Thank you Mr. Chair

As members of the Council will recall, the second IGAD Plus Extraordinary Summit on the situation in South Sudan was held in Addis-Ababa on 5 August 2016. During the Summit, the Transitional Government of National Unity of South Sudan gave its consent, in principle, to the deployment of a regional protection force. The Transitional Government of National Unity stated that the mandate of the force would focus on three key areas: to protect civilians; humanitarian agencies and Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) staff.

Consistent with this IGAD Plus decision and the commitment of the Transitional Government of National Unity, the Summit directed the East African Chiefs of Defense to engage their South Sudanese counterparts, with a view to discussing the modalities of implementation of their 29 July meeting’s outcomes. Among other things, the discussions will focus on how to return to the implementation of Chapter II of the Agreement on the Permanent Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements.

In its Communiqué, the second IGAD Plus Summit requested the AU Commission to undertake the following activities:

I) Carry out an in-depth investigation on the fighting that broke out in Juba on 8th July 2016 in the Presidential Palace between the guards of former 1st Vice-President and the presidential guard, with the view to identifying and holding accountable those who initiated the fighting.

II) To explore and recommend mechanisms to address, in a timely manner, the large scale mass atrocities that were committed during the recent cycle of violence in South Sudan. The Summit suggested that this could be done in consultation with the UN and in line with the AU Constitutive Act, as well as the Protocol establishing the Peace and Security Council and Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.
III) The Summit requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to transmit its Communique to the UN Secretary General for the consideration by the UN Security Council.

Given the developments outlined above, I would like to inform Council that the AU Commission has already undertaken the following steps:

I. Transmitted the Communiqué of the Second IGAD Plus Extraordinary Summit to the UN Secretary General.

II. Initiated, and will intensify its efforts to interact with members of the UNSC, the UN, and other regional and international players with the view to securing their support for the revision of the mandate of UNMISS, including its regional protection force.

III. And in the near future will submit to Council options and proposals on the implementation of the peace Agreement.

In line with the IGAD decisions, I would like to urge Council to condemn the targeting of foreign persons and diplomats in South Sudan. During the recent fighting, several diplomatic missions and international NGO workers were subjected to harassment, and the UN compounds, including the Protection of Civilian Sites were targeted in violation of international laws.

Council to encourage the Government of South Sudan facilitate the operationalization of the Regional Protection Force, and its protection mandate. Further, Council should congratulate the gesture of Gen Taban Deng Gai to step down on the return of Dr Riek Machar in the promotion of peace.

I wish to inform Council that the Chairperson’s High Level Representative for South Sudan, HE Alpha Oumar Konare continues to be fully engaged with the leadership in Juba as well as with other the African and international partners. He continues to coordinate with the former President Festus Mogae, the Chairperson of JMEC, to promote dialogue and reconciliation in South Sudan.

In conclusion, I would therefore like to propose that the Council endorses the Communiqué of the second IGAD Plus Extraordinary Summit.

I thank you.