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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
553RD MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
21 OCTOBER 2015

PSC/PR/BR.(DLIII)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 553rd meeting held on 21 October 2015, received a briefing on the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak and post-Ebola recovery efforts in the three most affected countries in West Africa, namely, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Council welcomed the briefing provided by the Commission on the progress made, to date, in the fight against the EVD outbreak in the three most affected countries in West Africa, as well as in the post-EVD recovery efforts. Council also received statements made by the representatives of Senegal, in its capacity as the Chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Guinea and Sierra Leone, as well as by the representatives of the United Nations, the European Union, the People's Republic of China, France and the United States of America.

Council recalled all its earlier pronouncements on the EVD, in particular, communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.1 (DXLI) adopted at its 541st meeting held on 31 August 2015.

Council commended the authorities and people of the three most affected countries, in West Africa, for their resilience and continued efforts to completely eradicate the EVD. Council also commended them for the progress made in their post-EVD recovery efforts. In this regard, Council reiterated its emphasis on the imperative need for the concerned countries and people to remain extra-vigilant, as well as to ensure effective surveillance mechanisms for monitoring cross-border movements of people, until all of the three most affected countries reach a zero-case status, with a view not only to effectively eradicate the EVD, but also to prevent its re-spread throughout the region and beyond.

Council stressed the need for a comprehensive approach to the post-EVD recovery efforts in order to more effectively address the wider social, economic and political consequences of the EVD outbreak. In this regard, Council further stressed the need to ensure that the support provided to the countries most affected is not only channeled towards strengthening healthcare services, but also towards the maintenance and provision of basic public services, including education and macro-economic stability, while at the same time enhancing other national capacities in order to not only enhance the resilience, but also reduce the vulnerability of these countries to future epidemic outbreaks.

Council also commended the Commission for its lead role in the fight against the EVD as well as in the post-EVD recovery efforts, through the African Union Support to the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA). Council reiterated its request for the Commission to expedite the establishment and full operationalization of the African Centre for Disease Control (ACDC). Furthermore, Council called on the World Health Organization to urgently approve the VSV-EBOV Ebola vaccine with a view to making it available to all the three most affected countries.

Council also requested the Commission to urgently establish the African Volunteer Health Corps who will be rapidly deployed during the outbreak of epidemics and to report to Council on the progress being made to this end.

Council reiterated its deep appreciation to all Member States and the African private sector for their generous pan-African assistance to the countries most affected by the EVD. Council also expressed deep appreciation to the AU partners and the wider international community for their continued support in the fight against the EVD and urged them to continue to extend their support towards the post-EVD recovery efforts of the most affected countries.

Council, once again, reiterated the need for continued resource mobilization for purposes of assisting the most affected countries in their post-EVD recovery efforts and re-appealed to Member States and partners to bridge the financial and other resource gaps through direct contributions. In this context, Council also reiterated its call for debt cancellation in favor of the three most affected countries, namely, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Council looked forward to the next progress report, by the Commission, during the month of December 2015, on the EVD situation and on post-EVD recovery efforts in the three most affected countries.

Council agreed to remain actively seized of the matter.