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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

478<sup>TH</sup> MEETING

19 DECEMBER 2014

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR.(CDLXXVIII)

PRESS STATEMENT

## PRESS STATEMENT

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), held its 478<sup>th</sup> meeting on 19 December 2014 on the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa. The meeting was held pursuant to the decision taken by the PSC at its 464<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 29 October 2014 to dedicate monthly meetings on the Ebola epidemic to receive comprehensive progress reports from the Commission, covering the evolution of the situation, the implementation of the mandate of the AU Support Mission to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA), the status of contributions by AU Member States and the level of engagement of the larger international community in combating the epidemic.

Council recalled all its earlier Communiqués and Press Statements on the Ebola Epidemic in West Africa.

Council took note of the briefing made by the AU Commissioner for Social Affairs H.E Dr Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko and commended the Commission, including its Staff Association for the contributions and progress made in the implementation of the mandate of the African Union Support to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA).

Council also commended all AU Member States that have contributed healthcare personnel, financial and material resources to the countries most affected by the Ebola epidemic. Council further commended the African Private sector and civil society, including volunteers, as well as bilateral and multilateral partners for their continued support to the efforts aimed at combating the Ebola epidemic in West Africa.

Council underscored the need for sustaining the current momentum in the fight against Ebola. In this context, Council urged all stakeholders to continue mobilizing additional resources, including through the Commission's budget, in support of ASEOWA and the efforts of the region, as well as those of the countries most affected by the Ebola epidemic.

Council appealed to the AU Member States, which have not yet done so, and in the spirit of pan-African solidarity, to also join the fight against the Ebola epidemic by extending necessary support to the countries most affected.

Council deplored the continued stigmatization, discrimination and isolation of both the people and the countries most affected. In this regard, Council reiterated its call on AU Member States, which have not yet done so, to fully implement the decision adopted by the 16<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Session of the Executive Council held in Addis Ababa on 8 September 2014, regarding the opening of borders and resumption of flights to the affected countries.

Council noted with concern that sections of the population in countries most affected by the Ebola epidemic are shunning healthcare facilities for fear of contracting the disease. In this regard, Council emphasized the need for an effective Ebola communication strategy in order to ensure that the population concerned is properly informed about the Ebola epidemic. Council called on the African media to help in reporting factually on the Ebola epidemic.

Council stressed the need to begin focusing attention on the socio-economic and political impact of the Ebola epidemic, and on the post-Ebola recovery strategies, not only for the countries directly affected, but also the immediate region and beyond. In the same vein, Council also stressed the need for coordination of efforts among the countries most affected, the region, and the wider international community. In this regard, Council called on AU Member States, Private Sector, civil society and the larger international community to continue to mobilize and provide humanitarian assistance to the victims of the Ebola epidemic, particularly care-givers, children and orphans.

Council reiterated the need for the Commission to accelerate efforts aimed at establishing the African Centre for Disease Control and for all AU Member States to further strengthen their healthcare systems.

Council requested the Commission to submit to it, in early January 2015, a comprehensive report on all aspects of the fight against the Ebola epidemic.

Council looked forward to the convening of an international conference on the Ebola epidemic as soon as possible.

Council decided to remain seized of the matter.