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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
584TH MEETING
ADDIS ABABA
29 MARCH 2016

PSC/PR/COMM.(DLXXXIV)

COMMUNIQUÉ

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 584th meeting held on 29 March 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, adopted the following decision on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation:

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Arms Control, Disarmament and Nonproliferation, as well as the introductory briefing provided by the Commission;
2. **Recalls** its press statement PSC/PR/BR.(CDXXX) on “Silencing the Guns: Pre-requisites for Realizing a Conflict-Free Africa by the Year 2020”, adopted at its 430th meeting held on 24 April 2014 and **reaffirms** its commitment to make full use of the powers entrusted to it, under Article 7, paragraph 1(n), of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council and to promote and encourage the implementation of regional and international instruments on disarmament and non-proliferation;
3. **Expresses its deep concern** over the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons (SALW), which continue to pose a serious threat to continental security, fuel armed conflict, cause significant loss of life and serious violations of international human rights law and humanitarian law, undermine conflict prevention, management and resolution efforts, and hinders post-conflict reconstruction and development;
4. **Further expresses its deep concern** over the continued irresponsible international trade in conventional weapons and the excessive accumulation thereof. In this regard, Council **calls on** Member States and the international community to become party to the Arms Trade Treaty and institute effective transfer controls in line with its provisions;
5. **Notes with concern** that poorly secured and managed Government arms and ammunition stockpiles remain a main source of armaments for non-state armed groups, terrorist groups and criminals, and in this regard, **urges** Member States to implement effective and sustainable physical security and stockpile management on all Government stockpiles in line with international standards and best practices;
6. **Reaffirms** its intention to undertake all steps necessary to prevent the illicit transfers and sales of arms and ammunition, including small arms and light weapons, to non-state armed groups, terrorist groups and criminals. In this regard, Council **requests** the Commission to work in close collaboration with Member States, the United Nations, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution

(RECs/RMs), as well as other relevant entities, to provide regular briefings to the Council, on the illicit flows of arms and ammunition into conflict zones and provide practical recommendations;

7. **Welcomes** the support provided by the Commission, RECs/RMs and international partners and **underlines** the primary responsibility of Member States to mitigate threats posed by the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of SALW. Council, therefore, **urges** Member States to renew their commitment and efforts towards the full and effective implementation of the relevant regional and international instruments through nationally led and owned programs;

8. **Recognizes** that the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of arms and ammunition is significantly aided by porous African borders. In this regard, Council **reiterates** the need for regional approaches based on strong inter-state cooperation that fosters sharing of intelligence and information on suspected traffickers, trafficking routes, and suspected diversion activities. Therefore, Council **calls on** Member States that have not yet done so, to urgently ratify or accede to the AU Convention on Cross Border Cooperation (Niamey Convention);

9. **Notes with concern** the increased use of SALW in inter-communal conflicts over natural resources, particularly among pastoralist communities, and **stresses** the need for integrated regional approaches to mitigate environmental factors, enhance access to basic services and reduce levels of violence through community disarmament;

10. **Recognizes** the vital role played by AU Peace Support Operations in assisting Member States in physical security and stockpile management of arms and ammunition, disarmament and demobilization activities, as well as arms marking and registration. In this regard, Council **requests** the Commission to be mindful of these issues and identify the requisite capacities in the pre-deployment assessment and planning phases of Council-mandated Peace Support Operations;

11. **Also expresses its deep concern** over the continued threat posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war (ERW) and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), and their devastating impact on civilians, as well as on economic development, post-conflict reconstruction and regional integration. Council **welcomes** the commendable progress made by Member States in clearing areas under their jurisdiction contaminated by anti-personnel land mines, cluster munitions and ERW and **calls upon** the concerned Member States to spare no effort in meeting their clearance obligations pursuant to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the relevant Protocols to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons;

12. **Council further calls** on Member States, that have not yet done so, to accede to the afore-mentioned instruments in line with the spirit of the relevant decisions of the AU policy

organs, and **requests** the Commission to assist Member States in their clearance activities, as well as facilitate the exchange of expertise and resources among them;

13. **Reiterates** that the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), as well as their means of delivery, continues to constitute a serious threat to international peace and stability. Council **stresses** that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Conventions remain the key pillars of the global regime against WMD. In this regard, Council **calls on** Member States and the larger international community to work within these frameworks to further strengthen their authority and the non-proliferation assurances they are meant to provide. Council further **reaffirms** the inalienable right of all Parties to apply chemical, biological and nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes, including spearheading socio-economic development and improving welfare of the population, without discrimination and in conformity with the instruments;

14. **Further urges** States in the Zone, that have not yet done so, to ratify or accede to the African Nuclear Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba) without further delay, and **calls on** the concerned States to affirm their respect to the nuclear-weapon-free status of the zone by ratifying or acceding to the Protocols of the Treaty, as soon as possible;

15. **Further expresses concern** over the attempts made by non-state actors and terrorists to acquire WMD and, in this regard, **welcomes** the important contribution of United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in mitigating these threats;

16. **Commends** all efforts undertaken by the Commission to promote and support the implementation of the international regime against WMD and resolution 1540 (2004) on the continent, and **encourages** further efforts that take into consideration the socio-economic development needs of Member States;

17. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.