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**PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 713TH MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
24 AUGUST 2017**

PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCXIII)

COMMUNIQUE

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 713th meeting, held on 24 August 2017, in Addis Ababa, adopted the following decision on Post-Elections Analysis and Upcoming Elections in Africa:

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the briefing provided by the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, H.E. Ambassador Cessouma Minata Samate, on elections and a constitutional referendum held in Africa from January to August 2017 in the following countries: Algeria, Angola, Congo Brazzaville, The Gambia, Kenya, Lesotho, Rwanda, Senegal and Mauritania (constitutional referendum), respectively, as well as of the briefing on the upcoming elections to be held in Liberia. Council **also takes note** of the statements made by the representatives of Congo, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia and Mauritania. Council **further takes note** of the briefing made by Mr. Farid Zarif, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN) and Coordinator of the UN Operations in Liberia on some aspects relating to the upcoming elections to be held in that country;
2. **Congratulates** Member States which have successfully and peacefully conducted their elections, as well as Mauritania for its well conducted constitutional referendum during the period January-August 2017 and **urges** those Member States which are planning to conduct elections to ensure that they scrupulously adhere to the relevant AU instruments, including the AU Declaration on Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG);
3. **Welcomes** the progress being made by Member States in deepening and consolidating the democratic culture and practice through the holding of periodic credible elections, as a way of preventing conflicts and promoting sustainable peace, security, stability and development in their countries;
4. **Commends** the AU Commission for its relentless commitment to continue to provide support to all Members States with a view to ensuring that regular, credible, democratic and transparent elections are held in line with the provisions of relevant AU instruments, including the ACDEG, the OAU/AU Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa, the Guidelines for African Union Electoral Observations and Monitoring Missions and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM);
5. **Also commends** the AU Commission for strengthening its engagement, harmonising its work and building synergies with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in election related work, particularly through the deployment of Joint High Level Political Missions (JHLPMs) with RECs and championing joint election observation missions;
6. **Notes with concern** the low participation of citizens in some elections in the continent, particularly the low turnout by the youth and women during elections, due to, among others, declining public trust in the institutions entrusted with managing the conduct of elections. In this regard, Council **urges** Member States to make deliberate efforts towards ensuring and promoting popular participation in democratic processes, including through civic and voter education;

7. **Also notes with concern** the trend, in some Member States, towards abuse of the media, particularly social media, by some sections of the civil society and some political parties, which can potentially undermine the credibility of the electoral processes and trigger violent conflicts. In this regard, Council **stresses the importance** of Member States to further strengthen their national regulatory instruments and mechanisms in order to prevent media abuse during elections;
8. **Calls** on civil society actors to always prioritize and support Africa's socioeconomic agenda, including during periods of elections, as part of the overall efforts to realize the AU's vision of a peaceful, developed, integrated and prosperous Africa, in line with AU's Agenda 2063;
9. **Underscores the importance** for Member States to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of AU Election Observer Missions (AUEOM) and of undertaking necessary follow ups, with a view to fostering more conducive conditions for future elections. In the same vein, Council requests the AU Commission to establish monitoring and follow-up mechanisms for the implementation of AEUOM recommendations with a view to avoid similar election-related challenges;
10. **Urges** Member States to prevent political parties and civil society groups from establishing youth militias for purposes of promoting campaigns of violence ahead of, during and after elections, as this tends to undermine the credibility of the electoral process. In the same context, Council **urges** Member States to ensure respect and promotion of human rights before, during and after elections;
11. **Also urges** political parties to desist from resorting to the use of violence as a way of expressing their disaffection over the outcomes of elections but rather, to make full use of all available legal channels in resolving any election related disputes ;
12. **Encourages** AU Member States to strive all times to institutionalise mechanisms for constructive management of all conflicts, including election-related conflicts. To this end, Council **urges** political parties and candidates to desist from mobilizing votes along identity fault-lines such as ethnicity;
13. **Underlines the importance** of Member States to continue to make concerted efforts to invest in national infrastructures for peace as a way of preventing election-related violent conflicts, including national early warning centres;
14. **Further underlines** the importance of the mobilization of funding from within the continent in order to reduce the vulnerability of elections processes in Member States from manipulations from external actors bent on using their financial leverage to influence outcomes of elections to the detriment of national aspirations;
15. **Reiterates the importance** of timely prevention of elections related conflicts in the continent through effective use of preventive diplomacy. In this context, Council **requests** the Commission to continue conducting its early warning programmes for timely detection of signs of vulnerability and instability related to elections, in order to inform early and appropriate responses from the respective AU and RECs organs;
16. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.