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**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia P.O.Box:3243 Tel. (251-1) 51 38 22 Fax: (251-1) 51 93 21
_____Email: situationroom@africa-union.org-----**

**PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 721st MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA 28 SEPTEMBER 2017**

PSC/PR/COMM (DCCXXI)

COMMUNIQUE

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 721st meeting held on 28 September 2017, considered the Report of its Field Mission to the countries of the Lake Chad Basin that was conducted from 27 to 31 July 2017 and adopted the following decision:

Council,

1. **Recalls** its earlier decisions and pronouncements on the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group and efforts aimed at neutralizing it, in particular the press statement PSC/PR/BR. (DCCII) of its 702nd meeting held on 19 July 2017, by which Council decided to undertake a field mission to the Lake Chad Basin countries. Council **also recalls** the Press Statement PSC/PR/BR. (DCLXXX) of its 680th meeting held on 18 April 2017, Communique [PSC/PR/2. (DCXXXIX)] adopted at its 639th meeting held on 29 November 2016 and Communique [PSC/AHG/COMM. 2(CDLXXXIV)] adopted at its 484th meeting held on 29 January 2015, at the level of Heads of State and Government, by which Council authorized the deployment of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF);
2. **Pays tribute to** the countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), namely Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, plus the Republic of Benin, for the sacrifices and the tremendous progress made in the fight against Boko Haram terrorist group, which has been considerably weakened and entirely dislodged from almost all its strongholds. In this respect, Council **welcomes** the invaluable contribution made by the MNJTF in the promotion of peace, security and stability in the Lake Chad Basin, despite the logistic and financial constraints encountered by the Mission in the conduct of ongoing operations;
3. **Stresses that**, despite MNJTF successes, Boko Haram still retains the capacity to continue to threaten peace and security in the region, in particular through the perpetration of asymmetric attacks on isolated locations, strike at soft targets such as markets and public gatherings, in the form of guerilla warfare and suicide bombings that unfortunately targets innocent civilian population;
4. **Takes note with concern of** the challenges with critical resources currently being faced by MNJTF in its operations against Boko Haram, including predictable funding, river and air navigation capacities. Council **stresses the imperative** that, as a successful reference model of multinational cooperation to address security challenges relating to violent extremism and terrorism, the MNJTF deserves greater and more expedited support from within the continent and the larger international community for its efforts;
5. **Welcomes** the support thus far provided by the AU and the international community, in particular the European Union (EU), that contribute to facilitate the MNJTF operations against the Boko Haram terrorist group. In this respect, Council **reiterates the need** for continued consultation and coordination between the AU, the partners and MNJTF, with regard to procurement and delivery of the logistical support to the mission to meet the requirements of the troops and the conditions on the ground. Council, given the fragility of the gains made thus far in the fight against Boko Haram, **urges** the AU Commission, in close cooperation and coordination with the LCBC and MNJTF, to find a rapid solution to all administrative bottlenecks that continue to delay the much

needed support to the Mission. Council **further urges** the EU to participate in that effort, with a view to

expedite the full use of its financial contribution to MNJTF operations;

6. **Expresses once again its deep concern** at the dire humanitarian situation prevailing in the region, in particular the increasing number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees in the North East of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger, resulting from the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group. Council **takes note with appreciation** of the number of national initiatives taken by the countries of the region from their own resources to mitigate the humanitarian situation. Council **reiterates its call on** the international community to provide the necessary assistance, commensurate to the needs of the affected people in the area, including the rehabilitation of the numerous Boko Haram fighters that have surrendered. Council **underlines the need** for a rapid disbursement of pledges made at the Oslo Humanitarian Conference on Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin region held on 24 February 2017, with a view to alleviating the current humanitarian crisis in the region;

7. **Reaffirms** the imperative for a comprehensive approach in the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group as provided for in its Communique [PSC/AHG/COMM.2(CDLXXXIV)] adopted at its 484th meeting. In this respect, Council **reiterates its conviction** that the sustainable solution to the crisis in the LCB countries, requires efforts beyond military action, that encompass development efforts towards addressing the root causes of violent extremism and radicalization, including poverty, illiteracy and massive youth unemployment. Council **calls on** the international community to extend the necessary financial support to the countries of the region, with a view to assist them in their efforts aimed at mitigating the dire environmental and socio-economic consequences of the shrinking of the Lake Chad on the livelihood of the riparian population;

8. **Encourages** countries of the region, in their efforts focusing on socio-economic recovery of the communities liberated from the Boko Haram terrorist group, as well as initiatives for the rehabilitation and reinsertion of Boko Haram surrendered combatants, with a view to depriving the terrorist group of support and recruitment grounds. In this respect, Council **requests** the Chairperson of the commission to dispatch, by December 2017 latest, a multidisciplinary team to assess the needs of the region in terms of post-conflict reconstruction and development support.

9. **Further requests** the Commission to conduct, during the first half of 2018, an in-depth study on *emerging hate ideologies and peace and security* and submit the findings to Council for appropriate directions and decisions. Council **also agrees** to dedicate an open session to a large debate on emerging hate ideologies and peace and security;

10. **Reiterates** AU's call for a dedicated Summit of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), with a view for the two Regional Economic Communities to come up with a comprehensive and sustainable strategy for the promotion of peace, security and development in the Lake Chad Basin region;

11. **Looks forward** to the joint visit to be undertaken in the region by the United Nations (UN) Secretary General, the Chairperson of the Commission, the President of the World Bank and the President of the African Development Bank, as a crucial step for international action in support of efforts deployed by countries of the region for peace, security and socio-economic development;

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12. **Expresses its profound gratitude** to the governments and peoples of the Lake Chad Basin countries for the warm welcome, hospitality and cooperation that had been extended to the PSC delegation during

the field mission. Council **also expresses gratitude** to the UN for its valuable logistic support to the mission;

13. **Requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to ensure the rapid implementation of the present communique, in particular with regard to issues relating to expediting the AU support to the MNJTF;

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