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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 1032ND MEETING 16 SEPTEMBER 2021 ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.1032(2021)

COMMUNIQUE

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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1032nd meeting held on 16 September 2021 on the Continental and Regional activities in the area of Mine Action:

The Peace and Security Council,

Recalling its previous decisions and pronouncements on Mine Action and related activities, particularly Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCCXXXVII)] adopted at its 837th meeting held on 4 April 2019, Press Statement [PSC/PR/BR.(DCCLXXI 11)] adopted at its 763rd meeting held on 10 April 2018, and Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.(DLXXXIV)] adopted at its 584th meeting held on 29 March 2016; **also recalling** the AU Mine Action and Explosives Remnants of War Strategic Framework;

Faithful to the provisions of Article 7.I(n) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on the promotion and implementation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)/AU, United Nations (UN) and other relevant Conventions and Treaties on arms control and disarmament;

Noting the opening remarks made by H.E Mahamat Ali Hassan, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Chad to the AU and Chairperson of the PSC for September 2021, and the statement by H.E Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security;

Also noting the statements by the representatives of the United Nations Mine Action Services (UNMAS), the European Union Delegation to the AU, as well as the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs).

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

1. **Welcomes** the progress that the affected Member States continue to make in clearing areas under their jurisdiction contaminated by antipersonnel land mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war (ERW);
2. **Expresses deep concern** over the continued threat posed by landmines, ERW and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), including the devastating consequences they have on civilians, post-conflict reconstruction, integration efforts and socio-economic development, and also **expresses concern** over the negative impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on mine action;
3. **Condemns in the strongest terms** the continued laying of anti-personnel landmines in some areas in the Continent by some actors, as well as terrorist groups, which contaminate territories and jeopardise the lives of civilians in addition to the debilitating impact on peace support operations and stabilization efforts; and **underscores** the expensive, dangerous, labour intensive and slow process in demining, including the technical expertise and equipment;
4. **Deplores** the devastating effects of landmines, especially the appalling injuries to innocent civilians resulting in humanitarian suffering and rendering of mined areas unusable, thereby perpetuating poverty in the affected areas for decades after armed conflicts;
5. **Stresses** the continued need to provide the necessary assistance to survivors, in line with the relevant instruments, to enable them to support themselves;

6. **Emphasizes** the importance of sustained awareness programmes to ensure that affected communities are sensitized on the dangers of landmines, ERW and IEDs; and in this regard, **underlines** the need to involve relevant civil society organizations, media and community leaders, among others, to mitigate the dangers associated with these deadly devices and save lives;
7. **Highlights** the continued relevance of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), and in this regard, **commends** Member States who have acceded to these instruments and **encourages** those that have not yet done so, to ratify, sign and domesticate these instruments, within the spirit of the relevant decisions by AU Policy Organs;
8. **Underscores** the importance of experience sharing between member states, as well as capacity building of national institutions; and in this regard, **commends** those Member States that provide technical support programmes to build national African capacities;
9. **Reaffirms** the primary role of Member States in mine action and the supporting role by the AU Commission, the UN and other partners, as well as the coordination role by mine action services in Africa; and in this regard, **encourages** continued efforts, particularly including mine action in the context of operational planning for peace support operations;
10. **Reiterates its call** for concerted efforts by the affected Member States to comply with their respective International Treaty and regional obligations related to mine action and clearance pursuant to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention by 2025; in this regard, **calls upon** the RECs/RMs, the AU Commission, the UN and international partners to strengthen cooperation and coordination in providing the needed support;
11. **Encourages** Member States to redouble efforts to prevent and counter the development and use of IEDs, and for them to enhance intra-African cooperation, share the required technical expertise and support, including equipment; and **urges** Member States to work closely with the RECs/RMs and the AU Commission and regional frameworks, including cross-border cooperation frameworks, to elaborate national frameworks that should guide all interventions in mine action;
12. **Requests** the AU Commission to include and integrate mines actions in the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030, as all efforts to get rid of mines is as vital as silencing other forms of arms;
13. **Mandates** the AU Commission to organize, as soon practicable, a session aimed at sharing information, lessons arising, and experiences garnered in the area of mine action aimed at formulating and charting strategies to ensure that Member States achieve the stated deadlines of 2025 on clearing mines;
14. **Requests** the AU Commission to conclude the Draft AU IED Mitigation Strategy and submit it to Council for consideration;
15. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.