

**AFRICAN UNION**

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**PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 975<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**27 JANUARY 2021**

**PSC/PR/COMM. (CMLXXV)**

## COMMUNIQUE

**Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 975<sup>1\*1</sup> meeting held on 27 January 2021, on Peace, Security and Development: taking security challenges into account in financing development:**

The Peace and Security Council,

**Noting** the opening remarks made by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Senegal to the AU and Chairperson of the PSC for January 2021, H.E. Ambassador Baye Moctar Diop, and the statement by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Smail Chergui; **also noting** the presentations made by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) and Head of the United Nations Office to the AU, H.E. Madam Hanna Tetteh; UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, Madam Vera Songwe; Chief Country Economist of the African Development Bank in Ethiopia, Dr Paul Mpuga; and Africa Programme Director of the International Crisis Group, Dr Comfort Ero;

**Mindful** that the scourge of conflicts in Africa constitutes a significant impediment to socio-economic development;

**Recalling** the relevant provisions of the Constitutive Act of the AU, its objectives and principles under Articles 3 and 4;

**Also recalling** the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Solemn Declaration which marked the rededication of Africa towards the attainment of the Pan Africanist Vision of an "integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena"; and

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

1. **Underlines** the inextricable interdependence between peace, security and socioeconomic development, which thus requires a comprehensive and integrated approach in resolving, managing and transforming conflicts in Africa; and in this regard, **emphasizes** the importance of addressing the structural root causes of armed conflict including, economic and social development, challenges related to economic faltering, and unequal distribution of wealth, social inequality and marginalization, human rights abuses, repression, corruption,, to prevent the escalation of armed conflict and relapse to violence, as well as promoting peace, social justice and inclusive dialogue to consolidate durable peace;

2. **Expresses deep concerns** on the growing multi-dimensional threats to peace, security and development in Africa which include, among others, climate change, the novel corona-virus (COVID-19) pandemic and other health emergencies, terrorism and violent extremism causing instability, deaths and destruction to infrastructure and livelihood of citizens, and undermining ongoing AU efforts to promote and achieve peace in fulfilment of the aspirations espoused in the AU's flagship project of "Silencing the Guns" and the AU theme for 2020, and the broader developmental blueprint of Agenda 2063; **also expresses deep concerns** on the growing linkages between terrorism and transnational organized crime, including money laundering, and illicit financial flows, as well as the role of external actors sponsoring terrorism; and in this regard **calls** for the full implementation of the AU Master Roadmap on the Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns to address challenges related to peace and security;

3. **Further expresses concerns** on the devastation and economic crisis caused by the current COVID-19 pandemic to the Member States, particularly those which are doubly affected by the scourge of conflict, terrorism and violent extremism, economic sanctions, displacement owing to climate change and natural disasters; in this context, **appeals** to the international community for debt relief, cancellation and restructuring, aimed at increasing liquidity taking into consideration unique circumstances of the Member States who have lost revenues and existing reserves to respond to COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting socio-economic challenges; and **calls** for the unconditional lifting of economic sanctions imposed on African countries to pave the way for economic recovery;
4. **Expresses grave concerns** on the observed trends of 'vaccine nationalism' threatening to exclude low-income countries thus endangering socio-economic recovery of affected Member States; in this regard, **calls** for universal, fair and equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines to ensure that all countries are accommodated; and **urges** that support be provided to middle-income economies in the Continent who are hosting many economic migrants;
5. **Underscores** the need for respecting the principle of permanent sovereignty over natural resource wealth and for the resource-rich Member States to manage the exploration and exploitation of natural resources transparently, responsibly, prudently and in an accountable manner to ensure that the broader citizenry benefit from the wealth gained from natural resources; **stresses** the need to address the growing interlinkage between non-state armed actors including terrorist groups and the criminal economy involving natural resources, and **calls** for concerted and coordinated regional, continental and international efforts to combat illegal exploration and exploitation of natural resources to ensure that the natural wealth is used, without prejudice to national sovereignty, enhance the delivery of essential services and underpins socio-economic development of concerned Member States;
6. **Emphasizes** the significance of national ownership and leadership, as well as inclusive participation of all stakeholders including women, youth, disenfranchised communities, civil society and the private sector in efforts of preventing conflicts and crises, transforming existing conflicts and paving the way for reconstruction and socio-economic development; and in this aspect, **urges** all the stakeholders to strengthen institutions, deepen democracy and private-public partnership to strengthen social cohesion;
7. **Underlines** the need for strengthening coordination amongst Member States, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), donor communities, development partners and the international community in redoubling efforts to accompany countries in conflict and those transitioning to peace to address existing and potential root causes of conflict, as well as to identify, initiate and promote post-conflict projects aimed at stabilization, reconstruction and socio-economic development;
8. **Underscores** the need for capacitation and full operationalization of the AU Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) centre in Cairo, Egypt and **appeals** to the Member States to ensure that the Cairo centre is well capacitated through predictable and sustainable funding to enable it to execute its mandate effectively;
9. **Encourages** the AU Commission, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), to provide technical support to the Member States on strategies to overcome socio-economic challenges imposed by COVID-19 pandemic and other threats to peace, security and development, and to address human security broadly including food, health, social, economic and environmental security as a foundation for personal, community, national, regional and continental security; **also encourages** using existing technology such as telecommunications to merge the informal economy into the formal sector in order to revive national economies and increase employment prospects as well as reduce the high unemployment found in the

Continent which was exacerbated by the pandemic; and **further encourages** continued cooperation bilaterally and multilaterally and strengthening of coordination amongst all the actors in pursuit of achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063;

10. **Emphasizes** the need to capacitate the national armies- and, as necessary without prejudice to national sovereignty reform the security sector and introduce new armament technologies to enable quick responses to the multiple security threats including terrorism, while also supplementing the military approach with preventive diplomacy and all efforts aimed at preventing conflict, peacebuilding and employing the use political solutions to promote and sustain peace;

11. **Applauds** the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on its adoption of the Action Plan for 2020 until 2024 aimed at fighting terrorism through the acquisition of military equipment, training and intelligence sharing amongst its member states;

12. **Encourages** internal resource mobilization, pooling of available resources at the regional level to combat terrorism, violent extremism and other common threats to peace, security and development; **underlines** the importance of continuous engagement with different actors including the private sector on strategies and costing of frameworks, as well as sharing experiences and emerging lessons to ensure economic recovery;

13. **Underscores** the imperative of strengthening coordination between existing instruments, the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), the African Union Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), the African Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), working closely with the RECs/RMs to support member states in the fight against common security threats including terrorism, violent extremism and criminal economy;

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