PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
759TH MEETING
23 MARCH 2018
ADDIS-ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM (DCCLIX)

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 759th meeting, held on 23 March 2018, adopted the following decision on the Situation in Mali and in the Sahel, as well as the Operationalisation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force:

Council,

1. Takes note of the briefing given by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, on the Situation in Mali and in the Sahel region in general, as well as the Regional and international efforts to fight against terrorism in the region, particularly the operationalisation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force. Council also takes note of the presentation made by the Permanent Secretary of the G5 Sahel, Ambassador Maman Sidikou and that of General Didier Dacko, Commander of the G5 Sahel Joint Force. Council further takes note of the statements made by the representatives of Niger, in his capacity as the current Chair of the G5 Sahel, Mauritania and Burkina Faso, member countries of the G5 Sahel, Ethiopia, in its capacity as the African Member of the United Nations (UN) Security Council, the United Nations and the European Union.

2. Recalls the relevant provisions of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, in particular Article 16, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding of 2008 between the AU and the Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the bases of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA);

3. Also recalls its previous decisions on the situation in Mali and in the Sahel region, in particular Communiqué PSC/PR/Comm. DCLXXIX), of its 679th meeting, held on 13 April 2017, by which it endorsed the Concept of Operations of the G5 Sahel Joint Force and authorised its deployment for an initial period of twelve (12) months renewable. Council also recalls Communiqué PSC/PR/comm. (DCCXXXIII) of its 733th meeting, held on 13 November 2017, on the emerging Regional Initiatives;

4. Expresses once again its deep concern over the continuing deterioration of the security situation in Mali and in the Sahel region, largely due to the intensification of terrorist attacks in the north and centre of Mali, as well as in the border region between Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Council strongly condemns the terrorist attacks against the civilian population, the defence and security forces of the countries of the region and the international forces present in Mali, particularly those of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the French operation Barkhane;

5. Welcomes the state of operationalisation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, which has just successfully conducted its first two operations after the establishment of its Headquarters in Sevare. Council pays tribute to the leaders of the Member States of the G5 Sahel, namely Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad, for their determination and the sacrifices being made in
the promotion of peace, security and stability in the Sahel, through an ever more effective fight against terrorism, violent extremism and transnational organised crime.

6. **Stresses, once again**, the need for a sustained and predictable support to the efforts of the countries of the region in the face of increased armed and terrorist groups, as well as criminals. In this regard, Council **expresses its gratitude** to the bilateral and multilateral partners for their multifaceted assistance to the countries of the Sahelo-Saharan region, in the face of the growing threat of terrorism and violent extremism and **welcomes** the pledges made at the Conference on The Sahel, held on 23 February 2018, in Brussels, in support of the operationalisation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force. Council **urges** all countries and organisations that made pledges to honour them, as soon as possible, in order to enable the G5 Sahel Joint Force to more effectively discharge its mandate;

7. **Stresses, once again, the need** for an African ownership of the efforts in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. In this context, Council **welcomes** the financial contribution made by Rwanda in support of the brotherly countries of the G5 Sahel and **calls upon** the other AU Member States, in a position to do so, to also provide assistance to the countries of the region in their efforts towards the promotion and preservation of peace, security and stability on the continent. Council **takes note, with appreciation**, of the technical support already provided by the Commission to the Permanent Secretariat of the G5 Sahel and **looks forward** to the redoubling of this assistance with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on 23 March 2018;

8. **Reaffirms** the need for the G5 Sahel Joint Force to be availed with predictable and sustained resources, in order to be able to more effectively carry out its mandate and **requests** the Commission, in close cooperation with the African members of the Security Council, to continue consultations to this end;

9. **Reaffirms** its total support to the stabilisation efforts led by the MINUSMA and **pays tribute** to its Troop Contributing Countries, for the huge sacrifices being made in the service of the fulfilment of the mandate of the Mission, in spite of the enormous challenges related to the particularly challenging environment and constraints in terms of human resources and equipment, which it is facing the Mission. Council **welcomes** the adoption by the UN Security Council of Resolution 2391 (2017) requesting MINUSMA to provide logistical support to the G5 Sahel in its operations in Mali. In this regard, Council **stresses the importance**, in the very particular context of Mali and the Sahel, of reviewing the mandate of MINUSMA, with a view to include an Intervention Brigade, such as the Intervention Brigade in MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Rapid Protection Force within the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and **requests** the Commission to undertake the necessary consultations in this regard.

10. **Reaffirms the importance** of the Nouakchott Process in the promotion of peace and security in the Sahelo-Saharan region and the intensification of its activities aimed at the overall efforts of stabilisation and development of the entire Sahel region. Council **reiterates** the provisions of paragraph 11 (ii)d of its Communiqué of 13 April 2017, on the multifaceted support, including the exchange of intelligence that the member countries of the Nouakchott Process must
give to the G5 Sahel Joint Force, in the corridors outside of the jurisdiction of the G5 Sahel. Council stresses once again, the imperative need for a continuous enhancement of the coordination of all the initiatives and actions to promote peace, security and stability in the Sahelo-Saharan region, bearing in mind that within the context of the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, there is no viable alternative to collective and/or coordinated action. Council requests the Commission to organise, as soon as possible, a meeting of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services of the Nouakchott Process, as well as extensive consultations between the G5 Sahel, the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to fight Boko Haram, the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CEMOC) and the Fusion and Liaison Unit (UFL), with a view to enhancing coordination and synergy of action for a better impact of efforts in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism. Council looks forward to the conclusions of the Strategic Consultation on the Sahel, scheduled for 28 to 29 March 2018, in Nouakchott, within the framework of the efforts to harmonise the various initiatives in favour of the Sahel and promote a shared strategic vision to face the challenges in the region;

11. Decides to extend the deployment of the G5 Sahel Joint Force for an additional period of twelve (12) months, effective from 12 April 2018, in conformity with the terms of Paragraph 11 of its Communiqué of 13 April 2017;

12. Reaffirms the urgent need for the accelerated implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali from the Algiers process, which constitutes the only inclusive and consensual framework likely to restore peace and stability in Mali. In this regard, Council urges once again the Malian parties to redouble their efforts, in order to ensure a timely implementation of the provisions of the Agreement, in particular through the schedule of priority actions, adopted at the 23rd session of the Follow-up Committee of the Agreement and to find a consensus within the framework of the organisation of the different elections planned in the course of 2018. Council welcomes the initiatives taken by the President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and his government with a view to expediting the implementation of the Algiers Agreement. Council takes note with appreciation of the consultations initiated by the Prime Minister of Mali, with the signatory movements of the Agreement and the countries of the region and reiterates its support for Resolution 2374(2017), within the framework of the international efforts to accelerate the process of the implementation of the Algiers Agreement, which will further isolate the terrorist and criminal groups;

13. Stresses the imperative need for building the capacities of the Defence and Security Forces of Mali, both in terms of training and equipment, for greater responsibility, at the national level and those in support of regional and international efforts to fight against terrorism and transnational organised crime;

14. Further requests the Chairperson of the Commission to provide quarterly briefings to Council on the implementation of the present communiqué;

15. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.