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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 834TH MEETING
21 MARCH 2019
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCCXXXIV)

COMMUNIQUE

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 834th meeting held on 21 March 2019, discussed the nexus between maritime security, safety and development of sustainable blue economy in Africa and adopted the following decision:

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the opening remarks made by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya to the African Union, H.E. Ambassador Catherine Muigai Mwangi, in her capacity as the PSC Chairperson for the month of March 2019. Council **also takes note** of the statement made by Honorable Ababu Namwamba, the State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya, as well as of statements made by the representatives of Member States, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Canada, Norway, European Union and the United Nations (UN);
2. **Recalls** United Nations Sustainable Development Goal Number 14, which commits states to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development. Council **also recalls** 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime (2050 AIM) Strategy and its Plan of Action adopted by the 22nd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in January 2014, and Assembly Decision Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.I (VI) adopted by the AU Extraordinary Summit, held on 15 October 2016, in Lome, Togo, which adopted the Charter on Maritime Safety and Security and Development in Africa (Lome Charter). Council **further recalls** all its previous decisions and pronouncements on Africa's Blue Economy, in particular, Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCLXXXII)], adopted at its 682nd meeting held on 25 April 2017;
3. **Reiterates** that Africa's diverse blue economy is one of the potential keys to the Continent's sustainable development and integration. In this regard Council **underlines the importance** of effective management of Africa's Blue Economy, in order to ensure that it significantly contributes towards promoting sustainable development, creates employment and improves the general well-being of the African people;
4. **Emphasizes** the close link between peace, security and development with regard to the maritime domain, as integral elements for Africa's overall economic growth and integration process. In this respect, Council **reiterates the importance** of the Lome Charter as an African instrument for promoting peace, security and safety in Africa's maritime domain, which are the necessary preconditions for the successful development and growth of the blue economy for the benefit of the continent and its people;
5. **Expresses deep concern** over the persistence of threats to safety and security in the maritime domain, including climate change and harmful human activities such as piracy, armed robbery at sea, illegal and unregulated fishing, which depletes marine resources, pollution/dumping of toxic waste, smuggling of goods and people, illegal migrants and terrorism.

In this regard, Council **underscores the importance** of developing security measures for effectively

promoting a secure marine domain, with a view to ensuring long term sustainable use of the marine resources, as well as adding more value to the Continent's blue economy in terms of sustainable fishing, trade, transport, tourism and exploration of marine resources such as offshore oil and geo-thermal power, including natural gas;

6. **Underlines the importance** for Member States to treat maritime security as a transnational issue, which requires collective security efforts that should also bring on board, land-locked countries. In this regard, Council **encourages** Member States to further enhance their collaboration and to share intelligence particularly oceanographic data, which is critical in effectively addressing any threats to peace and security particularly in the marine domain;

7. **Also encourages** Member States to always find peaceful solutions to any disputes they may have, particularly with regard to use of shared water bodies and the demarcation of their borders. In the same context, Council **further encourages** Member States to always prioritize the use of bilateral and regional mechanisms and institutions, in line with the relevant international instruments, in resolving maritime disputes and challenges within the context of African solutions to African problems;

8. **Stresses the need** to expand the domain blue economy to include inland water bodies such as rivers, dams and lakes, with a view to ensuring that all Member States participate in, and benefit from the sustainable management of the Continent's blue economy;

9. **Commends** the Government of the Republic of Kenya for convening and hosting the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference that was held in Nairobi, from 26 to 28 November 2019. Council **also commends** the Governments of Canada and of Japan in their capacity as co-hosts of the Conference;

10. **Also commends** President Faure Essozimna Gnassingbe of the Republic of Togo in his capacity as the AU Champion for issues relating to maritime safety and security for his tireless efforts towards the promotion of maritime security and safety in Africa, as a contribution to enhance peace and security in the continent. Council **further commends** President Danny Faure of the Republic of Seychelles, in his capacity as AU's Blue Economy Champion;

11. **Underlines the importance** of developing policies for governance of oceans and seas in accordance to Africa's Agenda 2063, as well as the need for strong regulatory frameworks and their enforcement. In the same context, Council **underscores the need** for harmonization of all legislation/normative instruments relating to the blue economy, and the need for effective implementation of all existing regional and international instruments and regimes relating to the marine domain;

12. **Underlines the importance** of full implementation of the AU-2050 Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy, the Revised African Maritime Transport Charter and the AU-Lome Charter on Maritime Security, Safety and Development that will help to solve problems of illegal and unregulated fishing;

13. **Commends** all Member States which have signed and ratified the Lome Charter and **underlines** the need for all the other Member States to also accede to the Charter. In the same context, Council **requests** the Commission to expedite the finalization of the draft annexes to the Charter;

14. **Further commends** the efforts being deployed by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the Gulf of Guinea, within the framework of the Yaounde Maritime Security Architecture. Council **underscores** the importance of capacity building and financial support to the Member States and, in this regard, **underscores** the need for a specific AU budget for the development of blue economy;
15. **Commends** the United Nations and all the other partners for their continued support in enhancing African maritime security, safety, blue economy development and governance as well as marine biodiversity protection and **encourages** them to ensure coordination of their support. In the same context, Council **welcomes** the outcomes of the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference held in Nairobi from 26-28 November, 2018, and also the major maritime security global financial and technical commitments made by various countries and institutions including Canada, Norway, Sweden, UK, International Maritime Organization and Ocean Foundation;
16. **Looks forward** to receiving the outcomes of the next meeting to be held in Maputo, Mozambique, in May 2019;
17. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.