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P.O. Box: 3243, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Tel.: (251-11) 551 38 22 Fax: (251-11) 551 93 21
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
711TH MEETING
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ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR(DCCXI)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 711th meeting, held on 22 August 2017 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, received a briefing on the implementation of the communique of the 455th meeting of the PSC on the prevention and combating of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa, held in Nairobi, Kenya on September 2014.

Council welcomed the briefings made by the AU Commission and the Committee for Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) on the efforts deployed in the implementation of the provisions of 455th PSC communique on the prevention and combating of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa.

Council recalled its previous communiqués and press statements on terrorism and violent extremism, particularly communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV) on terrorism and violent extremism in Africa, adopted at its 455th meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 2 September 2015, at the level of Heads of State and Government.

Council commended the efforts deployed by the AU Commission, with the support of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), CISSA and other organs of the Union, as well as Member States and partners in implementing the provisions of the 455th PSC communique.

Council noted that, despite the commendable progress made in implementing the provisions of the 455th PSC communique in combating terrorism and violent extremism at national, continental and international levels, terrorism continues to spread geographically, with extreme consequences in Africa.

Council reiterated its deep concern over the increasing capacity of terrorist organizations to recruit new members, including Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) and to finance their activities through a variety of means linked to transnational organized crime, such as piracy, kidnap-for-ransom (KFR), drug and human trafficking, selling of antiquities, and illegal exploitation and selling of natural resources. In this regard, Council appealed to all Member States to establish Financial Intelligence Units in their national systems and appropriate judicial systems and capacities to address the problem of money laundering and to curb terrorist financing.

Council urged Member States to submit their annual reports pursuant to the provisions of the 2004 Protocol on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa to enable the Commission to accurately assess progress in combating terrorism and identify challenges and gaps in the implementation of the provisions of the 455th PSC communiqué.

Council emphasized the need for Member States to address the root causes and the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and radicalization. Council underscored the need to promote community engagement and socio-economic development to tackle the issues related to unemployment, poverty, political oppression, human rights violations, social and economic exclusion, which are some of the conditions which drive recruitment into terrorism and violent extremism, especially among the youth.

Council underlined the need for Member States to criminalize acts of recruitment and incitement to commit terrorist acts, in line with UN Security Council resolutions 1624 (2005) and 2178 (2014). Furthermore, Council highlighted the urgent need for Member States to put in place the required due legal processes and programs to handle disengaged and returning terrorist fighters through the criminal justice system and other appropriate de-radicalization and reintegration programs to prevent relapse into terrorism.

Council called for enhanced efforts on cross-border cooperation among neighboring Member States to strengthen mechanisms for the effective sharing of information and intelligence, including within the Nouakchott and Djibouti processes, the different regional fusion centres, and AFRIPOL whose roles have become critical in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. Council also called on the Commission, including the ACSRT and CISSA to continue to provide support and to facilitate the development of technical and operational capacities of Member States for effective prevention and combating of terrorism and violent extremism.

Council reiterated its call to Member states to enhance their capacities in combating terrorism and violent extremism using the existing tools of the AU and international organizations and emphasized the need to take appropriate measures to control and monitor the use of internet, particularly the use of social media, as a platform commonly used for radicalization. Furthermore, Council stressed the importance of engaging a broad range of actors in the fight against terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization, such as religious and traditional leaders, school authorities, civil society groups, the media and internet service providers, as well as youths and women.

Council expressed its deep concern over continued entry into Africa of illegal small arms and light weapons, as well as expansive illicit circulation of such arms within the continent, which fuel terrorism. In this regard, Council reiterated its request to CISSA to continue to provide a detailed reports on the nature and sources of weapons used by terrorists in Africa.

Council appealed to the United Nations and the international community at large, to continue to provide financial and other necessary support to the AU's efforts in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism in Africa.

Council called on all Member States to continue implementing the provisions of the 455th PSC communique, as well as other relevant AU and international instruments. Council further reiterated its call to Member States, which have not yet done so, to urgently take the necessary steps to become party to the 1999 OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and its 2004 Supplementary Protocol, the 2015 Niamey Convention on Cross Border Cooperation and to the relevant international instruments adopted under the auspices of the United Nations.

Council agreed to remain seized of the matter.