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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

951ST MEETING

5 OCTOBER 2020

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR.(CMLI)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), dedicated its 951st meeting, held on 5 October 2020, to a virtual open session on the theme: “Implementation and Commemoration of United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security”. The Open Session was held to mark, both, the 20th Anniversary of the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1325 and coincided with the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Council took note of the opening statement made by the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of October 2020, H.E. Ambassador Osama Abdelkhalik, Permanent Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the AU, as well as the presentation made by the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on Women, Peace and Security, Madam Bineta Diop. Council also took note of the statement of the UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, Mme Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, read on her behalf by Mme Marie Goretti Nduwayo; the statement made by the Minister of the Federal Republic of Somalia for Women and Human Rights Development, Mme Deqa Yasin; as well as the statement made by the coordinator of the African Women Leaders Network and Women Leaders Platform in Mali, Mme Cisse Aissata Cissoko. The meeting was attended by representatives of the AU Member States, UN organizations, partners and other relevant stakeholders.

Council recalled its previous outcomes, on women, peace and security in Africa, particularly, Press Statements [PSC/PR/BR.(DCCCLXXXVIII)]; adopted at its 887th meeting (open session) held on 17 October 2019 and [PSC/PR/BR.(DCCCIII)] adopted at its 803rd meeting held on 19 October 2018.

Council recalled also the UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which is a landmark decision aimed at ensuring that women and girls are systematically and sustainably included in the peace and security agenda at all levels. Council recalled further Aspiration number 6 of Agenda 2063, which aims at building an Africa where development is people-driven and the potential of women and the youth is unleashed; as well as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, adopted in Maputo Mozambique in 2003 (the Maputo Protocol), as a legal instrument that provide a set of norms on human rights for African women. Council recalled as well Sustainable Development Goal Number 16 of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Council reiterated that Women, Peace and Security Agenda is crucial in realizing the goals set in AU Agenda 2063 and UN Agenda 2030, as well as the AU flagship project of silencing the guns in Africa, with a view to creating conducive conditions for Africa’s development. In this respect, Council commended the efforts being deployed by the AU Chairperson Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security in spearheading the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa and welcomed the progress made, thus far, as reflected in the Second Report on the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa, using the Continental Results Framework (CRF) adopted by the Peace and Security Council in May 2018.

Council welcomed the increased commitment by AU Member States to develop and to implement National Action Plans and commended all those Member States that have adopted their National Action Plans, and encouraged those, which have not yet developed or adopted National Action Plans to expeditiously do so.

Council underlined the necessity of the full and effective implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda through a comprehensive approach that ensures that balance between the four pillars of prevention, protection, participation, and recovery and relief, while respecting the principle of national interest and taking into account the cultural and societal specificities in each of the countries in armed conflict or emerging from it.

Council reiterated its call for Member States to redouble their efforts in implementing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, among others, through enhanced capacity building and dedication of domestic resources allocated to implementing their national commitments and deepen their ownership of the process, as well as developing national programmes which promote women's participation in peace processes and peace building activities.

Council, once again, underlined the importance of mainstreaming the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in all the relevant programs of the African Union Commission in relation to promotion of peace, security and stability in the African Continent, and highlighted the need to ensure the mainstreaming of the WPS agenda in the activities undertaken under the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy (AUPCRD) including through the AU's PCRD Centre in Cairo. Council stressed the importance of continued increase in the representation of women in peace keeping and peace support operations.

Council called for enhanced support to women and women's organizations, and particularly the women actors and organizations who are involved in the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda at the local and national levels, Council commended the efforts being deployed by the relevant stakeholders, and particularly women's organizations, in Somalia and in Mali to promote the rights of women and girls.

Council underscored the need for the AU Member States and the AU Commission to redouble efforts in mobilizing all resources required to the Office of the Special Envoy, in order to further enhance the institutional capacity and effectiveness of the Office in discharging its mandate and invited the chairperson of the AU Commission to take steps to further institutionalize the work of the Office of the Special Envoy on women, Peace and Security.

Council underlined the fundamental importance of enhanced cooperation and synergy in the efforts deployed by Member States, Regional Economic Communities and Regional mechanisms (RECs/RMs), the African Network of Women in Conflict Prevention and Peace Mediation (FemWise - Africa) subsidiary organ of the Panel of the Wise, the United Nations agencies, programmes and funds and other relevant stakeholders.

Council commended the AU partners, and the broader international community, for their continued support to the AU Women, Peace and Security Agenda in conflict settings within the African Continent. Council encouraged the international partners, including the United Nations

and International financial institution, to step up their financial and technical support to the efforts aimed at the full and effective implementation of UNSC resolution 1325 in Africa.

Council noted with deep concern that women continue to be disproportionately affected by armed conflicts and other emergency situations such as epidemics and pandemics. Council recognized the impact of the new Corona virus disease (COVID-19) on the implementation of the agenda as it has accentuated the pre-existing challenges faced by women and girls, including their vulnerability to human rights violations and abuses including sexual and gender-based violence during armed conflict and post conflict situations.

In this regard, Council condemned all forms of abuses and violence against women and girls reiterated the AU zero-tolerance policy and urged all Member States to take necessary legislative and executive measures to protect women and girls including through ensuring access to justice for the victims and combat impunity by bringing perpetrators of abuses and violence to account for these crimes. In the same vein, Council stressed the need for men and boys to also continue to play a role in promoting and safeguarding the enjoyment of human rights by women.

Council noted with deep concern the abuses perpetrated against women by terrorist groups and organizations, being among the negative impact of terrorism on the enjoyment of human rights, and reiterated the commitment to continue to take effective steps to protect the rights of women against these heinous crimes including through appropriate programs dedicated to deradicalization and promotion of respect for human rights.

Council agreed to remain actively seize of the matter.