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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

456TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

12 SEPTEMBER 2014

PSC/PR/COMM.(CDLVI)

COMMUNIQUÉ

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 456th meeting held on 12 September 2014, adopted the following decision on the progress report of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) for Sudan and South Sudan:

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the progress report of the AUHIP [PSC/PR/2.(CDLVI)], as well as of the introductory remarks by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security and the Chairperson of the AUHIP. Council **also takes note** of the statements made by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) for Sudan and South Sudan and the Joint Special Representative (JSR) for the AU – UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and Joint Chief Mediator (JCM). Council **further takes note** of the statements made by the representatives of the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan, the European Union (EU), the League of Arab States (LAS), Italy, in its capacity as co-Chair of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Partners Forum, Norway, in its capacity as a member of the Troika on Sudan and South Sudan, as well as France, United Kingdom and the United States of America, as permanent members of the UN Security Council;
2. **Recalls** its earlier communiqués and press statements on the implementation of the various aspects of the mandate of the AUHIP and other related AU's efforts, including communiqués PSC/AHG/COMM/2.(CCCXCVII) and PSC/AHG/COMM/1.(CCCLIII), adopted at its 353rd and 397th meetings held in Addis Ababa and in New York, on 25 January and 23 September 2013, respectively;
3. **Commends** the AUHIP and its members, namely former Presidents Thabo Mbeki, Abdulsalami Abubakar and Pierre Buyoya, as well as the Support Team, for their persistent engagement with, and support to, the efforts of the Governments and peoples of Sudan and South Sudan. Council **also commends** the Chair of IGAD, Prime Minister Haile Mariam Desalegn of Ethiopia, for his continued engagement and support to the efforts of the AUHIP and the promotion of peace, security and stability in the Horn of Africa region;
4. **Expresses appreciation** for the important role of the JSR/JCM, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, Haile Menkerios, and the Special Envoy of IGAD, Lissane Yohannes, in the overall efforts aimed at achieving peace, security and stability in the region, and **notes with satisfaction** the exemplary cooperation between them and the AUHIP. Council **also expresses appreciation** for the support and assistance being extended to the AUHIP by the AU bilateral and multilateral partners;
5. **Reiterates its appreciation** to President Idriss Deby Itno of Chad for his continued contribution to the peace efforts in Darfur, including the convening, in Umdjaras, Chad, from 26 to 30 March 2014, of the Forum for Reconciliation in Darfur for the purpose of encouraging all concerned groups to join the peace process;
6. **Welcomes** the continued engagement of the State of Qatar in the search for peace in Darfur, in particular its significant financial contribution for the implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) and the Darfur Development Strategy (DDS), thus assisting in alleviating the suffering of the population of Darfur, including the internally displaced persons (IDPs);

7. **Notes** the numerous challenges that continue to face Sudan, including armed conflicts in the Two Areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile and in Darfur, which threaten the well-being of the Sudanese people and indeed the future of the country, and **stresses** the need for renewed African efforts, with appropriate international support, to assist the Sudanese parties in overcoming these challenges, promoting national reconciliation, enhancing unity within diversity and strengthening democracy and good governance;
8. **Recalls** its earlier pronouncements on the need for a holistic approach to the challenges facing Sudan, as articulated in the report of the AU High-Level Panel on Darfur (AUPD), adopted by the 207th meeting of Council held in Abuja, Nigeria, on 29 October 2009 [communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.1(CCVII)], and, in this regard, **fully supports** the coordinated effort to address national issues, as well as the situations in the “Two Areas” and in Darfur, within a common framework;
9. **Welcomes** the speech made by President Omar Hassan Al Bashir of Sudan, on 27 January 2014, outlining the framework for a National Dialogue, based on the following agenda: peace and national unity, economy, basic rights and freedoms, national identity, constitutional review and governance;
10. **Further welcomes** the determination of all the components of the people of Sudan to move forward to achieve a comprehensive, fair and lasting settlement to the armed conflicts and other political problems that afflict their nation. In this respect, Council **notes with satisfaction** the adoption of the Paris Declaration and the Roadmap of the “7+7” Committee, on 8 and 9 August 2014, respectively, as well as the readiness of the registered Political parties, the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N), the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), the Sudan Liberation Movement-SLM (Minni Minawi) and the Sudan Liberation Movement-SLM (Abdel Wahid al-Nur) to participate in a common process, as expressed in the Addis Ababa Agreement of 5 September 2014 on the principles of the National Dialogue, its objectives and the key steps necessary for the creation of the enabling environment;
11. **Recognizes** the importance of the National Dialogue, as an authentic, transparent, inclusive and fair process initiated and owned by the people of Sudan, in order to bring about lasting peace across the entire country;
12. **Emphasizes** that the international community should do its part in supporting the people of Sudan at this historic juncture, noting that Sudan faces economic hardships and that the prospects for the success of the National Dialogue will be greatly enhanced by international measures to alleviate the economic distress facing the country. Council **notes** that, while Sudan has followed international economic prescriptions to stabilize its economy, the country still does not have access to international financial support, including debt relief, concessionary loans and other mechanisms normally available to countries undergoing such hardships;
13. **Recognizes** the critical leadership role of the AUHIP in the coordination of the various mediation tracks underway in Sudan. In this regard, Council **urges** all international actors with a mediation mandate to pool their resources together, as well as harmonize their interventions, in a manner that optimizes the window of opportunity presented by the National Dialogue, with a view to finding a comprehensive and lasting solution to the conflicts in Sudan;

14. **Endorses**, in light of the above, the following steps to ensure harmonized and focused action by the AUHIP in support of the efforts of the Sudanese stakeholders to address the issues confronting their country:

- (i) the negotiations on cessation of hostilities, immediately leading to a comprehensive security arrangements agreement, should resume at the earliest opportunity, under the auspices of the AUHIP and in collaboration and coordination with the JSR/JCM;
- (ii) the negotiations on the cessation of hostilities for the Two Areas and for Darfur should be conducted in a synchronized manner;
- (iii) a meeting of the Sudanese parties to discuss relevant process issues, in order to pave the way for the National Dialogue should be held at the AU Headquarters under the facilitation of the AUHIP, as requested by the Sudanese stakeholders, , to ensure that the necessary confidence-building are taken, the key steps of the National Dialogue process are fully agreed upon, and that the process is fair and will result in the mutually-agreed objectives;

15. **Welcomes** the commitment of the Sudanese stakeholders immediately to establish a conducive environment for the holding of the National Dialogue, and **encourages** the Government to expedite its efforts towards implementing the agreed confidence-building measures, including:

- (i) the release of all political detainees and prisoners;
- (ii) the adoption and implementation of all necessary steps to ensure political freedoms and full guarantee of the freedom of expression and publication, including by enacting the necessary legislation to give effect to these freedoms;
- (iii) ensuring that the judiciary will be the only institution to adjudicate matters relating to the exercise of the freedom of expression and publication, with no resort to extraordinary measures; and
- (iv) providing the necessary guarantees for the armed groups freely to participate in the National Dialogue, once the comprehensive ceasefire and security arrangements agreements have been concluded, and facilitating humanitarian assistance to all populations in war-affected areas;

16. **Urges** all Sudanese stakeholders participating in the National Dialogue to refrain from hate speech and from conducting negative media campaigns against each other;

17. **Further urges** the international community, especially the African Development Bank (AfDB), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and bilateral partners, to consider providing an economic support package to Sudan, including expediting debt relief and extending concessionary loans, in support of the people of Sudan as they move forward. Council **appeals to** all States that have imposed sanctions on the financial services sector to lift them, in order to contribute positively towards the creation of enabling conditions for the success of the National Dialogue;

18. **Recalls** the 27 September 2012 Agreements between South Sudan and Sudan and **welcomes** the positive evolution of the relations between the two Governments. Council **also recalls** the Agreement on the Temporary Security and Administrative Arrangements for the Abyei Area of 20 June 2011 and subsequent meetings between the Parties on the implementation of that Agreement;
19. **Commends** the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) and its Force Commander, as well as the members of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mission, for their efforts towards the implementation of their respective mandates;
20. **Further commends** the Government of Sudan for receiving South Sudanese fleeing the conflict in their country and extending the Four Freedoms to them while in Sudan, as well as for allowing the establishment of a humanitarian corridor to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance to the affected populations in South Sudan;
21. **Notes with satisfaction** the significant progress made in implementing the September 2012 Cooperation Agreements. At the same time, Council **notes with concern** that not all the elements of the Agreements have been fully implemented, particularly with respect to the Security Agreement, including the determination of the centreline of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ) that will lead to the establishment of the SDBZ;
22. **Supports** the envisaged convening, as soon as possible, by the two Governments, of a meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism, to address all outstanding security issues pertaining to the September 2012 Agreement, particularly the determination of the centreline of the SDBZ;
23. **Notes** the progress made towards the stabilization and normalization of the situation in the Abyei Area, including the return of the displaced persons. At the same time, Council **notes with concern** that key elements of the June 2011 Agreement have not yet been implemented, and that these delays are affecting the normalization of the life of the people of Abyei. Council **emphasizes** that without further progress, the achievements made to date will be jeopardized. Council **recalls** that the two Presidents have continuously affirmed they will jointly handle the question of the final status of the Abyei Area;
24. **Urges** the expedited implementation of the outstanding administrative and security elements of the June 2011 Agreement on the Abyei Area, in order to meet the everyday needs of the people of Abyei, emphasizing that the Parties may interpret those provisions creatively based on mutual understanding, and that the implementation of the temporary arrangements should, in no way, jeopardize the discussions on the final status of Abyei;
25. **Notes with appreciation** the cooperation extended by the Parties to the AU Border Program (AUBP), leading to the completion of the AUBP Technical Assessment Report on the capacity of Sudan and South Sudan to demarcate their border;
26. **Appreciates** the assistance given by the Parties to the AU Team of Experts (AUTE) on the Settlement of Boundary Issues, and **urges** that the process of exchanging the written submissions be expedited, to enable the AUTE complete its work in a timely manner;

27. **Recalls** the support expressed by the Assembly of the Union, in decision Assembly/AU/Dec.536(XXIII) adopted at its 23rd Ordinary Session held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 26 to 27 June 2014, for the Joint Approach by Sudan, South Sudan and the AUHIP, including comprehensive debt relief and lifting of sanctions for Sudan and development support to South Sudan. Council **urges** the international donors and creditors to provide such financial assistance and comprehensive debt relief as may be required to enable the two States to implement policies and programs designed to promote their economic development and to improve the lives of their peoples. Council **requests** the AUHIP to continue supporting these efforts;

28. **Recalls** its request to the AUHIP, in close consultation with the Chair and Secretariat of IGAD, to contribute to the promotion of a regional and holistic approach to the challenges of peace, security, stability and development in the Horn of Africa, in support of IGAD's efforts, as contained in communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM/2.(CCCXCVII), bearing in mind the relevant decisions of the Assembly of the Union, including decision Assembly/AU/Dec.536(XXIII). Council **looks forward** to an update by the AUHIP on the follow-up steps taken;

29. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.

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