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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

774<sup>TH</sup> MEETING

21 MAY 2018

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR. (DCCLXXIV)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) dedicated its 774<sup>th</sup> meeting on 21 May 2018, to an open session on the theme: “The link Between Climate Change and Conflicts in Africa and Addressing the Security Implications”.

Council and participants took note of the opening remarks made by H.E. Ambassador Hope Tumukunde Gasatura of the Republic of Rwanda in her capacity as the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of May 2018. They also took note of the presentations made by Dr. Leah Waess Wanambwa from the AU Commission Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, Dr Yonas Tariku from the Institute for Peace and Security Studies at the Addis Ababa University and Mr Samba Haroune Thiam, from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). They further took note of the statements made by the representatives of AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), AU partners and international organizations.

Council and participants recalled all AU Assembly Decisions on climate change, particularly, Assembly/AU/Dec. 669(XXX) on the outcomes of COP23/CMP 13 and Africa’s Engagements at the Global Climate Change Conference at COP24/CMP 14, adopted at its 30<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session held from 28 to 29 January 2018. Council also recalled all its previous decisions and pronouncements on Climate Change including Press Statement [PSC/PR/BR. (DCCVIII)] adopted at its 708<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 16 August 2017, Communique [PSC/PR/COMM. (DCLX)] adopted at its 660<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 21 February 2016 and Press Statement [PSC/PR/BR. (DLXXXV)] adopted at its 585<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 30 March 2016.

Council and participants also recalled UN Security Council Presidential Statement [SC 13189] adopted on 30 January 2018 on West Africa and the Sahel in which the Security Council recognized the link between climate change and violence in the two regions.

Council and participants underscored, once again, the linkage between climate change and peace and security in Africa. They also noted that climate change is a threat to global peace and security. In this context, and noting that no country or region is immune to climate change, they underscored the importance of coordinated efforts in mitigating the adverse effects of climate change.

Council and participants underscored the importance of Member States, RECs/RMs and AU partners to actively pursue integrated approaches to boost climate change resilience and to pay particular attention to prevention and further strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus, as well as to improve communication on climate change phenomena such as drought, cyclones and floods with a view to effectively ensuring disaster preparedness and risk reduction at local, national, regional and continental levels. In the same vein, they underlined the need for Member States and regions to share experiences, lessons and best practices in addressing the adverse effects of climate change. They also underlined the importance of building effective synergies between local and national authorities in efforts aimed at mitigating the adverse effects

of climate change. They further underlined the need for Member States to partner with the private sector particularly in building national climate change resilience, including in climate smart infrastructure development

Council and participants expressed concern over illegal trade in flora and fauna, which is contributing significantly to desertification and extinction of some fauna and flora species in some parts of the continent, and constitute a source of funding for criminal and terrorist groups. In this regard, they urged the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to work closely with Member States and to provide capacity building support for implementation climate change smart agricultural programs, including diversification of food crops and afforestation using indigenous species.

Council reiterated its call for Member States to accelerate the integrated implementation of all existing international and regional commitments and agreements relating to mitigation of adverse effects of climate change, which include the Paris Agreement, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that deplete the Ozone Layer and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030).

Council welcomed the outcomes of the 1<sup>st</sup> Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Congo Basin Climate Commission and the Blue Fund for the Congo Basin held on 29 April 2018, in Brazzaville, Congo, and also the outcomes of the International Conference on Saving the Lake Chad, held from 26 to 28 February 2018 in Abuja, Nigeria. Council underscored the importance of expeditious implementation, with the support of the international community, of the outcomes of the Summit and the Conference respectively, as part of the overall efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of conflicts in these regions.

Council commended all Member States which have already signed and ratified the Paris Agreement and have already started to implement it, and urged all those Member States which have not yet done so to expeditiously also do the same.

Council also commended members of the international community, which are already implementing the Paris Agreement and urged those that have not yet done so to also do the same. Council further commended the members of the international community that are providing support to local, national and regional efforts to build resilience and requested them to continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the populations in countries affected by climate change-related emergencies.

Council emphasized the need for the AU to continue mobilizing a united African front at the global level to mitigate the effects of climate change at both, regional and continental levels. Council also emphasized the need for developing a continental framework for proactively responding to the potential and real security threats posed by climate change to the continent. Council further emphasized the need for continued support to the work of the African Group of

Negotiators on Climate Change so that they can more effectively represent the continent in the climate negotiations.

Council, once again, underscored the importance of the AU Commission to mainstream climate change in all its activities particularly in early warning and prevention of climate change related violent conflicts. In this regard, Council requested the Continental Early Warning System to also include in its regular briefings to Council, early warning on potential adverse effects of climate change, including related conflicts in the continent.

Council also underscored the need for the AU Commission to provide technical assistance to Member States in order for them to successfully implement the Paris Agreement and to develop bankable projects in order for them to access Climate Finance.

Council, within the context of the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), requested the AU Commission to undertake a study on the nexus between climate change and peace and security in the continent. Council stressed that, among other things, the envisaged study should pay particular attention on the plight of island Member States.

Council requested the Chairperson of the Commission to appoint an AU Special Envoy for climate change and security who will work closely with the Committee of African Heads of States and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC).

Council also agreed to remain actively seized of the matter.

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