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P. O. Box 3243, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tel.: (251-11) 551 38 22 Fax: (251-11) 519321
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
565TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
17 DECEMBER 2015

PSC/PR/BR. (DLXV)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 565th meeting held on 17 December 2015, received a briefing on the Ebola situation and post-Ebola socio-economic recovery efforts in the three most affected countries in West Africa, namely, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

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

Council recalled all its earlier pronouncements on the EVD, in particular, Press Statement PSC/PR/BR.1 (DLIII) adopted at its 553rd meeting held on 21 October 2015, following a briefing on the EVD situation.

Council commended the authorities and people of the three most affected countries, in West Africa, for their resilience and tremendous efforts to completely eradicate the EVD. Council also commended them for their ongoing post-EVD socio-economic recovery efforts. In this regard, Council reiterated the need for these countries to adopt a very comprehensive approach that addresses the wider social, psycho-social, economic and political consequences of the EVD outbreak. Council also stressed the need to invest more in strengthening the healthcare services of the most affected countries, as well as the need to address the full range of second-order impacts of the EVD epidemic and the importance of community and survivor support initiatives, including the need to address stigma.

Council stressed, once again, the imperative need for the three most affected countries and people to continue to remain extra-vigilant vis-à-vis the risk of new EVD outbreaks and cases of relapses, and to continue to ensure effective surveillance mechanisms for monitoring cross-border movements of people, until all of the three most affected countries are declared Ebola-free.

Council also reiterated its emphasis on the need to ensure that the support being provided to the countries most affected is not only channeled towards the reconstruction and strengthening of national healthcare services, but also towards the maintenance and provision of other basic public services, including education and macro-economic stability. Council also laid emphasis on the need for enhancing other national capacities in order to not only to build dependable resilience, but also to reduce the vulnerability of these countries to other possible future epidemic outbreaks.

Council commended the Commission for its lead role in the fight against the EVD as well as in the post-EVD socio-economic recovery efforts, through the African Union Support to the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA) and, in particular, the health care volunteers who risked their precious lives in the service of Africa. In this context, Council requested the

Commission to honor all those who participated in the fight against Ebola under ASEOWA including personnel from the Commission

Council welcomed the ongoing efforts being deployed by the Commission towards the early establishment of the African Centre for Disease Control (ACDC). Council also welcomed the ongoing efforts to establish the African Volunteer Health Corps. In the same context, while welcoming the progress achieved to date, Council reiterated its call to the World Health Organization to urgently approve the Ebola vaccine with a view to making it available when it is needed.

Council also 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 further reiterated its 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 socio-economic recovery efforts of the most affected countries.

Council agreed to further review the Ebola situation and to take necessary decisions on the basis of a comprehensive ASEOWA evaluation report to be submitted to Council in January 2016.