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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

641ST MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

5 DECEMBER 2016

PSC/PR/COMM. (DCXLI)

COMMUNIQUE

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 641st meeting held on 5 December 2016, considered the Report of its Field Mission to the Republic of South Sudan that was conducted from 28 to 31 October 2016 and adopted the following decision:

Council,

1. **Commends** the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) for demonstrating the necessary political will and commitment to implement the Agreement on the Resolution of the Crisis in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS);
2. **Takes note** of all challenges being faced by the Government and people of the Republic of South Sudan in the implementation of the ARCSS;
3. **Stresses** that there can be no military solution to the situation in South Sudan. In this context, Council **calls** for the immediate cessation of hostilities and **strongly urges** them to fully embrace dialogue as the only viable approach to find a consensual and lasting solution to the challenges impeding the implementation of the ARCSS;
4. **Encourages** the TGoNU to ensure that the implementation of the ARCSS is inclusive and, in this context, **emphasizes the need** for a nation-wide civic education campaign, with a view to generating the necessary momentum for the successful implementation of the Agreement;
5. **Underscores the urgent need** for the establishment of accountability, justice and reconciliation mechanisms as provided for in the ARCSS, including appropriate mechanisms to address issues relating to sexual violence in a timely manner, with a view to ensuring justice for the victims. In the same context, Council **also underscores the urgent need** for expediting institutional reforms, including disarmament, demobilization and re-integration (DDR) and security sector reforms (SSR), as well as in the justice sector;
6. **Also stresses** that integrating and re-training the various South Sudanese militias into a new unified national army under a clear chain of command and control structure is key to ensuring the construction of a cohesive South Sudan nation. In this regard, Council **appeals** to all AU Member States, which are in a position to do so, and to the international community to provide necessary material, financial and technical support, in order to ensure a successful cantonment exercise;
7. **Welcomes** the consent, in principle, of the TGoNU for the deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF) pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 2304. However, Council **stresses** that the deployment of the RPF should be done through a consultative process that takes into full consideration the principle of respect of the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of South Sudan;

8. **Also welcomes** the development of a comprehensive Humanitarian Action Plan by the TGoNU and **urges** the international donor community to sustain the required support to this Action Plan;
9. **Emphasizes the critical importance** of ensuring unhindered humanitarian access to the population in need of humanitarian assistance. In the same context, Council **expresses** gratitude to the bilateral and multilateral partners for their continued support to the Government and people of South Sudan;
10. **Appeals** to the TGoNU and other South Sudanese stakeholders to facilitate the activities of all institutions that were established by the ARCSS, including the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) and the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM);
11. **Commends** JMEC and CITSAMM, for their relentless efforts in a particularly challenging environment and **encourages** them to persevere. Council also **commends** the AU High Representative for South Sudan, H.E. President Alpha Oumar Konare for his efforts and **also encourages** him to persevere in his engagement with the South Sudan peace process;
12. **Calls** for constructive engagement between the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan UNMISS with regard to the management of Protection of Civilian (POC) sites with a view to allay any mutual suspicions that may exist and, in order to build mutual confidence and trust;
13. **Re-affirms** the unwavering commitment of the AU to continue to fully support the TGoNU and the people of South Sudan in implementing the ARCSS, working in close cooperation with the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the countries of the region and the United Nations;
14. **Expresses** sincere gratitude to the TGoNU and the UNMISS, as well as the AU Liaison Office to the Republic of South Sudan, in Juba, for facilitating the successful conduct of the field mission;
15. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.