

AFRICAN UNION

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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 917TH MEETING

9 APRIL 2020

ADDIS ABABA

PSC/PR/COMM. 2(CMXVII)

COMMUNIQUE

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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) at its 917th meeting held on 9 April 2020, on the humanitarian situation in the countries affected by desert locusts invasion in Africa,

The Peace and Security Council,

Noting the statements submitted by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya to the African Union, H.E. Ambassador Catherine Muigai Mwangi, in her capacity as the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of April 2020, and the briefing note submitted by the Executive Secretary of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), H.E. Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu Negewo;

Recalling the Inaugural Joint Ministerial Meeting of the East African Countries and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) held in Addis Ababa, on 7 February 2020, which raised the awareness on the threat posed by the invasion of desert locusts in the Continent;

Mindful of Aspiration 1 of the AU Agenda 2063, for a prosperous Africa, which calls for, among others, putting measures in place to sustainably manage the Continent's rich biodiversity, forests, land and waters, and using mainly adaptive measures to address climate change risks;

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

1. **Notes with deep concern** the desert locust upsurge since June 2019 and the continued invasion affecting several countries in the Continent including Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya and Uganda, which has resulted an unprecedented threat to food and economic security;
2. **Warns** of a predictable invasion also targeting the western and northern regions of the continent, especially given that the rain season in the western and Sahel regions, during the third quarter of the year, constitutes conducive conditions for the reproduction of locusts.
3. **Also expresses deep concern** over the potential of the desert locust infestation to become a continental plague with debilitating impact on the humanitarian situation which could result in more suffering, displacement, and possible inter-communal violence particularly, among farmers and pastoralists; and in this regard, **warns** that failure to control the current infestations risks amplifying and spreading the infestation to the whole Continent;
4. **Also stresses** the importance of a prompt reaction to the arrival of the first locust infestations in order to reduce their level of propagation and reproduction, thereby helping to reduce their environmental and economic risks in Africa;
5. **Emphasises** the imperative of sustained measures to curb the spread and increase of the locusts infestation through effective surveillance and control operations using both aerial and ground application of pesticides;

6. **Commends** the leadership of IGAD for the relentless efforts deployed in response to the desert locust infestation in the region, including provision of early warning forecasts, in order to assist the Member States in their efforts to fight and curb the spread of the locusts and mitigate the impact on agriculture and food security in general;
7. **Welcomes** the establishment of an IGAD Special Taskforce to consolidate joint response efforts with the Desert Locust Control Organisation for East Africa (DLCO), Country Risk Services (CRS) and FAO, as well as developing the Desert Locust Impact Assessment Methodology and Tools; in this respect, Council **looks forward** to this process being facilitated by the Food Security and Nutrition Working Group (FSNWG), which is based at the IGAD Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC);
8. **Also welcomes** the work done by the Desert Locust Control Committee in North and West Africa (CLCPNOA) to tackle this scourge in terms of preventive measures and research efforts for sustainable solutions.
9. **Strongly encourages** Member States to further enhance collaboration towards eradicating the desert locust infestation, among others, through aerial spraying of pesticides in the affected countries, in order to prevent a regional and possibly a continental plague with negative impact on agriculture, food and economic security;
10. **Encourages** AU Member States and partners to provide support to IGAD and other organs involved in the fight against this scourge in their efforts to address the gaps in food security, as well as in combating and containing the infestation, which should be stopped from becoming a continental plague;
11. **Requests** the Commission to provide technical support to IGAD and to all the actors on the continent in their efforts towards the development of the Desert Locust Impact Assessment Methodology and Tools, in order to facilitate the mapping of appropriate responsive structure and mechanisms to address future locusts infestations in the region and the Continent;
12. **Also requests** the Commission to elaborate a strategy to be applied within the continent to both anticipate and effectively curb the spread of locusts infestation; and
13. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.