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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1187TH MEETING

17 NOVEMBER 2023
ADDIS-ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.1187 (2023)

COMMUNIQUÉ



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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1187th meeting held on 17 November 2023 on the commemoration of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS): focusing on women's participation in peace processes in Africa:

The Peace and Security Council,

Recalling Assembly Decision [Assembly/AU/Dec.842(XXXVI)] adopted by the Heads of State and Government during the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union held from 18 to 19 February 2023, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, renewing commitment to the promotion of Women, Peace and Security Agenda;

Further recalling the provisions and principles of article 4(l) of the AU Constitutive Act, Aspirations 3, 4 and 6 of the Agenda 2063, the Protocol of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa adopted in Maputo in 2003, the 2015 Gender Peace and Security Programme (GPSP), and the Doctrine on AU Peace Support Operations adopted by the 3rd Extraordinary Specialized Technical Committee on Defence Safety and Security in January 2021, as well as the AU Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 2018-2028, amongst others, which have put forth gender equality and gender mainstreaming explicitly as normative and policy imperatives, especially in peace and security structures and processes;

Committed to the implementation of its decisions and pronouncements on Women, Peace and Security in Africa and related themes, particularly Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1144 (2023)] adopted at its 1144th meeting held on 14 March 2023; Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM.1109 (2022)] adopted at its 1109th meeting held on 3 October 2022, Communiqué [PSC/MIN/COMM.1063 (2022)] adopted at its 1063rd meeting held at the Ministerial level on 8 February 2022, and Communiqué [PSC/MIN/COMM.(CMLXXXVII)] adopted at its 987th meeting held at the Ministerial level on 22 March 2021;

Faithful to the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality [Assembly/AU/Decl.12(III) Rev.1] adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Union at their third Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, held on 6-8 July 2004;

Noting the opening remarks made by H.E. Ambassador Jainaba Jagna, Permanent Representative of the Republic of The Gambia, on behalf of Ambassador Abdi Mahmoud Eybe, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Djibouti to the AU and Chairperson of the PSC for November 2023, the statement of H.E. Ambassador Adeoye Bankole, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, and the briefing by H.E. Mme. Bineta Diop, Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on Women, Peace and Security;

Also noting the statements by Dr Maxime Houinato, United Nations Women Regional Director for East and Southern Africa Region (ESARO), and a representative of the European Union Delegation to the African Union; **further noting** the statements by women peacebuilders from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan;

Taking note of all the statements by representatives of AU Member States and Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms;

Reaffirming its commitment to the ideals of the landmark United Nations Security Council

(UNSC) Resolution 1325 (2000) on WPS adopted on 31 October 2000 and its implementation; **further reaffirming** the AU's commitment to include women in peace and security processes in the Continent and to find solutions to the root causes of the crises and conflicts in the Continent; and

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

1. **Expresses deep concern** over the persistence of conflict, resurgence and emergence of threats to peace, security and stability in the Continent, with adverse impacts on women, girls, youth and children; **underscores** the imperative of holistically addressing the root causes and drivers of conflict in Africa;
2. **Further expresses deep concern** over the prevailing insecurity and ongoing armed conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, perpetuated by various armed groups resulting in a dire humanitarian situation; **condemns, in the strongest terms**, the human rights abuses committed by various armed groups and terrorist groups; and in this regard, **calls for** punitive actions against all those found to have committed human rights abuses and gender-based violence;
3. **Strongly condemns** the unjustified continuation of armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan, resulting in the wanton destruction of infrastructure and a dire humanitarian situation; **calls on** all the parties to the conflict to consider the supreme interest of Sudan above all else, cease hostilities and commit to an inclusive peace process with the meaningful participation of all strata of society, including women;
4. **Highlight** the importance for all parties to conflict to respect all universal conventions, especially the International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and International Humanitarian Law (IHL); **emphasises** the need for opening a humanitarian corridor to ensure aid reaches those in need and alleviate suffering;
5. **Stresses** the imperative for the protection of women, youth, children and all vulnerable groups in all situations of conflict and crisis, including against sexual and gender-based violence; in this regard, **requests** the AU Commission to provide support to the countries concerned to develop and implement rehabilitation programmes for women and girls affected by conflicts, in particular, sexual abuse;
6. **Underscores** the need to ensure that all civilian population enjoy their fundamental human rights and, in this regard, **encourages** Member States and the international community to redouble their efforts in strengthening the protection of women and further enhancing their participation in all efforts for finding lasting peace and security in Africa;
7. **Recognizes** the critical role of women in the promotion of peace, security, stability and development in Africa and **reiterates its call** to ensure effective and meaningful participation of women in peace processes, including in early warning and conflict prevention, mediation and dialogue to promote women, peace and Security agenda on the Continent;
8. **Commends** the efforts deployed by the FemWise-Africa Network and Panel of the Wise and **encourages** Member states to support their activities, as well as the AU Commission to provide the necessary support for them to effectively discharge their mandates; and in this regard, **urges** the Panel of the Wise, FemWise-Africa Network and all peacebuilders to redouble their efforts in preventive diplomacy efforts in order to foster social cohesion in the Member States, Regions and the entire Continent and prevent the eruption of conflict;
9. **Emphasizes** the need to appoint women as lead mediators and mediation experts in peace processes to ensure gender parity and the inclusion of gender experts as a norm for mediation teams;

and **stresses** the need to adopt financial mechanisms to facilitate meaningful participation of women in peace processes, including capacity programs to provide the requisite skills in conflict prevention, resolution, and management, as well as post-conflict reconstruction and development;

10. **Underlines** the imperative of peace agreements to include gender provisions to address women's security in conflict and crisis situations and to participate in peacebuilding efforts in the Continent;

11. **Underscores** the importance of advancing national, continental and continental tailor-made programmes to promote economic opportunities for women, including through funding of small and medium enterprises and start-up businesses, particularly those in conflict and post-conflict situations in Africa;

12. **Applauds** Member States as well as the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) on the progress made in the implementation of the landmark UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000) on WPS and **encourages** the Member States and RECs/RMs to redouble their efforts in ensuring its domestication at national and regional levels, and its full implementation thereof;

13. **Commends** the Member States which have adopted the National Action Plans (NAPs) on WPS and **encourages** them to ensure their full implementation at the local level; **urges** Member States to submit their reports to the AU Commission; **encourages** Member States which are yet to develop and adopt the NAPs to do so to further advance the WPS agenda, ensure gender parity and create conducive conditions for the meaningful participation of women in all spheres of decision making; and **also encourages** Member States to share best practices, as well as provision of technical and financial support to accelerate the implementation of the NAPs;

14. **Underscores** the need for the AU Commission, AU Organs, Member States, RECs/RMs, institutions and all other organizations, which are yet to do so, to put in place a quota system to promote gender parity in accordance with relevant normative instruments, including in governance of peace and security agenda in Africa;

15. **Emphasizes** the need to evaluate the achievements made in the implementation of the UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000) on WPS to address the identified challenges and map the way forward; **calls for** further expansion of space for the engagement of women and civil society organizations, including in AU Platforms on peace, humanitarian and development nexus in strengthening the implementation of the UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000) on WPS;

16. **Underscores** the need for creating a platform for exchanging ideas, knowledge and best practices between the AU Commission, Member States, RECs/RMs and the UN as well as partners, starting at the expert level, with a view of further advancing the WPS agenda;

17. **Requests** the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on WPS, supported by the AU Commission, to undertake a comprehensive review on the status of involvement of women in peace processes and report back to the Council with recommendations on areas for further improvement;

18. **Applauds** the Chairperson of the AU Commission for institutionalizing the office of the Special Envoy on WPS and **reiterates its request** to the Chairperson of the AU Commission to avail the requisite technical and financial support to enable the office to effectively discharge its mandate and further enhance its efforts in coordinating the work of women across the Continent;

19. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.