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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
560TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
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PSC/PR/BR.2(DLX)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 560th meeting held on 26 November 2015, was briefed by the Commission on the follow-up to, and implementation of, communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV) adopted by the 455th meeting of Council held at the level of Heads of State and Government in Nairobi, Kenya, on 2 September 2014. Council took note of the statements made by the representatives of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, as well as by the United Nations Secretariat and the European Union (EU).

Council recalled its earlier pronouncements on the issue of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa. Council reemphasized the critical importance of communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV), which articulated a comprehensive framework for the implementation of the AU and international counter-terrorism instruments in Africa.

Council reiterated the AU's concern at the seriousness of the threat posed by terrorism and violent extremism in different parts of the Continent, as shown by the attacks carried out in Bamako, Mali, Tunis, Tunisia, and in the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt, in the course of November 2015, and the continued terrorist activities in the Lake Chad Basin, Somalia and Libya. Council noted that these attacks were taking place against the backdrop of a global rise in terrorist activities, with the emergence of the so-called Islamic State (IS) in Iraq and Syria and the expansion of its activities in other parts of the world, as illustrated, among others, by the terrorist attacks committed in Istanbul, Turkey, in October 2015, and in Beirut and Paris, in November 2015.

Council noted with deep concern the expansion into Africa of the activities of the so-called IS, to which a number of groups have pledged allegiance. In this respect, Council noted the continued expansion of IS activities in Libya and the reported flow of foreign terrorist elements to Libya from Syria and Iraq, due to the increasing military pressure on the IS in these two countries. Council stressed that this situation will have serious implications for security and stability on the African Continent.

Council reiterated the AU's total rejection of all acts of terrorism and violent extremism by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes. Council reiterated the AU's determination to rid Africa of the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism, which cannot be justified under any circumstances, noting that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or group. Council expressed the AU's full solidarity with the affected countries and the victims of terrorism, both within and outside the Continent.

Council emphasized the need for renewed efforts to combat extremism and obscurantist religious interpretations that foster radicalization and intolerance. Council noted that these interpretations, which are promoted by foreign preachers and other actors, are a threat to African security and stability and should be strongly fought against. Council reiterated its deep concern at the reported financial flows from outside the Continent in support of terrorist and extremist groups, and the need to investigate the matter, with a view to determining the extent of the problem and making recommendations on how to address it.

Council welcomed the steps taken by the Commission as part of the implementation of communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV). In this respect, Council noted the support that continues to be rendered to regional security cooperation initiatives.

Council noted with satisfaction the holding of the first meeting of the Ministers of Defense and Chiefs of Defense Staff of the member countries of the Nouakchott Process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and the Operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in the Sahelo-Saharan Region, in Bamako, Mali, from 2 to 4 September 2015, and urged for an active follow-up of the Conclusions of this meeting. Council further noted with satisfaction the progress being made within the framework of the Djibouti Process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation in the East Africa Region, with the convening of the 2nd meeting of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services (HISS), in Kampala, Uganda, from 14 to 15 July 2015. Council looks forward to the convening of the 3rd meeting of the East Africa Region HISS, planned to take place in Addis Ababa, on 7 and 8 December 2015, and to the signing, on that occasion, of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the Eastern Africa Fusion and Liaison Unit (EA-FLU).

Council welcomed the progress made by the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA) in the discharge of its mandate. Council also welcomed the efforts being made by the member countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and Benin, through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), to neutralize the Boko Haram terrorist group. Council commended the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Security Forces for their continued efforts to neutralize the Al-Shabaab Al Qaeda-linked terrorist group.

Council commended the Commission for its efforts to operationalize the African Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), in line with decision EX.CL/Dec.820(XXV), adopted by the Executive Council at its 25th Ordinary Session held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 20 to 24 June 2014. Council looks forward to the 2nd meeting of the African Police Chiefs scheduled to take place in Algiers, Algeria, from 13 to 14 December 2015, and during which the founding documents of AFRIPOL, including its Statute, and other relevant documents, such as the programme of work of AFRIPOL, are expected to be adopted.

Council noted the support extended by the Commission to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) towards the development of a regional counter-terrorism strategy, which was endorsed by the 35th Summit of the SADC Heads of State and Government, held in Gaborone, Botswana, from 17 to 18 August 2015, as well as towards capacity building for countering violent extremism (CVE), including the decision to establish a regional CVE Observatory taken during the regional workshop organized by the African Center on the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), in collaboration with SADC, in Swakopmund, Namibia, from 10 to 11 November 2015, on the theme "Prevention and Combating of Violent of Extremism and Radicalization that lead to Terrorism".

Council welcomed the secondment by Sudan and Tunisia, at their own cost, of staff to the ACSRT, in line with the relevant provisions of communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV). Council urged other Member States to favorably consider requests for secondment as may be submitted by the Commission.

Council noted with satisfaction the efforts of the Commission towards supporting Member States in reviewing their national legislation on the basis of the African Model Law on Counter-Terrorism, endorsed by the Assembly of the Union, at its 17th Ordinary Session, held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 30 June to 1 July 2011 [Decision-Assembly/AU/Dec.369(XVII)]. In this regard, Council encouraged Member States to take advantage of the technical assistance being availed by the Commission.

Council acknowledged that a number of aspects of communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV) remain pending. Council called on Member States to expedite the implementation of their commitments, including:

- (i) the signing and ratification, by Member States that have not yet done so, of relevant African and international instruments, in particular the 2004 Protocol to the 1999 OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combatting of Terrorism;
- (ii) the full and effective implementation of the relevant African and international instruments, particularly with respect to the adoption of the required legislative and judicial measures, border control, suppressing of the financing of terrorism and anti-money laundering, denying safe havens to terrorist and criminal groups, exchange of information and intelligence, coordination at regional, continental and international levels, as well as the strengthening of the capacity of the law enforcement organs and armed forces;
- (iii) the implementation of the 2004 Protocol by those Member States that are party to this instrument, including submitting annual reports to Council on measures taken to combat and prevent terrorism and notifying it of all terrorist activities on their territories as soon as they occur;
- (iv) the appointment by those Member States that have not yet done so of national focal points for the purposes of liaison and coordination with the ACSRT; and
- (v) the provision by Member States of financial support for the implementation of the AU counter-terrorism agenda, in line with the stated principle of African leadership and ownership of peace and security initiatives on the Continent.

Council requested the Commission to expedite the implementation of the tasks entrusted to it as per communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV), with particular emphasis on the assessment of the implementation status of the 2002 Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, the holding of a high-level meeting of Member States on the issue of financing of terrorism, which Algeria has offered to host, and the elaboration of an African Arrest Warrant for persons charged with, or convicted of, terrorist acts. In this respect, Council welcomed the consultations that the Commission carried out, including most recently with a delegation of the International Organization of *La Francophonie* (OIF) and the Association of Francophone Prosecutors (AIPPF), in Addis Ababa, from 9 to 12 November 2015.

Council emphasized the importance of building a strong partnership with the rest of the international community in furtherance of the struggle against terrorism and violent extremism. In this respect, Council reiterated the key role of the Annual Consultative Forum with the relevant

international partners, provided for in communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV), to harmonize existing strategies and facilitate and promote action oriented collaboration and coordination, as well as to mobilize further support for African-led counter-terrorism efforts, including facilitating the acquisition of the required technologies. Council looks forward to the second consultative Forum due to take place in Addis Ababa, and requested the Commission to broaden the membership of the Forum and to bring on board all relevant international stakeholders.

Council recalled that, in its communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV), it welcomed the generous contribution amounting 10 million USD made by Saudi Arabia, as announced by the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), to support the AU's efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism and to strengthen the AU-OIC partnership. Council noted the signing, in April 2015, of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the AU Commission and the OIC General Secretariat on the utilization of this contribution, and looks forward to the disbursement of this pledge without any further delay, in line with the commitment made.

Council requested the Commission to effectively follow-up on the relevant provisions of this press statement and to report to it on steps taken and challenges encountered.