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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

430TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

24 APRIL 2014

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PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 430th meeting, held an open session, on 24 April 2014, devoted to the theme: “Silencing the Guns: Pre-requisites for Realising a Conflict-Free Africa by the Year 2020”. Statements were made by AU Member States, non-African countries, bilateral and multilateral partners and international organization/institutions, as well as by civil society organisations (CSOs).

Participants and Council agreed on the need for rapid, appropriate and courageous response to early warnings on potential outbreaks of violent conflicts. In this context, they called for the further strengthening of all existing preventive diplomacy tools, including the Panel of the Wise and the Continental Early Warning System and to ensure quick response when the need arises. Participants underscored the importance of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and called for its full operationalization, particularly the African Standby Force and its Rapid Deployment Capability.

Participants and Council acknowledged the primary responsibility of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in maintaining international peace and security and stressed the need for enhancing the strategic partnership between the AU PSC and the UNSC. They also emphasized the importance of the partnership between Africa and the international community in effectively addressing both current and emerging threats to peace and security on the continent. They nonetheless, stressed the primary responsibility of AU Member States in protecting their citizens and ensuring stability.

Participants and Council also emphasized the obligations of individuals and non-state actors to uphold the culture of peace and tolerance, as well as to refrain from actions that undermine peace and stability on the continent.

Participants and Council stressed the need for the identification and neutralisation of the root causes of violent conflicts. They called for common understanding, definition of, and response to, the root causes of violent conflicts so as to build consensus on the solutions required to comprehensively and effectively address them.

The importance of good governance, respect for human rights, popular participation and inclusivity was recognized. In this regard, there was a strong call for AU Member States to deepen the culture of democracy, accountability and good governance on the continent. Furthermore, they called on AU Member States that are yet to sign, ratify and domesticate existing AU legal frameworks and normative instruments, to do so, with a view to promoting durable peace and stability.

As a foundation for durable peace and stability, Member States were urged to redouble their efforts in economic development, ensure the well-being of their people and comprehensively address the problem of youth unemployment on the continent.

Participants urged Member States to strengthen their regulatory mechanisms on the exploitation and management of natural resources and to ensure that the proceeds from these resources are utilized in meeting the basic needs of their people, with a view to promoting equitable development and distribution of benefits.

There was a strong call for Council to be more engaged and to make efforts to make regular visits to conflict and post-conflict areas. Council welcomed the suggestion and agreed to include such visits in its Annual Programme of Work.

Participants called for greater synergies within the AU Commission and among AU Member States. They stressed the need for greater engagement and collaboration with CSOs and the African academia, within the context of the Livingstone Formula, taking into account the Conclusions of the Maseru PSC Retreat of February 2014.

Participants recalled paragraph 17 of Assembly Decision **Assembly/AU/Dec.501 (XXII)**, which declared 2014-2024 as the **Madiba Nelson Mandela Decade of Reconciliation in Africa** and, in this regard, stressed the importance of national reconciliation in nation-building, conflict resolution, as well as promotion of national healing and justice.

Participants and Council called for practical measures to effectively address the illicit proliferation of small arms, light weapons and other types of weaponry, including the need for universal signature and ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty. They called for the naming and shaming of suppliers, financiers, facilitators, transit points and recipients of illicit weapons, with a view to stemming the phenomenon of the illicit proliferation of these weapons.

Council requested the Commission to undertake a comprehensive study on the flow of illicit weapons into and within Africa and submit to it the outcome of such a study.

Council agreed on the urgent need for the elaboration of a Roadmap, to be submitted, for consideration by the Assembly, to underpin the actions necessary for the attainment of the goal of a conflict-free Africa by 2020, and called on all stakeholders to contribute to this process. Council requested the Commission to prepare the elements of a Roadmap for its consideration.

Council agreed to remain seized of the matter.