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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

581<sup>st</sup> MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

9 MARCH 2016

PSC/PR/BR.(DLXXXI)

**PRESS STATEMENT**

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 581<sup>st</sup> meeting, held on 9 March 2016, received a briefing provided by Commissioner for Peace and Security on the latest developments in the situation in Guinea-Bissau.

Council, recalling the decision taken by the Assembly of the Union, at its 26<sup>th</sup> Ordinary session, held in Addis Ababa, on 30 and 31 January 2016, reiterated its serious concern about the institutional crisis in Guinea-Bissau. Council also expressed its concern at the risks that this crisis can have on the still fragile political and security situation, as well as on the efforts towards economic and social recovery of the country. Council noted that the divergences that emerged between the main authorities of the State institutions, in addition to those related to the interpretation of the provisions of the Constitution concerning the respective powers of the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister, are of a nature to further weaken the process of stabilizing Guinea-Bissau. In this regard, Council already noted the difficulties which this situation generates for the functioning of the public administration and economic activities, as well as a certain upsurge of insecurity and social unrest in the city of Bissau.

Council urged the political actors, as well as all the political and military authorities of Guinea-Bissau, to exercise utmost restraint and a high sense of responsibility, with a view to finding, through dialogue and consultation, the best solutions to their political differences, in order to preserve the still fragile gains made, thanks to the efforts of peace building and post-conflict reconstruction, with the support of the countries of the region, the AU and the international community, as a whole.

Council stressed the importance of respecting the Constitution and marked its readiness to support, if necessary, a revision of the Constitution, which would clarify the provisions, which are a source of divergent interpretations. Council reiterated the support of the AU to the drafting of a Stability Pact and the process for the organization of a Conference on national reconciliation.

Council welcomed the efforts made by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), particularly through the action of its current Chairman, President Macky Sall of Senegal and the former President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria. Council also welcomed the recent visit of the UN Security Council to Guinea-Bissau. Council, in addition, took note with appreciation, of the initiatives taken by the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) in favour of peace and stability in Guinea-Bissau.

Council agreed to immediately undertake a visit to Guinea-Bissau in order to assess the situation and identify the ways and means by which it can contribute to the resolution of the institutional crisis and stabilization of Guinea-Bissau.

Council agreed to remain seized of the situation.