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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
904TH MEETING

16 JANUARY 2020
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR (CMIV)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 904th meeting held on 16 January 2020, briefed by The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Peter Maurer on role and activities of ICRC in Africa.

Council welcomed the presentation by the President of the ICRC and underscored the importance of partnership between the AU and the ICRC, as well as its continued commitment to peace and security in Africa. Council underlined the efforts deployed by the ICRC in addressing humanitarian crisis and other challenges relating to the protection of internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, children affected by conflicts and the needs of victims of sexual violence and protection of humanitarian personnel and their facilities in conflict situations.

Council took note of the efforts of the President of the ICRC in his recent visits to Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia, in which, among other, issues related to the current global humanitarian and multilateral dynamics, the double impact of climate change and armed conflict on communities and forced displacement were discussed.

Council commended African countries hosting refugees and emphasized the need for Member States to redouble efforts in sharing the challenge of hosting refugees, in line with AU and international instruments. In this regard, Council reiterated its request to the Commission to expedite the operationalization of the African Humanitarian Agency (AfHA) as provided for in the African Common Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness, with a view to supporting Member States on humanitarian related aspects.

Council also recalled the Decision Assembly/AU/DEC.718 (XXXII) and stressed the urgent necessity, for host countries, using the relevant tools, to proceed to the census and registration of refugees and IDPs in all the camps in the Continent, in cooperation with the AU Commission and the UN relevant agencies, in order to provide adapted and targeted humanitarian aid and avoid its embezzlement.

Council underlined that the year 2020, under the AU theme “Silencing the Guns in Africa: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa’s Development” is an opportunity for all Member States and RECs/RECs to enhance their efforts on the protection of IDPs and refugees, as well as signing, ratifying, domesticating and implementing relevant instruments on IDPs and refugees, in particular the AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention).

Council expressed deep concern over use of explosive weapons in conflict situations, which has long term effects to civilians and impedes the delivery of humanitarian assistance to

the population in need. In this regard, Council stressed the need for Member States to address the economic, social and environmental causes of conflicts.

Council condemned the militarization of IDPs and refugees camps which allows non-civilian activities in those premises, including inflows of weapons, military training, and recruitment. Council highlighted that the militarization of camps deprive camps from their humanitarian character and contribute to insecurity in the countries and regions concerned, and hinder the conduct of humanitarian activities in the protection of IDPs and refugees in the camps. In this regard, Council urges those concerned in the management of camps, to ensure safety and security, with a view to maintain the humanitarian character of those premises. In this context, Council urges Member States to provide cooperation to the African and international competent jurisdictions, to take legal actions against those involved in violations of human rights, the militarization of and recruitment in the IPDs and refugees camps, in full compliance with the International Law and Kampala Convention.

Council expressed grave concern over the double impact of climate change and armed conflicts which exacerbates the already deteriorated security and socio-economic situations in the continent. In this regard, Council welcomed the ICRC initiative of revising the 1994 ICRC Guidelines for military manuals and instructions on the protection of the environment in times of armed conflict, in order to effectively address the issue.

Council commended the AU's efforts in the implementation of the AU's policies on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), and also applauded the recently development in the established PCRD Centre in Cairo, Egypt, that will steer regional strategies on stability and development, such as in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin in partnership with other international agencies.

Council acknowledged the commitment and engagement of ICRC in Africa in implementing its mandate based on its seven fundamental principles, namely, humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality, geared towards ensuring that human dignity and life in armed conflicts and other situations of violence in Africa remain protected.

Council stressed on the need for additional efforts to mobilize resources towards the protection of civilian populations affected by armed conflicts and other situations of violence in Africa and Council reiterated its request to the Chairperson of the AU Commission to recommend to AU Member States proposals on how best the Permanent Representatives Committee Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and IDPs can be able to respond to the eruption of natural disasters in the Continent.

Council agreed to remain seized of the matter.

