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15TH MEETING OF THE PANEL OF THE WISE
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
9 JANUARY 2015

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The Panel of the Wise of the African Union (AU) held its 15th statutory meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 9 January 2015, under the acting chairmanship of Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, and in the presence of the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smaïl Chergui. In addition, the meeting was attended by Mr Edem Kodjo, Dr Specioza Naigaga Wandira as well as representatives of the United Nations.

The members of the Panel reviewed the overall peace and security situation on the continent on the basis of presentations made by the AU Commission and the United Nations. While welcoming the progress made in the past years in addressing conflict and crisis situations on the continent, the members of the Panel expressed deep concern at the prevailing situation, which has the potential of reversing the important gains made towards the promotion of peace and security on the continent.

The members of the Panel noted with deep concern the continued conflict in South Sudan, with its disastrous humanitarian consequences and far reaching impact for state building in the country and regional security and stability. They expressed support for the IGAD-led efforts, called on the parties to show statesmanship and rise to the expectations of their people and welcomed the establishment by the AU PSC of a High-Level ad hoc committee of Heads of State and Government, to further support the IGAD-led mediation.

The members of the Panel expressed concern at the continued deterioration of the situation in Libya. They stressed the need for renewed efforts to address this conflict, which is also negatively affecting regional peace and security. They welcomed the on-going efforts by the neighbouring countries, the AU, the UN and the League of Arab States, and emphasized the critical importance of coordination. In this respect, they welcomed the establishment of an International Contact Group for Libya.

The members of the Panel called on the Central African Republic (CAR) stakeholders to redouble their efforts towards the successful and timely conclusion of the on-going transition.

The members of the Panel noted with satisfaction the positive evolution in Somalia, with the continued extension of state authority and steady progress in the political process. They commended AMISOM for its outstanding contribution to the stabilization of Somalia. They appealed to the Somali stakeholders to persevere in their efforts, in order to successfully conclude the on-going process with the holding of the 2016 planned elections.

The members of the Panel welcomed the continued efforts towards the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the region. They encouraged the signatory countries to take all steps required towards the implementation of the outstanding issues, notably the neutralization of the armed groups operating in eastern DRC, particular the FDLR.

The members of the Panel encouraged the early conclusion of the talks between the Government of Mali and the armed groups in the northern part of the country, being facilitated by a mediation team led by Algeria, on the basis of the agreed principles of the

respect of the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Mali, as well as the secular nature of the state.

More generally, members of the Panel expressed deep concern regarding the Sahel and noted with concern the increased frequency of terrorist attacks on the continent, stressing the need for holistic approaches to address this scourge.

The members of the Panel welcomed the successful conclusion of the transition in Tunisia. They also welcomed the positive evolution of the situation in Guinea Bissau, with the restoration of constitutional order, and encouraged the Government and other stakeholders to pursue their efforts, including the implementation of the much needed reforms to address the challenges of impunity, drug trafficking, security sector reform and reconciliation. The members of the Panel encouraged the current efforts at national reconciliation in Madagascar.

The members of the Panel stressed the need for continued efforts to consolidate peace where it has been achieved. They noted the high risk of relapse into violence of countries in post-conflict situation.

Members of the Panel discussed and reflected on the situations presented with a view to exploring what types of actions it could undertake in support of the Union's efforts. In this respect, Mr Edem Kodjo, in his capacity as the Special Envoy of the Chairperson on Burkina Faso, provided other members of the Panel with a detailed reflection on lessons learned of his involvement, as well as prospects and challenges. The Panel felt encouraged by the ongoing efforts of the Government of Burkina Faso in handling the transition.

Members of the Panel further agreed to focus their efforts on the prevention of election related violence and conflict. They identified a number of practical steps to be taken, including the dispatch of missions to specific countries.

The members of the Panel also exchanged views on the thematic areas of focus for 2015. Finally, the members of the Panel discussed its work programme for 2015 and agreed to convene their next meeting during May 2015.

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