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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
1155TH MEETING

18 MAY 2023
ADDIS-ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR.1155 (2023)

PRESS STATEMENT



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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) dedicated its 1155th meeting, held on 18 May 2023, to an Open Session on Humanitarian Action in Africa.

Council recalled all its previous decisions and pronouncements on Humanitarian Action in Africa, particularly, Communiqué [*PSC/PR/COMM.1081 (2022)*], adopted at its 1081st meeting held on 4 May 2022; as well as, Article 6(f), Article 7(p), and Article 15 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, which respectively, stipulate as part of the mandate of Council, humanitarian action and disaster management; empowers the Council to support and facilitate humanitarian action in situations of armed conflicts or natural disasters in Africa; and also mandates the PSC to take active part in coordinating and conducting humanitarian action in order to restore life to normalcy in the event of conflicts and natural disasters.

Council took note of the opening statement by H.E. Ambassador Rebecca Amuge Otengo, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda to the AU and Chairperson of the PSC for the month of May 2023; the presentations by Professor Julio Rakotonirina, the AU Director for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development; the statement by H.E. Parfait Onanga Anyanga, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the African Union and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU), and the statement by the representative of the World Food Programme (WFP). Council also took note of the statements by Member States; Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), AU partners, international organizations and institutions, civil society organizations, as well as by think tanks and research institutions.

Council expressed deep concern over the deteriorating humanitarian situation in parts of the Continent, particularly in such countries as Sudan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Burkina Faso, and more generally, in the Horn of Africa region, the Sahel region, the Lake Chad Basin, and the Southern part of Africa as a result of a combination of factors which include violent conflicts, terrorism, inter-communal violence, unconstitutional changes of government, famine and the growing impact of climate change-related phenomena such as crop failures, droughts, floods, landslides and cyclones.

Council expressed the AU solidarity with all refugees and internally displaced persons on the Continent, including victims of natural disasters; and affirmed its unwavering commitment to redouble efforts towards mobilizing humanitarian aid, in order to alleviate their suffering.

Council noted with deep concern the dwindling resources for swift and effective responses to humanitarian crises in Africa and in this regard, appealed for redoubled efforts in mobilizing financial resources for humanitarian action, and encouraged Member States to adopt holistic approaches for addressing the underlying root causes of humanitarian crises, including by redoubling investments in mechanized agriculture, with a view to boosting food self-sufficiency on the Continent and reducing the risks and vulnerabilities associated with dependency on external sources of food.

Council underscored the need for burden and responsibility sharing and called upon the international community and partners to enhance the provision of adequate, flexible, predictable and consistent funding for humanitarian action in Africa including, in particular, to those countries and communities hosting large numbers of refugees for protracted periods in Africa.

Council urged all belligerents in conflict zones to strictly respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law (IHL/IHRL) and all other international instruments relating to

protection of civilians, as well as to facilitate humanitarian access and to guarantee safety and security of humanitarian aid agencies.

Council commended all Member States providing humanitarian assistance to populations in need, including those hosting refugees and internally displaced persons and, in this context, appealed to all Member States, in a position to do so, in the spirit of Ubuntu and Pan-Africanism, to assist fellow Member States facing humanitarian crises. In the same context, Council commended all the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for the efforts they are deploying in assisting the populations displaced by the scourge of terrorism.

Council underlined the need for Member States to generously contribute to the AU Special Emergencies' Fund and encouraged all Member States and partners who pledged support during the AU Extraordinary Humanitarian Summit and Pledging Conference, held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea from 25 to 28 May 2022 to expeditiously redeem their pledges.

Council reiterated the commitment of the AU to continue to provide technical assistance to Member States in addressing the root causes and drivers of violent conflicts, as well as to further strengthen local, national, regional and Continental capacities for swift responses to humanitarian crises and for enhanced resilience, including in the context of early warning and early responses.

Council welcomed the adoption of the Statute for the African Humanitarian Agency, by the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union in February 2023 and requested the AU Commission to expedite its operationalization and to redouble efforts in mobilizing the required resources to enable the Agency to more effectively discharge its mandate.

Council underlined the need for further strengthening national, regional and Continental early warning capacities and early response mechanisms, as well as the need for integrated and inclusive approaches that involve the affected communities, civil society organizations and the private sector.

Council expressed deep appreciation to all partners supporting humanitarian action in Africa and urged them to continue to further strengthen their partnership with AU Member States, the AU Commission and humanitarian agencies, with a view to ensuring timely and effective humanitarian responses on the Continent. In this context, Council encouraged Member States and international partners to urgently extend humanitarian assistance to the Sudanese refugees and IDPs.

Council encouraged Member States that have not yet signed or ratified the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugees in Africa and the 2009 Convention on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons, to consider doing so at their earliest convenience.

Council agreed to remain actively seized of the matter.