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PRESS RELEASE

AU Peace and Security Council Concludes a Three-Day Field Mission to the Republic of South Sudan

Juba, 20 February 2020: In line with its mandate to promote and enhance peace and security in the Continent, the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) undertook a field mission to the Republic of South Sudan from 18 to 20 February 2020. The Mission took place within the framework of the implementation of various decisions of the Council on the situation in South Sudan. In particular, the Council aimed at evaluating the status of implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) signed on 12 September 2018, given that the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) is to be formed on 22 February 2020. Furthermore, the Mission aimed at expressing AU's solidarity with the People and Government of South Sudan during this critical period in the history of the country. In this light, it is worth noting that this is the fourth field mission of the AUPSC to the Republic of South Sudan since October 2016.

The PSC delegation was led by His Excellency Ambassador Mohamed Idriss Farah, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Djibouti to the African Union, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of February 2020. The PSC delegation comprised representatives of the fifteen Member States, namely: Ambassadors of Algeria, Salah Francis Alhamdi; Angola, Francisco Da Cruz; Burundi, Joel Nkurabagaya; Equatorial Guinea, Cristantos Obama Ondo; Lesotho, Mafa Sejanamane; Morocco, Mohamed Arrouchi; Nigeria, Bankole Adeoye; and Togo, Sebade Toba; as well as Representatives from Gabon, Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe.

During its mission, the Delegation paid a courtesy call on the 1st Vice President of South Sudan, H.E. Taban Deng Gai and held consultation with Dr. Riek Machar Teny, Chairman of the SPLM-IO, who is also the First Vice President-Designate. It also received briefings from the National Pre-Transitional Committee, Members of the Steering Committee of the National Dialogue, the African Diplomatic Corps, the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the Reconstituted Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (R-JMEC), as well as the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (CTSAMVM). Furthermore, the delegation met with international partners, the African Development Bank, and representatives of the Civil Society Organizations and faith based groups in Juba.

In all its engagements, the Delegation pledged the African Union's unwavering solidarity with the people of South Sudan and support towards the full implementation of the R-ARCSS, especially the formation of an inclusive Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity (R-TGoNU) on 22

February 2020. The Delegation underscored that, an inclusive R-TGONU is a pre-requisite for lasting unity, peace, stability and development in South Sudan.

The PSC delegation commended President Salva Kiir Mayardit and his Government for the courageous and progressive decision to revert the country back to the original ten (10) States, and further noted that such a political compromise has restored the confidence of all stakeholders to the peace process. The PSC also welcomed the reassurance by Dr. Riek Machar Teny to work with the Government, noting that the issue of States has been resolved, and that he agreed to address other outstanding issues during the Transitional Period, including the security arrangements. The Delegation applauded the timely decision by IGAD to address the travel restrictions imposed on Dr. Machar. The PSC delegation commended the positive reaction by the Civil Society Organizations towards these positive changes and looked forward to the full participation of all South Sudanese in the development of their country. The Council also welcomed recommendations made by various stakeholders, especially for the AU Member States to provide technical assistance to the R-TGoNU.

In light of the foregoing, the Delegation expressed the necessity for the international community to sustain its valuable support to all aspects of the peace process in order to prevent a relapse to conflict, and possible devastating consequences on innocent civilians. In this connection, the Delegation expressed its concern over the slow implementation of the security arrangements, in particular, the delayed training of the Necessary Unified Forces, inadequate availability of uniforms and medical supplies. Given the monumental challenges to face the impending R-TGoNU, the Delegation pledged to advocate for sustainable continental and international support towards overcoming these challenges.

The PSC Delegation reiterated the AU's appreciation towards IGAD, the neighboring countries of South Sudan, UNMISS, R-JMEC and international partners, for their relentless efforts towards assisting the parties' efforts to restore peace, security, stability and development in South Sudan. The Delegation noted that the formation of the R-TGoNU is only the start of a long nation-building process, and thus called on the parties to remain resolute, guided by the principles of compromise and restraint.

The Delegation expressed its full appreciation for the support extended by the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, UNMISS and other stakeholders in facilitating its field mission. It also acknowledged the facilitation of the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission and Head of the AU Mission in South Sudan, Ambassador Professor Joram Mukama Biswaro, and the staff of the AU Mission in South Sudan for their valuable support.

The Council will issue a formal Report on the outcome of its Mission to South Sudan in due course.