogue to address pending issues, critical to the full implementation of the Revitalized Agreement and the establishment of the R-TGoNU. The Assembly **REAFFIRMS** the solidarity of the AU with the people and the Government of South Sudan in their aspirations to restore lasting peace and stability, and advance development in their country.

12. WELCOMES the cessation of hostilities by the Libyan parties and **ENCOURAGES** the parties to finalize a permanent ceasefire. The Assembly **ENDORSES** the Communiqué of the 8th Meeting of the AU High Level Committee for Libya, held on 30 January 2020, in Brazzaville, Congo, which, among others, underlines the imperative for an inclusive national dialogue and reconciliation strongly condemned the continued fighting in Libya and the external interference that undermines peace efforts in Libya. The Assembly **ALSO WELCOMES** the outcomes of the Conference on Libya held in Berlin in January 2020, especially the commitment by international partners to respect the embargo on arms and to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of Libya. The Assembly **CALLS UPON** the AU High Level Committee for Libya to continue to support the all-inclusive Libyan-led and Libyan-owned political process as a way forward to a permanent ceasefire, and also, as a prior condition to the reconciliation forum. The Assembly **UNDERLINES** the role of the neighboring countries of Libya, in the search for a solution to the current crisis, and **WELCOMES** the recent meeting held on 23 January 2020 in Algiers, Algeria. The Assembly **REAFFIRMS** the AU position that there is no military solution to the current crisis in Libya and **CALLS** for enhancement of efforts, including a permanent ceasefire, towards finding a political and peaceful settlement of the conflict in Libya in line with the provisions of the Agreement signed by the Libyan parties in 2015, in Skhirat, Morocco. The Assembly **REQUESTS** the Chairperson of the Commission to play his role and to take the necessary concrete measures, in close consultation with the UN, to ensure the effective involvement of the AU, with a view to resolving the Libyan crisis.

13. COMMENDS the countries of the Southern Africa region for sustaining peace and stability, including through enhancement of good governance, combating corruption and illicit financial flows and reinforced inter-state cooperation, which manifests the collective commitment in the region to silencing the guns. The Assembly **ENCOURAGES** the countries of region to further enhance mitigation strategies against natural disasters and drought and to continue working together to countering terrorism, violent extremism, radicalization, trafficking and trans-national organized crime. The Assembly **APPLAUDS** the Mozambicans for the successful organization of peaceful elections in October 2019 and encourages them to continue their efforts in implementing the Peace Agreement and advance peace, reconciliation and stability in the country, which would generate conditions more conducive for socio-economic recovery and development.

14. APPLAUDS the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Authority of Heads of State and Government for their continued commitment and efforts in finding

a lasting solution to the prolonged political and institutional crisis in Guinea-Bissau. The Assembly **CONGRATULATES** the people and Government of Guinea Bissau for the successful holding of a peaceful first round of presidential elections in Guinea-Bissau on 24 November 2019 and the run-off on 29 December 2019. The Assembly **STRONGLY CALLS** for a genuine all-inclusive dialogue, among all political actors, as the only viable alternative for finding durable solutions and strengthen the institutions of the State. In line with the announcement made by the National Electoral Commission of Guinea Bissau, regarding the outcome of the presidential elections, the Assembly **CONGRATULATES** Mr. Umaro Embalo for having being elected as President of Guinea Bissau.. The Assembly **URGES** the Government of Guinea Bissau to further strengthen national law enforcement mechanisms, in order to enable them to more effectively discharge their mandates, particularly in addressing drug-related crimes. The Assembly further **EXPRESSES DEEP CONCERN** over drug-trafficking and related crimes in Guinea Bissau, which contribute to destabilization, thereby fuelling instability in the country.

15.COMMENDS the efforts of the Republic of The Gambia towards consolidating democracy in the country through the current reforms process which will significantly contribute towards promoting stability and economic growth. The Assembly **ALSO COMMENDS** the AU Commission for its continued support, through the African Union Technical Support Team to the Gambia (AUTSTG) and other mechanisms, to the efforts of the Government of The Gambia, towards consolidating peace and security, particularly with regard to strengthening public institutions, in the country. The Assembly **ENCOURAGES** the Government of The Gambia to continue engaging in dialogue with the ex-coalition members and political parties, in order to promote political stability and create a conducive environment for peace and economic development in the country.

16.EXPRESS CONDOLENCES to the countries of the Sahel region for the lives lost due to terrorist attacks and other incidences of inter-communal violence and **AFFIRMS** the continued support of the AU through its various organs and programs. The Assembly **EXPRESSES DEEP CONCERN** over the persistent acts of terrorism, the growth of banditry, trafficking of all types and cross-border crime in the Sahel region. The Assembly **COMMENDS** the Malian parties for the progress in the inclusive national dialogue and **ENCOURAGES** them to continue with the reforms process, with a view to building confidence among communities, within the framework of the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, which emanated from the Algiers Process. The Assembly **URGES** the Malian parties to redouble efforts in the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. The Assembly **EMPHASIZES THE NEED** for continued support and advocacy efforts for regional initiatives, notably the ECOWAS initiatives to counter the spread of terrorism in the Sahel, through enhanced financing with the pledge of 1 billion US dollars made during the Ouagadougou Summit held on 14 September 2019. In this context, the Assembly **ENCOURAGES** ECOWAS Member States to honour their pledges in order to enhance the fight against terrorism in the Sahel. Furthermore, the Assembly **URGES** the partners, on the basis of priorities defined by the AU, to continue providing support the efforts against terrorism, banditry, trafficking and trans-national organized crime. In this regard, the Assembly **WELCOMES** the Bamako Declaration on Access to Natural Resources and

Conflict between Communities adopted on 29 November 2019, in Bamako, Mali, as adopted by the AU Ministerial meeting.

17. COMMENDS the PSC for its continued efforts towards the full operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF), including the continued provision of strategic guidance for the harmonization of ACIRC within the ASF Framework. The Assembly **ALSO COMMENDS** the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) Volunteer Nations for its continued compliance with the relevant decisions of the Assembly and PSC communiques, with a view to expediting the harmonization process, which should complete by June 2020. The Assembly **FURTHER COMMENDS** the Commission for the efforts deployed in the development of various policies for the functioning of the ASF, including the new Doctrine for Peace Support Operations and the new Concept of Operations, as well as for efforts towards the establishment of the ASF Regional Logistic Depots. In the same context, the Assembly **COMMENDS** the ASF Regional Standby Brigades for the continued efforts to ensure readiness for deployment.

18. WELCOMES the initiatives by AFRIPOL in combating transnational organized crime, including in fighting trafficking of illicit arms, drugs, and contraband. The Assembly **CALLS UPON** the Commission to expedite the staffing of the AFRIPOL Secretariat to enable it to more effectively deliver on its mandate. In this regard, the Assembly **COMMENDS** Algeria for seconding officers to AFRIPOL Secretariat and **ENCOURAGES** all other Member States also to second officers to the AFRIPOL Secretariat.

19. The Assembly **ENCOURAGES** the Member States, with the support of the AU Commission, as well as the RECs/RMs to redouble their efforts in mainstreaming child protection in their programmes. In this regard, the Assembly **REQUESTS** the AU Commission to integrate child protection into Silencing the Guns campaign and the theme of the AU for the year 2020, as well as to develop a comprehensive policy on child protection in AU peace support operations. The Assembly **REITERATES ITS CALL** for the Chairperson of the Commission to appoint a special envoy for children in armed conflict.

20. COMMENDS the Commission for the steps taken to fully operationalize the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FEM-WISE AFRICA) in particular the training and the deployment of young women mediators and **REQUESTS** the Commission to continue mobilizing support for the deployment of members of FEM-WISE in different AU liaisons Offices.

21. REQUESTS the AU Commission to institutionalize the Youth for Peace program within the Peace and Security Department with the designation of dedicated desk to coordinate the efforts of all stakeholders and facilitate its full operationalization, with a view to meet the increasing expectations of youth across the continent. The Assembly **ENDORSES** the five African Youth Ambassadors for Peace representing each of the five regions of the AU and **ENCOURAGES** them to continue to promote the role of the youth in the Continent on peace and security issues in line with the relevant AU instruments.

22. NOTES WITH DEEP CONCERN the growing insecurity posed by the negative effects of climate change in Africa. In this regard, the Assembly **REITERATES THE CALL** for sustained support for international commitments and agreements on climate change, in particular the Paris Agreement. The Assembly **ALSO CALLS UPON** the international community to fulfil the pledge of USD 100 billion per year, to finance climate change actions at national, regional and international levels. Furthermore, the Assembly **REQUESTS** the Chairperson of the AU Commission, the relevant AU Organs, working in consultation with Member States, to explore innovative means and ways of financing climate actions in Africa. In this context, the Assembly **UNDERScores** the importance of promoting on Member States territories the integrated pursuit of peace, security and development with a view to disactivate the root causes of conflicts and advancing mitigation of negative effects of climate change in the Continent. To this effect, the Assembly **ENCOURAGES** the PSC to continue providing strategic guidance. Furthermore, the Assembly **REQUESTS** the Chairperson of the Commission to submit an annual report in the course of 2020 on the measures taken towards giving expression on the ground to this interlinkage.

23. ENCOURAGES enhancement of efforts towards resource mobilization towards the operation of the AU Center for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development; implementation of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), as well as Security Sector Reform (SSR) in countries emerging from conflict; sustenance of the Mediation Support Unit (MSU), in order to optimize successes in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts in Africa; building more synergy in the fight against illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW);

24. STRONGLY CONDEMNNS all violations of arms embargoes currently in force in Africa, particularly as they contribute to illicit supplies to terrorist groups and criminal networks, thereby undermining the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of Member States. In this context, the Assembly **URGES** the PSC, working closely with the UN system, particularly its Security Council, to consider measures to be taken to curb violations of UN arms embargo in Africa. Furthermore, the Assembly **WARNS** that punitive measures will be taken against all those that continue to commit such violations, including naming and shaming, in line with PSC decisions.

25. STRONGLY CONDEMNNS all forms of foreign interference in the internal affairs of the AU Member States, which undermines the efforts of the Continent to silence the guns and aggravate crises with devastating effects on Africa's development and stability; The Assembly **REQUESTS** the PSC to remain seized with the matter and activate its policy of "naming and shaming" the peace spoilers.

26. COMMENDS the PSC for holding of its 11th Retreat on the 'Comprehensive African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) Study and the Working Methods of the PSC, from 29 to 31 October 2018, in Cairo, Egypt, and 12th Retreat on the theme "Strengthening the Work of the Peace and Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Peace Consolidation in Africa, from 24 to 26 June 2019, in Rabat, Morocco. The Assembly **ENDORSES** the Conclusions of the two Retreats and **REQUESTS** the AU relevant policy

organs to follow up on the implementation of the contents of the Conclusions of the Retreats. The Assembly **CONGRATULATES** the PSC for the development the Manual on Working Methods of the PSC which were adopted by the PSC at its 861st meeting held on 22 July 2019 and **ALSO ENDORSES** the Manual. Furthermore, the Assembly **WELCOMES** the convening of the PSC Annual High Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa on the theme “Silencing the Guns in Africa: Creating Conducive Environment for Children in Conflict Situations” from 13 to 14 January 2020, in Libreville, Gabon, and **ENDORSES** the Conclusions of the Seminar.

27. COMMENDS the African Members in the UN Security Council (A3) Members for a significant role played in bridging the gap between the AU and the UN, particularly, in articulating, defending and promoting African perspectives and common positions on issues of peace and security in the Continent. The Assembly **ALSO COMMENDS** the outgoing A3 Members, namely, Cote d'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea, for their exemplary work during their tenure in the UN Security Council and **CONGRATULATES** Niger and Tunisia for their election as non-permanent members of the Security Council. The Assembly **ENCOURAGES** the A3 to continue strengthening their unity and coordination with a view to more effectively amplify and spearhead the African voice and common positions on African peace and security issues in the UN Security Council agenda.

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