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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 622ND MEETING

6 SEPTEMBER 2016

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM(DCXXII)

COMMUNIQUE

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 622nd meeting held on 6 September 2016, adopted the following decision on the Consideration of the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Somalia:

Council,

1. **Endorses** the Report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Somalia, and **takes note** of the briefing provided by the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Ambassador Francisco Caetano Madeira on the situation in Somalia. Council also **takes note** of the statements made by the representatives of Ethiopia, in its capacity as the Chair of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), IGAD Secretariat and the United Nations (UN);
2. **Condemns** in the strongest possible terms, recent attacks by the terrorist group, Al Shabaab against civilians in some public places in Mogadishu and across the interim regional administrations and **expresses** its deepest condolence to the affected families of these recent attacks. Council **re-affirms** AU's solidarity with the people and Government of Somalia and support the country towards the elimination of Al Shabaab, as well as the promotion of peace, stability and reconciliation in Somalia;
3. **Commends** the progress made by the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) in the conduct of the upcoming elections based on a unique political process but infused with technical election components that is expected to set the foundation for a universal suffrage by 2020. In this respect, Council **endorses** the 2016 election calendar as announced by the National Leadership Forum as follows: Upper House Elections (25 September); House of Representatives (24 September); Swearing in of House of Parliament members (20 October); Election of Speaker (25 October); Election of President (30 October). Council **stresses** the need for the adherence to these timelines and **reiterates** the commitment of the AU and AMISOM to support the FGS towards a credible and inclusive electoral process including the 30% representation of women in the legislative arm of government;
4. **Welcomes** efforts by the AU Commission and AMISOM in supporting the conduct of elections in Somalia. Council **notes** the conduct of an AU pre-electoral assessment to Mogadishu in July 2016, which focused on identifying the best form of technical assistance to support the elections in Somalia. **On** the basis of this assessment, Council **requests** the AU Commission to expedite the deployment of technical experts, as well as provide other relevant forms of support to AMISOM in order to assist and reinforce the mission's capacity ahead of the elections;

5. **Re-iterates** the importance of the effective implementation of other pillars of the political process as envisaged in Vision 2016 and **encourages** the FGS with support of AMISOM, to continue with the process of establishing permanent democratic institutions including through the completion of the state formation and constitution review processes. Council **encourages** the FGS to continue its efforts towards the facilitation of a successful reconciliation process between clans and militia groups in Jubba State, and Galmudug Interim Administration as well as in the promotion of dialogue between Hiraan and Middle Sha belle, which should lead to the establishment of the final regional administration;

6. **Expresses satisfaction** in the steps taken by the Commission and AMISOM towards the effective implementation of the 2016 revised Concept of Operations (CONOPs), which was adopted by Council during its 608th meeting held on 29 June 2016. In particular, Council **welcomes** the efforts by AMISOM and the Somalia National Security Force (SNSF) to renew offensive operations towards degrading the capabilities of Al Shabaab whilst also promoting elections security. In addition, Council **commends** effort made by the newly deployed AMISOM Force Commander in enhancing greater coordination across AMISOM Sectors of operations, and **urges** the Mission leadership to spare no efforts in sustaining and improving on the revitalization of AMISOM operations;

7. **Underlines** the importance of the deployment of air assets to support AMISOM operations. Accordingly, Council **takes note** of the efforts by the AU Commission, UN and a number of AMISOM Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) namely, Ethiopia and Kenya in the conduct of inspection visits and through negotiations on the finalization of Tripartite Letters of Assist (LOAs), which will facilitate the deployment of these air assets. Council **encourages** all stakeholders to ensure that finalization and deployment of these assets, without further delay, given the critical phase of AMISOM current operations;

8. **Commends** the efforts made by AMISOM and its TCCs towards adherence to International Humanitarian Law and the promotion of Human Rights in the conduct of operations in Somalia. In this regard, Council **expresses** satisfaction and appreciation of the recent efforts made by the Mission to deploy investigative teams in relation to alleged violations and the establishment of in-mission court martial by the Ugandan People Defence Force (UPDF) to undertake trials of some soldiers for alleged misconduct. Council **requests** that the AU Commission should ensure its full support to AMISOM in setting these exemplary standards, and in further enhancing its accountability regime;

9. **Emphasizes** the need for the FGS in coordination with AMISOM and other stakeholders to implement a comprehensive security strategy in Somalia, which will seek to effectively balance the conduct of military operations with other security measures, such as strengthening of state authority, provision of basic services and the implementation of broader forms of stabilization activities. In this regard, Council **takes note** of the upcoming Security Event on Somalia, to be held in London on 7 September 2016, and **urges** all regional and international

stakeholders to ensure an AU-led inclusive and properly coordinated process aimed at promoting sustainable security in Somalia;

10. **Reiterates its call** to the UN Security Council to consider lifting the arms embargo imposed on Somalia as contained in UN Security Council resolution 2244 (2015), as a critical aspect of building capable Somalia security institutions, and to ensure that the criteria for the provision of arms is commensurate with the prevailing state of bureaucracy in Somalia. Consequently, Council **stresses** the need for the FGS to ensure the highest degree of responsibility in the management, storage and security of stockpiles;

11. **Re-iterates** the importance of an AMISOM exit strategy based on the indicative timelines set in the 2016 revised CONOPs and **stresses** the need for the AU Commission to commence a stocktaking exercise in light of the upcoming ten-year anniversary of the deployment of AMISOM. In this regard, Council **requests** the AU Commission to conduct a comprehensive lessons learned exercise, which will identify progress made, challenges encountered and more importantly recommend options on the way forward in the future of AMISOM, including the Mission Exit Strategy. Furthermore, Council **requests** that a report on this lessons learned exercise be submitted to Council for its consideration not later than December 2016;

12. **Re-news** its appreciation to the Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) namely Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda for their huge sacrifices and continued commitment in support of peace, security and stability in Somalia;

13. **Further expresses appreciation** to the European Union and the UN, as well as other bilateral donors for their financial resources to AMISOM and **renews** the call for continued support bearing in mind that collective efforts in Somalia is an expression of solidarity and the preservation of international peace and security;

14. **Requests** the Commission to transmit this communique alongside the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Somalia to the UN Secretary-General for onward transmission to the UNSC for its action as appropriate;

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