

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, P.O. Box: 3243 Tel.: (251-11) 5513 822 Fax: (251-11) 5519 321
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
995TH MEETING

13 MAY 2021
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR.(CMXCV)

PRESS STATEMENT

PRESS STATEMENT

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) dedicated its 995th meeting, held on 13 May 2021, to commemoration of the International Day of Living Together in Peace.

Council, recalled Resolution 72/130, adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly on 8 December 2017, proclaiming 16 May of each year as the "International Day of Living Together in Peace" under the efforts of Algeria, on the basis of its national experience in de-radicalization and the fight against extremism.

Council also recalled the principles of the AU as stipulated in Articles (3) and (4) of the AU Constitutive Act, namely, good neighbourliness, territorial integrity, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, peaceful resolution of conflicts and peaceful coexistence, and promotion of the culture of living together in peace at national, regional and continental levels.

Council further recalled its previous decisions on living together in peace, in particular Communique [PSC/PR/COMM.(CMXXVIII)] adopted at its 928th meeting on 27 May 2020 and Press Statement [PSC/PR/BR.(DCCCXCI)] adopted at its 891st meeting held on 5 November 2019.

Council, commended the efforts by Algeria leading to the adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution 72/130 and for the inclusion of the Day of Living Together in Peace, as a standing item in the Indicative Annual Programme of Work of the PSC.

Council reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to work towards the achievement of AU Agenda 2063, Aspiration 4, namely, a peaceful and secure Africa as well as Aspiration 5- "An Africa with a strong cultural identity, a common heritage, and shared values and ethics" and the AU Executive Council decision [CL/Dec.1098(XXXVII)] adopted in October 2020 at its 37th Ordinary Session on the AU theme for the year 2021 "Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers of The Building of Africa We Want".

Mindful of the Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa, 1980–2000, in which the Heads of State and Government of the OAU pledged to "ensure that policy-making adequately reflects Africa's socio-cultural values in order to strengthen our cultural identity", Council emphasized that the Plan of Action was an African testimony of establishing close linkages between arts, culture and heritage and the goal of establishing a united and prosperous Africa, where people live together in peace and harmony.

Council underlined the importance of taking full advantage of the Theme of the AU for the year 2021, to support the call for peace and solidarity among African peoples through the exchange and sharing of common values through arts, culture and heritage, in order to build a more united and harmonious Africa.

Council emphasized the need for the anchoring of Pan-Africanism and the community of history, destiny, identity, heritage, respect for religious diversity and the conscience of African peoples.

Council expressed concern over the persistence of violent conflicts and crises in the Continent, including inter-communal violence, the resurgence of hate speech and crimes, religious intolerance, radicalization and extremism, and the ideology of hatred. In this regard, Council underscored the importance of adhering to the principles of solidarity, respect for cultural diversity and tolerance, inter-religious dialogue and inclusive societies, as well as promoting the role of art and culture in enhancing the culture of peace and tolerance within and between communities.

Council encouraged AU Member States, with the technical support of the AU Commission and the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), to establish components of peace and security, in the various artistic productions and cultural programmes at national, regional and continental levels, with a view to promoting inclusive and peaceful communities in the Continent.

Council stressed the imperative of address the root causes of violent conflict in Africa and all forms of religious, ethnic, racial and cultural marginalization and exclusion and in this context, underlined the leading role of national reconciliation, inter-religious dialogue and transitional justice, as means of appeasement and overcoming challenging phases in communities in order to lay the necessary foundations for sustainable peace and development.

Council underlined the importance of adopting inclusive national policies for addressing situations of exclusion and marginalization in society, in order to strengthen social cohesion and achieve the goal of living together in peace.

Council encouraged Member States to combat illegal exploitation of natural resources, as well as to promote fair and equitable distribution of proceeds from the exploitation of natural resources, as well as to holistically address regional disparities in socio-economic development.

Council also encouraged Member States, which have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfFTA), and the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment, adopted in January 2018, in order to facilitate inter-state trade, as well as African people to people relations in the spirit of Aspiration 5 of the AU Agenda 2063.

Council noted with concern the challenges being faced, not only accessing, but also the delays in the delivery, of COVID-19 vaccines to AU Member States, and called on the international community to ensure fair and equitable access by African countries to the vaccines and stressed that any dysfunction in this context will only further deepen social suffering in Africa and delay the realization of the AU vision of a stable and peaceful Africa.

Council agreed to remain actively seized of the matter.