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**PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 986th MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
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PSC/M I N/COM M. (CM LXXX VI)

COMMUNIQUE

Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its virtual 986th meeting held on 18 March 2021, on Peacekeeping Operations in Africa: Emerging Challenges and Critical Lessons for Sustainable Peacekeeping Operations,

The Peace and Security Council,

Noting the opening statement made by the Cabinet Secretary, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya, H.E Ambassador Raychelle Omamo, in her capacity as the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of March 2021, and the statement made by the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Adeoye Bankole; **also noting** the presentation made by the Cabinet Secretary, in the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. Dr. Monica Juma, as well as statements made by the representatives of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union, H.E. Hanna Serwaa Tetteh, and the Head of the European Union Delegation to the African Union, H.E. Birgitte Markussen;

Expressing deep condolences on the untimely death of H.E. Dr. John Pombe Magufuli, the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, on 17 March 2021;

Recalling its previous decisions and pronouncements on peacekeeping operations in Africa and the emerging challenges, including on the state of peace and security in Africa and the initiatives and steps for promoting African solutions to African problems, in particular Communique [PSC/MIN./COMM. (DCCXCVII)] adopted at its 797th meeting, held at the ministerial level, on 24 September 2018; and communique [PSC/PR/COMM.(CMLV)] adopted at its 955th meeting, held on 15 October 2020, of which the PSC endorsed the Cairo Roadmap on Enhancing Peacekeeping Operations: From Mandate to Exit;

Further recalling the Report of the AU-UN Panel on Modalities for Support to AU peacekeeping Operations (A/63/666; S/2008/813 OF 31 December 2008); as well as the AU-UN Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security (2017);

Acknowledging the significant contribution of AU-led Peace Support Operations (PSOs) and the host countries, in promoting peace, security and stability in Africa, including in particularly challenging environments;

Deeply concerned about the surge in violent extremism, terrorism, human and drugs trafficking, proliferation of small and light weapons, as well as hybrid threats across the African Continent which constitute new threats to peace, security and stability around the world;

Mindful of the importance of clear, unambiguous and robust mandates, required material, human and financial resources for AU-led PSOs; and

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council:

1. **Welcomes** AU efforts and partnership with the UN in the promotion of peace and security while respecting human rights, and ensuring effective protection of civilians during peace keeping mission, including experiences of AU, UN, and Hybrid missions in Africa;
2. **Commends** all AU Member States contributing to peace support operations in the Continent in the promotion of peace, security and stability and create a secure and stable Africa; in the same context, **expresses appreciation** to the international community for their continued support to AU led PSOs;
3. **Also commends** Member States for the revitalization of the AU Peace Fund, and in particular, for their continued contributions to the Fund, as a testimony of their commitment to promote African solution to African problems; and in this context, **also commends** the AU Commission for the steps taken to ensure the effective management of the Fund;
4. **Pays tribute** to all peacekeepers for their sacrifices and commitment to duty, particularly those who have paid the supreme sacrifice in the promotion of peace, security and stability in the Continent and globally; **wishes speed recovery** to all those who have sustained injuries, and **underscores the importance** of ensuring that they are availed with all the necessary support;
5. **Underlines the urgent need to** effectively address the challenges faced by AU PSOs at the policy, strategic and operational levels, including the dilemmas of ensuring effectiveness in implementing its mandates and tasks which at times are ambiguous, without violating the core PSO principles, including as outlined in the African Union Doctrine on Peace Support Operations adopted by the 3rd Extraordinary meeting of the Specialised Technical Committee on Defence Safety and Security, held on 30 January 2021;
6. **Notes with deep concern** the surge in violent extremism, terrorism, human and drugs trafficking, proliferation of small and light weapons, as well as hybrid threats across the African continent, which constitute new sources of major risks to security, peace and stability around the world and the need to impose sanctions against spoilers and list Al Shabaab under Resolution 1267; **emphasizes** the need for women participation in all AU led PSOs and **strongly condemns** all acts and crimes of sexual exploitation and abuse against women and girls and **warns** the perpetrators of those crimes that they shall be brought to justice;
7. **Stresses** the need to ensure harmonization and coordination of decision-making processes at various levels, namely, national, regional and continental, including the need for a robust and comprehensive lessons learned and knowledge management framework, mechanisms and tools, in order to enhance the effectiveness in planning, deployment, management and liquidation of PSOs;
8. **Acknowledging** that the effectiveness and integrity of a PSO is a function of the quality performance and general conduct of its personnel, **stresses the importance** of ensuring the deployment of appropriately trained, experienced and skilled personnel in all AU-led PSOs, as well as the importance of ensuring that their professional conduct is commensurate with the provisions of the AU Compliance and Accountability Framework for AU PSOs, including adherence to AU's Code of Conduct and Discipline to the norms of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Laws;

9. **Notes with concern** the inadequacy and unpredictability of funding for AU PSOs, as well as the mismatch between the mandate/approval/authorization and tasks of a PSO, versus the financial, material and human resources provided to enable the PSO implement its mandate and achieve its objectives;

10. **Stresses** the importance of burden-sharing between the AU and the UN and other relevant international partners, including ensuring predictable, sustainable and flexible financing by the UN for AU-led or authorized PSOs, through the UN Assessed Contributions with a view to ensuring more effectiveness in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security; and in this regard, **requests** the AU Commission to develop a common African position paper on funding of the AU PSOs and accessing UN assessed contributions with a view to provide guidance to the AU Member States, as well as partners;

11. **Underlines** the need for improvement in AU-UN peace operations cooperation, including further institutionalization of the cooperation at every level, with stronger collaboration between the UN Security Council and the PSC;

12. **Underscores the importance** of ensuring AU command, control and coordination with Police and Troop Contributing Countries (P/TCCs) as guided by relevant mission management documents, as well as the importance of ascertaining the relationship between an AU PSO and host countries, in line with Status of Mission Agreements (SOMA) that outlines responsibilities, privileges and immunities of a PSO and its personnel;

13. **Also underscores** the importance of further strengthening the relationship and complementarity between peace operations and peacebuilding activities, and in this regard, **looks forward to** the operationalization of the AU-PCRD Centre in Cairo, which will have a vital role in implementing peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction and development activities on the Continent;

14. **Reiterates** its call for the African Standby Force to be fully functional and utilized, as the framework for the planning and rapid deployment of PSOs to conflicts and crises in Africa, in close cooperation and coordination with Regional Economic Communities and regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), in line with Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.I(XIV) adopted at the 14th Extraordinary Assembly of the Union on Silencing the Guns held on 6 December 2020;

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