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**PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
299th MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
22 November 2011**

PSC/PR/COMM.(CCXCIX)

COMMUNIQUÉ



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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 299th meeting held on 22 November 2011, adopted the following decision on the operationalization of the AU-led Regional Cooperation Initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA):

Council,

1. **Takes note of** the report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the operationalization of the AU-led Regional Cooperation Initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army [PSC/PR/(CCXCVIX)]. Council **also takes note** of the statements made by the representatives of affected countries, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the European Union (EU) and the United Nations;

2. **Recalls** the relevant provisions of the Plan of Action adopted by the Special Session of the Assembly of the Union on the consideration and Resolution of Conflicts [SP/SSEMBLY/PS/MAP(I)], held in Tripoli, on 31 August 2009, as well as decisions Assembly/AU/Dec.294 (XV).2 and Assembly/AU/Dec.369 (XVII) adopted by the Assembly of the Union at its 15th and 17th Ordinary Sessions, held respectively in Kampala, Uganda, from 25 to 27 July 2010, and in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 30 June to 1 July 2011. Council **also recalls** Press Statement PSC/PR/BR (CCXCV) adopted at its 295th meeting, held 27 September 2011. Council **further recalls** the statements of the UN Security Council of 21 July and 14 November 2011 related to the LRA;

3. **Expresses, once again, its deep concern** about the continuation of the criminal activities of the LRA and the resulting serious humanitarian consequences, as well as about the threat that this situation poses to regional security and stability;

4. **Commends** the countries of the region for the cooperation they have developed amongst themselves, as well as for their cooperation with the Commission in the implementation of the relevant AU decisions on the LRA, particularly the convening of the two ministerial meetings held in Bangui, Central African Republic, and in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 13 and 14 October 2010 and 8 June 2011, respectively;

5. **Decides**, pursuant to the request of the Assembly of the Union, as contained in decision Assembly/AU/Dec.369 (XVII), to authorize, as an AU initiative with the support of the international community, the implementation of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA (RCI-LRA), as described in paragraphs 16 to 19 of the report of the Chairperson of the Commission, for an initial period of six (6) months, starting from the adoption of the present decision, with the mandate, in conformity with the Conclusions of the Addis Ababa regional ministerial meeting on the LRA, to:

- i. strengthen the operational capabilities of the countries affected by the atrocities of the LRA,



- ii. create an environment conducive to the stabilization of the affected areas, free of LRA atrocities,
 - iii. facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid to affected areas.
6. **Decides further**, within the framework of the mandate outlined in paragraph 5 above and in line with the Conclusions of the Bangui regional ministerial meeting, that the RCI-LRA shall, in particular, carry out the following tasks:
- i. initiate and coordinate all political and strategic activities relating to the LRA with the affected countries and other stakeholders,
 - ii. facilitate operational coordination amongst the affected countries in the fight against the LRA,
 - iii. support capacity building for the national units engaged in operations against the LRA and, in this regard, interact with the international partners for them to provide timely and coordinated support to the affected countries,
 - iv. encourage and facilitate joint patrols at the borders of the affected countries, as well as sharing of information,
 - v. encourage the improvement of communications in the areas affected by the LRA activities, particularly through mobile telephones, radio coverage and basic infrastructure repair/construction,
 - vi. facilitate effective psychological operations to encourage defections from the LRA, and the implementation of strategies for demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants into their communities of origin,
 - vii. assist with the mobilization of adequate and coordinated support for the affected populations and other groups in need,
 - viii. contribute to the improvement and institutionalisation of civil-military coordination, including the provision, upon request, of escorts for humanitarian convoys,
 - ix. contribute to the mobilization of support for speedy recovery, as well as for rehabilitation efforts in the areas affected by the activities of the LRA, and
 - x. ensure the mainstreaming of the civilian protection in all military and security initiatives aimed at resolving the LRA problem;
7. **Requests** the Chairperson of the Commission, in close consultation with the countries affected by the activities of the LRA, to take the necessary measures with a view to facilitating, as appropriate, the establishment of the different components of the RCI-LRA, namely:
- i. the Joint Coordinating Mechanism (JCM), chaired by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, and comprising the Ministers of Defense of the affected



countries, as an *ad hoc* structure at the strategic level to coordinate the efforts of the AU and the affected countries, with the support of the international partners,

- ii. the Regional Task Force (RTF), composed of units provided by the affected countries, and whose total strength will be of a brigade size (5,000 troops), as agreed at the Bangui ministerial meeting, and
 - iii. the Headquarters of the RTF, including the Joint Operations Centre (JOC), composed of officers seconded by the affected countries;
8. **Welcomes** the measures taken by the Chairperson of the Commission for the imminent appointment, pending the conclusion of his consultations regarding the selection of a substantive Special Envoy, of an interim AU Special Envoy for the LRA, to coordinate, in close cooperation with affected countries, the overall strategy of the fight against the LRA;
9. **Appeals** to all the Member States in a position to do so, as well as to the AU partners, to provide the necessary support to the RCI-LRA, particularly in logistical, financial and technical terms, so as to facilitate the effective functioning of the different components of the Initiative, as well as to build the capacity of the armed and security forces of the affected countries. In this regard, **Council welcomes** the readiness expressed by some international partners to assist the AU and the countries of the region. Council **also notes with satisfaction** the declarations adopted by the UN Security Council on the LRA issue and **calls upon** the UN to establish a logistics support module for the RCI-LRA, including by adjusting, if necessary, the mandates of the UN peacekeeping operations in the region, so as to enable them provide timely, greater and more flexible support to the RCI-LRA;
10. **Decides**, in line with the relevant AU instruments, to declare the LRA a terrorist group, and **requests** the UN Security Council to do the same;
11. **Commends** the humanitarian agencies which are active on the ground for their mobilization and **urges** them to continue and intensify their actions in favour of the affected populations;
12. **Stresses** the need for the rehabilitation of the areas affected by LRA activities and **requests** the Commission, in consultation with the United Nations and other appropriate international institutions, particularly the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the World Bank, to contribute to the formulation of an appropriate strategy and the mobilization of the necessary resources to this end;
13. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.

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