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P.O. Box: 3243, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Tel.: (251-11) 551 38 22 Fax: (251-11) 551 93 21

Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 608TH MEETING

29 JUNE 2016

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM(DCVIII)

COMMUNIQUE

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 608th meeting held on 29 June 2016, adopted the following decision on the situation in Somalia and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM):

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the briefing provided by the acting Director for Peace and Security on behalf of the Commissioner for Peace and Security, on the situation in Somalia. Council also **takes note** of the statements made by the representatives of Somalia, Ethiopia, in its capacity as the Chair of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN);
2. **Condemns in the strongest possible terms**, the continuing attacks carried out by Al Shaabab terrorist group, including the recent attack on the Naso Hablod Hotel, in the busy KM- 4 junction, in Southern Mogadishu, which resulted in at least 15 deaths including Buri Mohamed Hamza, Somalia State Minister for Environment, and left several civilians injured. Council **expresses** its deepest condolence and solidarity with the people of Somalia, especially the affected families in the recent and other attacks by the terrorist group. Council **also expresses its deep concern** over the continued threat that Al Shabaab poses to peace and stability in Somalia and the region;
3. **Welcomes** the progress made by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) with support of AMISOM, in the establishment of permanent democratic institutions through inclusive political processes including the progress made in state formation, constitution-making and electoral processes. In this respect, Council **urges** the FGS to remain committed and more deliberate in its efforts to achieve its political milestones, as reflected in Vision 2016, especially in the successful conduct of elections scheduled for August/September 2016;
4. **Stresses** the need to adhere to this electoral timelines and, to ensure a transparent, inclusive and credible electoral process as well as the need for a common understanding and resolution of the current challenges associated with the state formation process. Council **also calls** for the cooperation of all the people of Somalia, particularly those in Hiraan and Middle Shabele, in order to enable the state formation process to move forward. Council **urges** the people of Somalia to assume greater responsibility for the security and governance of their country;
5. **Emphasises** the need to align the current political developments in Somalia with efforts to develop a capable, inclusive and effective Somalia National and Security Forces (SNSF), in line with the security strategy outlined in the revised Concept of Operations (CONOPs). Accordingly, Council **reiterates** the need for the international community to promote greater coordination and cooperation through the AU, in the collective efforts to achieve a more deliberate and effective approach in building the capacity of the SNSF. In this regard, Council **urges** the UN Security Council to lift the arms embargo imposed on Somalia as contained in UNSC resolution 2244 (2015), as a critical aspect of building capable Somalia security institutions;
6. **Commends** the efforts of the AU Commission for having convened the workshop that revised the AMISOM CONOPs in line with the communique PSC/PR/COMM.2(DXCV) of its 595th meeting held on 28 April

2015. In this respect, Council **takes note** of the Meeting of the Military Operations Coordination Committee (MOCC), which was held in Kampala, Uganda, on 22 June 2016, that deliberated and endorsed the main recommendations of the revised CONOPs;

7. **Expresses satisfaction** with the outcome of the revised CONOPs in relation to the identified priority tasks namely: AMISOM support and contribution to securing the electoral process in Somalia in coordination with the Elections Security Taskforce within the Mission area; more targeted and effective offensive operations by AMISOM and SNSF against Al Shaabab; implementation of the established Joint Technical Intelligence Committees, in order to improve intelligence sharing and management; and enhanced Command and Control by urgently filling structures of AMISOM's Strategic, Operational and Tactical headquarters with dedicated and qualified personnel;

8. **Welcomes** the appointment of General Osman Nour Soubagleh, by the Chairperson of the AU Commission, as the new AMISOM Force Commander on 31 May 2016, and his participation in the revision of the CONOPs, as well as in the Meeting of the MOCC. Council **further expresses satisfaction** with this appointment as part of efforts to enhance AMISOM's offensive operations, and promote increased command and control, in the conduct of AMISOM operations in line with the decision of the Djibouti Summit and other relevant decisions. Council **expresses full support to** the new Force Commander and **calls** upon him to spare no effort in promoting greater efficiency and coordination of AMISOM operations;

9. **Endorses** the revised CONOPs, which reflect efforts toward enhancing AMISOM and SNSF operations and crucially identifies indicative timelines for an exit strategy of AMISOM from Somalia. Accordingly, Council **requests** the AU Commission to formally transmit the endorsed CONOPs to the Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs), and the UN Security Council, for their consideration. Council **further directs** the Commission and AMISOM, and **requests** the UN and relevant stakeholders, to work in close collaboration to ensure effective implementation of the revised CONOPs;

10. **Takes note** of the indicative timelines of AMISOM exit strategy presented by the AU Commission, which prioritizes territorial recovery and consolidation by AMISOM and SNSF until October 2018, and a subsequent draw down and transfer of security responsibilities to the SNSF from 2018 to December 2020. Council **further urges** all T/PCCs to work in a collective, concerted and coordinated manner within the indicative time frame;

11. **Expresses appreciation** to the UN for its support to AMISOM, and **stresses the need** for continued efforts to enhance that support through the utilization of UN assessed contribution, bearing in mind that in deploying a Mission in Somalia, the AU is acting on behalf of the UN Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and aims at creating conditions conducive for long-term stabilisation and reconstruction of Somalia;

12. **Reiterates its call** for the deployment of additional force enablers especially the pledged air assets by Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. In this regard, Council **notes with concern** the prolonged negotiations between the UN and T/PCCs in the finalisation of the Letter of Assists (LOAs) that will facilitate the deployment of these air assets. Accordingly, Council **reiterates its call** for the urgent finalisation of the negotiations on the LOAs,

without further delay, taking into account that reimbursement rates for these assets should be commensurate with the context of AMISOM asymmetrical operations;

13. **Renews** the AU's appreciation to the EU and its Member States, for their support to AMISOM, as well as other contributions made towards the overall peace, security and stability of Somalia. Council **welcomes** the continued support of the EU to AMISOM under the Africa Peace Facility based on the strategic partnership between Africa and the EU and in the mutual interest of both continents to ensure peace and security in Somalia. In this respect, Council **takes note** of the EU's decision to accelerate the payment of AMISOM troop allowance through a lump-sum approach and, **looks forward** to the timely implementation of this disbursement model, within the shortest time frame. Council **also calls** for the fulfilment of pledge of funds for Somalia, especially in this critical period of elections in the country;

14. **Further expresses deep concern** about the recent decision by the EU to alter the payment procedures for the Burundian National Defence Force (BNDF) contingent within AMISOM, bearing in mind the critical phase of AMISOM operations especially in light of the upcoming elections in Somalia. Accordingly, Council **urges** the EU to reverse or at least delay the implementation of this decision in order to avoid possible adverse effects that could undermine AMISOM's operational momentum;

15. **Pays tribute** to all the AMISOM uniformed and civilian personnel, as well as the T/PCCs, namely: Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda for their continued commitment and the sacrifices made thus far;

16. **Requests** the AU Commission to report back to Council on the implementation of the revised CONOPs not later than 90 days, from the date of the adoption of this Communique;

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