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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL  
594<sup>TH</sup> MEETING  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA  
27 APRIL 2016

PSC/PR/BR (DXCIV)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 594<sup>th</sup> meeting, held on 27 April 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, received a briefing from Dr. Martin Ihoegian Uhomoibhi, the Joint Special Representative/Joint Chief Mediator (JSR/JCM) and Head of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) on the situation in Darfur and activities of UNAMID, as well as the statements made by the representatives of The Sudan and Ethiopia, in its capacity as Chair of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

Council expressed its appreciation for the improved cooperation between the UNAMID leadership and the Government of Sudan, and further commended UNAMID for working hard to help address the situation in Darfur in a very challenging environment.

Council commended Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) of UNAMID for the efforts towards the peace and stability in Darfur. Council reiterated its strong condemnation of all hostile actions and attacks against UNAMID personnel and assets, as well as against humanitarian organizations and their staff, and urged the Government of Sudan to do all that is necessary to arrest and bring to book the perpetrators of such criminal acts and for the establishment of a dedicated Commission of Inquiry.

Council commended the commitment displayed by the African Union High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) for Sudan and South Sudan towards addressing the multiple challenges facing Sudan, including in the Darfur region. Council recalled the statement by the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, of 23 March 2016, which welcomed the signing of the Roadmap Agreement by the Government of Sudan. Council also welcomed the Agreement and commended the Government of Sudan for signing it. Council strongly urged all the Sudan opposition parties, as well as armed movements, to sign the Agreement in order to give impetus to the search for a lasting and peaceful solution to the Sudan problems, including Darfur.

In view of the continued validity of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), Council reaffirmed the utility of the Document and urged for its continued implementation. In this regard, Council welcomed the holding of the referendum in Darfur, which was observed by the AU and the League of Arab States, from 11 to 13 April 2016, to determine the administrative status of the region and its results announced by the Referendum Commission on April 24, 2016.

Council reiterated deep concern on the prevailing humanitarian situation in Darfur over restrictions of movement and denials of access and clearances that continue to be imposed on UNAMID and humanitarian actors, thus hindering their capacity to undertake critical missions, including to areas of active fighting or inter-communal violence. In this regard, Council appealed to the Government of Sudan and other stakeholders to undertake all necessary efforts to address the situation by providing access and support to UNAMID and the

humanitarian agencies in the interest of protecting civilians, especially the most vulnerable, including the internally displaced persons.

Recalling its previous communiqués, particularly PSC/PR/COMM.(DXVI) and PSC/PR/COMM.1(DXXIX) held on 22 June 2015 and 31 July 2015, respectively, with regard to the ongoing discussions on the exit strategy of the UNAMID, Council welcomed the resumption of the meetings of the Joint Working Group (JWG) comprising the AU, the UN and the Government of Sudan, on 18 April 2016 and further encouraged the JWG to elaborate an exit strategy based on the PSC and UN Security Council benchmarks pursuant to Council's communiqué of 22 June 2015 and UNSC resolution 2228 (2015).

Council expressed deep concern over the proliferation of illegal arms in Darfur and the presence of various criminal and militia groups. Council welcomed the ongoing efforts of the Government of Sudan to collect illegally held weapons in Darfur and called on Sudanese stakeholders to fully cooperate and support this exercise. Council further called on the international partners to also support this disarmament process.

Council, once again, emphasized its call to the parties to the Darfur conflict that the pursuit of political objectives through military means can only prolong the suffering of the people of Darfur and, therefore, underscored the imperative of a political solution as the only viable and sustainable option for all parties.

Council agreed to continue reviewing the situation in Darfur and UNAMID activities pursuant to Council's communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.(DXVI) of 22 June 2015.