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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
570TH MEETING
21 JANUARY 2016
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR.(DLXX)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) at its 570th meeting, held on 21 January 2016, was briefed by the Commissioner, for Peace and Security on the Declaration of the Second Extraordinary Meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STCDSS), which took place in Addis Ababa on 15 January 2016, to consider the outcome of the conduct of the African Standby Force AMANI AFRICA-II Field Training Exercise (AA-II FTX), within the framework of the operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF) and the Report on the Implementation of the AU Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL).

Council commended the efforts of the Commission, AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), as well as of those other relevant stakeholders towards the successful conduct of the AA-II FTX, which took place from 19 October to 8 November 2015 simultaneously, at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and at the South African Army Combat Training Center in Lohatla, South Africa.

Council noted that the broad objective of the AA-II FTX was to validate the capacity of the AU to mandate, deploy and employ an African Standby Force Rapid Deployment Capability (ASF RDC), as a startup limited multidimensional operation under Scenario 6 and to run a full multidimensional peace support operation under Scenario 5 of the ASF doctrine. In this respect, Council recalled the 8th STCDSS meeting held on 15 May 2015 in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, which stressed the importance of conducting AA-II FTX as part of a critical process of assessing the full operational capability of the ASF by December 2015, as well as the 25th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 14 to 15 June 2015, which reiterated the importance of conducting the Exercise.

Council further took note of the convening of the Second Extraordinary Meeting of the STCDSS, which took place on 15 January 2016, in Addis Ababa and considered the Conclusions of the African Chiefs of Defence Staff and Heads of Safety and Security (ACDSS) on the conduct of the AA-II FTX and the Report on the AFRIPOL. Council welcomed the Declaration made by the STCDSS on the successful conduct of AA-II FTX.

Council acknowledged the successful conduct of the AA-II FTX and emphasised the importance of holding the AA-II FTX After Action Review (AAR) scheduled for March 2016 to, amongst others, provide a comprehensive assessment of various aspects of the ASF.

Commended the progress made by the Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) in operationalizing their respective standby forces and acknowledged the efforts of North African Regional Capacity (NARC) towards operationalizing of its standby force. In this regard, Council emphasised the need to ensure coordination amongst various African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) structures.

Council welcomed the recommendations in the Declaration of the STCDSS, particularly that the ASF has attained Full Operational Capability (FOC) following the successful conduct of the AA-II FTX and the confirmation of attainment of FOC by four (4) RECs/RMs, and consequently, that the African Capacity for the Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) be dissolved, in line with the Assembly Decisions 489(XXI) and 515(XXII).

Council commended all AU Member States and RECs/RMs for this important milestone achieved and in particular expressed appreciation to the Government of South Africa and SADC as Host Nation and Host Region respectively. Council further expressed appreciation to the Governments of Algeria, Angola and Nigeria for the provision of Strategic Lift and, the Government of Kenya for the financial contributions made for the AA-II FTX.

Council took note of the efforts deployed by the Commission and the progress made in the operationalisation of the AFRIPOL and looked forward to the submission of the AFRIPOL Statute for final review by the Specialized Technical Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs at its next ordinary session.

Council also looked forward to the endorsement of the Declaration of the Second Extraordinary Meeting of the STCDSS during the Assembly of the Union at its 26th Ordinary Session, scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 30 to 31 January 2016 and agreed to regularly review the progress to be made in further enhancement of the ASF.