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**13th ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SPECIALISED
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, SAFETY AND SECURITY**

5 NOVEMBER 2020 - VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM ONLINE PLATFORM

DECLARATION

**DECLARATION OF THE 13th ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SPECIALISED TECHNICAL
COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, SAFETY AND SECURITY HELD VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM ONLINE
PLATFORM ON 5 NOVEMBER 2020**

1. We, the members of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STCDSS) of the African Union (AU) met at the 13th Meeting held virtually via Zoom Online Platform and considered the Conclusions of the 16th Meeting of the African Chiefs of Defence and Heads of Safety and Security (ACDSS) held on 4 November 2020, which was preceded by a Meeting of Experts held from 2 to 3 November 2020.

2. On the basis of our deliberations, we declare as follows:
 - a. Urge Member States, including during the AU Extra-Ordinary Summit planned to take place on 5 December 2020 in South Africa, on Silencing the Guns, to consider the extension of the Silencing the Guns AU flagship project which will enable a review of the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa and ensure a realignment and reprioritization to guarantee realisation of the vision and objectives of the Roadmap. It is proposed that the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap be extended for a period of 10 years with a review every two (2) years, in line with the AU Agenda 2063. It is also requested that national action plans be developed to further enhance implementation of silencing the guns in Member States. Taking into account the harmful effects of foreign interference, particularly external military intervention in Africa's peace and security matters, urges the AU and Member States to ensure that such intervention no more takes place in the continent. Furthermore, reminds the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of its decision to convene a meeting in Equatorial Guinea, to brainstorm on Silencing the Guns in Africa, which was to be held in March 2020, but could not, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The outcome of the meeting, which was to be preceded by a meeting of women and youth on the same subject, was to feed into the process, leading to the AU Extraordinary Summit on Silencing the Guns;

 - b. Recall its decision in paragraph 3(a) of the Declaration of the 12th STCDSS, and direct the AU Commission to conduct within a month after this 13th Meeting of the STCDSS, a virtual meeting on the review of the work done so far in the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap since 2017, which will serve as an important contribution to the Extra-Ordinary Assembly on Silencing the Guns scheduled for 5 December 2020 in South Africa.

 - c. Endorse the recommendation of the PSC to the Assembly of the Union to extend observation of the Africa Amnesty Month during September of each year for a period of 10 years, within the context of Agenda 2063. It should be noted that the Africa Amnesty Month initiative emanated from the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap. In this regard, there is a need for these two activities to go hand-in-hand. To this effect, there is need for advocacy and campaign for the Africa Amnesty Month in Member States, to

ensure that this initiative is assimilated at the grassroots level, which is crucial for achieving success;

- d. Takes note of paragraph 5 of Executive Council Decision EX.CL Dec./1100(XXXVII) adopted on 14 October 2020 which *endorse[d] the report and recommendation of the AU High Representative to continue to use the scale of assessment for the regular budget to assess Member State contributions to the AU Peace Fund in line with the general consensus*. In this context, the Executive Council took note of the reservations on this matter brought by the Arab Republic of Egypt, People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Republic of Tunisia, Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and the State of Libya. Additionally, the Commission is urged to finalize the guidance documents on the AU Peace Fund and on financing through access to United Nations (UN) Assessed contribution for consideration by the PSC and endorsement by the next AU Assembly;
- e. Reiterate the provisional adoption of the AU Doctrine on Peace Support Operations by the 12th Meeting of the STCDSS on 15 December 2019, pending further inputs to be provided to the Commission by Member States, as well as by the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), not later than 30 November 2020 to facilitate finalisation of the Doctrine and its subsequent consideration and adoption by an Extraordinary STCDSS to be held in January 2021 to enable its endorsement by the 34th Assembly of the Union in February 2021. The Extraordinary STCDSS to be held in January 2021 will also address the issue relating to the establishment of an enhanced structure to cater for planning, deployment, management and liquidation of PSO. Furthermore, this meeting will consider and forge a way forward for the establishment of a Special Unit within the African Standby Force (ASF) to support Africa's effort in preventing and combating terrorism. In this context, tasks the RECs/RMs to elaborate modalities for the operationalisation of the Special Unit and convey the outcome to the AU Commission by 30 November 2020 for consideration by the Extraordinary STCDSS in January 2021;
- f. Commend the efforts facilitated by the Commission to ensure continued enhancement of the Compliance and Accountability Framework for AU PSO, including the assessment of progress in the implementation of the AU Workplan, which was an annexure of the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the AU Peace Fund, adopted by the 689th PSC meeting held on 30 May 2017. Within this context, the Commission is requested to present to the PSC, the outcome of the assessment with a new workplan that outlines current priorities that will further enhance and consolidate the Compliance and Accountability Framework for AU PSO;
- g. Take note of the efforts of the Commission in enhancing the civilian, police and military components of the ASF and PSO to ensure increased AU capacities and capabilities for multidimensional and integrated approaches in the planning and decision-making, as well as implementation and

management of AU PSO. Additionally, the Commission is directed to explore options to address issues that require specific considerations for PSO;

- h. Reiterate its call to Member States to continue supporting the ASF Continental Logistics Base (CLB), which already holds considerable equipment for PSO. This includes through the current secondment of personnel at own cost and provision of sustainable resources for effective management of the CLB, as well as storage and maintenance of donated equipment in the base. In this respect, the Commission should elaborate a structure of the ASF CLB, as well as the staffing and funding requirements to facilitate institutionalisation of the ASF CLB by AU Policy Organs. In the same vein, urge RECs/RMs to commit to receive and preposition ASF equipment in their Regional Logistics Depots (RLD) and/or identified Member States to facilitate rapid deployment in the future. Additionally, the Commission is urged, when facilitating recruitment of officers for the ASF CLB, that once the structure is approved, to prioritise Member States that have provided Staff Officers at own cost;
- i. Urge AU Member States to provide funding for the operationalization of the ASF Command Control Communication and Information Systems (C3IS) project, in conjunction with the efforts of the Commission to secure funding for the project;
- j. Implore AU Member States to provide support for additional strategic lift capabilities;
- k. Request all Member States to continue supporting the efforts of the Commission in preventing and controlling the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in PSO;
- l. Urge African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) Volunteering Nations (VNs) to comply with the relevant AU Assembly Decisions regarding the harmonisation of ACIRC pursuant to Assembly/AU/Dec.718 and submit a report to the next AU Assembly for consideration;
- m. Take note of the effort of the Commission to review progress achieved in the implementation of the Maputo Strategic Workplan on the Enhancement of the ASF (2016–2020). This review should inform the development of a draft Five-Year successor plan (2021-2025) which should be submitted for consideration by the 14th Ordinary Meeting of the STCDSS;
- n. Direct the Commission to align all training curriculum and standards with the new AU Doctrine on PSO to enable development of required capacities for the conduct and effective management of AU PSO;
- o. Recall its decision in paragraph 3(h) of the Declaration of the 12th STCDSS which directed the Commission to conduct a second phase of the Mapping

Study on Small Arms and Light Weapons focusing more on illicit weapons flows as linked to terrorist activities, working in close cooperation with Member States and the RECs/RMs;

- p. Recall its decision in paragraph 3(j) of the Declaration of the 12th STCDSS which directed the Commission to review the 1977 Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa and submit to the 14th Ordinary Meeting of the STCDSS for consideration;
 - q. Reiterate its call to Member States in paragraph 3(o) of the Declaration of the 12th STCDSS to ratify the African Union Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation, known as the Niamey Convention (2014) and to develop national border policies in line with the AU Strategy for Better Integrated Border Governance (2019). Additionally, all Member States are urged to ensure respect for the borders of other Member States;
 - r. Request Member States to continue supporting implementation of the mandates of current AU mandated and authorised PSOs;
 - s. Urge the Commission and relevant stakeholders to facilitate the implementation of AU Assembly Decision 792 to support the Group of Five (G5) Sahel Member States, and in mobilizing resources to address the issue of terrorism in the Sahel as a whole. In this respect, stresses the importance of AU leadership in this process. The Commission is also directed to consider which kind of assistance can be offered to all Member States and regions in the continent experiencing threats of terrorism as part of efforts to prevent and respond to this scourge;
 - t. Urge Member States, through the Chair of the Joint Coordination Mechanism (JCC) to convene the 7th Ministerial Meeting of the JCC of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord Resistant Army (RCI-LRA) to agree on a political direction for consideration by the PSC. Further, direct the Commission to develop an appropriate strategy for the rehabilitation of the affected areas and to mobilize the necessary resources to implement the strategy; and
 - u. Take note of the structure of the new Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) Department approved by the 33rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union held in February 2020 through Assembly/AU/Dec.750(XXXIII), with a broad mandate of facilitating conflict prevention, management and resolution. In addition, and considering the important role of the Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD) in the planning, deployment, management and liquidation of AU PSOs, direct the Commission to facilitate consideration of this matter at an Extraordinary meeting of the STCDSS in January 2021.
3. Thank all delegations for their participation and the AUC for elaboration of working documents of high quality and for facilitating the meeting.

4. Encourage the Commission to continue to provide regular updates and reports on progress towards the implementation of our decisions, particularly continued implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), in the next meetings of the STCDSS.
5. Further reiterate the role of the STCDSS as per Assembly/AU/Dec. 227 (XII) and in line with the provisions of Article 15 of the Constitutive Act of the AU (2000). In this regard, we hereby submit this Declaration to the 38th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the AU for onward transmission to the 34th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, scheduled to take place on 6 and 7 February 2021.