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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
762ND MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
9 APRIL 2018

PSC/PR/BR (DCCLXII)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 762nd meeting held on 9 April 2018, received a briefing on “Effective Take-off of the AU Humanitarian Agency (AUHA): Addressing the Impact of Terrorism and Armed conflicts on Africa’s Social Fabric”.

Council took note of the presentations made by the Director for the Department of Political Affairs of the AU, the Representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Council also took note of the statement delivered by the representative of Cote d’Ivoire in its capacity as African Member of the United Nations Security Council.

Council recalled the relevant provisions of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council, including Article 7(1p), which mandates to support and facilitate humanitarian action in situations of armed conflict or major natural disasters. Council further recalled its earlier pronouncements on humanitarian challenges in Africa, including press statements PSC/PR/BR.(CDLXIX), PSC/PR/BR. (DCXCV), PSC/PR/BR (DCCXXII) and PSC/PR/BR. (DCCVII) adopted at its meetings 469th 695th 723rd and 707th, held on 25 November 2014, 21 June 2017, 5 October 2017 and 8 August 2017, respectively.

Council expressed its deep concern at the continued prevalence of conflict and violence in different parts of the continent and at their devastating consequences for the affected civilian populations. Council further expressed its deep concern on the growing scope, scale and complexity of the humanitarian situation and climate changes that are negatively affecting human development, as well as at the dire humanitarian situations caused by natural disasters in Africa.

Council also expressed its deep concern over the social economic impact of large numbers of displaced person and refugees on the host countries and communities, particularly threats to national and regional security. In this regard, Council called for collective measures to register and screen refugees and asylum seekers, underscoring the need to maintain the civilian character of refugee settings and camps.

Council noted with concern that in most humanitarian operations, the AU presence is glaringly lacking and dominated by other international organizations and underscores the need for the AU to step up its presence and action in humanitarian situations on the continent. Council emphasized that AU visibility in such situations should be supported by concrete assistance and support to concerned Member States and affected populations, while reaffirming the principle of primary responsibility of the concerned states to providing leadership in initiating and coordinating humanitarian action.

Council underscored that social economic transformation of the continent and aspirations of Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals cannot be meaningfully achieved without tackling the main drivers of humanitarian crises on the continent. In this regard, Council underlined the urgent need to address the structural root causes of forced displacement and refugees on the continent with a view to finding comprehensive durable solutions, in line with humanitarian international law.

Council welcomed AU efforts towards building a humanitarian architecture, including the African Humanitarian Agency, as a basis for appropriate and effective humanitarian action on the continent and emphasizes on strengthening continental, regional and national capabilities for prevention, early warning, early response and early post conflict reconstruction to avoid relapse into protracted situations, and further called for mechanisms that link Africa's humanitarian action to Agenda 2063 and 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Council requested the AU Commission to expedite the development of the modalities for the operationalization of the African Humanitarian Agency and emphasized that the proposed mechanisms should outline the structural, financial and legal implications for consideration of the AU Decision-making Organs, bearing in mind for a genuine Africa ownership of the project. In this regard, Council expressed its readiness to remain seized with processes leading to full operationalization of Agency by January 2019, within the overall framework of the reform processes of the AU.

Council underscored the need for the new Agency to draw inspiration from, and strengthen synergy with the existing institutions and mechanisms within Member States and Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), and drawing on comparative advantages within the UN systems, while bearing in mind the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity.

Council underlined the need to finance the Agency through Africa's own resources, to ensure its independence. To this end, Council recalled the previous Decisions of the Executive Council and the Assembly on Alternative Sources of Financing the AU and reiterated the need to have predictable, reliable and sustainable resources to enable AU fulfil its humanitarian responsibilities. In this regard, Council urged all Member States to urgently implement the Assembly Decision to increase AU humanitarian fund from 2% to 4% of Member States' assessed contributions.

Council welcomed the envisaged holding of Donors' Pledging Conference to raise resources to replenish the Special Emergency Fund for humanitarian response and appealed to all Member States and partners to extend their support.

Council appealed to the international community to continue to support the AU, RECs/RMs and Member States within the framework of fair international burden sharing, as well as the international humanitarian system in addressing humanitarian crises on the continent, especially in registering and screening refugees, asylum seekers and other displaced populations, to enable host states and communities cope with the impact of their presence. Council called on Member States to facilitate the registration of refugees, asylum seeker and other displaced populations.

Council called upon all Member States, which have not yet done so, to sign, ratify and domesticate all African and international instruments related to the IDPs, refugees and humanitarian aspects in general.

Council agreed to receive regular briefings from AU Commission on the humanitarian situation in Africa, including the operationalization of the Agency, and to work in close collaboration with the Sub-Committee of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) on Refugees.

Council decided to remain actively seized of the matter.