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TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
437th MEETING
25 May 2014
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 437th meeting, held an open session, on 25 May 2014, to mark the Tenth Anniversary of its launching, with the participation of all AU Member States, AU Organs, Representatives of the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), bilateral and multilateral partners, African Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), think tanks and academic institutions.

The celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the PSC coincided with the Africa Day Celebration, as well as the end of the year-long Golden Jubilee Celebration of the founding of the Organization of African Unity/African Union (OAU/AU). The celebration provided an excellent opportunity for the Council to take stock of the achievements made and the challenges encountered over the past decade in the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability in Africa with a view to achieving the fundamental objective of creating a conflict-free Africa, in line with the letter and spirit of the Solemn Declaration adopted by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government on 26 May 2013.

Council received statements from the Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission, the Commissioner for Peace and Security and the Fourth Vice President of Pan-African Parliament, as well as from the various participants reflecting on the work of the PSC over the last ten years in discharging its mandate of promoting peace, security and stability in Africa. Council was also briefed on the outcome of the consultations in Africa undertaken by African CSOs in relation to the 10th Anniversary of the PSC, by the representative of the CSOs from African Center for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) and took note of the recommendations reflected in their Conclusions.

Council recalled the relevant provisions of the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union which attach paramount importance to the necessity of peace, security and stability in Africa as a necessary precondition for the acceleration of socio-economic development and integration of the continent.

Council further stressed the need to enhance its use of all available preventive diplomacy tools with the objective of anticipating crises and preventing them from escalating into full blown conflict. In this regard, Council emphasized the importance of strengthening the linkages between early warning and early response, which requires that the relevant AU policy organs operate with the required urgency and act effectively, in concert, on the information provided to them regarding potential crises and conflicts.

Council called on the Commission to regularly brief the Council on potential flashpoint on the continent with a view to facilitating and supporting timely action by the Council. To this end, Council emphasized the need for the allocation of more resources to support and strengthen the capacity of the Continental Early Warning System and the good offices' role of the Chairperson of the Commission and the work of the Special Envoys and Representatives. Council also emphasized the need to draw more proactive on the advisory capacity of the Panel of the Wise, in its capacity as a preventive diplomacy body, in order to take informed decisions.

Council welcomed the progress made in the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and expressed its satisfaction with the leadership role that the AU has assumed in promoting peace and security in Africa. In this regard, Council called upon all AU Member States and the Regional Economic Communities, as well as Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), to support the process of fully operationalizing APSA, particularly the African Standby Force (ASF) and its Rapid Deployment Capability. In the interim, Council underlined the need to expedite the operationalization of the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC), as a transitional measure to the full operationalization of the ASF.

Council acknowledged the critical role of cooperation with other stakeholders in conflict prevention, management and resolution on the continent. In this regard, Council called for greater coordination and consultation between Council and RECs/RMs on their interventions, in particular, in conflict situations and agreed to convene an annual meeting, with the view to enhancing cooperation, coordination and synergies on peace and security issues on the continent, including new and emerging threats. Furthermore, Council underscored the need to enhance its coordination with RECs/RMs and maximize each other's comparative advantages on the basis of the principles of complementarity and subsidiarity.

Council applauded its partnership with the UN Security Council and other international organizations and highlighted the need for a more effective and strong partnership and provide much more support to APSA. In particular, Council called for more regular and robust interaction with the UN Security Council drawing on the comparative strengths and advantages of the two Councils and acknowledging the primary responsibility of the UN Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. Council requested the UN Security Council to take due cognizance of Africa's position on matters of peace and security expressed through the decisions of the Union, in particular the AU PSC. Council also called upon the African members of the UN Security Council to assume greater leadership role on issues of peace and security in Africa.

Council recognized the fact that in the past ten years there has been little interaction between the PSC and CSOs as envisaged in the PSC Protocol. Council acknowledged the need for re-examination of application of some of the requirements for the CSOs participation, in order to facilitate as a transitional measure, a dynamic implementation of Article 20 of the PSC Protocol. In this regard, Council agreed for more engagement with African CSOs and other AU Organs and determined their active participation on a regular basis for effective pursuit of its efforts for conflict prevention, management and resolution. To this end, Council agreed to hold annual consultative meetings with other AU Organs and CSOs as provided under Articles 18, 19 and 20 of its Protocol.

Council called for stronger and more sustained support to countries emerging from conflict with regard to reconciliation and post-conflict reconstruction and development. Council stressed the importance of consolidating the peace and security gains on the continent in post-conflict phase to prevent relapses into conflict. In this regard, Council stressed the importance of the full operationalization and functioning of its subsidiary bodies, in including the Post-Conflict Committee.

Council expressed serious concern on the growing threats of terrorism in Africa and called on the AU Commission and the Secretariats of the RECs/RMs to come up with a comprehensive AU Strategy for addressing the phenomenon of extremism, terrorism and other new and emerging threats to peace and security in Africa such as piracy, human trafficking, drug trafficking, religious oriented tensions, the spread of small arms and light weapons. Furthermore, Council called for the development of mechanisms within the APSA to deal with these emerging threats.

Council also highlighted the growing problem of state fragility in light of the latest developments in the continent and underscored the need for AU Member States to strengthen governance and institutions, as well as security sector reforms.

Council recognized the urgent need for serious improvements in the way and manner that it responds to threats to peace and security on the continent and outbreaks of violent conflicts by making greater use of its mandate, especially in those aspects that have not received greater attention.

Council noted with concern the weak, inadequate or lack of implementation of some of its decisions and expressed its strong determination to address this phenomenon by taking specific measures, including the convening of a special session in this regard. Furthermore, Council called for greater political will and resources to be committed to the PSC and all other aspects of the APSA in order to effectively implement decisions on peace and security.

Council emphasized the importance of the visibility of its activities, and in this regard, Council underlined the need for an effective outreach and communication strategy.

Council recognized the lack of sustainable and predictable finance and the provision of logistical support for AU peace support operations, which has been seriously undermining AU's efforts to timely and effectively respond to crises situations. In this regard, Council agreed on the need to have greater ownership in providing financial and logistical support to AU peace support operations. Council, therefore, underscored the need to expedite the process of finding alternative sources of financing with regard to peace and security matters.

Council appealed to all AU Member States, that have not done so, to sign and ratify all AU relevant instruments relating to peace and security, particularly the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

Council noted with concern the challenges it faces in implementing its mandate due to gaps in the provisions in the PSC Protocol and stressed the importance of relevant AU Organs providing additional enabling provisions in the PSC Protocol. To this end, Council agreed to organize a retreat/brainstorming session to identify all gaps and make proposals to this effect.

Council agreed to organize a workshop of experts, academicians and policy practitioners, to undertake an in-depth consideration of Africa's dynamic peace and security landscape, as

well take stock of the impact of the operations of the PSC over the last ten years with recommendations for improvements in the discharge of its mandate.

Council agreed to have a second phase of the commemoration of its Tenth Anniversary, at the level of Heads and State Government on the margins of the AU Assembly to be held in June in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

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