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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
828TH MEETING

19 FEBRUARY 2019
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR. (DCCCXXVIII)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) dedicated its 828th meeting on 19 February 2019, to an open session on the theme: “Climate Change Funding in line with the Africa Adaptation Initiative (AAI) to Contribute towards Peace and Security”.

Council took note of the opening remarks made by H.E. Ambassador Herman Immongault of the Republic of Gabon in his capacity as the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of February 2019 and the statement made by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General to the AU and Head of the UN Office to the AU (UNOAU), H.E. Hannah S. Tetteh. They also took note of the presentation made by Mr. Tanguy Gahouma Bekal, the Executive Secretary of the Climate Change National Council of Gabon. They further took note of the statements made by the representatives of AU Member States, AU partners and international institutions and organizations.

Council recalled all AU Assembly Decisions on climate change, particularly, Decisions [Assembly/AU/Dec... (XXXII)] adopted by its 32nd Ordinary Session held in February 2019 and [Assembly/AU/Dec. 669(XXX)] adopted at its 30th Ordinary Session held in January 2018. Council also recalled all its previous pronouncements and decisions on Climate Change, including, Press Statements [PSC/PR/BR.(DCCLXXIV)]; [PSC/PR/BR. (DCCVIII)] and [PSC/PR/BR. (DLXXXV)] adopted at its 774th ; 708th and 585th meetings held on 21 May 2018; on 16 August 2017, and on 30 March 2016, respectively, as well as Communiqué [PSC/PR/COMM. (DCLX)] adopted at its 660th meeting held on 21 February 2016.

Council also recalled UN Security Council Presidential Statement adopted on 30 January 2018 on West Africa and the Sahel in which the Security Council recognized the nexus between climate change and violent conflicts in the two regions.

Council noted the inextricable linkages between climate change and peace and security. Council also noted, once again, that climate change is an existential multidimensional and multi-layered threat to local, national, regional and continental peace, security and stability. In this regard, Council emphasized the need for collective and holistic approaches towards building resilience and mitigating the adverse effects of climate.

Council underscored the importance of supporting access to cleaner and more efficient, as well as more sustainable sources of energy, sustainable land use practices and other activities that contribute towards building community resilience and thus mitigating competition for access to scarce resources. Council also underscored the importance of comprehensive, climate related security risk information, including credible data and analyses with a view to enabling Member States to predict with more precision the frequency of climate change related risks, including natural disasters, and to enhance the resilience of the communities.

Council reiterated the importance of Member States, Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs) and

AU partners to actively pursue integrated approaches to boost climate change resilience and to pay particular attention to prevention and further strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus. In the same vein, they underlined the need for Member States and regions to share experiences, lessons and best practices in addressing the adverse effects of climate change. Council also underlined the importance of building effective synergies between local and national authorities in efforts aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of climate change. Council further underline the importance of the private sector in dealing with climate change resilience, including in climate smart agriculture, efficient and clean energy sources, as well as in infrastructure development. Furthermore, Council stressed the need for private sector companies, particularly those in the mining sector, to also invest in corporate social responsibilities and contribute more towards environmental recovery and sustainability efforts in areas where they operate.

Council reiterated its call for Member States to accelerate the integrated implementation of all existing international and regional commitments and agreements relating to mitigation of adverse effects of climate change, which include the Paris Agreement, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that deplete the Ozone Layer and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030).

Council commended all Member States which have already signed and ratified the Paris Agreement and have already started to implement it, and urged all those Member States which have not yet done so to expeditiously also do the same.

Council underlined the need for Member States to mainstream climate change in their national education curricula, at all levels, with a view to more effectively promoting civic education and spreading public awareness on climate change and the threat it poses to human security. In the same vein, Council emphasized the important role that the media can also play in this regard.

Council, once again, emphasized the need for the AU to continue mobilizing a united African front at the global level to mitigate the effects of climate change at both, regional and continental levels. Council also emphasized the need for developing a continental framework for proactively responding to the potential and real security threats posed by climate change to the continent. In this regard, Council re-affirmed the need for Africans to face the challenges relating to climate change through the holistic adaptation strategies.

Council reiterated the need for Africa to prioritize adaptation measures at continental, regional and national level, in line with the guidelines contained in the African Adaptation Initiative (AAI), under the leadership of His Excellency President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon, Coordinator of the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC). In this respect, Council called upon the International Community to ensure appropriate funding for African adaptation initiatives to climate change, bearing in mind that Africa bear a very minor responsibility in the root causes of this phenomenon. Council paid tribute to President Ali Bongo Ondimba for his contribution to the fund set up to finance activities

for adaptation to climate change in Africa and called on AU Member States to contribute to this effort. Council expressed its appreciation to His Excellency Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, for his contribution, in his capacity as Coordinator of CAHOSCC, during the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21), held in December 2015 in Paris. Council reaffirmed the importance of initiatives taken during the African Summit for Action, held in the margins of the COP22, in Marrakech, Morocco, in November 2016, in particular the Green Wall project and the Triple A initiative.

Council underscored the importance of coordination and complementarity of initiatives, as well as the need for institutional cohesion among the various entities working on issues relating to climate change and, in this regard, emphasized the need for the AU Commission to be more actively involved in the Continental climate change institutional architecture, play a pivotal role and mainstream climate change in all its activities particularly in early warning and prevention of climate change related violent conflicts and crises. In this regard, Council, once again, requested the Commission to include, in its regular briefings to Council, early warning on potential adverse effects of climate change, including potential conflicts and crises in parts of the Continent.

Council underlined the need for sustained support for the efforts by Member States to build national resilience, hence, the need for more predictable sources of climate financing. In this context, Council requested the AU Commission to provide the required capacity building assistance to Member States, in order to enable them to more effectively implement the Paris Agreement, through access to climate change financing, and to develop bankable projects. In this regard, Council underscored the need for more specific earmarking of funds dedicated to combating effects of climate change, specifically, through better clarity on the criteria used.

Council also commended all members of the international community, which are already implementing the Paris Agreement and urged those that have not yet done so to also do the same. Council further commended the members of the international community that are providing support to local, national and regional efforts to build resilience and requested them to continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the populations in countries affected by climate change-related emergencies.

Council reiterated its request for the AU Commission to expedite the finalization of the outcomes of the study on the nexus between climate change and peace and security in the continent.

Council reiterated its request to the Chairperson of the Commission to appoint an AU Special Envoy for Climate Change, who will work under the auspices of the Committee of African Heads of States and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC). Council also stressed the need to expedite the finalization of the institutional framework, with a view to expediting the operationalization of the PRC Sub-Committee on Climate Change.

Council agreed to organize a session at the level of Heads of State and Government which will be solely dedicated to climate change.

Council agreed to remain actively seized of the matter.