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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
740TH MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
18 DECEMBER 2017

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PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) dedicated its 740th meeting, held on 18 December 2017, to an open session on migration, development and security in Africa.

Council and participants took note of the communication made by the Commissioner of Social Affairs, Madam Amira el-Fadil, on the Challenges of Free Movement: Articulating Migration, Development and Security in Africa. They also took note of the presentations made by the Head of Mission of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to AU, UNECA and IGAD, Ms. Maureen Achieng, as well as by the representative of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), on Migration, Development and Security in Africa. They further took note of the statements made by Member States and bilateral and multilateral partners.

Council and participants recalled the press statement of the 739th PSC meeting held on 8 December 2017, on the situation in Libya, in which Council expressed its dismay at the reported inhuman treatments that African migrants are suffering in parts of Libya and endorsed the press statement issued by the Chairperson on 20 November 2017, in which he expressed AU's profound concern over the despicable conditions of migrants in Libya and, stressed that an investigation should be carried out by the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights on the matter. They welcomed the efforts jointly undertaken with the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN), to address the plight of African migrants in Libya through the establishment of the Joint AU-EU-UN Task Force that convened its first meeting at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, on 4 December 2017, under the Chairmanship of the AU Commissioner for Social Affairs, Madam Amira el-Fadil.

Council and participants reaffirmed their support for the actions already taken by the Chairperson of the Commission to address the situation of African migrants in Libya and called upon all Member States and stakeholders to actively support these humanitarian efforts.

Council and participants reiterated the importance of upholding relevant international and African instruments, including the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugee and the 1967 United Nations Protocol Relating to the Status of refugees, the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing Specific Aspects of Refugees Problem in Africa, the 2009 AU Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons - Kampala Convention, the Treaty for the Establishment of the African Economic Community (1991), as well as the Migration Policy Framework for Africa.

Council and participants further reiterated its appreciation to Member States that have already pledged logistical support for the repatriation of African migrants from Libya, as well as to Rwanda and Niger for offering to host migrants and refugees respectively, in the context of African solidarity.

Council and participants acknowledged the huge challenge facing Africa, as most of migration movements take place within the continent, implying the need to refocus policies and measures to address migration inside Africa and overseas migration, given that the trend of increasing number of migrants is likely to persist in future, posing critical challenges to Member States. They underlined that Africa is confronted with unprecedented number of voluntary and forced migration as a result of conflicts, climate change and natural disasters.

Council and participants recognised that migration in Africa should be viewed as part of the broader agenda for economic integration and, for fostering intra-Africa trade and investments. They recognised that migration has important economic and social impacts for high, middle and low income countries of origin and destination, as well as for migrants themselves.

Council and participants took into consideration that migration and its nexus to development has a huge potential for Africa's development, stressing that the benefits of migration to investments from remittances currently outweigh Official Development Assistance (ODA) and, therefore, the need to deploy the available instruments to address migration and mobility issues in Africa, including the free movement Agenda and the Continental Free trade Agreement.

Council and participants underscored the importance of the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (1991) that demonstrates the political commitment of African countries to achieve regional integration agenda, including free movement, with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) to serve as building blocks towards the unity of the continent.

Council and participants commended Member States that have already taken steps to facilitate free movement and mobility of people within the continent. They recognised measures taken in this regard by Rwanda, Ghana, Seychelles, Mauritius and, recently, by Kenya and Nigeria.

Council and participants recognized that migration and mobility within the context of Africa's integration will play a key role in unleashing the continent's growth potential. They also underlined the imperative need for secured borders to facilitate peaceful cross border mobility of people and defuse the perception that link migration to insecurity and instability.

Council and participants recalled the communiqué of the 661st PSC meeting held on 16 February 2017, at Ministerial Level, on Free Movement of People and Goods and its implication on Peace and Security in Africa, in which Council stressed the need for AU Member States to further enhance mutual trust, cooperation and collaboration in addressing security challenges related to free movement of people and goods, in order to prevent terrorist and criminal

groups from taking advantage and exploiting such facilities. They stressed the need for effective management of migration in Africa, with a view to avoid its potential detrimental effects, in particular with regard to security and socio-economic cohesion of both communities of origin and destination. They further underscored the importance for enhanced collaboration between and among Member States Immigration, Defense, Security and Intelligence services, in close collaboration with relevant African and international institutions.

Council and participants underscored the need to take into account concerns expressed by some Member States and reiterated the need to address the potential impacts of migration in all its manifestations, including insecurity that may be associated with unregulated and irregular movements of people. They urged all Member States through regional cooperation and mechanisms to counteract enablers of irregular migration, including organized criminal network/groups that operate across borders through human trafficking and smuggling of migrants as a business.

Council and participants stressed that the responsibility of any Member State is to protect its citizens and those within its territories. In this regard, they appreciated the readiness expressed by Member States to receive their nationals returning from Libya and, urged them to provide conducive and peaceful environment and more development opportunities to stem out perilous outward migration for better opportunities overseas.

Council agreed to remain actively seized of the matter.