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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
420TH MEETING
18 FEBRUARY 2014

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR.(CDXX)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 420th meeting held on 18 February 2014, in Addis Ababa, devoted a session to a consultation with the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), in its capacity as an Organ of the AU.

The meeting was held pursuant to the Executive Council Decision EX.CL/Dec.712 (XXI) that was adopted in June 2012, at its 21st Ordinary Session, held in Addis Ababa, in which the Executive Council requested the PSC to take into account the rights of the child in its agenda and cooperate actively with the ACERWC, in its efforts aimed at promoting the welfare of children in Africa.

Council emphasized the need for the ACERWC to champion initiatives at national, regional and continental levels, to bring more awareness on children's rights and welfare to various stakeholders.

Council welcomed the call for an institutionalized collaboration between itself and the ACERWC in engaging AU Member States to take necessary measures and initiatives to ensure the protection of the rights of children in armed conflicts. Council required the authorities of the affected countries to facilitate reporting on incidence of recruiting and use of children in conflict situations to the ACERWC; in accordance with the UN Resolution 1216 (2005) centering on monitoring and reporting mechanism on the use of child soldiers. In this regard, Council stressed the need for authorities in affected countries to take measures against those found recruiting and using children in armed conflicts, and urged the ACERWC to come out with modalities for ensuring monitoring and receipt of reports of cases of recruitments and use of children in armed conflict.

Council discussed the possibility of institutionalizing its interactions with the ACERWC within the framework of Article 19 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, which provides for close cooperation between the Council and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). Council further discussed the opportunity for the ACERWC to extend its interaction to national, as well as regional level, to enhance its cooperation from the grassroots.

Council also agreed to look into the possibility of organizing a high-level meeting devoted to peace, security and children's rights and welfare in Africa, as well as the need to devise appropriate mechanisms through which the Secretariats of the two Organs can institutionalize their collaboration and further strengthen their engagement in favor of children.

Council agreed to hold, each year, an open session of the PSC, devoted to issues of children on the continent.

Council called all AU Member States, who have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC).