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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
407TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
4 DECEMBER 2013

PSC/PR/BR/CDVII

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 407th meeting held on 4 December 2013, devoted an open session to the theme: “*Women, children and other vulnerable groups in conflict situations in Africa*”. The meeting was held in pursuance of the decision adopted by Council at its 223rd meeting held on 30 March 2010, to convene such a session once every year.

Council took note of the statements made by the Commission, the Representatives of Namibia, in its capacity as the country that championed the adoption of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 1325, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as well as the statements made by fifteen (15) other delegations.

Council noted the progress made by AU Member States in the ratification and implementation of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women (2003) and other pertinent international instruments. Council further noted the progress made by Member States in submitting their reports on implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004) and the African Charter on the Protection and Welfare of the Child (1999), as well as the AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (2009).

Council welcomed the progress made in the development and adoption of the AU Gender Training Manual for AU Peace Support Operations (AUPSOs), including the elaboration of a Policy Brief and a Draft Code of Conduct.

Council emphasized the importance of the AU Gender Training Manual in contributing towards engendering the African Peace and Security Architecture. Council commended AU Member States for their plans to include their Centers of Excellence in gender mainstreaming process.

Council commended the African Peace Support Trainers’ Association (APSTA) for availing its personnel for training on the AU Gender Training Manual for AU PSOs.

Council recognized that the Training of Trainers (Tots) on the AU Gender Training Manual for AU PSOs represent a pool and platform to both understand and address gender-based-violence in conflict situations in Africa.

Council, whilst deploring the increasing use of sexual violence as a weapon of war on the continent, underscored the need to develop an African capacity, including appointment of a Special Rapporteur on violence against women and children in conflict situations in Africa, to prevent and respond to the scourge of sexual violence. In this respect, Council applauded the efforts of the Commission to mitigate women’s and children’s vulnerability.

Council welcomed the efforts of the Chairperson of the Commission to continue to ensure the mainstreaming of gender aspects into all AU activities.

Council supported the proposal of the Republic of Namibia to institutionalize the annual celebration of the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1325 in AU Member States and at the African Union Commission level.

Council agreed to convene the next open session on women, children and other vulnerable groups in conflict situations in Africa in 2014.