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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 879TH MEETING
11 SEPTEMBER 2019
ADDIS ABABA

PSC/PR/COMM.2 (DCCCLXXIX)

COMMUNIQUE

Adopted by the Peace and Security Council during its 879th meeting held on 11 September 2019 on its field mission report to The Gambia which took place from 28 to 31 July 2019.

The Peace and Security Council,

Noting the statement made by the permanent representative of The Gambia, Ambassador Sulayman Alieu Jack on the post-conflict situation in The Gambia;

Recalling its previous pronouncements on the situation in The Gambia, in particular Communique [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCXCIV)] adopted at its 694th meeting held in Addis Ababa on 15 June 2017, in which Council requested the AU Commission to provide all necessary support for Security Sector Reform in The Gambia;

Expressing solidarity with the Government and the people of The Gambia, and **reaffirming** its commitment and readiness to continue supporting the people of The Gambia in addressing the challenges facing their country, in line with the relevant AU instruments and principles.

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

1. **Commends** the Government of The Gambia for the commitment to implement the reforms and for the progress being registered and **encourages** the Government to expedite the necessary decision-making processes, in order to facilitate timeous implementation of the various reforms; in this regard, **reiterates** its commitment to continue to support efforts aimed at expediting the implementation of all transition tasks, particularly the various reforms;
2. **Also commends** the Government of The Gambia for its relentless efforts towards consolidating democracy in the country, among others through the current reforms process, which will significantly contribute towards promoting stability, as well as economic growth and prosperity in the country;
3. **Encourages** the Government to draw lessons from the recent political history of the country and to rebuild confidence among political actors, without which any envisaged reform to stabilize the country might not generate appropriate expected results;
4. **Commends** the Economic Community for West African States (ECOWAS) for its continued support to the overall reforms and stabilization efforts being deployed by the Government of The Gambia, particularly in the context of Security Sector Reform (SSR);
5. **Underscores** the need for civil service reforms, in order to enhance the capacity of the Government to more effectively discharge its mandate; furthermore, **encourages** the Government to take full ownership of, and lead role in, the SSR, among others, through creating specialized and fully capacitated steering committees based on needs expressed by different national security institutions;
6. **Encourages** the Government of The Gambia to fast track decision-making process on SSR issues, including the production of the Cabinet Paper and a Paper on the status of the Office of the National Security pending the passing of the National Security Council Act that was drafted by the AU Military

Advisors now embedded in the Office National Security;

7. **Underscores** the importance for mainstreaming gender and the youth, as well as to include a reasonable percentage of women in the reforms process, in order to create the opportunity for effective participation of women and the youth and as a mechanism to manage the legitimate expectations of the youth;

8. **Appeals** to all political parties and other Gambian stakeholders to prioritize national interests above all else and de-escalate the prevailing tensions through a genuine dialogue process, and to fully participate in the reforms process for the betterment of their country;

9. **Underlines** the need for the Government to build the capacity of its security institutions, in order to enable them to more effectively discharge their constitutional mandate or responsibility of maintaining national security when ECOMIG eventually withdraws from The Gambia in March 2020; in this regard, **commends** the ECOMIG for the important role played in stabilising the country and **emphasizes** that the withdrawal of ECOMIG should be conditions- based and done in a manner that will preserves the gains recorded so far and that it will not result in a security vacuum in the country;

10. **Underscores** the critical role of the TRRC in The Gambia that its noble process can potentially facilitate the country's transition from its past; in this context, **requests** Chairperson of the Commission to mandate the newly established AU Development Agency, formerly NEPAD, to facilitate the mobilization of necessary financial resources from within the Continent, including from the African Development Bank and from some key bilateral partners, in order to support this critical process, with a view to pave way for proper national reconciliation and healing in The Gambia;

11. **Commends** all international partners for their continued support to The Gambia and **urges** them to redeem the pledges they made during the Brussels Donors Conference for The Gambia; further **urges** all partners to continue extending their support to the Government of The Gambia in a coordinated manner, in line with the priorities identified by The Gambia and ensure national ownership for the successful implementation of all reforms;

12. **Acknowledges** the positive role played by the AU Technical Support Team to the Gambia (AUTSTG) in the reforms process in The Gambia and take note with concern over the financial challenges if encounter in executing its mandate; in this regard, **requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to urgently mobilize sustainable financial resources for the activities of the AUTSTG;

13. **Adopts** the report of its field mission to The Gambia during the period, from 28 to 31 July 2019, with its recommendations and **requests** the AU Commission to dispatch it to all stakeholders for the implementation of the recommendations;

14. **Expresses its gratitude** to the people and Government of The Gambia, the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights and the AUTSTG for the support accorded to the PSC delegation during its visit;

15. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the situation in The Gambia.