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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 360™ MEETING
22 MARCH 2013
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.(CCCLX)

COMMUNIQUE

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 360th meeting held on 22 March 2013, in an open debate format, adopted the following decision on the full use of all available tools in preventive diplomacy:

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the statement made by the Commissioner for Peace and Security on the AU's conflict prevention efforts, the challenges encountered and the best way forward, as well as of the statements made by Member States, Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs) and partners¹;
2. **Acknowledges** the holding by the United Nations Security Council of an open debate on "Optimizing the use of preventive diplomacy tools: prospects and challenges in Africa", on 16 July 2010 under the presidency of Nigeria;
3. **Recalls** the Statement of Commitment to Peace and Security in Africa, issued by the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, at the solemn launch of the Peace and Security Council, in Addis Ababa, on 25 May 2004 [PSC/AHG/ST.(X)] and other relevant statements and decisions of the Peace and Security Council, including the Declaration on the State of Peace and Security in Africa, adopted at its 275th ministerial level meeting, held in Addis Ababa on 26 April 2011 [PSC/MIN/BR.I (CCLXXV)];
4. **Notes** that, while the number of violent conflicts in the continent has been significantly reduced and important advances have been made, thanks to Africa's determination and collective efforts, with the support of its partners, a number of African countries remain trapped in a vicious cycle of conflict, linked to multiple factors, including governance deficit. In this respect, Council **stresses** the need to address the root causes of conflicts in a systematic and holistic manner, and the imperative for all Member States, in line with their commitments under relevant AU instruments, to work towards ever-higher standards in the areas of human rights, democracy, good governance and conflict prevention, a prerequisite to attain socioeconomic development and integration on the continent;
5. **Stresses** that one of the main objectives of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council is the anticipation and prevention of conflict, as stipulated in Article 3 of the Protocol. In this respect, Council **recalls** that the Peace and Security Council Protocol contains detailed provisions on conflict prevention, as illustrated in particular by the

About 25 participants from Member States, Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, as well as bilateral and multilateral partners, took the floor during the open debate.

articles relating to the powers of the Peace and Security Council [*Article 7 (1 a & b)*], the determination of its agenda [*Article 8 (7)*], entry points and modalities for action [*Article 9*], the role of the Chairperson of

the Commission [Article 10 (2)], the responsibilities of the Panel of the Wise [Article 11], the Continental Early Warning System-CEWS [Article 12], and the African Standby Force [Article 13 (3d)]. Council **further recalls** the provisions of the Peace and Security Council Protocol on the relations with the Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution [Article 16], the Pan-African Parliament [Article 18], the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights [Article 19], and civil society organizations [Article 20]. Council **also recalls** that effective cooperation with the United Nations and other international organizations, as provided for in Article 17, can greatly contribute to conflict prevention efforts in Africa;

6. **Acknowledges** that over the years, the AU has adopted several instruments on human and people's rights, governance, elections and democracy, respect for diversity and minority rights, as well as management of natural resources, which represent a consolidated framework of norms and principles whose observance would considerably reduce the risk of conflict and violence on the continent and consolidate peace where it has been achieved. Council **underlines** the particular importance of the July 2000 Solemn Declaration on the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) and its July 2002 Memorandum of Understanding, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, as well as the significance of the Declaration on the shared values adopted by the Assembly of the Union at its 16th Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, from 30 to 31st January 2011;

7. **Stresses** that the immediate priority for the AU should no longer be to adopt additional instruments, but rather to implement the existing ones. In this respect, Council, while welcoming the progress made in operationalizing the relevant provisions of the Peace and Security Council Protocol, including those pertaining to the CEWS and the Panel of the Wise, **calls for** renewed efforts from all concerned to ensure effective use of them. Council **further calls** for the strict observance by Member States of AU's instruments on governance, human rights and other related issues, in order to reduce the risk of conflicts and violence on the continent;

8. **Agrees**, in order to enhance preventive diplomacy and further the overall objective of conflict prevention on the continent, that the following steps should be taken:

- (a) strengthening of the linkages between early warning and early response, which requires that the relevant AU policy organs operate with the required flexibility and act effectively on the information provided to them regarding potential conflicts and crises,
- (b) periodic review by Council, at least once every six months, of the state of peace and security on the continent, using horizon scanning approaches, on the basis of updates provided by the CEWS, relevant AU institutions, such as the Panel of the Wise, African and international think tanks, civil society organization and other stakeholders,
- (c) regular briefings by the Commission and other stakeholders, at least every two months, as provided for in the press statement adopted at its 311th meeting held on 16 February 2012 [PSC/PR/BR(CCCXI)], on electoral processes in Africa, bearing in mind that elections on the continent have more often than not been marred by violence, sometimes leading to full-blown conflict,

- (d) operationalization of the 2009 Livingstone formula on the interaction with civil society,
- (e) effective follow-up by Council, within the framework of its conflict prevention responsibilities, of the progress towards the promotion of democratic practices, good governance, the rule of law, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for the sanctity of human life and international humanitarian law by Member States, as provided for in Article 7 (m) of the PSC Protocol, and
- (f) convening of bi-annual meetings on preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention, within the context of Council's mandate and processes;

9. **Stresses** the primary responsibility of the Member States in ensuring successful conflict prevention efforts. In this respect, Council **calls on** all Member States that have not yet do so to urgently take the necessary steps to become parties to the AU's instruments on governance and democracy, and **urges** all Member States that are parties to those instruments to fully comply with them. Council **underscores** the importance of effective leadership in shaping and maintaining institutions of good governance, and **encourages** Member States to put in place comprehensive national prevention mechanisms that would operate in conjunction with the relevant AU and RECs/RMs structures. Council **also emphasizes** the need and obligation of Member States to extend full cooperation to the Peace and Security Council in the discharge of its mandate, particularly in the area of conflict prevention, as provided for in Article 7 (2, 3 & 4) of the PSC Protocol. Council **appeals** to Member States to avail to the Commission the resources necessary for successful conflict prevention efforts;

10. **Calls on** the Commission to accelerate its efforts towards the full operationalization and strengthening of the CEWS, and to make full use of all instruments availed to it by the PSC Protocol in conflict prevention, notably by expeditiously bringing to the attention of the Peace and Security Council any matter which may threaten peace, security and stability in the continent, and dispatching envoys and other emissaries to potential conflict areas;

11. **Extends full support** to the ongoing efforts by the Commission to develop a conflict prevention framework, including the envisaged holding, in June 2013, of a meeting that will bring together the AU, the RECs/RMs and other stakeholders, to review the draft framework and finalize it, and **requests** the Commission to submit to the relevant AU structures proposals on the establishment of a mediation support unit to enhance the work of the Peace and Security and the Political Affairs Departments of the Commission. Council **encourages** the Commission and the RECs/RMs, in their ongoing efforts towards the full operationalization of the APSA, to endeavor to ensure effective synergy and complementarity among the various APSA components, as well as to mainstream gender in its early warning and conflict prevention efforts. Council **further encourages** the Commission to launch an effective sensitization and outreach campaign to better popularize relevant existing AU instruments and the provisions contained therein, for them to be owned by all stakeholders;

12. **Stresses** the need to enhance the capacity of the Panel of the Wise of the AU to enable it to fully discharge its mandate. In this respect, Council **undertakes** to strengthen its interaction with the Panel, as provided for in Article 11 of the Peace and Security Council Protocol. Council **welcomes** the ongoing

efforts to operationalize a network bringing together the AU Panel of the Wise and similar structures, entities, associations involved in conflict prevention and mediation (PANWISE). Council **encourages** the Commission to take advantage of the renewal of the membership of the Panel, due in January 2014, to submit proposals on how best to strengthen this important organ;

13. **Stresses** the need for close coordination and harmonization of efforts between the AU and the RECs/RMs in the area of conflict prevention, within the framework of the provisions of Article 16 of the Peace and Security Council Protocol and the Memorandum of Understanding between the AU and the RECs/RMs in the area of peace and security;

14. **Further stresses** the importance of close coordination and collaboration between the AU, on the one hand, the United Nations and other relevant international organizations, on the other, in the area of conflict prevention, based on Africa's leadership and ownership of peace efforts on the continent;

15. **Acknowledges** the critical role of civil society in furthering conflict prevention on the continent. Accordingly, Council **encourages** African civil society organizations, including local communities, to contribute to the ongoing efforts aimed at enhancing compliance with the existing AU instruments, including through the development of compliance indexes that can leverage on Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) and would provide regular updates on the steps taken by Member States in fulfillment of their commitments;

16. **Recognizes** the significant contribution that social media can make in sharpening the organizational tools for the promotion of good governance and conflict prevention and, in this respect, **calls on** AU Member States, RECs/RMs and other African stakeholders, to take full advantage of these new tools, in order to more effectively engage with the citizenry, particularly the youth and women;

17. **Looks forward** to the successful conduct of the 50th OAU/AU anniversary as an opportunity that will further boost the essence of the African Renaissance in terms of preventive diplomacy and its combination with other tools of the AU for effective conflict prevention, management and resolution towards sustainable development;

18. **Decides** to remain effectively seized of the matter.