

AFRICAN UNION

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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 922ND MEETING

6 MAY 2020

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.(CMXXII)

COMMUNIQUE

Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 922nd meeting held on 6 May 2020, on the spread, control and implications of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Africa,

The Peace and Security Council,

Noting the opening remarks made by the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the AU and PSC Chairperson for the month of May 2020, H.E. Ambassador Professor Mafa Sejanamane, as well as the update on the spread, control and implications of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Africa that was provided by the Director of Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa-CDC), Dr. John Nkengasong;

Deeply concerned about the continued spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in the African Continent and all its attendant peace and security ramifications, as well as socioeconomic impact in the Member States;

Acknowledging the relentless efforts being deployed by the AU Commission through the Africa-CDC, the World Health Organization (WHO), Member States, the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), as well as the private sector, philanthropists and civil society organizations, in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the efforts being deployed by the AU Chairperson and President of the Republic of South Africa H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa;

Also acknowledging the positive results of necessary measures being implemented by Member States to effectively prevent the spread of the pandemic, including testing, contact tracing and treatment of people infected by the COVID-19, as well as lockdowns and enforcement of personal hygiene practices;

Mindful of the importance of ensuring that no efforts are spared in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic until it is completely eradicated from the Continent and the need for Member States to build the necessary resilience and capacity to fight similar future pandemics;

Also mindful of the strategic partnership that exists between the AU and the United Nations, particularly the AU PSC and the UN Security Council (UNSC) in the area of peace and security in Africa, especially the primary responsibility of the Security Council of promoting international peace and security as stipulated in the UN Charter;

Recalling all its previous decisions on COVID-19 pandemic, including Communique [PSC/PR/COMM. (CMXXI)], adopted at its 921st meeting held on 28 April 2020;

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

1. Commends Member States for their relentless efforts in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, including through lockdowns, enforcement of personal hygiene practices, opening up borders and airspaces to facilitate delivery of anti COVID-19 supplies, provisions of humanitarian assistance, as well as for facilitating movement and protection of healthcare workers;

2. **Also commends** the Africa CDC for the sustained provision of technical assistance to Member States in their efforts to contain and defeat the COVID-19 pandemic; **pays tribute** to all healthcare workers for their continued sacrifices, and **encourages** them to persevere until the COVID-19 pandemic is completely eradicated from the Continent;

3. **Further commends** African scientific research institutions at the national, regional and continental levels and African Scientists in general for being in the forefront of the global race to find a cure and a vaccine for the COVID-19 pandemic and **urges** the redoubling of efforts in this direction; **also urges** national governments, the African private sector and other relevant organizations to lend enhanced political, financial and institutional support to the African researchers engaged in the search for a remedy to the global pandemic.

4. **Urges** Member States to be guided by scientific evidence and guidelines of competent national, regional, continental and international health institutions, particularly the Africa CDC and the WHO on all matters relating to COVID-19 vaccines; **further urges** Member States to scale up their efforts in testing, contact tracing and treatment of COVID-19 cases;

5. **Encourages** Member States to ensure that measures being taken against COVID-19 do not compromise or undermine ongoing efforts on preventive and lifesaving programmes, including on malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDs. Council **also encourages** Member States to remain vigilant and to further enhance cross border cooperation and to share health related intelligence, in order to prevent the spread of infections especially in those areas affected by illegal border crossings;

6. **Underscores the importance** for Member States, to continue upholding respect for human rights and individual dignity and, in this context, **urges** them to regularly review and adjust national lockdowns, in order to sustain economic activities and livelihoods, as well as to prevent possible unrest that may be caused by the restrictive measures being implemented in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic;

7. **Underscores the need** for all stakeholders within the Continent to redouble efforts in mobilizing the required resources, particularly sustainable funding, anti-COVID-19 equipment and material, as well as healthcare workers to effectively fight and defeat the pandemic. In the same context, Council **continues to urge** all Member States, which have not yet done so, to make their contributions to the AU COVID-19 Fund;

8. **Stresses** that COVID-19 pandemic constitutes an existential threat to human life, peace and security throughout the world and, in this regard, **calls on** the UN Security Council, in line with its primary responsibility of promoting international peace and security, to also contribute to the efforts both, in Africa and at the global level, particularly through the adoption of necessary measures towards the current fight against the COVID-19 pandemic;

9. **Requests** the Africa CDC, working in close collaboration with Member States and the WHO, as well other relevant stakeholders, to urgently develop measures for mobilization of support to ensure that those parts of the Continent with higher rates of COVID-19 infections are given commensurate attention and support, in order to quickly contain and prevent further spread of the pandemic, as well as to preserve the gains already achieved; and

10. ***Decides*** to remain actively seized of the matter