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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1159TH MEETING (MINISTERIAL LEVEL)

22 JUNE 2023
ADDIS-ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/MIN/COMM.1159 (2023)

COMMUNIQUÉ



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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1159th meeting held at Ministerial level on 22 June 2023, on “Briefing on the Status of Implementation of the Common African Defence and Security Policy and Other Relevant Defence and Security Instruments on the Continent, with Specific Focus on Update on Operationalization of the African Standby Force”.

The Peace and Security Council.

Recalling the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP) adopted by the 2nd Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Sirte, in the Great Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, on 28 February 2004; **also recalling** all relevant AU Assembly Decisions, particularly, Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec.843.(XXXVI)], on the Report of the PSC on the Implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa, adopted by the 36th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government held from 18 to 19 February 2023 in Addis Ababa, and also Decision [(Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1 (XIV)] adopted by the 14th Extra-Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union on 6 December 2020, which declared the African Standby Force fully operational and directed the PSC to utilize its framework in mandating and authorizing AU peace support operations;

Further recalling its previous decisions and pronouncements on the CADSP and on the ASF; particularly Communique [PSC/PR/COMM.1007 (2021)] on the Status Report/ Roadmap to the Full Operationalization of the African Standby Force and the Continental Logistics Base, adopted by the PSC at its 1007th meeting held on 8 July 2021; Communique [PSC/PR/COMM.(CMLX)] on the Establishment of a Special Unit on Counter-Terrorism within the Framework of the ASF, adopted at its 960th meeting held on 28 October 2020; and Communique [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCCLXVIII)] on State of Foreign Military Presence in Africa: Implications on the Implementation of the Common African Defence and Security Policy, adopted at its 868th meeting held on 14 August 2019;

Conscious of the indivisibility of security in Africa, and particularly the fact that the defence and security of one African country is directly linked to that of other African countries;

Noting the opening remarks by Honorable Frederick Shava, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade of the Republic of Zimbabwe and PSC Chairperson for the month of June 2023, the briefing by H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security; and the briefings by the representatives of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms (RMs) namely, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC);

Determined to completely silence the guns in Africa by the year 2030, in order to create conducive conditions for the realization of the AU Vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena; as well as the aspirations of AU Agenda 2063; and

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

1. **Underlines** that the Common African Defence and Security Policy constitutes the bedrock of Africa’s collective defence and security and **welcomes** the progress registered, thus far, in its implementation including through the adoption of various normative frameworks such as the AU

Peace and Security Architecture and the Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2030, among others;

2. **Expresses concern over** the influx of mercenaries and foreign fighters in the Continent, which runs counter to the letter and spirit of the CADSP;
3. **Further expresses concern over** the proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs) across the Continent and **underscores the need** to enhance cooperation in controlling the flow of SALWs, including developing a regional disarmament instrument; and cross-border information and intelligence sharing mechanism;
4. **Reiterates** that the defence and security of all Member States is inextricably interlinked and, in this context, **encourages** Member States to pursue their national security interests in a manner that also reinforces and guarantees the security of their neighbours and the need for Member States to strengthen the development and use of collective security approaches in dealing with common defense and security threats;
5. **Underlines** the need to reinvigorate and operationalize all pillars of the common peace and security architecture, in view of the evolving pattern of threats, and their deplorable humanitarian and structural consequences, which are indicative of the urgent need to act to meet the challenges of peace and security in Africa; in this context, **requests** the AU Commission to continue providing requisite technical support to Member States in implementing the CADSP;
6. **Commends** all RECs/RMs that have already reached Full Operational Capability (FOC) of the African Standby Force and **strongly encourages** those that are yet to reach this status to redouble efforts towards the same end;
7. **Welcomes** the adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the AU Commission and the RECs/RMs adopted by the 15th meeting of the STCDSS, on the roles and responsibilities of the Parties in the planning, deployment, employment and post-employment of the ASF, as well as the adoption of the AU Strategic Framework for Compliance and Accountability in Peace Support Operations;
8. **Underlines the critical role** of the Continental Logistics Base in supporting peace support operations; **emphasizes the urgent need** for expedited implementation of the Decision of the 36th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly on the structure of and funding for the CLB; **requests** Member States to assist in the mobilization of the required financial resources to this end, and **encourages** the RECs/RMs to continue to further strengthen their regional standby capabilities among others by expediting the establishment of their own regional logistics depots (RLDs);
9. **Also requests** the Commission to expedite the assessment exercise of pledged strategic lift aircraft as part of efforts to enhance strategic lift capability and the finalization of the MoUs for the utilization of these assets to enable ASF rapid deployment of troops, reinforcement of troops, casualty evacuations and timely logistic supplies in conflict zones;
10. **Reiterates the importance** of enhanced collaboration and coordination between the Planning Elements (PLANELMs) of the RECs/RMs and the Continental PLANEL, in order to facilitate harmonization of decision-making on the deployment of the ASF based on the principles of subsidiarity, complementarity and comparative advantages;
11. **Encourages** Member States to renew their political will and commitment to the CADSP, and

further encourages them to consider utilizing the ASF for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts on the Continent;

12. **Underscores the need** for a maritime component within the ASF, among others, to facilitate maritime trade and ultimately the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area and in this context, **welcomes** and **looks forward** to the successful conduct of the envisaged ASF continental maritime exercise;

13. Mindful of the growing threat of terrorism and violent extremism in the Continent, **encourages** Member States and RECs/RMs to take concrete steps towards enhancing national and regional counter-terrorism capacities and cooperation and, in this context, **underscores the importance** of expediting the establishment of a Counter-Terrorism Unit within the ASF pursuant to Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.(CMLX)] adopted at its 960th meeting held on 28 October 2020;

14. **Reiterates** the decisions of the 15th meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STCDSS) and **requests** the Commission to expedite their implementation particularly, the strategic review of the ASF in order to align it with the contemporary security challenges facing the Continent, taking into consideration the Conclusions of the Inaugural Lessons Learned Forum on AU Peace Support Operations that was held in November 2022, in Abuja, Nigeria and subsequently adopted by the PSC at its 1129th meeting held on 20 December 2022, and to ensure the alignment of the ASF Concept to enable its effective utilization;

15. **Underscores** the importance of intensifying efforts to address the perennial challenge of unpredictable, inadequate and unsustainable funding for AU peace and security efforts, including the commitment by Member States to make contributions to the AU Peace Fund according to the approved scales of assessment, as well as the importance of intensification of efforts in the ongoing engagements with the UN Security Council, based on the African Common Position on Financing of AU Peace Support Operations;

16. **Reiterates the** interdependence of peace, security and development in order to address the phenomena of instability and insecurity in Africa and, in this regard, **calls** upon Member States and the AU Commission to support deliberate socio-economic and development programs;

17. **Reiterates** the request for the Chairperson of the Commission to regularly brief Council on the status of the implementation of the Policy and other relevant AU instruments on defence and security in the Continent, in line with Article 14 of the Preamble of the Solemn Declaration of the Common African Defence and Security Policy, which provides Council with the opportunity to review the implementation of the Policy and to provide guidance in addressing any challenges that may be identified;

18. **Expresses** deep condolences to the Government and people of Uganda for the tragic loss of innocent lives, particularly, of children as a result of the recent attack on a secondary school, on 17 June 2023, by the Allied Democratic Forces terrorist group; and

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