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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
667TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
17 MARCH 2017

COMMUNIQUÉ

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 667th meeting held on 17 March 2017, adopted the following decision on the situation in South Sudan:

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the statement made by Ambassador Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security and the briefings made by the Chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC), former President Festus Gontebanye Mogae of Botswana and the United Nations (UN) Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the UN Mission in South Sudan [UNMISS], Mr. David Shearer, on the situation in South Sudan. Council **also takes note** of the statements made by the representatives of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) of South Sudan, Ethiopia in its capacity as the Chair of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and as an African Member of the UN Security Council, as well as Egypt in its capacity as an African Member of the UN Security Council on the situation the South Sudan;
2. **Recalls** AU Assembly's decisions, as well as previous PSC communiqués and press statements on the situation in South Sudan;
3. **Notes with deep concern** the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in South Sudan, which continues to claim lives, and displace the civilian population. Council **strongly calls** on the TGoNU, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement – In Opposition (SPLM-IO) and all other armed groups to immediately cease all hostilities, and uphold respect of the ceasefire provisions as articulated in the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) of August 2015, in order to create an environment conducive for the return of peace and normalcy as well as the delivery of humanitarian assistance in the country. Council **reiterates** its conviction that only a political approach can lead to lasting peace in the country;
4. **Further notes with deep concern** the ravaging famine in Leer and Mayandit counties of Unity State of South Sudan, as declared by the TGoNU and UN Agencies, namely, the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) on 20 February 2017. Council **acknowledges** that the on going fighting and the resources diverted to it continue to exacerbate the humanitarian situation and negatively impact the TGoNU's ability and international humanitarian agencies efforts to provide assistance to affected communities. In this regard, Council **appeals** to the AU Member States and international community at large to urgently enhance humanitarian assistance to the country;
5. **Expresses its deep concern** over the growing number of refugees into neighbouring states and **commends** all neighboring states hosting the South Sudanese refugees. **Calls upon** the Parties and all relevant stakeholders to facilitate and provide support towards the voluntary return, resettlement and rehabilitation of all displaced and South Sudanese refugees back to their homes;

6. **Commends** the President of the Republic of South Sudan, H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit for announcing a National Dialogue Initiative on 14 December 2016 and for the reiteration of his decision at the opening of the second session of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly on 21 February 2017. Council **welcomes** the announced National Dialogue and **stresses** that an inclusive, genuine and transparent National Dialogue process and led by an impartial personality is imperative in addressing the many historical challenges facing South Sudan;

7. **Undertakes** to engage the AU High Representative for South Sudan, former President Alpha Oumar Konare of Mali, on concrete proposals that would assist the National Dialogue process to be inclusive and transparent. Furthermore, Council **appeals** to the international partners to contribute both financially and materially to making the National Dialogue a success, complementing the process of the implementation of the ARCSS;

8. **Commends** the leaders of IGAD, H.E. Hailemariam Desalegn, Prime Minister of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Chairperson of IGAD, President Omar al-Bashir of the Republic of Sudan, President Uhuru Kenyatta of the Republic Kenya, and President Yoweri Museveni of the Republic of Uganda, for their steadfast engagement and support to the implementation of the ARCSS. In this context, Council **stresses** that the resolution of the conflict in South Sudan will help address the security challenges facing the whole region;

9. **Recalls** the Joint AU, IGAD, UN Press Statement issued following the consultation on South Sudan, held on 29 January 2017, on the sidelines of the 28th Ordinary Session of the AU Summit in Addis Ababa, which called for the AU High Representative for South Sudan to conduct shuttle diplomacy to find a lasting solution to the conflict in the country. Council **applauds** the sustained engagement of the AU High Representative with the South Sudanese parties and international partners in the peace process. Council further **underscores** the necessity and imperative of a resolute and unified approach by AU, IGAD and UN, as well as by other international partners in efforts to ensure a speedy and peaceful settlement to the conflict in South Sudan;

10. **Commends** the work of the JMEC and its Chairperson for their continued and unwavering oversight of the Agreement and **urges** the TGoNU to continue cooperating with the JMEC to ensure progress in the implementation of the Agreement. Council **notes with appreciation** the assistance of the international community to the various mechanisms in the Peace Agreement, such as the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM). Council **encourages** the international community to continue to providing to all these mechanisms especially, JMEC, with the required assistance, in order to enable the South Sudanese to fully and faithfully implement the Peace Agreement;

11. **Expresses appreciation** for the important role played by UNMISS and its leadership in protecting the civilians in South Sudan. Council **commends** the troop contributing countries, and **urges** them to continue to support UNMISS to sustain security in the country during the transition phase. Council **appeals** to the TGoNU and the UN to expedite the

deployment of the Regional Protection Force (RPF) as per the provisions of UN Security Council resolution 2304 of 12 August 2016.

12. **Commends** the humanitarian agencies for their commitment to assisting the affected communities of South Sudan, while working under very challenging conditions. Council **calls** on the TGoNU, SPLM-IO and all other armed groups to observe international law with regards to the humanitarian workers, in order to create access and conducive environment for the humanitarian agencies to be able to deliver humanitarian assistance to the population and communities in need;

13. **Underscores** the fact that lasting peace and security in South Sudan can only be attained through good faith, resolve to implement agreed commitments and keeping national interest above all other concerns, as well as reconciliation, healing and justice as outlined in the report of the AU Commission of Inquiry of in South Sudan of 2015. In this context, Council **requests** the AU Commission to scale-up ongoing efforts towards establishing the Hybrid Court of South Sudan (HCSS). Council further **urges** the TGoNU to speed up the establishment of the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing, and the Compensation and Reparations Authority;

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