

AFRICAN UNION

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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
660TH MEETING
21FEBRUARY 2016
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM(DCLX)

COMMUNIQUE

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The Peace and Security of the African Union (AU), at its 660th meeting, held on 21 February 2017, adopted the following decision on the drought situation and its implication for peace and security in Africa:

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the Information Note from the AU Commission on the drought situation and its implications for peace and security in Africa. Council **further takes note** of the statement made by the Acting Director for Peace and Security, on behalf of the Commissioner for Peace and Security. Council **also takes note** of the presentations by the AU Commission, through the Departments of Political Affairs and Rural Economy and Agriculture, as well as of the presentation made by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs(UNOCHA) and the statement of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees(UNHCR);
2. **Recalls** the AU Assembly decisions on climate change, particularly Assembly/AU/Dec.246(XII), Assembly/AU/Dec.580(XXV)Rev1 and Assembly/AU/Dec.603(XXVI) adopted at 12th, 25th and 26th Ordinary Sessions of the Union, respectively, on the African Common Position on Climate Change and the Mitigation Factor, as well as Press Statement PSC/PR/BR (DLXXXV) adopted at its 585th meeting, held on 30 March 2016;
3. While emphasizing on the inter-dependency between human security and environmental protection, Council **expresses serious concern** over the devastating impact of climate change in Africa as manifested through recurrent droughts, which is one of the major triggers of tensions and violence in communities. Council **expresses** the AU's solidarity with those African countries most affected by the drought situation;
4. **Recognizes** that El Nino and El Nina natural factors and their effects, as compounded by the effects of climate change, will induce droughts and prolonged dry spells, or floods, which make it imperative for Africa to stand prepared with adequate responses;
5. **Calls on** Member States and Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), to take urgent measures to mobilize and provide immediate relief to the populations affected by the effects of the 2015/2016 droughts, as well as by the prevailing drought conditions in the different regions in Africa;
6. **Commends** the AU Member States that have already deployed efforts in addressing the impacts of droughts. In this regard, Council **stresses** the need for Member States and RECs/RMs, to share international expertise relating to mitigation of drought, including the scaling up of national and regional efforts in disaster preparedness through translation of early warning signals into concrete actions;

7. **Recognizes** that a purely humanitarian response does not suffice to fully address the scourge of drought and the underlying vulnerabilities induced by climate change in the continent. Accordingly, Council **calls on** AU member states to accelerate the integrated implementation of existing international and regional commitments and agreements related to mitigation of the effects of climate change, namely the Paris Climate Agreement, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk reduction 2015-2030;

8. **Stresses** the need for Member States to start strategizing for effective protection against the impact of drought and provision of relief, while abiding by the principles of international law and sub regional arrangements in connection to climate change and the threats posed by this challenge, which continues to create existential problems for many African States. In this regard, Council **further stresses** the need for cooperation among member states in order to tackle this major problem;

9. **Calls on** AU Member States, RECs/RMs and partners to actively pursue integrated approaches to boost resilience that focus on prevention and strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus, as well as improve communication on drought through timely sharing of data to inform disaster preparedness and response at the national, regional and continental level .Council **urges** AU Member States to take appropriate measures to ease cross-border movement of their people and their assets, remove tax barriers and other logistical constraints that result in the spike in food prices, which are known to exacerbate food insecurity and the vulnerability of people affected by droughts;

10. **Appeals** to African institutions and public-private partnerships to proffer innovative solutions to address drought conditions, with particular emphasis on the economic empowerment of local communities, especially those in the arid and semi-arid regions of Africa;

11. **Underlines the need** for the replenishment of the AU Special Emergency Assistance Fund on Drought and Famine in Africa, in order to enable the Fund to assist Africans, in a timely manner, whenever there is an emergency need in the continent. In this regard, Council **appeals** to all AU Member States to further extend their financial support to the Fund and to meet their commitments under the 2003 Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security to allocate 10% of their national budget to agriculture development;

12. **Appeals** to all Member States and the international community at large, to continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the countries that are most affected by climate change and drought-induced humanitarian crises;

13. **Acknowledges the need** to mobilize funds in support of African communities affected by droughts, especially to provide for women, children and other vulnerable groups, affected by food insecurity resulting from drought conditions across Africa. In this regard, Council **requests** the Commission to undertake consultations with all stakeholders to organize an international

conference on drought impacts in Africa, with a view to mobilizing resource for immediate response;

14. **Reiterates its call** to all Member States, which have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the Paris Agreement and expedite its implementation, as it represents a historic turning point in international cooperation on climate change;

15. **Decides** to remain actively seized with the matter.