PRESS RELEASE

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

Juba, 19 April 2018: 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 14 to 19 April 2018. The mission took place in the framework of the implementation of various decisions of the Council on the situation in South Sudan, in particular the communiqué of its 751st meeting held on 8 February, 2018. The mission was also undertaken in an effort to give impetus to the High Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF) being driven by the Member States of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD).

The PSC delegation comprising fifteen Member States was led by His Excellency, Bankole Adeoye, Ambassador/Permanent Representative of Nigeria to the African Union, who is the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of April 2018. The PSC delegation expressed the solidarity and total support of the African Union towards finding lasting peace in South Sudan, and also strongly urged all parties to the conflict to uphold their commitments to the on-going peace process by making necessary sacrifices, allow for genuine reconciliation and healing, and to ensure that next round of HLRF talks does not fail as it remains the last chance for peace.

During the mission, the delegation held consultations with the President of the Republic, H.E Salva Kiir Mayardit, the 1st Vice-President of the Republic, Lt. General Taban Deng Gai, the Cabinet Ministers, the Members of the Steering Committee of the National Dialogue, the Special Representation of the Secretary General of the United Nations (UN), Head of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), as well as the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) and the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM). The delegation also met with the African Diplomatic Corps in Juba, international partners, representatives of the civil society organizations, leaders of faith-based organizations, as well as the representatives of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from the Protection of Civilian sites (PoCs) in UNMISS Juba 1 and 3.

The PSC delegation visited the city of Malakal in the Central Upper Nile State, where they held consultations with the Deputy Governor of the Central Upper Nile State and the Mayor of Malakal, as well as UNMISS and CTSAMM teams on the ground, before engaging the representatives of the IDPs from the PoCs in Malakal.

The PSC delegation took the opportunity of its various interactions to express AU’s support to the on-going peace efforts led by IGAD in the framework of the HLRF, which concluding phase will take place in Addis Ababa in the coming days. The PSC delegation assured all stakeholders of AU’s
readiness and determination to spare no efforts in supporting IGAD and the South Sudanese parties to overcome the challenges facing the peace process, in particular the implementation of the Agreement for the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (ARCSS) signed on 15 August 2015. In this regard, the PSC Delegation stressed the important role of the AU High Level Ad Hoc Committee on South Sudan, with a view to restoring the long awaited peace in the country and put an end to the humanitarian challenges, particularly the despicable suffering of the people of South Sudan. The delegation shared concern with the Government of South Sudan on the centrality of Hybrid Court to the peace process and underscored the need for enhanced cooperation between the AU and the Government towards firming up all arrangements for the establishment of the Court in pursuit of transitional justice.

The PSC delegation looks forward to a new schedule for the concluding phase of the HLRF to provide opportunities for more consultations with all stakeholders. The PSC delegation underlined the need for synergy between the HLRF, the National Dialogue and the Reunification process of the SPLM, and emphasized that all processes should be mutually reinforcing. The PSC delegation appealed to all stakeholders, to uphold the exclusive interest and wellbeing of the people of South Sudan over all other considerations, and encouraged full and inclusive participation in the HLRF process, in good faith, as well as with high sense of responsibility.

The PSC delegation reiterated the AU’s appreciation to IGAD, neighbouring countries and UNMISS, as well as international partners for their relentless efforts to help restore sustainable peace, security and stability in South Sudan.

The PSC delegation noted the progress in the state of peace and security in the country and commended the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, UNMISS and other stakeholders for facilitating its Field Mission, as well as to the AU Special Representative of Chairperson of the Commission and the Head of the AU Liaison Office and staff for the valuable support.

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