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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
693RD MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
14 JUNE 2017

PSC/PR/BR. (DCXCIII)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), dedicated its 693rd meeting held on 14 June 2017, to an Open Session on the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the year 2020.

Council took note of the opening statement by the Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council, H.E. Ambassador Susan Sikaneta of the Republic of Zambia and the presentations by the Ag. Director for Peace and Security Department, Dr. Admore Kambudzi, Mr. Abdel-Fatau Musah from Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations (UN), and Mr. Désiré Assogbavi, Head of Office Oxfam International Liaison Office to the AU. Council further took note of statements that were made by representatives of AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), civil society organizations, the diplomatic community and international organizations/institutions.

Council recalled communique [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCXLVIII)] of its 648th meeting held on 16 January 2017 and the Assembly decision Assembly/AU/Dec.630(XXVIII) which endorsed the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the year 2020.

Council and participants commended the Peace and Security Council Member States for taking initiatives to develop the AU Master Roadmap (AUMR) on Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020, in line with the OAU/AU 50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration adopted by the AU Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa on 25 May 2013 in achieving the goal of a conflict-free Africa.

Council and participants reiterated deep concern over the persistence of the various scourges as outlined in the AU Master Roadmap and the attendant conflicts and crises that continue to cause suffering and devastation in Africa. In this regard, Council and participants stressed that the implementation of the AU Master Roadmap should be given a priority at the national, regional and continental levels and to be driven on the basis of high level political and financial commitment to enable relevant tools and strategies to achieve the desired goal.

Council and participants underscored that the guiding spirit in the AU Master Roadmap, as spelt out in the 4th aspiration of Agenda 2063, which is the African Union's strategic framework for socio-economic transformation of the continent over the next five decades, highlights the need for dialogue-centered conflict prevention, as well as the management and resolution of existing conflicts, with a view to silencing the guns in Africa by the Year 2020. In this regard, Council and participants emphasized that Africa should assume total responsibility for its destiny, which includes, among others, realization of a conflict-free, integrated and prosperous Africa. Furthermore, Council and participants encouraged political actors, especially political parties and parliaments, to foster conducive conditions that contribute to the preservation of peace, security, stability, and cohesion and encouraged them to use Agenda 2063, as a guide for elaboration of their manifestos and programmes.

Council and participants highlighted the need to capacitate law enforcement agencies to enable them effectively contribute to stopping inflow of illicit weapons into Africa, and at the same time curb the circulation of illicit weapons within the continent, and also enhance capacity to identify, seize and destroy illicit weapons.

Council and participants appealed to all Member States, the RECs/RMs, as well as civil to society organizations, the private sector and partners, in collaboration with the AU Commission, to take all necessary measures to fully implement the AU Master Roadmap.

Council and participants stressed the importance of urgently taking the required steps and mobilizing necessary support from all concerned stakeholders, including, in particular the United Nations Security Council and other relevant Organs, in order to ensure effective follow-up and implementation of the AU Master Roadmap with a view to realizing the goal of a conflict-free Africa.

Council agreed that the AU Commission should collect inputs from all AU Member States and submit to Council, on their efforts of implementing the AU Master Roadmap, in order to facilitate the assessment/review of its implementation. Such assessment/review will serve the purpose of information and experience sharing.

Council agreed to recommend to the 29th Ordinary Assembly of the Union declaration of the African Day, 25 May, as an Amnesty Day for surrender and collection of illegally owned weapons/arms to designated national law enforcement agencies. This process should be accompanied by positive measures including that people who hand over illegally owned weapons/arms should not face arrest or prosecution as a way of acknowledging the good will shown and embracing the culture of peace.

Council further agreed to recommend to the 29th Ordinary Assembly of the Union to appoint a Panel of the Eminent Personalities on Silencing the Guns, to monitor and report to the Peace and Security Council on implementation of the AU Master Roadmap and report to Council on the status its implementation, challenges and recommendations on the way forward.

Council called on those Member States who have not done so, to sign, ratify and implement all relevant AU and international instruments related to silence the guns in Africa, in particular the Arms Trade Treaty, which play a great role in silencing the guns in Africa.

Council agreed to remain seized of the matter.