

AFRICAN UNION

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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 915TH MEETING 9 MARCH 2020 ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM. (CMXV)

COMMUNIQUE

Adopted by the Peace and Security Council at its 915th meeting held on 9 March 2020, on the situation in the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak,

The Peace and Security Council,

Mindful of the declaration, on 30 January 2020, by the World Health Organization, of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) and its existential threat to human life, as well as its potentially devastating consequences on macro-economic fabric throughout the African Continent; **also mindful** of the fact that COVID-19 situation continues to evolve;

Welcoming the Communique adopted by the emergency meeting of African Ministers of Health on the Coronavirus Disease Outbreak, held on 22 February 2020, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia;

Noting the opening statements by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, H.E. Ambassador Crisantos Obama Ondo, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of March 2020, and the briefing made by the Deputy Director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), Dr. Ahmed Ogwel Ouma;

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

1. **Commends** the Africa CDC for the relentless efforts being deployed in response to the outbreak of COVID-19, and **emphasizes** the importance of constant adjustments/adaptation in response to the evolution of the situation on the ground;
2. **Stresses** the importance of a Continent-wide collective response to the COVID-19 and, in this context, **underlines the importance** of emulating the best practices and lessons learnt from the successful fight against the 2014 - 2016 West Africa Ebola Virus Disease outbreak, including the need to mobilize private sector resources;
3. **Encourages** all Member States, with the support of the Africa CDC, to take necessary measures to prevent and to contain the spread of COVID-19, including ensuring appropriate measure in public gathering places, such as schools and churches, as well as to have, at the local and national level, the capacity to test COVID-19, as well as to further enhance the general capacity of their national health infrastructure;
4. **Underlines the urgent need** to put in place an effective communication strategy and, in this context, **requests** the Africa CDC to effectively engage all media platforms, with a view to ensuring real time transmission of information relating to COVID-19, as well as to fight misinformation, which is exacerbating misconceptions and generating panic;

5. **Appeals** to the private sector and the international partners for financial and material support and, in this context, **underscores** the importance of redoubling efforts in mobilizing the required financial, material and human resources, in order to enable the Africa CDC to sustain its current operations and to be more effective in responding to COVID-19, and to this end,
6. **Requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to champion adequate responses to the COVID-19 outbreak, including through playing a lead role in mobilizing the resources required to effectively combat the COVID-19 scourge; **encourages** the Chairperson of the Commission to engage private sectors for their necessary support in responding to COVID-19;
7. **Also requests** the Africa CDC to immediately submit a supplementary budget to the relevant AU policy organs for approval, to allow the Africa CDC to continue with its activities in responding to COVID-19 outbreak in the Continent.
8. **Also underscores the urgent need** for the Africa CDC to brief the Permanent Representative Committee (PRC), in close collaboration with the authorities of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, in its capacity as country hosting the AU Headquarters, on the evolution of the situation and on the measures being deployed to effectively prevent and contain the spread of COVID-19 throughout the Continent;
9. **Requests** the Africa CDC to ensure that all AU meetings, particularly those being convened at the AU Commission Headquarters, are properly serviced to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and, in this respect, **requests** the Commission to expedite the finalization of the Guidelines on Gatherings and Meetings, and to urgently disseminate them to the Member States in all official AU working languages;
10. **Further requests** the Africa CDC to continue to provide regular briefings to Council on the fight against COVID 19 in the Continent;
11. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.