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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 1063RD MEETING 8 FEBRUARY 2022 ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/MIN/COMM.1063 (2022)

COMMUNIQUE

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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1063rd open session held at the Ministerial level on 8 February 2022 on the nexus between Urbanisation, Women, Peace and Security in Africa:

The Peace and Security Council.

Recalling its previous decisions on Women, Peace and Security in Africa and related themes, particularly, Communique [PSC/MIN/COMM.(CMLXXXVII)] adopted at its 987th meeting held at the Ministerial level on 22 March 2021, and Press Statement [PSC/PR/PS.1052(2021)] adopted at its 1052nd open session held on 29 November 2021;

Also recalling Assembly decision [Assembly/AU/Dec.29(11)] on Promoting the Development of Sustainable Cities and Towns in Africa, adopted during the Second Ordinary Session of Assembly of the Union held in Maputo, Mozambique, on 10-12 July 2003, in which the Assembly expressed its determination to reap the potential benefits of cities and towns as centres of economic growth and places of opportunity and prosperity for all African people in the course of economic development and structural transformation;

Mindful of the Executive Council Decision [EX.CL/Dec.933(XXIX)] on the Common African Position on the Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), adopted during the 29th Ordinary Session of Assembly held in Kigali, Rwanda, on 13 to 15 July 2016;

Faithful to the realisation of Aspiration 6 of the AU Agenda 2063 and the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs), particularly Goals 5, 11 and 16, as well as the AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 2018-2028, which, amongst others, have put forth gender equality and gender mainstreaming explicitly as normative and policy imperatives, especially in peace and security structures and processes;

Committed to the implementation of the landmark United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (S/RES/1325) on Women, Peace and Security adopted on 31 October 2000;

Noting the opening remarks by H.E. Ambassador Raychelle Omamo (SC, EGH), Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya and Chairperson of the PSC for February 2022, and the presentation by H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security; **also noting** the statements by H.E. Madam Bineta Diop, AU Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security; H.E. Ms Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and Mr. Mabingue Ngom, Senior Advisor to the Executive Director and Director of the UNFPA Representation Office to AU and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA);

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

1. **Recognises** that the Continent is witnessing remarkable population growth and rapid urbanisation amid other prevailing challenges that includes a mismatch between the supply of services and pace of urbanization, persistent violent conflicts and crises, as well as other threats to peace, security and development; and **highlights** the adverse effects of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on social, economic and political efforts on the Continent;

2. **Commends** Member States for their efforts in addressing and overcoming the challenges posed by rapid urbanisation; and **emphasises** the need for further enhancement of national, regional and continental early warning mechanisms geared towards identifying risks and drivers of conflict in urban areas to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts, and achieve durable peace;

3. **Deplores** the fact that women are disproportionately affected by violent conflict and often fall victim to gender-based violence, forced evictions, and discriminatory inheritance laws and practices; and in this regard, **emphasises** the urgency for all Member States and relevant stakeholders to enhance safety and security in urban areas, and for sustained efforts towards safeguarding women and children and protecting their liberties;

4. **Underscores** that addressing matters related to land, such as access to and land ownership, land-related human rights violations, such as illegal evictions and displacement, is critical to building resilience and achieving durable peace; and in this respect, **emphasises** the need for a participatory process reflecting the strata of society, including women, community-based organisations, traditional authorities, faith-based organisations and other related stakeholders in pursuance of long-lasting solutions having due regard to the vulnerability of women;

5. **Encourages** Member States to redouble efforts to address all structural root causes of conflict, including inequalities and underdevelopment, notably those affecting women and girls on account of social stereotypes; and **urges** Member States to strengthen existing national platforms, and to those who are yet to do so, to establish these platforms in which members of communities, especially women, can register their grievances, perpetrators of impunity are held accountable, and victims are accorded justice;

6. **Decides** on the following actions as critical components for managing urbanisation whilst factoring in the women, peace and security agenda:

- i. The necessity to harness urbanisation for structural transformation and development to realise the aspirations enshrined in Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals, and the importance of sharing experience and technical expertise amongst the Member States;
- ii. The need to elevate urban planning and development to a national security issue and empower women to meaningfully participate in decision making and policy formulation relating to urban planning and development;
- iii. The imperative of integrating a gender-based approach in city policies and planning, and reinforcing the gender dimension into the national technical committees dealing with public services, local governments, housing and urban development, property rights, and secure land tenure;
- iv. The imperative to capacitate local authorities and city management to effectively manage urbanisation taking into account the growing population, deliver public services, and contribute to national development plans to achieve sustained economic growth, as well as enhance the safety and security of women and girls in urban areas including from threats that arise from unregulated urbanization;
- v. The need to expand and support, including through the provision of technical and financial provisions, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) run by women, and encourage the SMMEs to prioritise employing women in Urban Centres to accelerate economic and social empowerment of women;

- vi. The need to enhance and where not available, establish gender champion networks to influence local governments, national decision-makers, and the private sector to invest in research, technology and infrastructure informed by gender analysis to support equitable development of the growing urban population and planned city expansion;
 - vii. The need to ensure that stabilisation efforts and post-conflict reconstruction and development programmes cater to the humanitarian needs of refugees and internally displaced persons, including those who fled to urban areas with particular attention to the needs of women and girls;
 - viii. The importance of ensuring access to affordable energy and expanding the use of renewable energy, including the use of solar panels; and
 - ix. The need to avail adequate resources, including predictable and sustainable funding to address challenges related to rapid urbanisation and the attendant threats of such rapid urbanization to women and girls;
7. **Emphasises** the imperative of a Continental Comprehensive Roadmap on Urbanisation that is gender-sensitive and fully encompasses women's rights, security and liberties; in this regard, **requests** the AU Commission, through the Office of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security and other relevant departments, in collaboration with Member States and RECs/RMs, to develop a Continental Comprehensive Roadmap on Urbanisation that is both security and gender-sensitive and submit to the PSC for consideration;
8. **Underscores** the need to capacitate the Office of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, to enable it to fully discharge its mandate and monitor the implementation of all decisions on Women, Peace and Security;
9. **Requests** the AU Commission, in close coordination with the UN-HABITAT, to continue rendering support to the Member States in their respective national efforts of implementing AU relevant decisions, to address challenges related to urbanisation such as those relating to peaceful coexistence and stability, as well as the safety and security of women and girls; and **appeals** to the Member States to continue to provide the necessary support to the activities of the UN-HABITAT;
10. **Looks forward** to the outcome of the High-Level meeting on the New Urban Agenda planned to take place in New York on 28 April 2022, and **stresses** the importance of ensuring that women's voices are heard articulating the need for security of women and their full participation in urban spaces;
11. **Also looks forward** to the World Urban Forum in Katowice, Poland, to be held in June 2022, and **underlines** the need to develop a Joint Advocacy Strategy between the AU and the UN on enhancing women's participation in urban development and conflict prevention to be presented in this Forum;
12. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.