

AFRICAN UNION

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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

928TH MEETING

27 MAY 2020

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.(CMXXVIII)

COMMUNIQUÉ

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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 928th meeting held on 27 May 2020, on the impact of COVID-19 on living together in peace,

The Peace and Security Council,

Noting the opening remarks made by the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the AU and PSC Chairperson for the month of May 2020, H.E. Ambassador Professor Mafa Sejanamane, as well as the presentations made by the Director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa-CDC), Dr John Nkengasong; Executive Secretary of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), Madam Zainab Ali KOTOKO; and Founding Director of Amani Africa, Dr. Solomon Ayele Dersso;

Mindful of the fact that, COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented crisis impacting the entire globe, with far-reaching political, economic, social and security consequences throughout Africa and the rest of the world, particularly the distress in the communities;

Recalling its previous decisions on living together in peace, in particular Press Statement [PSC/PR/BR. (DCCCXCI)] adopted at its 891st meeting held on 5 November 2019; **also recalling** Resolution 72/130, adopted on 8 December 2017, by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly proclaiming 16 May of each year as the "International Day of Living Together in Peace" under the efforts of Algeria, on the basis of its national experience in de-radicalization and the fight against extremism;

Acknowledging that living together in peace is based on the principles of solidarity, cooperation, non-discrimination, inclusivity, accepting diversity, supporting multilateralism as well as living in a peaceful and united way.

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

1. **Commends** the efforts made by Algeria aiming at the adoption of the Resolution 72/130 at the UN General Assembly and for including the celebration of the "International Day of Living Together in Peace" on the Agenda of Peace and Security in Africa;
2. **Welcomes** the efforts deployed by the Africa CDC, in particular the launch of Kofi Annan Global Health Leadership Program focusing on disease prevention and control on the continent, with a view to equip emerging and established public health leaders with the skills required to become more effective in initiating innovative, bold, visionary but implementable African-owned solutions to address disease threats and challenges in the 21st century; **also welcomes** the establishment of pool procurement for the medical equipment needed by AU Member States in the fight against COVID-19; and in this regard, **encourages** all Member States to provide their support to these initiatives in order to curb and control the spread of COVID-19 in the Continent;
3. **Expresses concern** over the increase of unilateral approaches promoting isolationist and protectionist policies which undermine the values of Living Together in Peace by

restricting access of developing countries to medical supplies, including diagnostic material that are key for scaling up the testing capacity of AU Member States; in this regard, **calls on** the World Health Organization (WHO) to support the efforts of the Continent, through the Africa CDC, to limit the impact of these developments and also facilitate access to medical supplies needed in the fight against COVID19;

4. **Commends** the initiatives of partners who are providing assistance, including in the form of medical supplies and equipment to AU Members States; **also commends** Member States, which are also assisting other Member States as a sign of pan African solidarity and encourages them to maintain this spirit of Africa helping Africa in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic;

5. **Further commends** the initiatives taken by Member States to produce critical medical supplies required in the fight against COVID-19 and **requests** the AU Commission, working in close collaboration with AUDA-NEPAD, to explore means and ways of promoting and supporting the production of medical supplies in the Continent, as part of the process of promoting home grown solutions to challenges currently facing the Continent, as well as for responses to similar situations in the future;

6. **Expresses deep concern** over the continued propagation of false information about the COVID-19 pandemic including the exploitation of the COVID-19 crisis by cyber-criminals through cyber-attacks against critical information systems of hospitals, which is gravely undermining the efforts of Member States to eradicate the pandemic and is also contributing to inciting violence against some vulnerable sections of society and to recruit them into criminal and terrorist groups; and in this regard, **encourages** Member States to continue to raise public awareness on the COVID-19 pandemic and to encourage their populations to only rely on official information that is disseminated by national health authorities, Africa CDC and the World Health Organization (WHO) on all matters relating to the pandemic. Council also **appeals** to Member States to take necessary measures to prevent the use of social media to spread false information about COVID-19, in order to prevent distress and panic among the population;

7. **Notes with deep concern** the rise of geo-political rivalry between major powers of the world and its impact, particularly on Africa's peace and security landscape and multilateralism; in this regard, **underscores the importance** of further strengthening the commitment of Africa to speak with one voice in defending and promoting Africa's common positions and interests; and in this context, **encourages** the African Members in the UN Security Council (A3) to ensure that Africa's common position and interests on the agenda of the UN Security Council are effectively articulated, promoted and defended, as well as preventing them from being entangled in the rivalry between great powers; **highlights** that Africa cannot be considered as a laboratory for testing vaccines;

8. **Welcomes** the call by the UN Secretary-General for a \$200 billion economic relief package, as well as the 20 May 2020 joint statement of the Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the UN High-Commissioner for Human Rights, calling for global solidarity through fiscal and economic relief measures;

9. **Requests** the AU Commission, working with the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) and the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), to initiate consultations with AU Member States, with a view to effectively assessing peace and security risks and providing technical support towards enhancing their national capacities and resilience, particularly in the area of early warning and disaster risk reduction and preparedness;
10. **Reiterates** its appeal to all AU peace support operations to continue implementing their respective mandates, while enhancing efforts in the fight against COVID-19 and ensuring the safety and security of their personnel;
11. **Calls on** the warring parties in the Continent to heed and respect the call for global ceasefire to ensure that all efforts of Member States are devoted to the fight against COVID-19, an imperative that also reflects the AU's 2020 theme: "Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development" and **also calls on** all external parties to end foreign interference and arms transfer to warring parties in the Continent;
12. **Stresses the imperative** of ensuring protection, without any form of discrimination, of all categories of vulnerable groups such as women and children and to put an end to all forms of violence, including against women and girls, particularly during this challenging COVID-19 situation and **also stresses the need** to provide migrants, IDPs and refugees access to basic needs in terms of medical supplies and food.
13. **Commends** those Member States which have opened their air spaces and have also availed humanitarian corridors, as well as those which are providing strategic air lift for the delivery of medical equipment, food aid and healthcare personnel in different parts of the Continent. Council also commends all those countries that have made pledges to the AU COVID Special Fund and **encourages** other Member States to do the same, with a view to boosting Continental efforts in the fight against COVID-19;
14. **Once again requests** the Africa CDC to continue providing regular briefings to Council on the progress, trends and challenges in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic in the Continent;
15. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter