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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

1043RD MEETING AT THE LEVEL OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

29 OCTOBER 2021

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/AHG/COMM.1042(2021)

COMMUNIQUE

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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1043rd meeting held at the level of Heads of State and Government on 29 October 2021 on the theme: “Addressing Disaster Management issues in Africa: Challenges and Perspectives for Human Security”:

The Peace and Security Council,

Recalling Assembly Decisions of the AU on climate change, particularly Assembly/AU/Dec. 669(XXX) on the outcomes of COP23/CMP 13 and Africa’s Engagements at the Global Climate Change Conference at COP24/CMP 14, adopted at its 30th Ordinary Session held from 28 to 29 January 2018; and **also recalling** its previous decisions and pronouncements on climate change and related activities, particularly Communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.1(CMLXXXIV) adopted at its 984th meeting held at the level of Heads of State and Government on 9 March 2021;

Acknowledging that climate change, unregulated development and lack of preparedness are the major drivers of disaster risks on the Continent and that disasters continue to undermine modest development gains, hampering the realization of the aspirations enshrined in Agenda 2063, and adversely impacting the implementation of the AU flagship project, Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030;

Reiterating its commitment to implement all initiatives pertaining to “Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030”, and to simultaneously and comprehensively address the fundamental root causes of conflicts and violence in the Continent;

Cognizant of the adverse impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, with far-reaching political, economic, social and security implications throughout Africa, and has further exacerbated disaster risks and humanitarian crises;

Faithful to Articles 6(f) and 7(p) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, stipulating that one of the functions of the Council is humanitarian action and disaster management, and empowering the Council to support and facilitate humanitarian action in situations of armed conflicts and significant natural disasters;

Reaffirming its solidarity with the governments and people of Member States adversely affected by disasters, including those that were induced by climate change and COVID-19;

Noting the opening remarks made by H.E Filipe Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique and Chairperson of the PSC for October 2021, statement by H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission presented by Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security;

Also noting presentation made by H.E. Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, AU Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment;

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

1. **Expresses concern** over the co-occurrence of disasters induced by epidemics, endemic diseases, drought, floods, landslides, animal diseases, pests and veld fires, cyclones and volcanic eruptions, amongst other hazards, especially in areas that are fragile due to conflict resulting in forced displacements, thereby exacerbating the vulnerability of populations further diminishing their resilience capacity; and potentially leading to armed conflicts;
2. **Underscores** the fact that disaster risks pose a threat to development and human security and that the confluence of disaster occurrences and conflicts/crises exacerbates the complexity of humanitarian emergencies; in this regard **stresses** the importance of availing the necessary mechanisms to assist the affected populations, especially the most vulnerable in society – women, children and the elderly;
3. **Highlights** the need to develop Multi-Hazard Early Warning and Early Action Systems, including the development of inter-operational situation rooms at continental, regional and national levels which would enable timely interventions to address the diverse disaster risks, climate change-related impacts and their consequences on peoples' lives;
4. **Encourages** Member States to consider adopting policies that incorporate disaster risk reduction in all development projects to prevent new risks, reduce existing risks and build resilience; and to exchange information in the context of activating early warning mechanisms;
5. **Underscores** the necessity to implement sufficient and comprehensive impact assessment studies for development projects to alleviate any possible negative impacts that can compound these caused by natural disasters;
6. **Stresses** the need to expedite the development of Disaster Risk Management policies, strategies and establishment of institutional mechanisms , based on integrated and multi-hazardous approach
7. **Reiterates** the necessity to adhere to the African Common Position on Climate Change, with its emphasis on Climate Finance Ambition and operationalization of the Global Goal on Adaptation with a view to invest in adaptation, disaster risk preparedness and building resilience;
8. **Emphasizes** the need to dedicate sufficient budgetary allocations to prevention, reduction and management of disasters, including on research, risk information and management;
9. **Underlines** the importance of enhanced coordination amongst AU Departments and Programmes, including the AU humanitarian response mechanism, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa-CDC), AU Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (AU-PCRD), Disaster Risk Reduction Unit at Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) and African Risk Capacity, amongst others, for better output and outcome;

10. **Further underlines** the need for a nexus between the humanitarian emergency response programmes and Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) programmes in cases where the humanitarian emergency situation derives from an armed conflict situation;
11. **Reiterate the imperative** of strengthening the role of Member States in humanitarian action, primarily building and maintaining predictable, preventive, response and resilience capabilities,
12. **Emphasizes** the urgency for the AU, in close cooperation with the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms and in line with the principle of African solutions to African problems, to marshal its resources and upscale its continental and regional efforts to decisively strengthen its mechanisms for prevention of, response, and build resilience to disasters, and address challenges of forced displacement;
13. **Underscores** the importance of partnerships and close working relationship between the AU Commission with relevant institutions and international partners, including those offering scientific and technical expertise for generating early warning and facilitating prevention, response and recovery efforts;
14. **Requests** the AU Commission to facilitate the development of an overarching and comprehensive COVID-19 Recovery Framework for Africa, encompassing other disasters that have taken place before and within the context of COVID-19;
15. **Reiterates its call** for the need to expedite the operationalization of the African Humanitarian Agency (AfHA) in order to empower and further strengthen Member States' capabilities for prevention, early warning, early response and early post-conflict or post-disasters recovery and reconstruction; in this regard, **encourages** Member States to consider increasing AU Humanitarian Agency Funds, in line with its performance evaluation, to ensure independence and effectiveness of AfHA , as well as to ensure predictable, reliable and sustainable resources to enable the AU to fulfil its humanitarian responsibilities;
16. **Endorses** the proposal of Algeria for the creation of a Continental Civilian Capacity for Disasters Preparedness and Response which will have to draw from national individual capacities in order to provide timely assistance to disaster stricken countries in the Continent and **requests** the AU Commission to prepare the modalities for its establishment;
17. **Looks forward** to the convening of a humanitarian summit and a pledging conference in 2021/22 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, aimed at mobilizing continental and international support and resources, as well as deriving multiple approaches to address continental growing humanitarian needs, implement recovery programmes for displaced population, food and nutrition of affected population;
18. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.