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**ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION**  
**Thirtieth Ordinary Session**  
**28 – 29 January 2018**  
**Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA**

**Assembly/AU/6(XXX)**  
Original: English-French

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

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

### I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present Report of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa is submitted to the Assembly of the AU pursuant to Article 7(q) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU. The Report covers the period from the 29<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU, held in Addis Ababa, from 3 to 4 July 2017, to the 30<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union taking place in Addis Ababa from 28 to 29 January 2018. The report covers the activities carried out by the PSC during the period under review and provides an overview of the state of peace and security in the continent with respect to conflict and crisis situations, as well as the status of the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Furthermore, the Conclusions of the Fifth PSC High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa: Assisting Incoming African Members of the United Nations Security Council (A3) in Preparing to Address Peace and Security Issues on the Continent, held from 4 to 5 December 2017, in Livingstone, Zambia, are attached to this report for the Assembly's endorsement.

2. The PSC comprises fifteen (15) members with equal rights, in line with Article 5 (1) of its Protocol. The current membership of the PSC includes Algeria, Botswana, Burundi, Chad, Congo\*, Egypt\*, Kenya\*, Niger, Nigeria\*, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo, Uganda and Zambia\*<sup>1</sup>. In conformity with Rule 23 of the Rules of Procedure of the PSC, the PSC members have rotated the chairship of the PSC on a monthly basis following the English alphabetical order of the names of countries. During the period under review, Nigeria, Algeria, Botswana, Burundi, Chad and Congo chaired the PSC from July to December 2017. For this month of January 2018, Egypt is chairing the PSC.

3. It should be noted that the mandate of PSC Member States with a two-year term, will expire on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. Given this expiry of the mandate of the ten (10) members of the PSC, the Executive Council, during its 32<sup>nd</sup> ordinary session to be held in Addis Ababa, from 25 to 26 January 2018, will elect ten new members who will take their seats in the Council with effect from 1 April 2018, in line with the PSC practice.

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

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<sup>1</sup> \* Denotes PSC Members with a three-year term mandate

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

5. During the reporting period, the PSC remained seized with the conflict and crisis situations in the continent, as well as with various thematic issues related to the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa. In total, the PSC held fifty (50) meetings during the reporting period. The meetings covered the following situations: Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Darfur (Sudan), Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Mali/Sahel, Somalia and South Sudan. The PSC also considered the activities of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). The meetings also considered the development of the African Standby Force (ASF), as well as the cooperation between the AU and ad hoc sub-regional peace arrangements, with particular focus on the MNJTF and the Joint Force of the Group G5 Sahel. The PSC also considered the implementation of the communique of its 455<sup>th</sup> meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya on 3 September 2014, on the prevention and combating of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa. Furthermore, the PSC received briefings on elections in Africa on a quarterly basis, as well as briefings on the activities of the African members (A3) of the UN Security Council. Additionally, the PSC adopted the conclusions of the High Level Seminar on peace and security in Africa held in Livingstone, Zambia, from 4 to 5 December 2017.

6. The PSC also held meetings on thematic issues, including the free movement of people; the issue of child soldiers; humanitarian response for the victims affected by terrorist activities; drought situation and its implications on peace and security in Africa; justice, peace and reconciliation; role of women in preventing and countering violent extremism in Africa; link between terrorism and transnational organized crimes in Africa; migration, development and security in Africa and public health threats to peace and security in Africa. In addition, the PSC received briefing by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on the humanitarian situation in the Sahel region and by the UN Peace building Commission.

7. On 4 September 2017, the PSC launched the Africa Amnesty Month, pursuant to Assembly Decision Assembly/AU/Dec. 645 (XXIX) adopted during the 29<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held on 3-4 July 2017, in Addis Ababa, which declared the month of September of each year, till 2020, as “*Africa Amnesty Month*” for the surrender and collection of illicit small arms and light weapons. During the same month, the PSC, pursuant to Articles 18 and 19 of its Protocol, held a consultative meeting with some organs of the AU whose mandates include peace and security issues in Africa.

8. During the reporting period, the PSC undertook two field missions. The first field mission was undertaken to the countries of the Lake Chad Basin from 27 to 31 July 2017, where the Council visited Yaoundé and Maroua in Cameroon, Ndjamena in Chad, Diffa and Niamey in Niger and Maiduguri and Abuja in Nigeria. The second field mission

was undertaken to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) from 22 to 26 October 2017. The main objective of both field missions was to listen to the stakeholders and gather first-hand information on the situations in the countries of the Lake Chad Basin and in the DRC, in order for Council to find best means and ways of enhancing its efforts in finding solutions and also in mobilising the needed humanitarian assistance, particularly in countries of the Lake Chad Basin where the Boko Haram terrorist group has caused huge destruction.

**9.** The PSC, during the period under review, held a ministerial meeting on 20 September 2017 in New York, on the margins of the 72<sup>nd</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly. During the meeting, the PSC discussed the situation in South Sudan and adopted a communique aimed at assisting the South Sudanese parties find a solution to the conflict in their country. In conformity with Article 17 of its Protocol, the PSC held an informal meeting and the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Joint Consultative Meeting with the UN Security Council on 7 and 8 September 2017, in Addis Ababa, respectively. Subsequently, on 16 and 17 November 2017, in Addis Ababa, the PSC held its 3<sup>rd</sup> Joint Retreat and the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Joint Consultative Meeting with the European Union Political and Security Committee (EUPSC), respectively. In those meetings issues relating to peace and security in Africa, as well as funding for AU peace and security activities and enhancing partnership in promoting peace, security and stability in Africa were discussed. In addition, on 15 January 2018, the PSC held an interactive consultative session with the League of Arab State (LAS) aiming at enhancing dialogue on peace and security issues in Africa.

**10.** From 4 to 5 December 2017, the PSC organised the Fifth High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa: Assisting Incoming African Members of the United Nations Security Council (A3) in Preparing to Address Peace and Security Issues on the Continent, in Livingstone, Zambia. It should be highlighted that the purpose of the Seminar is to enhance the role of the A3 in promoting, advocating and defending the common African positions on peace and security issues concerning Africa within the UN Security Council decision making process.

**11.** As part of the efforts to activate Subsidiary Bodies and Sub-Committees established by the PSC under Article 8 (5) of its Protocol, the Committee of Experts (CoE) organised its First Retreat from 11 to 16 December 2017 in Musanze, Rwanda to re-invigorate its activities and perform some of the duties assigned to it by the PSC. During the Retreat, among other activities, the CoE developed its indicative annual programme of activities to ensure that the Committee remains active in supporting the PSC in its work. The Conclusions of the Retreat of the CoE has been adopted by the PSC at its 746<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 17 December 2018.

### III. STATE OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

#### A. CONFLICT AND CRISIS SITUATIONS

##### I. Indian Ocean

##### Madagascar

**12.** The situation in **Madagascar** during the period under consideration was marked by significant political, socio-economic and security developments. At the political level, progress has been made in the preparations for the Parliamentary and Presidential elections, scheduled before the end of 2018. In this regard, a reform of the electoral framework, initiated in 2016, is being completed, with a provisional list of voters, draft organic bills relating to the general electoral system and referendums. Out of an electoral budget estimated at US \$ 12,944,865, US \$ 5,640,791 have already been mobilised by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). As part of the efforts of the AU to support Madagascar on the path of strengthening gains in terms of stability and national reconciliation, the Chairperson of the AU Commission dispatched to Antananarivo, from 20 to 23 November 2017, AU High Representative for Silencing the Guns in Africa, former Minister Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, to hold consultations with authorities and other Malagasy stakeholders in view of the upcoming elections. During these consultations, the High Representative focused particularly on strengthening confidence-building and dialogue among all stakeholders on a number of issues relating to the electoral process and national reconciliation. Following the AU mission, dialogue resumed between the Malagasy actors on the above-mentioned draft electoral texts, before their submission to the National Assembly.

**13.** The period under review was also marked by some political tension regarding the proposal of the authorities to revise the Constitution, in particular its Articles on the eligibility of former Presidents of the Republic of Madagascar. On its part, the opposition wants the Constitution to be respected and accuses the authorities of manipulation and maneuvering to postpone the elections. On the eligibility of former Presidents for the next Presidential election, the Minister of Justice of Madagascar affirmed, on 9 January 2018, that the decision rendered by default, on 28 August 2010, by the Antananarivo Criminal Court against Mr. Marc Ravalomanana, within the context of the killings of 7 February 2009, remains valid and that the former Head of State will be notified of the sentence. Such a conviction would call into question the eligibility of former President Ravalomanana, whose supporters have affirmed their determination to oppose any invalidation of the candidacy.

**14.** At the socio-economic level, Madagascar has regained the confidence of its bilateral or multilateral economic partners. However, this progress remains fragile, owing to social instability and the persistence of insecurity linked especially to livestock raiding, various types of trafficking, particularly of rare natural resources of the country.

15. Within this framework, the Assembly may urge the Malagasy parties to favour consensus through dialogue in the organisation of the forthcoming elections and, in particular, to conclude beforehand a political agreement with a view to establishing the conditions for a calm political atmosphere that is conducive for a peaceful, free, transparent and credible elections, the results of which would be accepted by all; urge the Malagasy authorities to postpone the revision of the Constitution under the present circumstances; encourage the Commission to undertake, as soon as possible, a pre-electoral mission to Madagascar and to make available to that country experts to assist in the drafting of a Code of Good Conduct and the establishment of a credible electoral process; call upon the partners of Madagascar to provide financial support for the electoral process and to congratulate the Chairperson of the Commission on his efforts to support Madagascar and encourage his High Representative to pursue his efforts.

## II. Horn of Africa

16. It should be recalled that several decisions of the Assembly of the Union called for a holistic approach of challenges in the Horn of Africa. The PSC, in the communiqué [PSC/AHG/COMM/2.(CCCXCVII)] of its 397<sup>th</sup> meeting of Heads of State and Government, held on 23 September 2013, called for the AU High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan and South Sudan in support of IGAD/s effort, to promote a regional and holistic approach to the challenges of peace, security, stability and development in the Horn of Africa, including a conference. In this regard, the AU Commission, under the auspices of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan and South Sudan and in close collaboration with the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), convened from 8-10 October 2017, in Khartoum, Sudan a strategic consultative meeting to facilitate a brainstorming on the longstanding challenges and changing dynamics in the Horn of Africa and set in motion a consultative process that enables the development of a common agenda for regional peace and security in the Horn of Africa. The meeting was part of a series of strategic consultative process that will culminate in the development of a regional strategy for peace and security in the Horn of Africa, bringing together a select group of policy makers, practitioners and experts. The overarching goal of the consultative process is to reach a shared understanding of the existing and emerging challenges confronting the region and a common ownership of the problems and the strategies required to address them, under the leadership of the African Union.

### South Sudan

17. In **South Sudan**, the political, security, economic and humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate with grave impact on the lives of citizens. Consequently, on 20 September 2017, the PSC met in New York and deliberated on the situation in South Sudan. The PSC reiterated its conviction that the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) remains the only viable option towards addressing the current political, social, economic and security challenges facing South Sudan and achieving sustainable peace. Council commended IGAD the adoption of Communiqué of its 31<sup>st</sup> Extra-ordinary Summit, as well as the communiqués of the IGAD Council of

Ministers held on 2 and 24 July 2017, respectively. Council reiterated its support to the IGAD-led process and to the holding of the High-Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF), which, in Council's view, represents a unique opportunity for the South Sudan to achieve sustainable peace and stability. Council also stressed the need for the AU High Level ad hoc Committee on South Sudan to be updated on the High Level Revitalization Forum. Council also urged the AU Commission to urgently elaborate possible measures and submit them to Council by December 2017 against all those who continue to obstruct efforts towards the restoration of peace and security in South Sudan. It also noted that steps towards justice should be accompanied by peace, reconciliation and healing bearing, in mind the complementarity of these processes.

**18.** Regarding the National Dialogue initiative, which was launched by President Salva Kiir Mayardit, the initial scepticism following its launching in May 2017 appears to have been overcome. The Dialogue's Steering Committee continued to make efforts to engage local communities and others living outside the country, most notably in Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda. Dr. Riek Machar of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-In Opposition [SPLM-IO] declined to meet the Dialogue's representatives on the grounds that the timing and structure of the National Dialogue were not in sync with the urgency of the matters at hand. The SPLM-Leaders [former Political Detainees (FDs)] were similarly reticent, and viewed the process as premature. Other exiled stakeholders queried the intent and agenda of President Kiir regarding the idea of a Dialogue in the midst of war.

**19.** An assessment of the process of implementation of the ARCSS by the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission [JMEC], chaired by former president of Botswana, H.E. Festus Mogae, showed a wide gap between the expected and the real achievements of ARCSS after more than two years of implementation. The Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU), which participated in the evaluation process, disagreed with the findings and submitted its own evaluation. Despite the disagreements between the TGoNU and JMEC, the assessment was useful in IGAD's preparations towards the HLRF and the subsequent IGAD Summits and meetings that culminated in the 59<sup>th</sup> Extra-Ordinary Session of the IGAD Council of Ministers held on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2017, in Addis Ababa. It should be noted that the initial phases of the HLRF process constituted mainly consultations with South Sudanese stakeholders and written submissions were received from a range of actors in and outside South Sudan. Among other issues, the need for a permanent ceasefire, a revised calendar for the implementation of the ARCSS, the restructuring of the 32 new States, renegotiating the power-sharing arrangement, were some of the common threads that emerged from the HLRF consultations.

**20.** The process of establishing the Hybrid Court of South Sudan has registered some progress. Following the discussions, in August 2017, with the AU High Representative, former President Alpha Omar Konare, the TGoNU finalized the draft Memorandum of Understanding [MoU] and the Statute of the Court. Both the MoU and the Statute were submitted to the Council of Ministers by the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs in November 2017. As of 15 December, the AU Commission was

notified by the South Sudanese Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs that both documents were approved by the Council of Ministers in its meeting of 13 December 2017. The AU Commission is putting in place the necessary arrangement for the joint signing by the Commission and the Government, before a bill can be presented to transitional national assembly for adoption. At the time of finalizing this report, the observations made by the Cabinet were still being integrated into the draft Bill.

**21.** However, the security conditions in the country remained a major concern. There was an intensification of clan-based and intra-communal violence in the northwest Bahr El Ghazal region, Upper Nile in the northeast, and Equatoria in the South in May 2017. In October 2017, tensions escalated between President Salva Kiir and his former Chief of General Staff, General Paul Malong Awan, following the latter's dismissal in May 2017. In November 2017, General Malong was released from house arrest and he left for Nairobi, Kenya, ending weeks of a political and security standoff. In September 2017, the TGoNU and UNMISS reached agreement on the deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF) and the deployment of troops commenced.

**22.** President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, following a request from President Salva Kiir, continued to facilitate the reunification of the SPLM factions, notably the SPLM-In Government (IG), the SPLM-In Opposition (IO), and the SPLM-former Political Detainees (FPD's). In November 2017, Uganda and Egypt collaborated in efforts to reunite the various SPLM factions in Cairo, Egypt. President Yoweri K. Museveni of Uganda and President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt, following a request from President Salva Kiir, pursued their efforts to facilitate the reunification of SPLM factions; notably, the SPLM-Government (IG), the SPLM-IN opposition (IO) and the SPLM former political detainees (FPD's), resulting in the signing of the Cairo Declaration, on 16 November 2017, and the Entebbe Agreement on 15 December, which provide for the roadmap of the SPLM re-unification process, based on the Arusha agreement signed in January 2015.

**23.** In the meantime, President Kiir's visit to Sudan on 31 October 2017 added impetus to the efforts to ensure peace and harmonious relations between the two countries. In November 2017, President Hassan Al Bashir visited Uganda and the two countries committed to exert efforts towards achieving peace in South Sudan.

**24.** The humanitarian situation also continued to be of major concern, given the negative impact of the ongoing conflict on civilian population. Almost 2 million people were still internally displaced by December 2017 with another 2 million in neighboring countries as refugees, and 210,000 in UNMISS Protection of Civilian Camps. The humanitarian funding needs of South Sudan remain high, at \$1 billion for 2017.

**25.** The AU High Representative for South Sudan, H.E. Alpha Omar Konare, continued his diplomatic engagement in furtherance of the peace process. Between August and November 2017, the High Representative held consultations in South Africa, Chad, Ethiopia and the United States of America. As part of the consultations, the High Representative advocated for the proactive engagement of the AU High Level

Ad Hoc Committee for South Sudan, given its strategic significance to the peace process in South Sudan. Consequently, the Ad Hoc Committee convened its first and second meeting on 20 November 2017 and 18 January 2018, respectively, in Addis Ababa, at the level of the permanent representatives to the AU. The meetings discussed developments in South Sudan and considered ways in which the Committee can enhance assistance to the IGAD led peace process and support the High Representative for South Sudan in accordance with its mandate. Members of the High Level Ad Hoc Committee subsequently participated in briefings on the IGAD Revitalization Forum convened by the IGAD Chair in November and December 2017, as well as January 2018. In addition, the High Representative travelled to the Republic of Congo to consult with President Denis Sassou Nguesso on the possible role that his country could play in providing assistance to the exiled members of the SPLM-IO who escaped Juba with Dr. Riek Machar.

**26.** Subsequent to extensive consultations process with all relevant South Sudanese stakeholders, the first phase of the IGAD led High Level Revitalization Forum for the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan took place in Addis Ababa, from 18 to 21 December 2017. At this meeting, the AU Commission Chairperson appealed to all the South Sudanese stakeholders to fully seize this unique opportunity offered them again by IGAD and to solemnly and sincerely commit themselves to immediately end the violence and accelerate the march towards peace and reconciliation. While the signing of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access, on 21 December 2017, created a lot of expectation on both the distressed people of South Sudan as well as the concerned international community, it is, however, regrettable that the South Sudanese Parties have, once again, failed to honor their commitments as outlined in the Agreement. More deaths and displacements continue to be recorded as fighting broke out in different parts of the country, immediately after signing of the Agreement. Given the rising concerns over the commitment of the parties to the Agreement and the persist persecution of civilian populations, on 12 January 2018, the Chairperson of the AU Commission and the Secretary General of the UN issued a joint statement condemning the violations of the Agreement and calling on the South Sudanese parties to immediately cease hostilities, desist from undertaking further military operations and scrupulously uphold their commitments. More importantly, they affirmed the intent to support the imposition of measures, in accordance with the communique of the PSC issued on 20 September 2017, should the parties continue to violate the Agreement.

**27.** The Assembly may therefore wish to welcome the signing, on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2017, by the South Sudanese stakeholders of an Agreement of Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access. The Assembly may also wish to commend IGAD for leading the High Level Revitalization Forum, which presents a unique opportunity for the implementation of the ARCSS, in line with the Communique of the 720<sup>th</sup> meeting of the PSC, held at Ministerial Level in New York on 20 September 2017. The Assembly may wish to congratulate IGAD and the Chairperson of the Commission for their efforts that led to that achievement, towards finding a lasting solution to the conflict that is devastating South Sudan. The Assembly may wish to

express deep concern over the repeated violations of the Agreement by the parties deteriorating humanitarian situation caused by the ongoing conflict, and urge all warring factions to urgently put an end to all military actions and comply scrupulously with their commitments as contained in the Agreement of 21 December 2017. The Assembly may also commend the AU High Representative for South Sudan, Alpha Oumar Konare, and the Chair of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission [JMEC], Festus Mogae, former President of Botswana, for their collective efforts towards implementation of the ARCSS. The Assembly may also wish to welcome efforts by Presidents Yoweri K. Museveni of Uganda and Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt that led to the Cairo Declaration and the Entebbe Agreement aimed at reuniting the SPLM. In addition, the Assembly may wish to congratulate the Transitional Government of National Unity (ToGNU) for the cooperation extended in the establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, and request the AU Commission together with the ToGNU to conclude expeditiously this process. The Assembly may further urge for unity of purpose on the resolution of the situation in South Sudan and encourage coordinated efforts between the AU, IGAD and UN to that end. The Assembly may wish to commend the rapprochement between the Republic of South Sudan and Sudan in the ongoing efforts to achieve two states at peace with each other within the Cooperation Agreement of 2012.

### **Sudan: Situation in Darfur**

**28.** The security situation in **Darfur** continues to improve, albeit some persistent challenges. As mandated by the UNSC resolution 2363 (2017), a Joint AU-UN Assessment Mission was undertaken to Darfur, from 7 to 17 November 2017, to evaluate the progress made during the first phase of the reconfiguration of the AU-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). The Mission concluded that, except for the setting up of the Jebel Marra Task Force (JMTF) in Golo, in Central Darfur, the first phase of the reconfiguration had progressed as planned, with few hitches. All the expected eleven (11) team sites earmarked for closure were closed ahead of schedule and handed over to the Government of Sudan. In addition, a total of three infantry Battalions were repatriated and two infantry battalions previously earmarked for the mission were no longer inducted. At the time of finalizing this report, the total number of infantry battalions stood at 11 as opposed to 16 previously.

**29.** There was no evident adverse impact of the withdrawal of UNAMID forces on the communities where the battalions sites were located and, in most cases, the Government of Sudan security forces, including the police, were already deployed to avoid any gap following the departure of UNAMID battalions. Furthermore, the Government of Sudan has been cooperative in all areas of the reconfiguration of UNAMID. With regard to the establishment of the Temporary Operating Base (TOB) in Golo, the Government has yet to allocate the land. In view of the changes that the current reconfiguration is bringing to the delivery of the Mission's mandate, the AU-UN Assessment Mission recommended that, in the renewal of mandate of UNAMID in July 2018, the priorities of the Mission should be reviewed to take into account the emerging

realities. It also recommended support for the AU to engage in post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts in Darfur to sustain the fledgling peace.

**30.** As efforts continue to secure an agreement on permanent ceasefire between the Government and the rebel movements in Darfur, the parties continue to announce an extension to their temporary unilateral cessations of hostilities. In October 2017, the Government extended its unilateral cessation of hostilities till 31 December 2017 and more recently, further extended it for another six months. The Sudan Liberation Movement/Minni Minawi (SLM/MM) and Justice and Equality Movement-Gibril (JEM/G) also extended their unilateral cessations of hostilities for two months from 30 November 2017 to 31 January 2018.

**31.** In the meantime, the Government of Sudan started its Weapons Collection Program under the coordination of Vice President Hassabo Mohammed Abdel Rahman. The program was implemented simultaneously in all five Darfur states. A key component of the weapons collection program is the tightening of the borders with neighboring countries to ensure weapons do not filter through during or after the program's completion.

**32.** With regard to the Two Areas of Blue Nile and South Kordofan states, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) has been embroiled in leadership crisis since March 2017, which led to the replacement of its former Chairman, Malik Agar, and the appointment of a new leader, Abdulaziz Al-Hilu, in October 2017. The new leadership reached out to the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) and confirmed that Malik Agar and Yasir Arman, former Chairman and Secretary-General, respectively, were no longer the Movement's leaders and peace negotiators. The AUHIP, facilitated at least two informal consultations with representatives of the new leadership in August and November 2017 to discuss the way forward, and envisages conducting additional consultations on the resumption of peace negotiations on the Two Areas.

**33.** It should be recalled that the Government of the United States of America, on 6 October 2017, lifted the economic sanctions imposed on Sudan by announcing the revocation of Executive Orders of 1997 and 2006, thus ending over 20 years of economic and trade sanctions on Sudan. However, Sudan remains on the list of countries still labelled as state sponsors of terrorism which prevents it from accessing US aid and international debt relief, both of which are needed to ease the debt burden on Sudan. The African Union commended the lifting of sanctions and also urged that Sudan be removed from the list of state sponsors of terrorism.

**34.** Meanwhile, the general political process in Sudan continues to evolve positively as the First Vice President and Prime Minister, Bakri Hassan Saleh, and the Higher Committee in charge of the implementation of Dialogue outcomes, continued the push for the constitutional review, a key outcome of the National Dialogue. In this regard, the process of sensitization for the national general elections in 2020 has already commenced.

**35.** On Sudan and South Sudan relations, Presidents Omar al- Bashir and Salva Kiir met in Khartoum in early November 2017, in order to bolster bi-lateral ties between the two countries. They recommitted themselves to implementing the various agreements that they signed in 2012, under the auspices of the AUHIP, especially with regard to the promotion of good neighborliness and border and security issues.

**36.** In view of the foregoing, the Assembly may wish to commend UNAMID for the progress made on the first phase of the reconfiguration exercise and urge it to ensure the second phase is also completed in June 2018, in line with the schedule as defined by the relevant PSC communiqués and UNSC resolutions. The Assembly may also wish to stress the need to ensure that the next review of the mandate of UNAMID, in March 2018, should reflect the changes on the ground and that Mission's priorities are in sync with the realities on the ground, including the much needed support for reconstruction and stabilization, in line with that the recommendation of the AU/UN Assessment Mission. . In addition, the Assembly may wish to encourage Sudan and South Sudan to enhance their cooperation towards reinforcing good neighborliness and addressing border insecurity. The Assembly may also call for greater commitment by all sides for the resolution of the issues relating to the Two Areas of Blue Nile and South Kordofan, as well as Abyei.

### **Somalia**

**37.** The period under review witnessed important developments in the political landscape in **Somalia**, with regard to the state formation and the relationship between the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and the Federal Member States (FMS), the constitutional review process, dialogue between Galmudug state and Ahlu Sunna Wa Jamaa (ASWJ) and preparations for the 2020 elections under universal suffrage. Whilst the nine-day high-level consultative meeting held in Mogadishu in November 2017, and chaired by the Somali President, did not resolve the challenges between the FGS and the FMS, it facilitated agreement between the FGS and FMS leaders on issues of power and resource sharing over the coming six months. Notwithstanding, the meeting agreed on six critical issues, namely: improving security in the country and eliminating terrorism; promoting a federal system in the country; fast-tracking the review of the Constitution under a unified approach; the 2020 electoral process; strengthening cooperation between the FGS and FMS as well as development projects and humanitarian aid. Additionally, the integration of security forces under a unified national army, based on a proportional contribution from the FMS in line with the National Security Architecture, was also highlighted as critical, during the meeting.

**38.** With regard to the constitution, the National Constitutional Convention (NCC) held from 8 to 10 October 2017, that would have officially launched the constitutional review process, could not overcome the differences between the FGS and the FMS. The FMS, the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission (ICRIC) and the Joint Parliamentary Oversight Committee (JPOC) boycotted the process, after seven months of successful efforts that included wide consultations with

FMS by the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs. The 16- Point communiqué of the Kismaayo meeting held in October 2017 to enhance regional cooperation and common position between the FMS and the FGS was not conclusive on issues relating to security, politics, federalism, and reconciliation.

**39.** Indeed, political friction within the FGS, and between the FGS and the FMS, risks undermining political cooperation, thereby unravelling the country's national cohesion. Frictions within the FGS were exposed by a series of high profile incidents, including the exclusion by the Prime Minister of the Interior Minister, and the Minister for Humanitarian and Disaster Management from the membership of the country's new National Emergency Committee; the resignations of the Minister of Defence and Army Chief in October 2017; the dismissal of the Head of the Somali Police Force and the National Intelligence and Security Agency in October 2017, allegedly, due to their continued disagreements which negatively impacted on security sector reforms efforts and public security. The political crisis in Galmugud and the South-West, coupled with persistent differences between the FGS and the FMS, is also impeding efforts to establish a robust National Security Architecture, as well as the Political Roadmap. These differences could re-ignite clan-based conflicts and reverse the political gains so far made.

**40.** It is also worth noting that, the impact of the Gulf crisis continued to threaten Somalia's national cohesion as certain FMS decided to oppose the FGS stance of neutrality. In view of these internal political tensions, the establishment of a Committee by the Senate (Upper House) on 23 October 2017 to try to diffuse these tensions that were undermining national cohesion was a step in the right direction.

**41.** The security situation in Somalia continues to be a source of deep concern for the AU, with new challenges emerging during the period under review. The African Union Mission in **Somalia** (AMISOM) has made significant progress in degrading the threat posed by Al Shabaab, and has recovered, to date, about 80% of the national territory. This has created a conducive environment for the smooth progression of the political process, at both the federal and FMS levels. In accordance with its exit strategy, AMISOM has started transferring some primary security responsibilities to the Somali National Army (SNA), and has initiated the gradual reduction of its troops. Between October and December 2017, a total of 1,000 AMISOM soldiers returned to their countries. However, the slow pace of operationalizing the Somali National Security Forces (SNSF) is a matter of serious concern as it will invariably affect the timelines for AMISOM's exit.

**42.** Despite the gains made by AMISOM and the Somalia National Army, Al Shabaab still retains the capacity to destabilise Somalia (FGS), as demonstrated by the two major attacks in Mogadishu in October 2017. Most notably, the deadly terrorist attack of 14 October 2017, in which more than 500 persons were killed and many others injured, demonstrated that Al Shabaab continues to retain capability for asymmetric warfare. The terrorist group further demonstrated in series of offensive attacks and several

assassinations against FGS officials that it remains a major threat to peace and stability in Somalia.

**43.** The Somalia Security Conference and the Somalia Partnership Forum, which took place on 4 and 5 December in Mogadishu, gave the opportunity to the region, the AU and all Partners to reaffirm their support to efforts aimed at ensuring security and stability in Somalia.

**44.** The humanitarian situation in Somalia continues to be of major concern and requires sustained attention. Throughout Somalia, more than two million people are now internally displaced, including one million in protracted conditions and an additional one million newly displaced throughout 2017. In this context, 874,000 are attributable to the drought and 188,000 are conflict related. Furthermore, 6.2 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. Rainfall in the last three months of 2017 was below average and erratically distributed, making this the fourth consecutive dry rainy season. While funding for scaled up humanitarian response has been available in 2017, continued large-scale assistance is needed throughout 2018 to prevent loss of lives and protect livelihoods. However, attention needs to be placed on building resilience and addressing chronic humanitarian crisis in Somalia, as well as finding durable solutions for communities in protracted crisis.

**45.** The Assembly may wish to welcome the progress made to date in the fight against the al-Shabaab terrorist group, thanks to the joint efforts by AMISOM and the Somali National Security Forces (SNSF), whilst noting al-Shabaab's unprecedented capacities. The Assembly may encourage AMISOM to remain resolute and steadfast in discharging its mandate until the al-Shabaab terrorist group is completely eliminated and Somalia is pacified. In this respect, the Assembly may wish to underline the urgent need for AMISOM to be equipped with the necessary capacity, including force enablers and multipliers and strongly reaffirm the need for AMISOM to be provided with a predictable and sustainable funding, with a view to enabling it to more effectively discharge its mandate, in line with the conclusions of the AU-UN Joint Review of May 2017, and in the spirit of the UN-AU Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security, signed on 19 April 2017. The Assembly may also wish to renew AU's commitment to peace, security and stability in Somalia, taking into account the political and security dispensation in the country and the region, since the deployment of AMISOM in 2007, and reaffirm its full support to the authorities and the people of Somalia, as well as its determination to spare no efforts towards peace, security and reconciliation in Somalia.

### **III. Great Lakes**

#### **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**

**46.** Disagreements relating to the implementation of the Agreement of 31 December 2016 including the establishment of institutions provided for by the Agreement; confidence building measures in particular the release of political prisoners; and the

date for the organisation of the elections continued to fuel tension in the DRC throughout the period under consideration. The PSC, at its 712<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 23 August 2017, appealed to all Congolese political and social actors to sustain the institutional process to ensure a successful political transition, as well as the establishment of conditions conducive to free, fair and credible elections. Similarly, Council stressed the need to strengthen the political role of the AU in the search for a solution to the crisis in the DRC.

**47.** Thus, within the framework of the implementation of the Communiqué of the 712<sup>th</sup> meeting of the PSC, the Chairperson of the Commission undertook a working visit to Kinshasa from 28 September to 1 October 2017, accompanied by the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs. During his visit, he met, among others, with President Joseph Kabila Kabange, the main Congolese political and social stakeholders, as well as with several international actors, including the Group of African Ambassadors. In line with the Constitution and the Agreement of 31 December 2016, he strongly encouraged all Congolese stakeholders to maintain dialogue in order to overcome their differences and establish a conducive political environment for a peaceful and consensual electoral process.

**48.** Subsequently, the PSC also undertook a mission to Kinshasa and Kananga, in the Kasai Central Province, from 22 to 26 October 2017 to assess the political situation in the country, in particular, progress made in the implementation of the Agreement of 31 December 2016 and related to this, to determine efforts made towards the electoral process. The PSC also made an assessment of security and humanitarian situation in the country, specifically in Kananga. In the meantime, the Chairperson of the Commission participated in the 8<sup>th</sup> High-level meeting of the Regional Monitoring Mechanism of the Addis Ababa Framework Agreement for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the DRC and the Region and the 7<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), in Brazzaville, on 19 October 2017. The AU Commissioner for Peace and Security also took part in the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the signatory countries of the Framework Agreement, on 17 October 2017, in Brazzaville, Congo. In this regard, the UN Security Council resolution 2389(2017), that came upon a joint initiative from the A3, is to be welcomed as it reiterates the need to respect cooperation framework commitments in the Great Lakes region.

**49.** These various meetings afforded an opportunity to stress the need for the AU, the Great Lakes Region, the United Nations and other partners to pool their efforts to in order to encourage the Congolese actors to favour dialogue to preserve peace and stability in their country and the urgent need to coordinate efforts to provide coherent and effective support to the DRC for the organisation of elections and for a peaceful transition.

**50.** On 5 November 2017, the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) published the electoral calendar, fixing 23 December 2018 as the date for the organisation of the combined Presidential, Legislative and Provincial elections. Despite

the publication of the electoral calendar, a segment of the opposition political actors and civil society activists continued to call for demonstrations across the country to get President Joseph Kabila to leave before 31 December 2017. These demonstrations were marred by violent incidents and arrests in Kinshasa, on 30 November 2017. The peak of violence and tension was recorded during the month of December 2017. The demonstrations of 31 December 2017, launched by Catholic congregation, calling President Joseph Kabila commit himself to relinquish power, was dispersed by the Congolese police. Tension has since been rising in the country and controversy has arisen over the deaths that the police crackdown would have caused. Several Catholic leaders have denounced what they described as excessive use of force by the police. The AU and the UN have requested the Congolese authorities to conduct investigations into the events of 31 December 2017. At the time of finalising this report, there was still tension between the authorities and the Catholic clergy.

**51.** The publication of the electoral calendar has brought to light the challenges that the CENI still faces in the conduct of the entire electoral process. These challenges are related to logistics, financing, security and the finalisation of the legal framework for the elections. These challenges were also the subject of the consultation meetings of the Guarantors of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement for the DRC and the Region, held in Addis Ababa, on 22 November 2017, and the meeting between the Commissioner for Peace and Security, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in the DRC and Head of MONUSCO and the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region held on 22 November 2017, with the participation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the ICGLR. Both meetings underscored the need for the Guarantors of the Framework to pool their efforts to defuse the current political tensions in the DRC and to support the CENI to address the above mentioned challenges. The meeting of the Guarantors decided that the Ministers of the Guarantors should undertake a visit to the DRC in January 2018 to engage the Congolese stakeholders on the full implementation of the Agreement of 31 December 2016.

**52.** It should be stressed that the meeting of 19 September 2017, held concurrently with the 72<sup>nd</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly, provided for the establishment of an International Group of Experts from the United Nations, the AU, Southern African Development Community (SADC), the European Union (EU) and the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF), to support the CENI, by mobilising the necessary political, technical, financial and logistical support for the electoral process. Thus, the Commission dispatched an electoral expert to the CENI to coordinate the activities of the Group of experts placed at the disposal of the CENI by the various partners.

**53.** The noteworthy progress made in the registration of voters should be highlighted. At the time of finalising this report, only the provinces of Kasai remained, where the registration should end in January 2018. However, the logistical and financial challenges remain extremely important. The Congolese Government pledged, within the framework of the 2018 Finance Law, to make available to the CENI the necessary

financial resources, apart from any possible external contributions, within the framework of a new disbursement plan. Within the context of the finalisation of the legal framework for the elections, the National Assembly adopted in first reading the Election Law, which was then transmitted to the Senate. But the introduction in the Electoral Law by the CENI of the Voting Machine and the threshold of representativeness of political parties has not been unanimously agreed and constitutes a source of new controversies within the political class.

**54.** The security situation, which the humanitarian issues and the observance of human rights are linked, remains a source of concern. The numerous armed groups and other militias continue to launch attacks against the positions of the Armed Forces of the DRC (DRC), the bases of the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) and the civilian population. In the eastern part of the country, particularly in North Kivu, an attack on a MONUSCO military base, in the town of Semuliki, on 7 December 2017, resulted in the death of at least 15 Tanzanian peacekeepers, many missing and injured persons. The attack was attributed to militiamen of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an armed Muslim group from Uganda. The Chairperson of the Commission expressed the compassion of the AU for the tragedy that has hit the Tanzanian government and people.

**55.** In Kasai, the security and, above all, the humanitarian situation remains very fragile, following the tragic events related to the clashes between the Kamuina Nsapu sect and the FARDC. The Forum on Peace, Reconciliation and Development in the Kasai space, held in Kananga, from 19 to 21 September 2017, has allowed a gradual return of the people to their homes, but many are living in poor conditions. The humanitarian actors operating in the area having cited the lack of funding as a challenge for the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance. In addition, UNICEF has reported that nearly 400,000 children in Kasai are at risk of dying from malnutrition. On the other hand, after the Ebola epidemic outbreak in May 2017, a cholera epidemic followed. However, the AU has already dispatched experts and technicians and a financial assistance of US \$ 100,000 to support the Congolese authorities in the fight against this new outbreak.

**56.** The Assembly may wish to welcome the progress made in the electoral process, notably the announcement on 5 November 2017 of a new electoral calendar setting the date of 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2018 for the holding of the provincial, legislative and presidential elections. In addition, the Assembly may urge the AU Member States, with the necessary logistical capabilities, to generously make them available to the DRC for the success of the electoral process. The Assembly may wish to encourage the Guarantors for their efforts aimed at implementing the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement for the DRC and the Region, signed in Addis Ababa, on 24 February 2013. In this regard, the Assembly may wish to welcome the UN Security Council resolution 2389(2017), that came upon a joint initiative from the A3, as it reiterates the need to respect cooperation framework commitments in the Great Lakes region. The Assembly may also encourage the AU, SADC, ICGLR, UN (MONUSCO) to work together for a coherent and effective financial, logistical and security support to the DRC and invite

other interested partners to give unconditional support to the CENI. Furthermore, the Assembly may wish to send a delegation of Heads of State and Government to the Congolese authorities to urge them to take, within the agreed deadlines, the necessary measures relating to the laws and the financing of the elections, as well as the reinforcement of the confidence building measures to defuse the political tension, in particular the release of political prisoners, freedom of demonstration and access of the opposition to the State media. Lastly, the Assembly may call upon the opposition actors and civil society organisations to avoid any action that may heighten tension in the country.

### **Central African Republic (CAR)**

**57.** During the period under consideration, the AU remained strongly active in the efforts to sustainably restore security, peace and stability in the CAR. The African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, led by the AU, in cooperation with the countries and organisations of Central Africa region, entered its active phase. Initiated at the request of the Head of State of the Central African Republic, Professor Faustin Archange Touadera, this initiative aims at facilitating dialogue between the armed groups and the Government in order to find a negotiated solution to the crisis in the Central African Republic.

**58.** Following the adoption of the Road Map in Libreville on 17 July 2017, the Facilitation Panel held its first meeting, in Bangui, on 11 and 12 September 2017, during which a Technical Committee, acting as the Secretariat, was set up; timelines of activities and a budget were also drawn up. It was also agreed to enlarge the membership of the Panel to the countries neighbouring CAR and to admit observers to the deliberations of the Facilitation Panel. On 24 and 25 November 2017, the Panel held its 2nd meeting in Bangui. Essentially, this meeting considered the preparation of the field deployment of the Panel team for exchange of views with the armed groups.

**59.** A first stage of discussions between the Panel and the armed groups took place from 27 November to 11 December 2017, under the leadership of the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission and Head of the AU Mission in the Central African Republic and for Central Africa (MISAC). It enabled the members of the Panel to present the Initiative to them, to convey to them the message of the Chairperson of the Commission, calling for an end to the violence and adherence to the peace and reconciliation process. The Panel team also listened attentively to the concerns of the armed groups. At the end of that first stage, a feedback was given to President Touadera, the international community and the economically active forces of the Central African nation for the purpose of transparency and ownership of the process by the Central African people. A second tour is planned in February 2018.

**60.** In accordance with the timetable, the last stage of the Initiative could be the organisation, in Bangui, of an Extraordinary Summit of the Heads of State of the region, in the presence of the Chairperson of the Union, to endorse the Peace Agreement that may be concluded between the armed groups and the Government.

**61.** Following its 737<sup>th</sup> meeting, held on 21 November 2017, on the situation in the CAR, the PSC welcomed the lead role of the AU in the Initiative. The PSC requested the Chairperson of the Commission to take the necessary steps to make a financial contribution to the budget of the African Initiative and to support the central role of the AU in the stabilisation of the situation in the CAR.

**62.** Pursuant to the decision of the PSC meeting of 21 November 2017, the Chairperson of the Commission decided to allocate US \$ 200,000, as a contribution to the implementation budget of the Initiative. The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) had already allocated about USD 180,000 to launch the implementation of the Initiative. In addition, the Technical Committee of the Initiative had signed a financing agreement for the amount of US \$ 264,000 with the UN Peacebuilding Fund.

**63.** In accordance with the Roadmap, the African Initiative should be emphasized as the only reference framework for the various initiatives aimed at restoring peace and reconciliation in the CAR. This is why the Extraordinary Meeting of Foreign Ministers of ECCAS Member States, held on 21 October 2017, in Libreville, decided to strengthen the Panel by endorsing its enlargement to all neighbouring countries of the CAR. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF), Sant'Egidio Community, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the EU and France have been admitted as observers to the meetings of the Panel.

**64.** At another level, the UN Security Council welcomed the visit of the UN Secretary General to the CAR, at the end of October 2017. In Resolution 2387 on the CAR, adopted on 15 November 2017, Council decided to renew the mandate of MINUSCA, to strengthen its operational capabilities by increasing its strength by 900 peacekeepers to enable it to better fulfill its mandate of protection of the civilian population. Council also fully supported the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR and called upon all the partners to provide political and financial support for the work of the Facilitation Panel.

**65.** Despite the proliferation of armed groups and the persistence of armed clashes that prevent the State from exercising full authority over the entire territory, development partners and international financial institutions continue to support the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan (RCPCA) and the defence and security reforms. The still fragile situation in the CAR requires the support of the AU and its Member States.

**66.** Central African Republic continues to face a serious humanitarian situation. In addition to the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons, hundreds of thousands refugees fled to the neighbouring countries, mainly in Cameroon, Chad and the DRC. Furthermore, the country still facing a situation of health chronic emergency. Even if violence decreased somehow in Bangui, the presence of armed groups in other parts of the country, as well as the grand banditry make the security situation still very

volatile. The persistent insecurity in many areas of the country continues to impede access to populations in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

**67.** Therefore, the Assembly may wish to condemn the occupation and control of several localities in the country by armed groups and strongly urge them to put an end to violence and the use of weapons of all kind. The Assembly may wish to reaffirm the leading role of the AU in the efforts to implement the African Initiative and welcome the UN Secretary-General's visit to the CAR, as well as the adoption on 15 November 2017, by the Security Council of Resolution 2387(2017). The Assembly could call upon CAR neighbouring States, members of the Facilitation Panel, to fully cooperate and work towards the success of the Initiative by taking internal steps to control and prevent the movements of armed groups in their territories. The Assembly may call for complementarity between MINUSCA and MISAC, with a view to restoring State authority and the adherence of armed groups to Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Repatriation (DDRR) programmes. The Assembly may commend the Government of the CAR for its recovery and peacebuilding efforts despite the many challenges. Furthermore, the Assembly may wish to commend the remarkable efforts of the EU and all other partners for their continued support in the reconstruction of the CAR.

### **Burundi**

**68.** The political situation in Burundi continues to be a source of concern for the AU, which deployed efforts, in cooperation with East African Community (EAC), to support the Burundian parties to overcoming their differences and bring their country back on the path of peace and reconciliation. The 4<sup>th</sup> Session of the Inter-Burundian Dialogue, under the aegis of the EAC, that took place in Arusha, Tanzania, in November 2017, did not enable the participant to conclude an agreement. Several political parties boycotted the meeting for reasons of security and non-inclusion of all stakeholders. Meanwhile, the Government of Burundi is actively preparing for the 2020 elections and the revision of the Constitution, which includes several amendments, particularly the one concerning the duration of the Presidential term, from 5 to 7 years and the establishment of a post of Prime Minister, Head of Government, from the Parliamentary majority. In addition, the International Criminal Court (ICC) has decided to open a preliminary investigation on Burundi. It should be noted that the decision of Burundi to withdraw from ICC took effect from 27 October 2017.

**69.** With regard to security, the reports of the AU observers note a general calm in the country but also sporadic acts of violence. The presidential mercy granted on 1 January 2018, to over 2000 prisoners which are serving less than 5 years prison term, those who demonstrated good conduct or sustaining disabilities, is a testimony of this situation. However, opposition members complained for mistreatment and harassment by the Government. It is to be noted that the Government of Burundi and the AU Commission are yet to sign the Memorandum of Understanding that should guarantee the legal framework for the work and the protection of the AU Observers.

70. With regard to the humanitarian situation, the problem of food insecurity becomes crucial because of the instability in the country and especially the economic sanctions imposed on Burundi, in addition to negative impact of climate change. There is also growing insecurity in Burundian refugee camps in Tanzania and the DRC. While thousands of refugees are returning home, others prefer to seek refuge in the region, increasing the risk of swelling the ranks of armed groups operating in Eastern DRC.

71. The Assembly may reaffirm the commitment of the AU to a peaceful resolution of the political situation through an inclusive dialogue on the basis of the Arusha Agreements and the Constitution of Burundi and appeal to the Burundian authorities to initiate all Constitutional reforms through a broad consensus of all stakeholders. The Assembly may once again call for the Government of Burundi and the AU Commission to address the outstanding issues for the early signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Activities of the Human Rights Observers and Military Experts of the African Union.

### **RCI/LRA**

72. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) still poses a serious security threat in the Central African Region. It continues to carry out attacks on civilians, looting, abductions, and poaching in the DRC and the CAR in order to replenish its manpower and supplies. This has resulted in the continued displacement of civilians in the affected areas of DRC and CAR, exacerbating the humanitarian situation in those areas. The LRA is exploiting the security vacuum created by the withdrawal of the Ugandan and American troops from the Eastern CAR to engage in these activities at will. The DRC security forces continue to conduct counter-LRA operations with support of MONUSCO whereas CAR troops continue to conduct joint patrols with MINUSCA around Obo town, nevertheless with limited equipment and logistics. Despite the activities of CAR troops, the population remains largely exposed to and fearful of the LRA. The AU, in collaboration with UNOCA, continues to sustain the Operational and Political momentum against the LRA notably through the activities of the RCI-LRA Joint Coordination Mechanism, the meetings of RTF Commanders from the DRC and CAR held in October 2017 and of the LRA Focal Points held in November 2017 as well as a Joint Assessment Mission to CAR in December 2017. In this regard, the Assembly may wish to recommend the enhancement of cooperation and harmonisation of the activities of the RCI-LRA with the ASF, in line with the Conclusions of the 10<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STCDSS). The Assembly may also wish to commend the continued Partnership between the AU and the UN in the fight against the LRA.

## **IV. West Africa and Sahel**

### **Guinea Bissau**

73. The political and institutional crisis that started in **Guinea Bissau** in 2015, is yet to be resolved. During its 29<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session, held in Addis Ababa from 3 to 4 July

2017, the Assembly called on all political actors in Guinea Bissau to respect and implement, without any further delay, the Conakry Agreement signed on 14 October 2016, and commended the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) for its continued efforts towards sustained peace and stability in Guinea Bissau. In the past two and half years, Guinea-Bissau has been in institutional paralysis due to the protracted political crisis between the President, the Peoples National Assembly (ANP), the government, revolving around differences within the ruling party, the African Party for the independence of Guinea Bissau and Cabo Verde (PAIGC). Regional and international efforts deployed to resolve the crisis have so far not yielded the expected dividends. Lack of consensus has led to the appointment and dismissal of five different Prime Ministers between 2015 to date, resulting in the paralysis of the ANP for more than two years.

**74.** With the upcoming 2018 legislative and 2019 presidential elections, the political climate in the country is tense and could deteriorate as the election date approaches. From 1 to 2 December 2017, the ECOWAS Chair dispatched a high Level ministerial mission to Bissau to assess the status of implementation of the Conakry Agreement following the three months extension of the deadline given to President Jose Mario Vaz by the previous ECOWAS summit held in Monrovia in June 2017. The Assessment Mission did not record any progress in the implementation of the agreement. At the same time, the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea Bissau (ECOMIB), which had expired on 30 September 2017 has not been renewed. The international community is of the view that ECOMIB should be maintained to help maintain security in the country, particularly with regard to the upcoming elections.

**75.** The 52<sup>nd</sup> ECOWAS Ordinary Summit held on 16 December 2017, considering the situation in Guinea Bissau, called for the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement, in particular the appointment of a consensual Prime Minister. In this respect, the ECOWAS Authority entrusted President Alpha Kondé of Guinea and Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe of Togo with the responsibility to engage all Guinea Bissau stakeholders, while envisaging the imposition of individual and collective sanction on those who hinder the implementation of the Agreement.

**76.** In other internal developments, it is to be noted that the PAIGC which has joined forces with seventeen other political parties, is calling for the resignation of the President. The rising tension and incitements by political actors, if not managed properly, have the potential to escalate into violence.

**77.** On 17 October 2017, Mr. Domingos Simões Pereira and Mr Baciro Dja, both former Prime Ministers also held consultations with President Conde, on the ongoing crisis in Guinea Bissau, after which they issued a joint declaration stating that President Vaz constitutes an obstacle to the implementation of the Conakry Agreement. On 12 January 2018, the Prime Minister Umaro Sissoco Embaló submitted his resignation to the President, who accepted it.

**78.** While the military has remained in the barracks, there are reports of disquiet within the service regarding the political situation in the country. On the other hand, the Security Sector Reform (SSR) process has been stalled due to lack of funds and the deadlocked political process. The recent recruitment of about 1,950 youths into the military could further complicate SSR efforts. This includes the arrest of six military officers in December 2017, for allegedly plotting against the Chief of Staff of the armed forces, General Biague Na Tan, which further complicated the situation.

**79.** In light of the above, the Assembly may wish to call upon Bissau-Guinean Stakeholders to abide by their commitments and urge them to comply with and implement the 2016 Bissau Roadmap and Conakry Agreement, so as to resolve the crisis and ensure a successful and timely conduct of the upcoming 2018 legislative elections. The Assembly may urge the President of the Republic to promote the necessary conditions for an inclusive and genuine dialogue to bring about peace and stability in the Country and urge all stakeholders in Guinea-Bissau to refrain from actions that could further ignite the crisis. The Assembly may further wish to commend and express support to the mediation efforts being deployed by the ECOWAS, including the role being played by the ECOMIB in maintaining and enhancing stability in Guinea-Bissau. Equally, the Assembly may further call for the renewal of ECOMIB mandate and for joint efforts to mobilize financial resources to support the continuation of its operation in Guinea-Bissau, until the resolution of the crisis and restoration of peace and stability in the country.

### **Mali and Sahel**

**80.** The political situation in Mali during the period under consideration was marked by the preparations for the regional, municipal and local elections initially scheduled for December 2017, as well as the legislative and presidential elections scheduled for 2018 and the efforts to implement the agreement for Peace and Reconciliation for Mali, signed in 2015, following the process of the Inter-Malian Talks in Algiers. The general situation in the Sahel region has been marked by efforts to operationalise the G5 Sahel Joint Force, the increase in the number of terrorist attacks, the worsening humanitarian situation and international efforts to find a comprehensive and sustainable solution to the growing cross-cutting challenges affecting the region.

**81.** On 30 December 2017, through a presidential Decree, President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita appointed Soumeylou Boubèye Maiga, as Prime Minister of Mali, to replace Abdoulaye Idrissa Maiga, in office since April 2017.

**82.** At the electoral level, in June 2017, the Malian authorities initiated a process of the revision of the Constitution. Several opposition political parties and Civil Society Organisations mobilised against this revision of the Constitution. After several days of consultations with various actors, the government decided to postpone the proposed Constitutional revision thus bringing calm and appeasement on the political scene. Within the framework of the electoral process, the government decided, during the month of October, on the date of 17 December for the organisation of the combined

Regional, communal and local elections. The signatory parties to the above-mentioned Agreement have not ceased to call for the postponement of the elections to enable the interim authorities to continue the accomplishment of their mission and the review of the Code of local Communities and the Law on the Free Administration of Territorial authorities. They also believe that the deterioration of the security situation will not be conducive for the holding of elections in most constituencies in the northern and central regions of the country. They also demanded the prior return of refugees who are interested in participating in these elections. As for the Malian political opposition, which also shares the security concerns, it requested for the audit of the electoral register and expressed concerns about the transparency of these elections. After consultations with the stakeholders in the electoral process, the government announced, on 26 November, the postponement of the Regional, Local and by municipal elections for the month of April 2018.

**83.** As part of the implementation of the above-mentioned Agreement, the PSC, at its 703<sup>rd</sup> meeting, held in Addis Ababa, on 20 July 2017, once again urged all the Malian parties to redouble their efforts to overcome the challenges of implementing the Agreement. Thanks to the efforts of the Government of Mali and the International Mediation, the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA) and the Platform, which clashed violently in the region of Kidal, signed in Bamako, on 23 August 2017, a Truce Agreement to end several weeks of hostilities. This Truce was made final with the subsequent "Commitments" of 20 September. In a Press Statement dated 25 August 2017, the Chairperson of the AU Commission welcomed the peacebuilding efforts in Northern Mali undertaken by the CMA and the Platform, through the signing in Bamako, on 23 August 2017, of a Truce that offers a sustainable peace perspective in Mali. The PSC, at its 736<sup>th</sup> meeting in Addis Ababa, held on 20 November 2017, once again noted with concern the slow path of progress in the implementation of the Agreement. The Mediation and the Follow-up Committee of the Agreement (CSA) are currently working to help remove the obstacles that impede the effective implementation of the Agreement. It is important to stress that differences of view among stakeholders have a negative impact on the finalisation of the implementation timeline of the Agreement.

**84.** However, following the 22<sup>nd</sup> Session of the CSA, held on 5 December 2017, progress has been made. The Malian Parties, in a new spirit of consensus, agreed to finalise, as soon as possible, their discussions on the conditions for the organisation of peaceful elections in April 2018, including the discussions on the Code of Territorial Communities and the Law on the Free Administration of Local Authorities and the operationalisation of the Interim Authorities. Significant progress has also been made, in particular, in the determination of the criteria and quotas for the integration of ex-combatants into the new Malian army and will have to be validated by the National Council for Security Sector Reform (CNRSS). It is to be recalled that the Carter Center has been designated as an Independent Observer, in line with the provisions of Article 63 of the Agreement of Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

**85.** On 29 June 2017, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2364 (2017), by which it renewed the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization

Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). In addition to the support that the mission is supposed to it is tasked to provide in the implementation of the Agreement, MINUSMA, through this new resolution, is also tasked to support the electoral process underway in Mali, to support more strongly the Malian forces, as well as those of the G5-Sahel, within the limits of its mandate and resources. Subsequently, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2374 (2017), by which it decided to impose targeted sanctions against any person or entity whose activities tend to undermine the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali.

**86.** With regard to the security situation, Northern Mali is still witnessing repeated attacks against the Malian Defence and Security Forces, UN forces and Operation Barkhane, clashes between armed groups, banditry targeting the civilian population and humanitarian organisations, as well as radical sermons. In this context, the PSC, at its 703<sup>rd</sup> meeting, held in Addis Ababa, on 20 July 2017, reaffirmed its strong condemnation of despicable terrorist attacks against the civilian population, the Malian and international forces of MINUSMA and Operation Barkhane. The PSC, at its 736<sup>th</sup> meeting, held in Addis Ababa, on 20 November 2017, also reiterated its deep concern about the continuing deterioration of the security situation, not only in the northern regions of Mali, but also in the central part of the country, in particular the Border with Niger and Burkina Faso, where increasing terrorist attacks against civilians and defense and security forces of the two countries are taking place. It is in this context that recurrent attacks against military posts in Burkina Faso and the one of 4 October 2017, in Tongo Tongo, in Niger, which resulted in the loss of dozen of Nigerien and American soldiers, took place.

**87.** **With regard to the Sahel region,** progress has been made in the efforts to operationalise the G5 Sahel Joint Force. Specifically, there has been significant progress in the establishment of a Central Command Post of the Force, a donation of equipment by the President of the Republic of Mali and the preparation of a provisional budget of 423 million Euros for the first financial year. It should be noted that several pledges were registered (the G5 Sahel countries, France, the EU, the United States of America and Saudi Arabia) representing more than 268 million Dollars. The Joint Force has already launched, on 31 October 2017, its first joint cross-border operation between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger; it should reach full operational capacity in March 2018. It should be recalled that the PSC, at its 736<sup>th</sup> meeting in Addis Ababa, on 20 November 2017, welcomed the pledges made by various partners, in particular the EU and some of its Member States. In this regard, the UN Security Council adopted on 8 December 2017, resolution 2391(2017), in which it authorised MINUSMA to provide operational and logistic support to the G5-Sahel Joint Force. Countries of the region are looking forward to the outcome of the next Donors Conference on the Sahel scheduled to take place in February 2018, in Brussels, Belgium.

**88.** With regard to the efforts aimed at strengthening coordination of initiatives and other efforts of the international community in the region of the Sahel, the AU, through the MISAHHEL, the UN and the EU are working for the implementation of the conclusions of the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministerial Coordination Platform for the Sahel, held in

N'Djamena, on 14 June 2017. It is in this context that the joint meeting of the Heads of the Intelligence and Security Services of the Nouakchott and Djibouti processes took place in Addis Ababa on 10 November 2017, during which the countries of the Sahelo-Saharan region reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen their cooperation and to provide all the necessary support to the initiative of the G5-Sahel.

**89.** The security challenges in the Sahel region have caused the deterioration of the humanitarian situation. In this context, the PSC, at its 723<sup>rd</sup> meeting, held on 5 October 2017, among others, stressed the urgent need for all Member States and members of the international community, in a position to do so, to help the affected countries cope with the current humanitarian situation.

**90.** In light of those developments, the Assembly may wish to urge once again the Malian parties to redouble their efforts with a view to ensure the speedy implementation of the Agreement; welcome the signing of a Ceasefire Agreement on 23 August 2017 and the commitment to the Cessation of Hostilities, signed on 20 September 2017, by the armed groups that signed the Algiers Agreement; urged the Malian parties to reach a consensus for the organization of the upcoming election in 2018; commend MINUSMA for the efforts undertaken and renew the AU's support to the Mission in its stabilization efforts in Mali; reiterate its support to the Resolution 2374(2017), in the framework of the international efforts to accelerate the process of the implementation of the Algiers Agreement; reiterate its deep concern at the continuous deterioration of the security situation in Mali and the Sahel region; and condemn, once again, all terrorist attacks. **Concerning the Sahel**, the Assembly may welcome the progress made in operationalising the G5 Sahel Joint Force and welcome the pledges made by different partners, appealing to them to participate in the Conference on the Sahel, which is scheduled to be held in Brussels in February 2018, to mobilise additional resources for the Joint Force, call upon the international community, first and foremost the United Nations Security Council, to take the appropriate decisions to ensure sustainable and predictable funding for the Joint Force, request the international community to provide support for the needs expressed by the G5 Sahel countries in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, express its gratitude to the international community for its continued support for the efforts made to promote peace, security and stability in Mali and the Sahel region and encourage them to continue and strengthen their support, in particular to the fight against terrorism, violent extremism and radicalisation.

### **The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) Against the Boko Haram Terrorist Group**

**91.** During the period under review, the countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), namely Nigeria, Niger, Cameroun and Chad plus Benin, continued, through the MNJTF, the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group leading to further degrading of that group. However, despite the gains made so far, Boko Haram remains a serious threat to regional security in the Lake Chad Basin. The terrorist group retains the capacity soft targets in the region. Boko Haram has displaced millions of people and left a number of others in the affected areas in dire need of humanitarian

assistance. The MNJTF continues to conduct operations against the terrorist group especially in the Lake Chad islands, in spite of its limitations regarding amphibious and air intelligence gathering assets de-mining capabilities.

**92.** The AU continues to support the MNJTF operations. The PSC, under the Chairmanship of Nigeria, undertook a field mission to the countries of the LCBC, from 27 to 31 July 2017, to express AU's solidarity to the peoples and the governments of the region and engaged all stakeholders on the ground with a view to better inform its decision making process on the situation in the region. As reported above, the AU Commission, in partnership with the LCBC, convened a regional conference in Ndjamena, Chad, from 2 to 4 November 2017, as a first step in the process of developing a Regional Stabilization Strategy for areas affected by Boko Haram terrorist group. On its part, the PSC, at its 738<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 7 December 2017, extended the mandate of the MNJTF until 31 January 2019. Besides, the AU and its partners, in particular, the EU, the United Kingdom and Turkey, are providing additional financial and logistic support to the MNJTF. In addition, the AU is supporting the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) in the formulation of holistic Regional Stabilization and Recovery Strategy.

**93.** The Assembly may wish to commend the countries of the LCBC for their continued efforts against the Boko Haram terrorist group. The Assembly may also wish to request the Commission, working closely with partners, to continue to deploy necessary efforts towards mobilizing additional and adequate support for the MNJTF, based on the need expressed by the countries of the region, with a view to assist them in filling its capability gaps. The Assembly may further wish to call on all AU Member States and the international community at large to extend the necessary assistance, including fulfilling pledges to the countries of the region confronted by a dire humanitarian situation. The Assembly may also call for an improved coordination between the AU Commission and MNJTF to ensure that the support and assistance from the international community are received promptly by the troops who are ultimately the end users. The Assembly may wish to request the LCBC to develop further regional strategy to address the root causes of the crises, and call for regional and international support to the ongoing efforts to revitalise the Lake Chad.

### **Côte d'Ivoire**

**94.** During the period under review, Côte d'Ivoire, with a more vigorous economic growth, continued its efforts toward the consolidation of peace and national reconciliation, despite many challenges facing the country. It is against the context of these ongoing progress, that the UN Security Council has decided, on June 30, 2017, to close the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). The debate in the country, in the context of the challenges relating to the renewal of the political class, has been largely dominated by the prospect of the 2020 elections. In addition, following the various mutinies during 2017, the security situation in Côte d'Ivoire is still marked by efforts being deployed by the authorities to consolidate a republican army under the authority of the constitutional civilian authorities. The latest incidents in Bouake,

between military and elements of a special unit against criminals, remind us of the fragility of the gains made so far in efforts aimed at rebuilding the defense and security forces of the country.

**95.** The general situation in the barracks has improved significantly, thanks to the Legislation of Military Programming 2016-2020, implemented by the Government, in the framework of an ambitious project for the improvement in the living and working conditions of the defense and security forces. The recent downsizing in the troops and the command is part of a permanent mechanism aimed of incentive to voluntary departure from the army. The country thus seeks to complete the consolidation of a professional army, politically neutral and at the service of the public institutions.

**96.** Strengthened by its structural reforms, the Ivorian State has managed to secure, in November 2017, a donation of 524, 7 million from the American programme of development, referred to as the Millennium Challenge Account, as well as support from various other financial partners of Côte d'Ivoire.

**97.** This conducive climate facilitated the successful holding at the end of November 2017, in Abidjan, of the 5<sup>th</sup> EU-AU Summit, within the framework of the partnership between the two organizations.

**98.** In light of the above, the Assembly may welcome the ongoing progress in Côte d'Ivoire on the path of consolidation of peace and stability in the country. The Assembly may also encourage the Ivorian authorities to pursue their efforts, with a view to promote the formation of a republican army under the exclusive authority of the civilian constitutional power and the deepening of the national reconciliation.

### **Liberia**

**99.** Since the last Ordinary Session of the Assembly, the political situation in **Liberia** has been dominated by presidential and legislative elections, which were held in October 2017. The elections marked a critical milestone as they were the first to be conducted by the Government following its full assumption of security responsibilities from the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in June 2017. The elections are even more significant as they paved the way for the first peaceful transition of power in the country in last seven decades. While UNMIL will finally withdraw from Liberia in March 2018, the Liberian security agencies are now fully responsible for security within the country and along its borders with its Mano River Union (MRU) neighbouring countries of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire. It has continued to perform this role credibly, particularly during the recent elections.

**100.** The AU Commission, in close collaboration with ECOWAS and the UN, coordinated efforts and engagements towards political support which facilitated a conducive environment for the successful conduct of the presidential and legislative elections.

**101.** While the 10 October 2017 elections were generally peaceful and found to be credible by international observers, a few legal challenges to the electoral process and its outcomes have since emerged, resulting in the delay of the presidential run-off which was initially scheduled for 7 November 2017. However, on 7 December 2017, the Supreme Court recognized that there were irregularities but there was insufficient evidence to invalidate the results of the first round of the presidential elections. The Court therefore instructed the National Election Commission (NEC) to rectify the irregularities and set a date for the run off.

**102.** The run-off elections took place on 26 December 2017, seven weeks after the first round. The NEC of Liberia declared George Weah winner with 61% of the vote over Joseph Boakai, who conceded defeat and congratulated his opponent, who paid to him a courtesy call.

**103.** The AU, like all other electoral observer missions, hailed the smooth and peaceful conduct of the elections in Liberia, despite significant decrease in international support to Liberia's development and political processes. While this situation favours a welcome increase in national ownership of the electoral process, it also puts considerable pressure on scarce national resources, especially as the country is still recovering from the negative human and financial effects of the Ebola outbreak. Issues that were at root of Liberia's civil war, including corruption and impunity have undermined progress in taking forward critical reforms that would broaden political space, develop the security sector and improve governance and rule of law.

**104.** The Assembly may wish to congratulate the people and the Government of Liberia, as well as all political and civil society stakeholders for the smooth and peaceful conduct of the electoral process, in the challenging post-conflict and post-Ebola context that characterises the country. The Assembly may wish to congratulate the new President of Liberia, Mr. George Weah, and pay a particular tribute to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and her Government for those landmark elections in Liberia. The Assembly may encourage Liberian stakeholders to work towards peaceful transmission of power to the new authorities, bearing in mind the daunting socio-economic challenges facing Liberia. The Assembly may call on the international community and donors to pursue and intensify its assistance to Liberia in its efforts towards achieving sustainable peace, stability and development for its people, and request in this regard the Commission to mobilise resources in the framework of the AU Framework policy for post-conflict reconstruction and development in support to Liberia.

## **V. North Africa**

### **Libya**

**105.** The situation in **Libya** has remained of deep concern to the AU, given the persistent political, security and humanitarian challenges. Indeed, the AU policy organs have continued their engagements in the country to help it recover peace. At its last Ordinary Session, the Assembly urged the Libyan parties to overcome their differences

through political dialogue. At its 703<sup>rd</sup> meeting held on 20 July 2017, the PSC reviewed the situation in Libya and reiterated AU's concern about the persistent political deadlock, as well as at the humanitarian and security situation in the country, marked by continuing fighting among armed militias in parts of the country. In this regard, Council called upon all the Libyan stakeholders to work together with a view to overcoming the political impasse and paving the way for durable peace, stability and reconciliation in Libya. Council further reviewed the situation in Libya at its 739<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 8 December 2017, where it was briefed by the Commission and the Personal Envoy of the Chair of the AU High-Level Committee on Libya, President Denis Sassou Nguesso of Congo. The PSC welcomed the efforts exerted by the neighbouring countries of Libya, particularly to facilitate and host meetings of the different Libyan political, military and tribal stakeholders, in support to the AU/UN efforts to address the challenges in Libya.

**106.** It is to be recalled that AU's engagements in Libya are focused on assisting the parties to take forward the political process by expediting the amendment of the Libya Political Agreement (LPA) signed in Skhirat, Morocco, in December 2015. The AU continues to work in order to ensure coordination and coherence in assisting the Libyan stakeholders to restore peace in their country. Towards this end, the AU High Level Committee for Libya convened, in Brazzaville, in the Republic of Congo, on 9 September 2017, where the various Libyan political leaders, including Prime Minister Faiez al-Serraj; President of the House of Representatives, Agila Saleh, Chairman of the High State Council, Abderrahman Swehli, participated, while Marshall Haftar paid a visit to the Chair of the High-Level Committee in Brazzaville, a few days later. During this meeting, the AU articulated a Roadmap, stressing, in particular, the need for amendment of the LPA to be endorsed by a Libyan national reconciliation conference, subsequently leading to a national election. The official launching of the dialogue between the Representative of the House of Representatives (HoR) and the High State Council (HSC) was subsequently opened by President Sassou Nguesso in Brazzaville.

**107.** The UN, on its part, outlined an initiative, titled "Action Plan for Libya," on 20 September 2017, in New York, calling for a series of sequential steps to restart the process of amending the LPA; convening an inclusive national conference; finalizing and approving a constitution, and holding elections based on a new electoral law and constitution.

**108.** It was against this background that, the Libya Dialogue Committee, representing both the HoR and HSC, continued its work in Tunis on 25 September 2017. Overall, the Dialogue Committee, in its two meetings, made some progress in agreeing on sections in the LPA to be amended, including the restructuring of the Presidency Council from nine to three members, and the appointment of a Prime Minister outside of the three member Presidency Council. However, there was disagreement on the composition of the High State Council, as well as on Article 8 relating to the Army Chief of Staff.

**109.** Subsequently, the U.N. Special Representative, Ghassam Salame, submitted to the House of Representatives and the High State Council a proposal to amend the

Article of the LPA on the executive power, outlining the structure and functions of the Executive Branch, as well as the mandate and the modalities of functioning of the Presidency Council. Whilst this proposal was received favourably by the House of Representatives, the High State Council members were divided over the matter. The UN Special Representative subsequently reported that, as a follow-up on the implementation of the U.N. Action Plan, the U.N had started preparations for the National Conference, which is expected to take place in February 2018, as well as finalizing preparations for elections and a new constitution, on the basis of a draft that has already been finalized by the Constitutional Drafting Assembly. The UN Special representative paid a visits to Niger and Chad, respectively on 3 and 4 January 2018, and subsequently to the AU Headquarters, during which he has been reassured of the AU's full support to his mission and agreed on reinforcing the collaboration between the two organizations on the issue.

**110.** The political deadlock continues to exacerbate the humanitarian crisis, including the plight of African migrants who got stranded in Libya, while attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea into Europe. In November 2017, international media reported on the existence of “slave auctions” of African migrants in some parts of Libya. In a bid to address this humanitarian crisis and the plight of African migrants in Libya, the Chairperson of the AU Commission issued a statement on 20 November 2017 in which he condemned these despicable acts and called on the African Commission for Human and People’s Rights to investigate the case and dispatched the AU Commissioner for Social Affairs, Amira el-Fadil, to Libya, where she consulted with the Libyan authorities and other stakeholders on the situation of African migrants in Libya and agreed on practical steps to address their plight. On its part, the PSC at its 739<sup>th</sup> meeting, held on 8 December 2017, endorsed the Chairperson’s Statement and urged him working closely with Member States and relevant partners, to ensure that necessary steps are taken with a view to expediting the voluntary repatriation of African migrants.

**111.** In order to optimize coordination and cooperation in addressing the plight of African migrants, a Task Force was established in Abidjan, on 29 November 2017, during a Tripartite meeting between the Chairperson of the AU Commission, the President of the EU and the UN Secretary General. The Task force convened its first meeting at the AU Headquarters, in Addis Ababa, on 4 December 2017, and agreed on the modalities of its work. Furthermore, on 5 December 2017, the Chairperson of the Commission met with the Permanent Representatives of the 21 member states that either have nationals stranded in Libya or share a border with Libya. The Chairperson reaffirmed the commitment of the AU to work closely with its Member States, the UN, the EU and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the necessary steps are taken in order to expedite the voluntary repatriation and resettlement process of African migrants. To date, the process of repatriation has already allowed over 2600 migrants to return to their respective countries.

**112.** On its part, and in response to the plight of African migrants, the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord reiterated its commitment to bring those

responsible to justice based on the conclusions of ongoing investigations, working closely with the international community.

**113.** Against this background, the Assembly may wish to urge the Libyan parties to muster the necessary political courage to overcome their political differences, consensually amend the LPA, and move towards national reconciliation. The Assembly may also wish to commend the members of the AU High Level Committee for Libya, its Chair, President Denis Sassou Nguesso, of the Congo Republic, as well as the neighboring countries, the AU High Representative for Libya, former President Jakaya Kikwete, for their continuing engagement to address the political, security, and related challenges in Libya. The Assembly may wish to welcome the efforts exerted by the neighbouring countries of Libya, particularly to facilitate and host meetings of the different Libyan political, military and tribal stakeholders, in support to the AU/UN efforts to address the challenges in Libya. The Assembly may wish to urge that necessary and conducive condition are met. as a prerequisite, for the successful holding of elections in Libya and reiterate, to this end the vital importance of national reconciliation conference and robust security measures for free, fair and inclusive elections. The Assembly may wish to reaffirm the central role that the AU should play in Libya and to call for enhanced coordination and cooperation in the international community, in particular with the UN. The Assembly may wish to condemn, in the strongest terms, the alleged abuse of African migrants in Libya, and express its support to the AU/ EU/UN Tripartite Task Force, as well as the efforts of the Presidency Council of the Government of National Accord, and urge all concerned to extend the necessary support to the AU Commission in coordinating the activities of the Task Force. Equally, Assembly may wish to call for the prosecution of those found culpable of those despicable acts against African migrants. The Assembly may wish to commend countries that have accepted to host repatriated migrants from Libya.

## **VI. Western Sahara**

**114.** The question of **Western Sahara**, , has remained unresolved, for four decades, despite the adoption of a multitude of resolutions by the UN and the OAU/AU, calling for definitive measures to enable the people of Western Sahara to exercise their right to self-determination. Successive efforts by the international community towards the peaceful resolution of the dispute between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO beginning with the OAU Settlement Plan and through the current UN Security Council negotiating framework, mandated under the UNSC resolution 1754(2007), have remained stalemated. The current stalemate in the peace process is largely due to the Moroccan insistence that only its proposal of autonomy shall serve as the basis of the negotiations while the Frente Polisario insists on self-determination and independence despite the fact that any precondition for the talks had been explicitly ruled out by UNSC Resolution 1754(2007) which had mandated the talks in the first place.

**115.** The AU policy organs have remained seized of the issue. It should be recalled that, at its 668<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 20 March 2017, the PSC called on the two parties, in

their capacity as Member States, to engage in direct and serious talks to overcome the current deadlock in the peace process. The PSC also requested the Chairperson of the Commission to strengthen the mandate of the AU High Representative for Western Sahara, His Excellency Joaquim Alberto Chissano, former President of Mozambique, in order to facilitate direct dialogue between the parties, as well as to enable him to conduct effective consultations with stakeholders on the peace process and on the protection of human rights and the preservation of the natural resources of the Territory. The PSC further decided to reactivate the Ad hoc Committee of Heads of State and Government on the conflict in Western Sahara, established pursuant to resolution AHG/Res.92(XV), adopted at the 15<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, held in Khartoum, Sudan, from 18 to 22 July 1978, and requested the Chairperson of the Commission to undertake the necessary consultations for the finalization of the composition and the operationalization of the Ad hoc Committee. Although the PSC has insisted on the return of the AU Personnel to MINURSO Headquarters in Layoune and to allow an independent monitoring of human rights in the Territory, no progress has been reported in this regard.

**116.** In the decision of its 29<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session, held from 3 to 4 July 2017, the Assembly welcomed the commitment of the UN Secretary-General to re-launch the negotiating process, with a new dynamic and a new spirit leading to the resumption of negotiations, in good faith and without preconditions, between the two parties with the aim of reaching a durable solution, which shall provide for the self-determination referendum of the people of Western Sahara in line with the relevant UN resolutions and the OAU/AU decisions.

**117.** The admission of Morocco, in January 2017, as the 55<sup>th</sup> Member State of the AU without preconditions and/or reservations, and thereafter sitting side by side with the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) in the meetings of AU Policy organs, is a unique opportunity to have the two parties working together towards reaching a peaceful solution that will speedily facilitate organization of the self-determination referendum in Western Sahara. In this regard, the AU remains committed to provide all necessary support to its two Member States to generate the political will needed to break the current stalemate and ensure a definitive solution to this conflict.

**118.** In August 2017, the United Nations Secretary General appointed Mr. Horst Kohler, former President of Germany, as his personal Envoy for Western Sahara. In October 2017, Mr. Köhler undertook a visit to the region. He visited the Polisario-controlled part of Western Sahara, but not to the capital, Laayoune, where MINURSO is headquartered, which is under Moroccan-control. Mr. Kohler also visited Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania. The Personal Envoy's visit was part of the new impetus to re-launch the political process in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 2351 and thereafter he briefed, on 22 November 2017, the UN Security Council on his mission and received full support of the Members of the Council to revive the peace process between the two parties. Mr. Kohler also visited on 10 and 11 January 2018, the AU headquarters where he was reassured by the Chairperson of the Commission of the AU's full support for his mission.

**119.** In light of the foregoing, the Assembly may wish to express its support for the re-launching of the negotiation process, between the two Member States with the aim of reaching a durable solution consistent with the relevant UN resolutions and OAU/AU decisions. The Assembly may also wish to reiterate its call on the two Member States, the Kingdom of Morocco and the SADR to engage in direct and serious talks directed by the AU and the UN. While the AU stands ready to operationalize, at appropriate time, the Committee of the Heads of State and Government on Western Sahara, the Assembly may wish to call on the two parties to fully cooperate with the Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Horst Köhler. The Assembly may further wish to request Morocco, as AU Member State, to allow the AU Observer Mission to return to Laayoune, Western Sahara, as well as to allow an independent monitoring of human rights in the Territory. The Assembly may also wish to reiterate its repeated calls, in particular its declaration adopted at its 24<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, from 30 to 31 January 2015, on the Crans Montana Forum, a Switzerland-based organization, to desist from convening its meetings in the city of Dakhla, in Western Sahara and appeal to all Member States, African civil society organizations and other relevant actors to boycott the upcoming meeting scheduled to take place from 15 to 20 March 2018.

## **B. THEMATIC ISSUES**

### **a) Preventing and countering terrorism and violent extremism**

**120.** Terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to peace, security and stability. The past months have witnessed some of the deadliest acts of terrorism on the continent to date. These include the 14 October 2017 bombing in Mogadishu which killed more than 500 persons, and the 24 November attack in Sinai in which 311 worshippers were killed. There have also been continuous and deadly attacks against innocent civilians and peacekeepers in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions. The continent is also deeply impacted by extra-regional security and political developments. Notably, with the military defeat of the so-called Islamic State (ISIS) in the Middle East, the group is seeking to make the continent, and particularly North Africa and the Sahel region, its new sanctuary. Thousands of returning African and foreign terrorist fighters flowing into the continent are posing a serious security threat which many African states are ill-prepared to confront such a challenge.

**121.** Therefore, the AU, including through the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) has continued to support and build capacity of Member States with a focus on addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and radicalization.

**122.** The ACSRT also organized, in collaboration with the Sahel Fusion and Liaison Unit and the Sahel League of Ulemas, Scholars, preachers and Imams, a regional Workshop for religious leaders from the countries of the Nouakchott Process in the promotion of tolerance and the prevention of radicalization in religious education. The

workshop was held on 11 December 2017 in Algiers. The second meeting of the Regional Counter-Terrorism Coordinators was held at the ACSRT's headquarters in Algiers on 14-15 December 2017. The meeting sought to promote unified regional and inter-regional responses to terrorism and transnational organized crime through the formulation of uniform programs which will ease cross-region coordination and exploration of synergies in operations and capacity building.

**123.** The ACSRT also convened its 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Representatives of Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs) Focal Points in Algiers, Algeria, from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> December 2017, which brought together ACSRT Counter-Terrorism National and Regional Focal Points (FPs) from 50 AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanism, in addition representatives of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The three-day meeting, opened by the Commissioner for Peace and Security allowed the National and Regional Focal Points to analyze the current terrorism situation on the continent, adopt its 2018-2020 Strategic Plan and coordinate action and map the way forward in terms of advancing the continent's counter-terrorism objectives, for a more concrete coordinated joint action. Both meetings made important recommendations among which are the necessity to review the Centre's Structure, to endow it with the necessary infrastructure and funding to allow it to fully implement its mandate.

**124.** Moreover, in the framework continued partnerships within the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF), the ACSRT co-organized a Workshop: Capacity Building in the West Africa Region Working Group and facilitated the organization a Workshop on the Nexus between Trans-national Organized Crime and Terrorism, both held in Algiers, Algeria, 23-24 and 25 October, 2017, respectively. In addition it held a Conference on Kidnapping For Ransom on 23 -24 August in Algiers, jointly organized with the UN Counterterrorism Implementation Task Force (UNCTITF) and a Leadership Training: Operation Africa-Trigger from 4 to 8 September 2017, 11-14 September at its Premises in Algiers, Algeria, in collaboration with Interpol, UNODC and the World Customs Organization (WCO) which launched an operation that will see officers from across West Africa and the Sahel conducting coordinated interventions targeting the illicit trafficking of firearms and terrorist mobility.

**125.** During the period under review, the ACSRT received the prestigious 2017 Award of the OPWC for its efforts and assistance to AU Member States in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and its universality.

**126.** The AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL) has also commenced the implementation of its three-year work plan following the convening of the first General Assembly and the signing of the Host Agreement in May 2017. On 24-25 October 2017, AFRIPOL organized a capacity building workshop on Transnational Organized Crime, Cybercrime and Terrorism. AFRIPOL also convened a meeting to enhance cooperation in combating cybercrime, on 13-14 December 2017 in Algiers. The meeting identified

action at national, regional and continental levels to strengthen the capacities of the police agencies to prevent and combat cybercrime.

**127.** The Committee of Intelligence and Security Services (CISSA), within its mandate, regularly updated the PSC on the evolving threat of terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization on the continent. Enhancing information sharing and cooperation between intelligence agencies remain a key pillar of counter-terrorism cooperation. In this regard, the Commissioner for Peace and Security convened the first joint meeting of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services of the Member States and organizations participating in the Nouakchott and Djibouti Processes at the AU Headquarters, in Addis Ababa, on 10 November 2017. The meeting resulted in a set of action points for greater synergy and cooperation between the member countries and organizations to address the growing threat of terrorism and crime and the links between them.

**128.** On 10-11 December 2017, a High-Level Forum of AU Member States was convened in Oran, Algeria, under the theme “effective and sustainable counterterrorism responses: a regional approach”. The Forum, which was organized in collaboration with the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the Government of Algeria, promoted a preventive and response approach that focuses on addressing the conditions conducive to terrorism, countering violent ideologies, effective criminal justice responses, and integrated stabilization and peace support operations. The meeting highlighted that Africa has put in place guiding principles and frameworks in preventing and combating terrorism and violent extremism on the continent. There is need now for renewed strong political will and effective action at the national and regional levels. In this regard, the meeting discussed measures and good practices to address a range of issues in the areas of prevention, criminal justice, information and intelligence exchange, countering terrorist financing, handling inflows of foreign terrorist fighters, stabilization, reconciliation and rehabilitation, as well as harmonized regional approaches and capacity building.

## **C. IMPLEMENTATION OF VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE (APSA)**

### **a) The Peace Fund**

**129.** During the period under review, Member States and the Commission intensified their joint efforts towards expediting the operationalization of the Peace Fund within the general framework of *Financing the Union*. At the time of finalizing this Report, it is encouraging to note that 29.5 million USD have been secured from Member States contributions. This represents a huge effort from our Member States to reach this unprecedented level of funds in the Peace Fund. It is now time to finalise and to put in place the oversight, management and governance structure of the Peace Fund, as decided by the PSC in the communiqué of its 689<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 30 May 2017. The 30<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly may be requested to adopt the Peace Fund structure as proposed by the Commission.

**b) African Standby Force (ASF)**

**130.** Following the successful conduct of the Amani Africa II (AII) Field Training Exercise (FTX), the Assembly adopted decision Assembly/AU/Dec.589 (XXVI) in January 2016, directing that an “Evaluation Mission [should] be undertaken by the Commission and the RECs/RMs to verify the state of readiness of Regional Standby Forces”. In the context of implementing this Assembly decision, the 10<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of the Specialised Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STCDSS), held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 9 January 2018, considered and endorsed the Report and the recommendations of the Independent Panel of Experts, led by Professor Ibrahim Gambari, on the Verification, Confirmation and Validation of Africa Standby Force (ASF) pledged capabilities, as well as the Maputo Five Year Workplan (2016-2020) on the enhancement of the ASF.

**131.** The STCDSS also recognized the progress made in the operationalization of the ASF Continental Logistic Base (CLB), inaugurated on 5 January 2018, by the Commissioner for Peace and Security and the Prime Minister of Cameroon. The meeting further welcomed the acquisition by the Commission of the Command, Control, Communication and Information System (C3IS) equipment and the development of Common Costs for AU Peace Support Operations, as major milestones in the development of the ASF.

**132.** In light of the above, the STCDSS urged all concerned stakeholders to continue supporting the realisation of the full operationalisation of the ASF, including the rapid finalization of the Legal Framework on the Employment of the ASF by June 2018. Furthermore, the Commission was directed to expedite the AU PSO Doctrine and ASF Concept review processes for submission to the next Ordinary Meeting of the STCDSS. Notably, the Declaration of the 10<sup>th</sup> Ordinary meeting of the STCDSS has been submitted to the Assembly as a standalone working document.

**133.** It should be also highlighted that, the 10<sup>th</sup> ordinary meeting of the STCDSS requested all concerned stakeholders to support the harmonization of the activities of the African Capacity for Immediate Responses to Crisis (ACIRC) with ASF and enhance cooperation between ASF and all ad-hoc coalitions namely, MNJTF, Group of Five Sahel Joint Force and RCI-LRA Task Force with the ASF Framework.

**c) Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD)**

**134.** During the period under review, the AU continued to make progress in implementing the AU PCRD Policy. The establishment by the AU Commission of an inter-departmental Task Force on PCRD whose objective is to ensure effective coordination of strategic PCRD Policy guidance and implementation has generated fresh impetus in the process. With the membership of the AU Liaison Offices and RECs/RMs, the Task Force carried out joint activities which saw synergies and

coordination enhanced in Member States implementing PCRD activities. To ensure coherence, a five-year Results-Based Framework on PCRD is being finalised in early 2018 and will guide implementation of AU's initiatives.

**135.** Within its Quick Impact/Peace Strengthening Project Policy framework, the Commission, through its Liaison Offices, provided support for the establishment of a National Human Rights Commission in the Central African Republic, the rehabilitation of the Judiciary Police Prison in Bandim, Guinea Bissau and the procurement and installations of border/security monitoring equipment, supporting girl child education through the Grand Bassa Community College in Liberia and several community level peacebuilding projects in Somalia, and a rule of law project in Madagascar.

**136.** Furthermore, with a view to articulating relevant approaches and requisite resources, a workshop on Enhancing PCRD through Partnerships with RECs/RMs for conflict prevention, management and resolution was held in Harare, Zimbabwe, from 25 to 27 October 2017. The overall goal of the Workshop was to enable the AU make its contribution towards the implementation of the Lusaka Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by 2020, through the strengthening of institutional capacities at the AU, RECs/RMs in order to undertake effective post-conflict stabilization, peacebuilding and reconstruction. Within the above framework of collaboration on implementing the PCRD Policy, two annual meetings with RECs/RMs on PCRD – at technical and political levels, were proposed. The technical meeting will be held in the second quarter of 2018. In addition, the Harare Workshop agreed on a Guideline Note that defines and provides contextual clarity with a view to enhancing coordination and collaboration on the practical aspects of PCRD interventions among the various actors, notably the Commission, Member States, RECs/RMs and other partners such as the African Development Bank, World Bank, the EU and the UN system, as well as bilateral partners.

**137.** Within the context of the Inter-departmental Task Force on PCRD, the Commission and the United Nations conducted a joint assessment mission to Sudan from 7 to 16 November 2017. The assessment team visited team sites in Darfur States evacuated by UNAMID, conducted consultations with Government authorities, affected communities, the United Nations Country Team and the diplomatic community in Khartoum. The objective of the assessment was to provide to the AU and United Nations leadership an account on the progress of phase one of UNAMID's reconfiguration and detailed recommendations on the scope and pace of phase two, along the lines of UN Security Council resolution 2363 (2017).

**138.** Following an interactive dialogue between the PSC and UN Peacebuilding Commission held in Addis Ababa on 8 December 2017, and the signing by the commissioner for Peace and Security of an MoU with the UN Peacebuilding Commission, the AU is poised to further enhance the implementation of the PCRD Policy, which should contribute to a more predictable and strategic partnership in the areas of conflict prevention, political dialogue, national reconciliation, democratic governance and human rights.

**139.** Going forward, the AU plans to scale up its stabilization efforts on the continent as it aims to manage transitions from initial stabilization which often has a heavy military footprint to long-term peacebuilding with a focus on reconstruction, revitalization of public service institutions, and short- to medium-term socio-economic and political development. In this respect, the Commission in partnership with the Lake Chad Basin Commission convened a regional conference in Ndjamena, Chad from 2 to 4 November 2017, chaired by the Commissioner for Peace and Security and Mr. Sidick Abdelkeria Hagggar, Minister of Water and Sanitation of the Republic of Chad, representing the Prime Minister, as a first step in the process of developing a Regional Stabilization Strategy for areas affected by the Boko Haram terrorist group. A follow-up regional conference is planned for the first quarter of 2018 to finalise a comprehensive regional strategy that will rationalize the various initiatives aimed at stabilizing the areas affected by Boko Haram's activities in the Lake Chad Basin region. In the same vein, our peacebuilding efforts in Somalia and Sudan within the framework of the African Union Mission in Somalia and UNAMID in Darfur respectively will also be scaled up.

**140.** It should be highlighted that, post-conflict reconstruction and development demands huge investments, especially in financial terms, which are often not readily available in the continent. Thus, it makes it imperative for efforts to be deployed to mobilize both public and private sectors, as well as international financial institutions, and partners, and within the framework of the African Solidarity Initiative, to regroup efforts in order to provide reliable support to countries emerging from conflict in Africa.

**141.** In light of the above, the Assembly may wish to reiterate its call to Member States and the RECs/RMs to prioritize support for and implementation of post-conflict reconstruction development activities in those areas emerging from conflict. The Assembly may further wish to call upon the Commission to continue mobilizing support for the PCRD Policy Framework, including from the private sector and international financial institutions and partners, in support of countries emerging from conflict with a view to preventing relapse and advancing regeneration of resilience.

**d) Continental Early Warning and Conflict Prevention**

**142.** The Commission has continued its efforts to enhance its capacity to provide timely information and analysis through the development of various products, including the production of early warning reports and regular horizon scanning briefings to the PSC. The engagement with RECs/RMs was sustained, among others, through assistance provided to ECOWAS and ECCAS, and by initial consultations on early warning with UMA. Following the consultation with African Civil Society Organizations, in May 2017, with the objective of strengthening collaboration in the area of early warning and conflict prevention, one of the CSOs has commenced submission of early warning information on Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) Africa Reporter tool. In addition, following the request from the Government of Ghana for technical support, and the preliminary assessment mission to Ghana in June 2017, the Commission supported Ghana in the conduct of its Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience

Assessment (CSVRA) in October 2017. The Commission had continued to provide technical assistance to Member States in the establishment and strengthening of national peace infrastructures, including the setting up of early warning systems and situation rooms. In this respect, six Member States, are already setting up their national early warning systems with the support of the Commission.

**143.** During the period under review, AU Border Programme (AUBP) also continued with Member States to pursue its work of border delimitation and demarcation. AUBP organized a confidence-building workshop between Comoros and Madagascar, held from 1 to 3 August 2017, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to create a conducive platform to begin the delimitation process of their common maritime boundary. The Programme facilitated the 5<sup>th</sup> session of the Joint Technical Committee (JTC) between Uganda and South Sudan, held from 29 November to 1 December 2017, in Kampala, to review implementation of the resolutions of the 4<sup>th</sup> session of the JTC. In addition, the AUBP supported the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the Joint Demarcation Committee (JDC) between South Sudan and Sudan, held from 7 to 12 December 2017, in Debre Zeit, Ethiopia to further implementation of the Boundary Issues Agreement, signed in 2012. With regards to capacity building, a training on the use of software to assist in the delimitation efforts between the riparian states of Lake Tanganyika was held from 13 to 17 November 2017, in Addis Ababa. On cross-border cooperation, AUBP continues to advocate for the signature and ratification of the AU Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation (Niamey convention). The Commission organized the Member States' Experts Meeting for the validation of the draft African Union Border Governance Strategy, held from 06 to 08 November 2017, in Addis Ababa. The Commission also held its 3<sup>rd</sup> AUBP- RECs Coordination Meeting, from 9 to 10 November 2017, in Addis Ababa, to develop areas of collaboration.

**e) Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR)**

**144.** Progress on national DDR and SSR processes has been slow. The major challenges facing SSR and DDR processes at the national level are related to the persistent insecurity and lack of adequate national strategies for sustainable peace and security. Some Member States emerging from conflict are struggling to achieve national reconciliation and comprehensive peace. In many instances, national efforts are overshadowed by lack of good governance and poor responses to political challenges. Such factors combined continue to obstruct the emergence of an environment conducive for effective SSR and traditional DDR processes. Nonetheless, the Commission remains steadfast in its operational and technical support to Member States.

**145.** In Madagascar, the Commission with support from partners, deployed two SSR advisors to support the process of finalization and endorsement of the national SSR strategic and operational plans.

**146.** In Sudan, the Commission fully participated in two joint AU-UN assessments for the reconfiguration and drawdown of UNAMID that took place in Darfur, in March and November 2017. These exercises highlighted the need for the Government of the Sudan to strengthen the military, security, justice and corrections services in Darfur, to be able to take effective control of the areas vacated by UNAMID forces.

**147.** With regard to activities relating to capacity building support for Member States, RECs and AU missions, the Commission, in collaboration with partners, continued its training courses. The Commission also developed 6 SSR guidance documents covering issues on gender and SSR, conducting needs assessment missions, harmonization of national security legislation, development of codes of conduct for African security institutions, SSR good practices, and monitoring and evaluation of SSR processes.

**148.** Engaging civil society remains an important component of the AU Policy Framework on SSR. In this respect, the Commission hosted, on 1-3 November 2017, the Inaugural Workshop on Engaging CSOs in Security and Justice Sector Reforms, with a view to building the capacities of African CSOs to engage in security and justice reforms at the national, regional and continental levels, and to provide a platform for ongoing dialogue and interaction between CSOs, the AU and RECs/RMs.

**149.** On DDR, the Commission, jointly with the Lake Chad Basin Commission, convened a regional stabilization conference, on 2 – 4 November 2017, in Ndjamena. The conference was the first step towards the development of a comprehensive regional strategy that will drive and rationalize various initiatives aimed at stabilizing the areas affected by Boko Haram's terrorist acts in the region. The multi-pronged regional strategy will encompass effective humanitarian responses and early recovery to encourage the return of IDPs and refugees; harmonized regional practices in handling disengaged combatants, and enhancing regional security and governance issues to address the conditions that gave rise to Boko Haram.

**150.** In Guinea-Bissau, the Commission organized and conducted a 3 months skills acquisition training, from October to December 2017, for defense and security sector personnel in collaboration with the Government of Guinea Bissau, in particular with regard to the social reintegration of retired armed forces personnel.

**151.** As part of the new phase of the AU DDR program, the Commission is also finalizing a number of DDR Operational Guidance Notes which aim to assist national and regional practitioners to design, implement and assess DDR initiatives. The guidance notes cover a number of emerging and pertinent issues such as foreign fighters, preventing and countering violent extremism, women and children, as well as upholding human rights in DDR interventions.

f) **Controlling the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons**

152. The violence perpetrated across the continent by non-state armed groups, terrorist and criminals is a constant reminder of the level of death and destruction that can be caused by the diversion and illicit trade in arms and ammunition. Nonetheless, serious gaps in prevention and response continue to exist at the national and regional levels. On its part, the Commission has launched the Ammunition Safety Management Initiative to assist states identify and address gaps in physical security and safety and build sustainable capacities to manage national stockpiles and prevent diversion and accidental explosions. Guinea Bissau was among the countries assisted in 2017 through trainings and technical assessments. The Commission has also finalized the process for assessing candidates for the roster of African practitioners on arms and ammunition managers who will be deployed to interested member states to assist in national capacity building.

g) **Weapons of Mass Destruction Disarmament and Non-proliferation**

153. The African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE), convened its 8<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session on 10 November 2017, in Addis Ababa, against the background of serious financial and administrative challenges hindering the operationalization of its Secretariat and the implementation of the programme of work. The session resolved to convene the conference of states parties as early as possible in 2018, to discuss with the States Parties the measures required to put the AFCONE Secretariat back on track.

154. In compliance with the call made by the 584<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Council of 29 March 2016, the Commission organized a Training Workshop for African National Contact Points on the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The workshop resulted in a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the national contact points and provided training on select aspects of national implementation, including developing legislation and action plans and preparing Confidence Building Measures.

h) **Women, Peace and Development**

155. In 2017, efforts of the Commission in the area of Women, Peace and Security were articulated around three main strands: Bridging the gap between policy and implementation, enhancing the role and leadership of women in peace processes and high level advocacy missions to bring to the forefront issues affecting women, particularly in conflict affected countries. In line with this, the Office of the Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security is in the process of finalizing a Continental Results Framework for monitoring and reporting on delivery by Member States on commitments and implementation progress on Women, Peace and Security. Furthermore, during the period under review the PSC, dedicated its 728<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 31 October 2017, to an Open Session on the theme: "The role of women in preventing and countering violent extremism in Africa", in commemoration of the adoption of UN Security Council

Resolution 1325(2000) on Women, Peace and Security. A High Level Joint Solidarity Mission between the United Nations and the African Union Commission was conducted in Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations and the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the Commission on Women, Peace and Security with the participation of the Executive Director of UN Women and the UN Secretary General Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The two organizations have also supported the creation by African Women Leaders of a Network for the Transformation of Africa, with focus on Peace, Governance and Sustainable Development.

**i) Children in situation of armed conflicts in Africa**

**156.** The PSC is seized with the issue of protection of children in conflict situations, as a cross cutting issue in all of its decisions. The PSC, dedicated its 706<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 26 July 2017, to an Open Session on the theme: “Child Soldiers/Out of School Children in Armed Conflict in Africa”, in which the PSC expressed their deep concern at the high number of out-of-school children in Africa, particularly in countries affected by conflicts and the resultant effect of extreme poverty, underlining that this disturbing trend need to receive the needed attention from political leaders, human rights activists, and other members of the international community including the AU, in line with the Assembly decision of January 2017 on the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by the year 2020.

**j) Activities of the Panel of the Wise**

**157.** In line with article 11 of the PSC Protocol, and following proposals by the Chairperson of the Commission, the 29<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Assembly, held on July 2017, appointed the five new members of the Panel of the Wise, namely Mr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, from Namibia, for the Southern Africa region; Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, from Liberia, for the Western Africa region; Dr. Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe, from Uganda, for the Eastern Africa region; Mr. Amr Moussa, from Egypt, for the Northern Africa region; and Mrs. Honorine Nzet Bitéghé, from Gabon, for the Central Africa region. The new members of the Panel were inaugurated on 4-5 October 2017 at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa and elected Mr. Hifikepunye Pohamba as its Chair for the period October 2017 to September 2018. The Panel of the Wise also agreed on the modalities of election for its Chairperson, which includes among others alternating each year woman and man for the chairship. The Panel also adopted its programme of work up to December 2018, which includes, among others, giving additional momentum to the AU’s efforts in conflict prevention and mediation, through five thematic reflections on emerging threats to peace and security: a) Perspectives for multiparty democracies in contemporary Africa: What role for structured dialogue processes at national level; b) Migration and Human Security: Understanding and mitigating irregular and forced migration from Africa; c) Promoting the Youth as a force for peace, reconstruction and development in Africa; d) Improving the mediation and resolution of natural resource-related conflicts across Africa; and e) Religion, Peace and Conflict in Africa: the ambivalence of the sacred.

**158.** It should be recalled that in its July 2017 Decision appointing the new members of the Panel of the Wise, the Assembly of the Union decided to establish a "Pan African Network of Women Mediators" (FemWise-Africa), as a subsidiary body of the Panel of the Wise, to strengthen the active participation of women in conflict prevention, mediation and peacebuilding in Africa. The Panel of the Wise, therefore, took steps to operationalise FemWise-Africa by convening its Steering Committee on 5-6 October 2017, in Addis Ababa, and by convening its General Assembly on 13-14 December 2017, in Constantine, Algeria, both of which laid the basis for the development of modalities of deployment of the members of FemWise-Africa to carry out healing and dialogue processes, especially in border communities, and modalities of partnership with the private sector aiming to help to sustain dialogue with quick-impact projects.

**159.** Lastly, the Panel of the Wise, which works very closely with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as the Pan African Network of the Wise (PANWISE), which brings together mediation actors, convened the 5th Retreat of the PanWise on 16-17 November 2017, in Kampala, Uganda, on the theme *Trends in Democracy, Elections and Governance in Africa and their Implications for Peace-making*. Marking the 10th anniversary of the Panel of the Wise 2007 Report on Elections, this year's Retreat examined the current state of democracy in Africa by paying particular attention to elections and electoral processes; governance; the state of implementation of existing legal and normative. The Retreat also introduced the Ugandan chapter of FemWise-Africa.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

**160.** Indeed, the general picture of the state of peace and security on the continent is still mixed, with situations that are improving, while others are still facing challenges, thus requiring more sustained efforts from the AU. The successful organisation of elections in Liberia reinforces the importance of post-conflict reconstruction on the continent. The persistence of violence in South Sudan, the Central African Republic and the DRC continues to testify to the prevalence of internal conflicts in Africa. Even if, undeniably, the general trend, at least, as far as interstate and internal conflicts are concerned, is decreasing.

**161.** No need to reaffirm it: terrorism and violent extremism, feeding on the proceeds of transnational organised crime in its various forms, including drug, human and illegal small arms and light weapons trafficking, is undoubtedly the most serious threat to the peace, security and stability of the continent. Somalia has experienced this year the deadliest attack in the history of terrorism on the continent, while AMISOM remains to this day the only bulwark against the takeover of the country by terrorist groups particularly Al-Shabaab, until the Somali National Forces are able to effectively take over. In Mali and the Sahel, the various terrorist groups, taking advantage of the vast expanses of the desert, increasingly call into question, each day, the stability of the countries of the region, which react in more collective ways, as testified through the establishment and operationalisation of the G5-Sahel Joint Force. In the Lake Chad

Basin, the countries of the region are facing deadly daily action of the terrorist group Boko Haram, despite all the successes made by the Multinational Joint Task Force.

**162.** Clearly, the PSC has undertaken a number of activities, in addition to its regular meetings, during the period under review, to find a way out of crisis and conflict on the continent. These include, inter alia, interactions with various partners in particular the UN Security Council, the EUPSC as well as other AU organs. Furthermore, the field missions to the LCBC and DRC asserted the proactive role the PSC could play on the continent in particular in peacebuilding and preventive diplomacy. These undertakings provided an opportunity for the PSC to identify ways and means to better inform its decisions making process, based on the dynamics on the ground.

**163.** No doubt that the crisis and conflict situations on the continent persistently point to the need for greater political will and commitment to deal with their root causes, to ensure long term solution that could make it possible to avoid relapse into violence. Within this context greater efforts must be exerted on prevention, peacebuilding, peace consolidation and stabilisation, through well supported post-conflict reconstruction and development policies suited to each individual country particularly those emerging from crisis situations or violent conflicts. Post-conflict reconstruction and development demands huge investments, especially in financial terms, which are often, alas, not readily available in the continent. Thus, it makes it fundamental for efforts to be deployed to mobilize both public and private sectors, international financial institutions and partners, as well as AU Member States within the framework of the African Solidarity Initiative, to regroup efforts in order to provide reliable support to countries emerging from conflict in Africa. Therefore, the AU must continue underscoring the imperative of all Member States to work towards the development for better conditions of life for African people with a view to protect free them from poverty, inequality and violent conflicts.

**164.** Within this framework, the PSC remains committed, in close cooperation with the Member States, the Commission and the RECs/RMs, with the support of the partners, first and foremost the United Nations and its Security Council, to pursue its efforts, particularly in the area of prevention and the strengthening of collective security mechanisms, as provided for in the African Peace and Security Architecture, to face the threats such as terrorism and violent extremism. The PSC will continue to discharge its mandate towards the continental objective of Silencing the guns by 2020 and for the prosperous Africa We Want by 2063.

**Assembly/AU/6(XXX)  
Annex**

**DRAFT REPORT OF THE FIFTH HIGH-LEVEL SEMINAR  
ON PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA**

**«Assisting Incoming African Members on the UN Security Council in Preparing to  
Address Peace and Security Issues on the Continent»  
Livingstone, Zambia 4 – 5 December 2017**



**unitar**

United Nations Institute for Training and Research

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## **DRAFT REPORT OF THE FIFTH HIGH-LEVEL SEMINAR ON PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA**

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### **I. Introduction**

1. From 4 to 5 December 2017, the Government of the Republic of Zambia, in collaboration with the Commission of the African Union (AU) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), organized in Livingstone, Zambia, *the Fifth High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa: Assisting Incoming African Members of the United Nations Security Council (A3) in Preparing to Address Peace and Security Issues on the Continent*. The Seminar was held within the context of implementation process of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture.

### **II. Participation**

2. The Seminar brought together the following countries: Egypt and Senegal (outgoing A3 Member), Ethiopia (sitting A3 Member) and Cote d'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea (incoming A3 members). The following Member States of the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC), representing the five regions of the AU also attended the Seminar, namely, Algeria (Northern Africa region), Kenya (Eastern Africa region), South Africa (Southern Africa region) and Togo (western Africa region), as well as Nigeria and Rwanda, in their capacity as members of the PSC. Congo, participated in its capacity as Chairperson of the PSC for the month of December 2017, while Zambia participated in its capacity as PSC member and host of the Seminar.

3. Her Honour Mrs. Inonge M. Wina, the Vice-President of the Republic of Zambia, presided over the opening ceremony of the high-Level Seminar.

4. The Seminar was chaired by the Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council for the month of December 2017, Hon. Jean-Claude Gakosso, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Congo. The delegations of Zambia and Rwanda were led by Ministers and State Minister of Foreign Affairs, namely Hon. Mr. Harry Kalaba and Hon. Mr. Olivier Nduhungirehe, respectively. Other delegations were led by senior officials from their respective missions and capitals.

5. The AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, accompanied by officers of the AU Commission, AU Special Envoys and Representatives, attended the High-Level Seminar. The United Nations (UN) delegation, including officials from UNITAR, was led by, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and Head of the UN Office to the AU, H.E Haile Menkerios. The High-Level Seminar was also attended by AU partners, namely the European Union, Netherlands, Switzerland and Norway.

### **III. Objective**

6. Building on the foundation laid by the previous High Level Seminars, inaugurated in 2013, the objective of the Fifth High Level Seminar was to take stock of achievements and challenges in the process of articulation, coordination, promotion and defense of common African positions on peace and security issues concerning Africa, within the decision-making process of the UN Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The Seminar, which came on the eve of Cote D'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea assuming their status as incoming African Members of the UN Security Council, was also aimed at finding best ways and means of further enhancing the coordination between the PSC and the A3, within the context of further strengthening the capacity of the PSC to more effectively discharge its mandate.

7. The Seminar provided an opportunity for participants to discuss and exchange views on a number of critical issues, including Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020, financing of AU-led Peace Support operations and cooperation between Member States of the A3 and the PSC. Participants also received briefings/updates from the AU and UN Special Envoys and Special Representatives on some conflict/crisis situations in Africa, particularly, in the Great Lakes region (Democratic Republic of Congo), the Horn of Africa (Somalia and South Sudan) and the Sahelo-Sahara region (Libya and Mali). Participants also exchanged views on challenges being faced and necessary steps to be taken in order to address those challenges. They were apprised of the AU positions and pronouncements, in particular decisions made by the PSC on African peace and security issues on the Agenda of the UNSC.

#### **(a) On Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020**

8. Participants:

- i) Noted the significant progress in the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap on Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by the year 2020, including the launching, by the PSC, of September as the Amnesty Month, in line with Assembly Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.645(XXIX) adopted by the 29<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the AU held from 3 to 4 July 2017, of the Month of September of each year as Africa Amnesty Month for the voluntary surrender of arms/weapons;
- ii) Emphasized the importance of all AU Member States to observe the Africa Amnesty month each year and, in this regard, called for public awareness raising campaigns. In this respect, participants urged Member States to report on the status of implementation of the Amnesty month;
- iii) Underscored the importance of addressing the root causes of violent conflicts/crises;
- iv) Reiterated the importance of further strengthening the Continental Early Warning System, including the need for early and appropriate responses, as well as the imperative for political commitment in addressing the issue of denialism as key success factors in achieving the goal of silencing the guns in Africa;
- v) Stressed the need to prioritize preventive diplomacy and mediation, along with Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development efforts to avoid relapses and welcomed the operationalization of the Network of African Women in Mediation (FemWise);
- vi) Emphasized the need for priority setting and sharing of responsibilities among all actors concerned, mainly AU Member States and RECs/RMs in the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap;
- vii) Also emphasized the need for Member States to submit their progress reports to the AU Commission on the status of implementation of the AU Master Roadmap;
- viii) Underscored the need for expediting the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2020;
- ix) Called on the UN to effectively support the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap on Silencing the Guns in Africa;
- x) Underlined the importance of national reconciliation and justice, including traditional justice mechanisms;

- x i) Need for the AU Organs, Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), AU partners and other relevant stakeholders, to effectively contribute to the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap;
- x ii) Stressed the need for redoubling of efforts in mobilizing the necessary political will, in order to foster the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap;
- x iii) Also stressed the importance of expediting the ongoing efforts in counter-terrorism efforts throughout the continent, in addition to the interrelated emerging threats such as human and drug trafficking and the phenomenon of foreign fighters;
- x iv) Underlined the importance of emulating the best practices from within the continent on steps to be taken in silencing the guns;
- x v) Bearing in mind the time constraints, they urged all Member States, RECs/RMs to expedite the implementation of the AU Master roadmap.

**(b) On AU Peace Fund:**

**9. Participants:**

- i) Welcomed the progress being made in the revitalization of the AU Peace Fund pursuant to AU Assembly decision, adopted at the 27<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Union adopted in June 2016 in Kigali, Rwanda;
- ii) Urged all Member States to expedite the implementation of relevant decisions of the AU Assembly of the Heads of State and Government on the Financing of the Union and the PSC decision adopted at its 689<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 30 May 2017, on the operationalization of the Peace Fund, following the adoption by the UNSC of resolution 2320(2016);
- iii) Recalled the importance of mobilization of necessary political will of Member States to contribute more generously to the AU Peace Fund, taking into consideration the importance of using UN assessed contributions to finance AU-led peace support operations authorized by the UN Security Council.

**(c) On Coordination between the A3 and the AU Peace and Security Council**

**10.** The Seminar welcomed the progress made in the process of strengthening cooperation between the PSC and the A3, both, those based in Addis Ababa, and those

based in New York, which has significantly contributed towards spearheading common African positions in the decision making process of the UN Security Council on peace and security issues of concern to Africa.

**11.** While welcoming the progress made to date, participants underscored the need for more enhanced cooperation and coordination among the A3 pursuant to Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.644(XXIX) adopted by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government at its 29<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session held in July 2017. In this regard, participants agreed on the following :

- i) The need for the AU PSC to align its provisional monthly programmes of work with the UN Security Council programme, in order to allow A3 ample time for necessary preparations;
- ii) The importance of timely transmission of PSC decisions to the A3, in New York, ahead of UN Security Council meetings, in order to allow them sufficient time for preparations for articulation of African common positions in the UN Security Council;
- iii) The need to implement the conclusions of the previous High-Level Seminars on cooperation and collaboration between the PSC and A3. Participants also reiterated the importance of strengthening institutionalization of information sharing between the PSC and A3 on peace and security issues in Africa, including through regular video-teleconferences;
- iv) The need to commend the outgoing members of the A3, Egypt and Senegal, and Ethiopia (sitting member) for the efforts aimed at promoting common African positions in the UNSC during their tenure, as well as for regular briefings provided to the PSC on their activities within the UNSC. In this respect, the Participants stressed the need to enhance those briefings, including through ad hoc consultations whenever necessary and, in particular, on the eve of major UNSC decisions on peace and security issues of concern to Africa;
- v) The importance for the PSC, whenever necessary, to state in its communiques and press statements, its expectations from the A3, in fostering African common positions in the UN Security Council decision making process on issues of concern to Africa;
- vi) The need for the A3 Members to be sufficiently capacitated in order for them to more effectively discharge their responsibilities in the UNSC;
- vii) The need to further enhance the capacity of the experts, both, the AUPSC and the A3, to coordinate their activities, collaborate and work together,

particularly during the preparation of annual joint consultative meetings between the AUPSC and the UNSC;

- viii) The importance of regularly convening consultative meetings between the AU Commission and the A3, at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, before the A3 take their seats in the UNSC, with a view to enhancing their capacity in the preparation of their programme of work during their respective presidencies of the UNSC;
- ix) Need for A3 to be more actively involved in the decision-making process of the UNSC on issues of concern to Africa on the agenda of the UNSC. In this respect, the Seminar reiterated the need for the A3 to be either pen holders or co-pen holders on issues of concern to the continent;
- x) Enhanced cooperation and interaction between the A3 and other non-permanent members of the UNSC;
- xi) Need to further enhance the capacity and status of the AU Permanent Observer Mission to the UN, in New York, in order to increase its visibility in both, the UNSC and in the General Assembly. The Seminar encouraged the PSC to take the necessary steps to this end with the Permanent Representatives Committees and its relevant Subcommittees, with a view to providing the Mission with the required expertise to further enhance its support to the A3;
- xii) The importance of utilizing the facilities of the AU Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations, in New York, including for meetings and other activities of the A3 and the Africa Group.

**12.** Participants congratulated the newly elected members of the A3, namely Cote d'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea and looked forward to their unwavering commitment to articulate, defend and promote AU's common positions on peace and security issues relating to the continent, during their tenure in the UNSC.

#### **IV. Vote of thanks**

**13.** Participants thanked the Government of the Republic of Zambia, under the leadership of H.E. Edgar Chagwa Lungu, President of the Republic, as well as the people of Zambia, in particular Livingstone authorities, for the generous hospitality and the excellent facilities put in place to ensure the successful organization of the Fifth High-Level Seminar. Participants further expressed their gratitude to the partners, particularly Norway, for their support extended to the organization of the Seminar.

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