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P. O. Box 3243, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tel.: (251-11) 551 38 22 Fax: (251-11) 519321
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
733RD MEETING
13 NOVEMBER 2017
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCXXXIII)

COMMUNIQUE

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 733rd meeting held on 13 November 2017, considered the prospects for cooperation between the AU and *ad hoc* sub-regional peace arrangements, with particular focus on the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against the Boko Haram and the Joint Force of the Group G5-Sahel, and adopted the following decision:

Council,

- Takes note** of the opening statement made by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Chad, Ambassador Chérif Mahamat Zene, in his capacity as Chair of the PSC for the month of November 2017. Council **also takes note** of the briefings made by the Acting Director for Peace and Security, Mr. Sivuyile Bam, and by the Senior Political Advisor to the Executive Secretary and Head of Mission of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), Ambassador Mamman Nuhu. Council **further takes note** of the statements made by the representatives of Benin, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria, in their capacity as countries of the LCBC and MNJTF, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, as members of the G5 Sahel, as well as by the representatives of Egypt, in its capacity as African member of the United Nations Security Council, France, the United States of America, the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN);
- Recalls** the relevant provisions of the AU Constitutive Act, the Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the area of Peace and Security between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the Regional Mechanisms (RMs) for Prevention, Management and Resolution of Conflicts signed in 2008. Council **further recalls** its earlier decisions and pronouncements on the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group and efforts aimed at neutralizing it, in particular Press Statements [PSC/PR/BR. (DCCII)] and [PSC/PR/BR. (DCLXXX)] adopted at its 702nd and 680th meeting held on 19 July 2017 and 18 April 2017, respectively, Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM. (DCCXXI)] on the Report of the PSC field Mission to the countries of the LCBC conducted from 27 to 31 July 2017, Communiqué [PSC/PR/2. (DCXXXIX)] adopted at its 639th meeting held on 29 November 2016 and Communiqué [PSC/AHG/COMM. 2(CDLXXXIV)] adopted at its 484th meeting held on 29 January 2015, at the level of Heads of State and Government, by which Council authorized the deployment of the MNJTF. Council **also recalls** Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM. (DCLXXIX)] adopted at its 679th meeting, held on 13 April 2017, by which Council endorsed the Strategic Concept of Operations (CONOPS) of the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel;
- Welcomes** the significant progress made by the MNJTF and the Member States of LCBC plus Benin in the fight against Boko Haram terrorist group, which has considerably weakened the capability of the group and continued to successfully dislodge it from its strongholds. In this

respect, Council **pays tribute** to the troop contributing countries to the MNJTF for the enormous sacrifices made for the promotion of peace, security and stability in the Lake Chad Basin. Council **pays particular tribute** to the gallant soldiers that have paid the ultimate price and **expressed once again its heartfelt condolences** to their families and respective countries of origin. Council **encourages** MNJTF Forces to remain resolute until the Boko Haram terrorist group is completely defeated;

4. **Emphasizes that**, despite MNJTF significant successes, Boko Haram still remains a real threat for the countries of the region as it retains capacity to reorganize itself and conduct deadly asymmetric attacks, as illustrated by the recurrent suicide attacks in various LCBC countries. In this regard, Council **strongly condemns** the continued attacks and abuses perpetrated by the terrorist group against innocent civilians and **strongly warns** the members of the group that they shall be held accountable for their heinous crimes;

5. **Reiterates the need** for the Commission, the LCBC and the MNJTF to work closely towards mobilizing the required and appropriate financial and logistical support to the MNJTF, on the basis of needs expressed by the countries of the region. Council **underlines the urgent need** for the MNJTF to be provided with the necessary capacities in terms of land mobility, with appropriate vehicles, air and navigation assets, communication and air surveillance equipment, mine action and specialized medical personnel. In this respect, Council **requests** the Commission, the LCBC and MNJTF, with troop contributing countries to the Force, to undertake, as soon as possible, consultations with a view to identify ways and means to ensure that the AU support to countries of the region in their efforts against Boko Haram is expedited and adequate;

6. **Further welcomes** the outcomes of the First MNJTF Regional Stabilization Strategy Conference for the LCBC countries affected by the Boko Haram that was held in N'Djamena, Chad, from 2-4 November 2017, and **looks forward** to the implementation and necessary follow-up of the commitments made by the affected countries and partners. Council **reaffirms** that, in addition to the much-needed military and security operations against Boko Haram and other terrorist groups, sustained national, regional and international development efforts should also be deployed towards the improvement of livelihoods, education and job creation, as well as towards the protection of human rights, including those of women and girls, so as to address alienation and marginalization, which create fertile ground for terrorism and violent extremism within the local communities;

7. **Also welcomes** the significant progress made in the operationalization of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, established by countries of the region, namely Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, to fight against the various terrorist and criminal groups operating in the Sahel region. Council **commends** the countries of the G5 Sahel Joint force, for the efforts being deployed and sacrifices being made in the fight against terrorism, violent extremism and transnational organised crime and other various illicit traffics, including human trafficking ;

8. **Underscored the importance** for the AU, LCBC and the G5-Sahel to enhance political and operational coordination, bearing in mind the need to draw lessons from previous peace support operation experiences, with a view to enhance the effectiveness of emerging regional initiatives, through the enhancement of coordination between the partners and countries participating in those initiatives ;
9. **Reiterates the need** for all countries of the Nouakchott Process to lend the necessary support to the Joint Force of the G5-Sahel, as stressed in its above mentioned communiqué of 13 April 2017 and reaffirmed at the 1st Joint meeting of the Nouakchott and Djibouti Processes held on 10 November 2017;
10. **Commends** the AU partners for their continued support to both, the MNJTF and G5-Sahel and **urges** them to further enhance their multidimensional support. Council **stresses the importance** for partners to coordinate their respective efforts, in line with the needs and preoccupations of the countries and forces concerned, with a view to better ensure efficient and rational use of resources mobilised in support to MNJTF and G5-Sahel operations;
11. **Requests** the Commission to redouble efforts aimed at mobilizing additional funding for the MNJTF and the G5-Sahel Joint Force;
12. **Calls on** the entire international community to enhance its financial, logistical and technical support to the MNJTF and the G5- Sahel Joint Force ;
13. **Acknowledges that**, given emerging threats to peace and security in the continent, namely terrorism, violent extremism and transnational organised crime, there is need for the AU and Member states including the RECs to explore ways and means to adapt AU instruments in the framework of the APSA. In this respect, Council **requests** the Commission to undertake, with the RECs, RMs and ongoing ad hoc regional initiatives, a common reflexion on operations undertaken within regional or interregional framework, with the authorization and support by the AU, and to submit to the consideration of Council lessons learnt from those experiences, which could further enrich the APSA;
14. **Looks forward** to the outcomes of the the forthcoming Sahel Conference to be held in Brussels, with a view to mobilise more support to the efforts of the Sahel region countries;
15. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.