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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
589TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
12 APRIL 2016

PSC/PR/COMM. (DLXXXIX)

COMMUNIQUE

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 589th meeting, held on 12 April 2016, adopted the following decision on elections in Africa:

Council:

1. **Takes note** of the briefing by the Commission on the recent elections in Benin, Cape Verde, Central African Republic Chad, Djibouti, Comoros, Congo, Niger, Tanzania (in Zanzibar), and Uganda. Council **also takes note** of the briefing by the Commission on preparations for elections that will be held during the second quarter of 2016 ;
2. **Expresses its satisfaction** that the culture of peaceful and democratic elections continues to take root across Africa, as evidenced by the regular holding of national elections in AU Member States. In the same context, Council **welcomes** the growing positive trend of peaceful transfers of power in some AU Member States. In this regard, Council **commends** all Member States, which have successfully conducted peaceful elections and **urges** Member States to ensure peaceful, credible, transparent and democratic elections, which should be held in conformity to the AU shared values and instruments, in particular the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance in conducting their future elections;
3. **Commends** the efforts being deployed by the Commission, through the Department of Political Affairs, to ensure successful organization of peaceful, credible, transparent and democratic elections throughout the continent. In this regard, Council **reiterates** the need for the Commission to take the necessary steps for the deployment of pre-election assessment missions, long-term election observer missions and post-election observer missions, in sufficient numbers and on time taking into consideration the available financial resources, particularly in countries emerging from conflict and other Member States, where election-related violence has the potential of generating crisis or conflict situation, in line with Article 14 (1) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council;
4. **Expresses** serious concern over the boycott of elections by some political parties. In this connection, **stresses** the need for the Commission to engage political parties, especially during the pre-election period, to encourage dialogue and negotiations in their efforts to resolve any existing disputes rather than resorting to violence and boycotts, in order to ensure that the elections are conducted in a calm and peaceful atmosphere. Council **emphasizes** the importance of the Commission to continue its early warning initiatives aimed at detecting signs of instability early enough to ensure early response. In the same context, Council **encourages** political stakeholders

to accept election results and resolve election-related disputes through available legal avenues.

5. **Also stresses** the need for the Commission, working in collaboration with the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), to engage with civil society organizations with a view to ensuring that they continue to play a more constructive and positive role during elections processes. Council **highlights** the need for Member States to undertake civic and voter education for their citizens;

6. **Acknowledges** the important role that the media, in general, and social media, in particular, can play in the promotion of democracy, including the holding of peaceful elections. In this regard, Council **emphasizes** the need to ensure that social media is not abused to disrupt or undermine the credibility of election processes;

7. **Expresses deep concern** over the growing tendency of external interference in elections in the continent and in ways that often polarize communities and societies leading to election-related violence. In this regard, Council **stresses** the need for Member States to take full ownership of, and fund their election processes using national resources, bearing in mind that elections are very critical and sensitive processes and that, doing so, will also significantly contribute towards reducing their dependence and the vulnerabilities that are usually associated with external donor funding. In the same context, Council **urges** Member States to make contributions to **the** Democracy and Electoral Assistance Fund, in order to enable the Commission to more effectively assist those Member States that may need support in enhancing their electoral machinery;

8. **Reiterates** the need for the Commission to ensure that the popularization, in all AU Member States, of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, is considered as a continuous process, rather than wait for the time that Member States organize their elections. In this regard, Council, **once again, encourages** those Member States, which have not yet done so, to sign, ratify and domesticate the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, as well as all other relevant AU instruments;

9. **Looks forward** to the outcomes of the planned comprehensive review of AU election observation methodology. In this context, Council **requests** the Commission to follow up on the recommendations of the various AU election observer missions;

10. **Decides** to devote a session to discuss the challenges to and prospects for peaceful, transparent and credible elections in Africa;

11. **Also decides** to remain seized of the matter.