United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security
Holds Eleventh Consultative Meeting in New York, on 2 October 2015

<u>Communiqué</u>

On 2 October 2015, the United Nations-African Union Joint Task Force on Peace and Security held its eleventh consultative meeting at United Nations Headquarters in New York, on the margins of the seventieth session of the United Nations General Assembly. The United Nations Secretariat and African Union Commission were represented by senior officials from the two organizations.

The Joint Task Force discussed issues of common interest and identified areas of collaboration in a number of countries, including Burkina Faso, Burundi, Libya and South Sudan. The meeting also discussed thematic issues, including follow up on the High-Level Independent Panel on Peace Operations and the report of the Secretary-General on "The Future of UN Peace Operations", in particular options on funding of peace operations, cooperation on counter-terrorism and the need to combine efforts on conflict prevention, with a particular focus on elections-related conflict and constitutional issues. The Joint Task Force took stock of the implementation of its earlier decisions and commended the leadership of the two organizations on the increasing levels of strategic cooperation between the United Nations and African Union.

The meeting welcomed progress in South Sudan, following the recent signing of a peace agreement by the warring parties, and called on national stakeholders, international partners and the leaders of the neighbouring States to fully support the implementation of the peace agreement. The meeting called for the immediate and full implementation of the peace agreement so as to create the conditions for the safe and voluntary return of the 2.2 million people in South Sudan of which 1.4 million are internally displaced and over 200,000 are seeking refuge at United Nations bases. In that regard, the meeting expressed concern over the obstruction of humanitarian assistance to those in need in South Sudan. The meeting further condemned violations of human rights and international humanitarian law that have been committed during the conflict. The meeting welcomed the communiqué of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the Joint Task Force committed itself to support the implementation of the decisions of the African Union Peace and Security Council meeting.

The Joint Task Force expressed serious concern over the ongoing conflict in Libya and called on the parties currently engaged in a dialogue process facilitated by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Bernardino León, to reach consensus and sign a peace agreement ahead of the 21 October expiration of the mandate of the House of Representatives. The meeting endorsed the need for collective support by the United Nations and African Union to the next phase of the transition in Libya. The two organizations agreed to ensure that all partners work together and avoid duplicating efforts to maximize support to the country and the chances of success of the transition. The Joint Task Force reaffirmed the role of the International Contact Group on Libya in efforts to coordinate international support to Libya.

The Joint Task Force expressed concern over the political and security crisis in Burundi and the continuous violations of human rights and humanitarian consequences. In this regard, the Joint Task Force expressed its support for the East African Community-led facilitation in Burundi, under the auspices of Uganda, and urged all stakeholders in Burundi to cooperate with the East African Community-led facilitation in order to resume a genuine and inclusive political process to address the crisis in that country. The meeting welcomed the deployment of African Union human rights observers and military experts to Burundi and called for such efforts to be sustained. The meeting also noted with serious concern the humanitarian impact of the political crisis in Burundi, including the presence of a large number of refugees in neighbouring countries and internal displacement of persons. It called on all partners to continue efforts to address the humanitarian situation in the sub-region.

The Joint Task Force deplored flagrant violations of the Constitution and the Transitional Charter in Burkina Faso where a coup d'état took place in mid‑September, less than one month before the holding of presidential and legislative elections that would have marked the end of the transition process and the return of the country to constitutional order. The meeting commended the swift diplomatic actions led by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and supported by the African Union and United Nations that resulted in a reversal of the coup d'état. The Joint Task Force agreed that the African Union and United Nations should continue working in close cooperation to support Burkina Faso's political transition and the holding of elections in accordance with Burkina Faso's Constitution and Transitional Charter.

Participants also discussed the recent report of the United Nations Secretary-General on "The Future of UN Peace Operations", which makes a case for stronger global-regional partnerships and calls for "sustained, predictable and flexible funding" for African Union peace operations mandated by the Security Council. In that report, the African Union is singled out as a "key United Nations regional partner". The Joint Task Force welcomed recent proposals and reiterated its commitment to draw lessons from past experience and work together and with Member States to find practical and creative solutions to the question of funding African Union peace support operations. The meeting also endorsed proposals to launch a UN-and-AU-wide consultative process to finalize the development of a joint United Nations-African Union framework for an enhanced partnership in peace and security. Building on the existing framework between the Peace and Security Department of the African Union Commission and the United Nations Office to the African Union, the framework would provide a blueprint for enhanced and strategic cooperation among entities of the two organizations working on peace and security.

Participants agreed that the African Union and United Nations should work together to promote a renewed global commitment towards conflict prevention and mediation, including through advocacy to their respective member States. The Joint Task Force agreed to deepen the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of conflict prevention and that from the very onset of crises, the United Nations Secretariat and the African Union Commission should carry out joint early warning, assessment missions and analyses, and harmonize their approaches, drawing on each other's comparative advantages. In that regard, the Joint Task Force agreed that conflict prevention would be a standing agenda item of the Task Force.

The meeting discussed the need to further develop the growing partnership between the African Union Commission and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, with a particular focus on efforts in Mali/Sahel, the Horn of Africa and West/Central Africa. Participants were updated on ongoing efforts to expand the Nouakchott and Djibouti processes to strengthen regional and multilateral cooperation on security-related issues. The Joint Task Force endorsed proposals to develop a strategic and action-oriented road map by the secretariats of the African Union and United Nations to frame United Nations-African Union cooperation on counter-terrorism issues, especially with regard to preventing and countering violent extremism, focusing on priority countries and sub-regions.

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8 October 2015　　　　　　　AFR/3236-PKO/529
Press Release

http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/afr3236.doc.htm

2015-10-02

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