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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1135TH MEETING

31 JANUARY 2023
ADDIS-ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.1135 (2023)

COMMUNIQUÉ



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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 1135th meeting held on 31 January 2023, that was dedicated to an Open Session on the Inaugural Commemoration of Africa Day of Peace and Reconciliation in line with the decision of the 16th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government held on 28 May 2022, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

The Peace and Security Council,

Recalling Declaration [Ext/Assembly/AU/Decl.(XVI)] adopted by the 16th Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea on 28 May 2022, which instituted 31 January of each year as “Africa Day of Peace and Reconciliation” and Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec.501(XXII)] adopted by the 22nd Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, which declared 2014-2024 as the Madiba Nelson Mandela Decade of Reconciliation in Africa;

Also recalling its previous decisions and pronouncements on peace, justice, and reconciliation, particularly Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1017 (2021)] adopted at its 1017th meeting held on 5 August 2021 on AU Support to the Member States in Political Transition and Post-Conflict situations; Communiqué [PSC/MIN/COMM.(DCCCXCIX)] adopted at its 899th meeting held at the ministerial level, on 5th December 2019, on “National Reconciliation, Restoration of Peace, Security and Rebuilding of Cohesion in Africa”; Press Statement [PSC/PR/BR.(DCCCXCI)] adopted at its 891st meeting, Open Session, held on 5 November 2019, on the theme: “Living together in Peace”; Press Statement [PSC/PR/BR.(DCLXXII)] adopted at its 672nd meeting, Open Session, held on 28 March 2017; Press Statement [PSC/PR/BR.(DXXV)] adopted at its 525th meeting, Open Session, held on 23 July 2015; Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.(CDIX)] adopted at its 409th meeting, Open Session, held on 18 December 2013; and Communiqué [PSC/MIN/COMM.(CCCLXXXIII)] adopted at its 383rd meeting held at ministerial level, on 29 June 2013;

Further recalling Resolution, A/RES/72/130 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 8 December 2017, declaring 16 May of each year as the International Day of Living Together in Peace;

Noting the opening remarks by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Uganda to the AU and Stand-In PSC Chairperson for the month of January 2023, H.E. Ambassador Rebecca Amuge Otengo; the statements by the Chairperson of the AU Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat; by the AU Champion for Peace and Reconciliation, H.E. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola; by the Chairperson of the AU Panel of the Wise, H.E. Domitien Ndayizeye, former President of the Republic of Burundi, and by the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye; as well as by the representatives of Member States, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), the United Nations, civil society organizations (CSOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); and

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council:

1. **Welcomes** the inaugural Commemoration of Africa Day of Peace and Reconciliation and **decides** to institutionalize and regularize it as an annual event;

2. **Expresses appreciation** to the efforts of H.E. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, as the AU Champion for Peace and Reconciliation and his continued efforts to bring peace and stability in the Great Lakes region and assure him of the continued support of Council;
3. **Commends** Burundi, South Africa, and the Gambia for sharing their experiences in promoting peace and reconciliation, as well as the AU Commission for its continued support to Member States in their efforts to promote dialogue initiatives aimed at ensuring the conducive environment for achieving national reconciliation and social cohesion, including through the implementation of national transitional justice programmes;
4. **Acknowledges** the nexus between peace, justice and reconciliation and in this respect, **stresses the importance** of comprehensively addressing the fundamental root causes of conflict, including rebuilding the capacity of state institutions, building inclusive societies, fighting impunity, promoting transitional justice and accountability using both, local including traditional institutions and where necessary, regional and international institutions, as necessary preconditions for promoting peaceful and reconciled societies;
5. **Underscores the need** of strengthening the pillars of the African Peace and Security Architecture and African Governance Architecture to adequately address structural and cyclical instability; especially the role of the Panel of the Wise in providing early response to early warning through the tool of preventive diplomacy;
6. **Underlines the importance** of deploying African mediators in African peace processes particularly in Member States in political transition; as well as the importance of supporting inclusive, locally-led and owned peace and reconciliation initiatives, which effectively contribute towards preventing the recurrence of conflict and help in building more resilient societies;
7. **Also stresses the need** to ensure that post-conflict reconstruction and development initiatives directly and effectively address trauma and other psycho-social needs of victims of violent conflicts, particularly, women, children and other vulnerable sections of society;
8. While expressing concern over the deterioration of State institutions, the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government and the outbreak of conflict in some Member States, including the growing threat of terrorism and violent extremism, **welcomes** the progress made in democratic consolidation that is being registered in other Member States, and **urges** Member States to promote broad based, inclusive and competitive politics and avoid the politics of exclusion; and **welcomes** the efforts towards comprehensively addressing the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism;
9. **Requests** the AU Commission to further enhance the Continental early warning, conflict prevention, management, resolution and post-conflict reconstruction and development capacities while remaining focused on the implementation of AU Agenda 2063 and the AU Flagship project of silencing the Guns in Africa by the Year 2030;
10. **Encourages** the Commission and Member States to continue promoting the culture of peace, tolerance, justice, forgiveness, and reconciliation as an important step for conflict prevention, especially in post-conflict communities, and, in this regard, **applauds** the Republic of Angola for the biennale Luanda Pan-African Forum, as a platform for sharing experiences, lessons and best practices in the promotion of reconciliation and the culture of peace; and **urges** all Parties to Cessation of Hostilities Agreements to commit to their full and timely implementation;

11. **Underscores the importance** of inclusivity and meaningful participation of all marginalised groups and affected communities, particularly, women, youth, victims, community leaders and leaders of religious groups, in the efforts of the Commission to consolidate peace;
12. **Calls Upon** all security forces to fully observe and comply with their obligations in the 1949 Geneva Conventions on International Humanitarian Law; and International Human Rights law, and to, at all times distinguish between military and civilian objectives taking care to protect schools, hospitals and the rights of women and children;
13. **Underlines** the need to put at the centre of the peace agenda, a comprehensive Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration program, while **noting** that successfully reintegrating soldiers requires sustained funding from Governments and Partners in order to adequately take care of their reintegration needs;
14. **Requests** AU Members States, AU Commission and RECs/RMs to mainstream child protection measures in early warning, conflict analysis, the pacific settlement of disputes, transitional justice and disarmament, and demobilization and reintegration;
15. **Further underscores the importance** of continued revitalization of the Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise) and the regional decentralization of FemWise-Africa, and emphasized the need for expeditious operationalization of the WiseYouth Network pursuant to paragraph 34 of Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec.815 (XXXV)] adopted by the 35th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government held from 5 to 6 February 2022; and
16. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.

2023-01-31

Communiqué of the 1135th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council, Held on 31 January 2023, on the Inaugural Commemoration of the Africa Day of Peace and Reconciliation.

Peace and Security Council

African Union Commission

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