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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

270TH MEETING

5 APRIL 2011

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR.1(CCLXX)

PRESS STATEMENT

**PRESS STATEMENT OF THE 270TH MEETING
OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL**

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 270th Meeting held on April 5, 2011, was briefed by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, and the Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in his capacity as Representative of the current Chairman of ECOWAS, on the latest developments in the situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

Council expressed its deep concern over the grave humanitarian consequences caused by the deterioration of the security situation in Côte d'Ivoire, resulting from the intensification of military operations following the refusal of Mr. Laurent Gbagbo to cede power, in the context of the implementation of the peaceful solution endorsed by the PSC on 10 March 2011.

Council reaffirmed its earlier decisions on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire, particularly its 259th and 265th Meetings held on 28 January and 10 March, 2011, respectively at the level of Heads of State and Government. In this regard, Council urged Mr. Gbagbo to cede power immediately to President Alassane Ouattara in order to curtail the suffering of the Ivorian People.

Council deplored the loss of many lives, condemned the violation of human rights and other abuses in the context of military conflict, and reiterated the imperative of the protection of the civilian population and the binding responsibility of all sides for the respect of international humanitarian law, including access of humanitarian agencies to civilian populations needing assistance. In this regard, Council stressed the need for an independent investigation into the killings of civilians in Douékoué. Council encouraged UNOCI, within the framework of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council of UN, to vigorously implement its mandate to protect civilians.

Council expressed deep regret over the refusal of outgoing President, Laurent Gbagbo to accept the proposals made by the High Level Panel of the AU to resolve the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire as endorsed, on 10 March, 2011, by its 265th meeting, which President Ouattara formally accepted, as well as Laurent Gbagbo's rejection of all other initiatives for a way out of the crisis, and which did not allow the rapid completion of the implementation of a peaceful resolution of the crisis. In this context, Council expressed appreciation to the efforts being made by the President of Mauritania, Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, in cooperation with other African Heads of State and the Commission, with the view to bring to an end the bloodbath and to peacefully resolving the current crisis, and urged all the parties to promote the success of these efforts.

Council welcomed the resolution adopted by the 39th Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Abuja, on March 24 2011. Council reaffirmed its determination to work in close cooperation with all the Ivorian parties concerned and ECOWAS, with the support of UN and other partners, for the consolidation of peace and the promotion of a genuine national reconciliation among Ivorians. Council also welcomed the adoption, on 30 March 2011, of UN Security Council Resolution 1975 (2011).

Council requested the Chairperson of the Commission, in close cooperation with the ECOWAS Commission and with the support of the UN, to take all necessary steps to identify urgent actions that the AU could undertake to assist the Ivorian authorities in the promotion of national reconciliation, the deepening of democracy and the consolidation of peace.

Council recognized the extremely difficult and dangerous conditions under which diplomatic missions, in particular the AU Representative, are operating in Abidjan, and paid tribute to the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission and all members of his team and assured them of its full support. In this regard, Council requested the United Nations Forces to insure, as much as possible, the protection and security of the diplomatic missions which are accredited in Côte d'Ivoire.

Council agreed to remain seized of the situation and to meet, at the appropriate level, to take appropriate decisions.