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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 679TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA 13 APRIL 2017

PSC/PR/COMM(DCLXXIX)

COMMUNIQUE

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 679th meeting held on 13 April 2017, adopted the following decision on the draft Strategic Concept of Operations (CONOPs) of the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel:

Council:

1. **Takes note** of the briefing made by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, on the situation in Mali and in the Sahel region in general and the regional and international efforts in fighting against terrorism in the region. Council **also takes note** of the statement made by Mr Abdoulaye Diop, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, in his capacity as Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the G5 Sahel, as well as of the presentation of the draft Strategic Concept of Operations (CONOPs) of the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel made by the Chair of the Defense and Security Committee of the G5 Sahel. Council **takes further note** of the statements made by the representatives of the United Nations, the European Union and Senegal, in its capacity as African Member of the United Nations Security Council,;
2. **Recalls** the relevant provisions of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, in particular in its Article 16, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding of 2008 between the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) the Regional Mechanisms (RMs) for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, which constitute the basis of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA);
3. **Recalls also** its previous decisions on the situation in Mali and the Sahel region, in particular the Communique PSC/AHG/COMM/2. (CCCLIII) adopted at its 353th meeting, held on 25 January 2013, in which it requested the immediate neighbours of Mali to provide the necessary support in terms of intelligence and any other assistance to Mali and encouraged the Commission to facilitate the coordination and strengthen the effectiveness of the border monitoring measures. Council **further recalls** the communique PSC/AHG/comm. (CDLV) adopted at its meeting, at the level of Heads of State and Government level, held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 2 September 2014. In this regard, Council **reaffirms** the Declaration adopted in Nouakchott, on 18 December 2014, by the Summit of the Member countries of the Nouakchott Process for the Enhancement of security Cooperation and the Operationalisation of the APSA in the Sahelo-Saharan region, as well as the Conclusions of the first meeting of the Defense Ministers of the member countries of the Nouakchott Process, held in Bamako, on 4 September 2015, which decided to establish the Joint patrols and Mixed units aimed at securing the borders and the an Intervention Force to combat terrorism in northern Mali. Council **also recalls** the Convention establishing the G5 Sahel, signed on 19 December 2014 in Nouakchott, Mauritania.
4. **Reaffirms** its full support to the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and **renews its support** to the Malian parties in their efforts to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement, despite a number of challenges facing by the process. Council **expresses** its appreciation to President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, for his unflinching commitment to peace and reconciliation in Mali. In this regard, Council **welcomes** the progress made in the implementation of the Agreement, in particular the establishment of the Interim Authorities in Three of the five regions in Northern Mali and the convening of the Conference of National Accord. Council **further stresses the need** for the parties in Mali to redouble efforts with a view to significantly accelerating the implementation process of the Agreement, noting that the delays accumulated so far in the process are detrimental to the common efforts to further isolate the armed terrorist groups, the only beneficiaries of a stalemate in the peace process;

5. **Expresses its deep concern about** the escalation of terrorist attacks not only in northern Mali, but also in the central part of the country, as well as in other countries of the region, particularly in northern Burkina Faso and the western part of Niger. Council **reiterates its firm condemnation** of all terrorist acts targeting innocent civilians, the Malian forces and the international forces present in Mali, in particular those of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA);

6. **Expresses its support** to MINUSMA for its efforts, as well as its appreciation to the Troop contributing countries (TCCs), for the huge sacrifices made in the fulfilment of its mandate under UNSC Resolution 2295(2016), despite the challenges linked to the particularly difficult environment as well as the lack of human and material resources faced by the Mission;

7. **Stresses the imperative need** to build the capabilities of the Defense and Security Forces of Mali, both in terms of training and equipment, with a view to shouldering better the national efforts in the fight against terrorism and transnational organised crime, in particular in Northern Mali, and to contributing better in future regional and international efforts for peace and security;

8. **Welcomes** the efforts made by the countries of the region within the framework of the Nouakchott Process, as well as the G5 Sahel, in the fight against terrorism and transnational organised crime. In this regard, Council **stresses once again** the need to enhance coordination of all initiatives to promote peace, security and stability in the Sahelo-Saharan region;

9. **Pays tribute** to the Heads of State of the member countries of the G5 Sahel Group, namely Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad, for their constant commitment, solidarity and sacrifices, with a view to promoting peace and security in this part of the Sahel. In this regard, Council **notes with appreciation** the arrangements that the countries of the G5 Sahel, with the support of the partners, are putting in place, within the framework of efforts aimed at pooling of resources for greater efficiency in the fight against terrorism, violent extremism and transnational crime.

10. **Takes note** in particular of Resolution 00-01, adopted in Bamako, on 6 February 2017, by the Heads of State of the G5 Sahel, at their ordinary Summit, in which, they decided to immediately establish the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel, as well as the final communique of the Extraordinary meeting of the Defense and Security Committee of the G5 Sahel, held on 8 March 2017, in Bamako;

11. **Decides**, in support of the efforts of the Member States of the G5 Sahel and, in response to the request made by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the G5 Sahel Group on the basis of the above mentioned Resolution, on the following:

(i) takes note of the Strategic Concept of Operations (CONOPS) of the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel,

(ii) endorses the STRATEGIC CONOPS and authorises the deployment of the Joint Force of the G5 for an initial period of twelve (12) months renewable and a strength of up to 5,000 personnel, including military, civilian and police components, and others, with the following aspects to be taken into account:

a) participation of civilian and police elements in the mission tasked to deal in particular with aspects relating to respect for human rights and International Humanitarian Law, as well as the protection of civilians;

- b) specify the relationships of mutual support between the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel, the MINUSMA and other international forces present in the region,
- c) make reference to the relevant provisions of the Protocol Relating to the establishment of the PSC and APSA, as well as the AU Strategy for the Sahel Region, which determined the framework within which the Joint Force is established ;
- d) the development of the detailed implementation plan of the CONOPS, with a general framework of cooperation with the non-member countries of the G5-Sahel, particularly those of the Nouakchott Process, in order to enable the expansion of and support to the action of the G5-Sahel Member States in the corridors outside the jurisdiction of the G5 Sahel.

111) The G5 Sahel Joint Force will be deployed to implement the following mandate:

- Combat terrorism, drug trafficking and human trafficking in order to create a secure environment by eradicating the actions of the Terrorist Armed Groups and other organized criminal groups, with a view to restoring security and peace in accordance with international law;
- Contributing as necessary to the restoration of state authority and the return of displaced persons and refugees;
- Facilitate humanitarian operations and the delivery of aid to the affected populations to the maximum extent possible;
- Contribute to the implementation of development actions in the space of the G5 Sahel.

12. **Urges** the UN Security Council, upon receipt of this Communique and the CONOPS referred to in paragraph 11 above, to adopt urgently a decision, which, in conformity with the request made by the Member States of the G5 Sahel: (i) approves the deployment of the Joint Force (ii) authorise the Secretary General to identify the modalities of sustainable and predictable financial and logistical support to be provided to the Force, including through MINUSMA and (iii) calls for the mobilisation of international support for the Joint Force of the G5 Sahel and other related initiatives in the fight against terrorism, violent extremism and transnational organised crime in the Sahel;

13. **Commends** the bilateral and multilateral partners, for the continued assistance provided to the countries of the region and **encourages** them to increase their support. Council **calls upon** the AU

Member States and the other members of the international community to provide all the necessary support to the efforts of the Member States of the G5 Sahel, including financial and logistical assistance, equipment, as well as an enhanced support in the area of timely shared intelligence, in order to facilitate the speedy and full operationalization of the Joint Force. Council **requests** the Commission to extend the necessary support to Secretariat of the G5 Sahel, towards the holding of a Donors Conference that it intends to organise ;

14. **Urges** the Commission to provide the necessary technical support to the Secretariat of the G5 Sahel to expedite the finalisation of the Strategic CONOPs implementation plan and other relevant documents, with a view to facilitating the deployment, as soon as possible, and the management of the G5 Sahel Joint Force;
15. **Requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to transmit the present communique to the UN Security Council and to other partners of the AU, to secure their support and action, as necessary ;
16. **Also requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to provide regular updates to Council, on a quarterly basis, on the status of implementation of the present communique ;
17. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.