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**8TH ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SPECIALIZED
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, SAFETY
AND SECURITY**

**VICTORIA FALLS, ZIMBABWE
15 MAY 2015**

DECLARATION

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1. We, the members of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STCDSS) of the African Union (AU) met at the 8th Ordinary Session in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe and considered the Conclusions of the African Chiefs of Defence Staff (ACDS) on the Progress made towards the operationalization of the African Standby Force and its Rapid Deployment Capability (ASF-RDC) and the status of operational readiness of the African Capacity for the Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC).
2. Our meeting was held as a follow-up to the Declaration adopted by the 7th Ordinary Meeting of the STCDSS, held in Addis Ababa on 14 January 2014, which was preceded by the 11th Meeting of the African Chiefs of Defence Staff and Heads of Safety and Security, held from 14 to 15 May 2015, and a Meeting of Experts, from 11 to 13 May 2015 respectively.
3. On the basis of the Conclusions of the Chiefs of Defence Staff, we declare as follows:
 - a. Request the AU Commission to expedite the completion of the Annual Training Directives, Frameworks, Policies, Standards and Curriculum for Training and Capacity Building and ensure its dissemination to member states. Subsequently, AU Member States should encourage their Peacekeeping Training Centres to adhere to AU Training Directives, Frameworks, Policies, Standards and Curriculum for Training and Capacity Building of personnel for Africa-Led PSOs.
 - b. Request that the AU Commission and RECs/RMs should develop guidelines on the linkage between rostering and training of civilians to ensure that experts eligible for deployment are well trained and adequately prepared prior to deployment.
 - c. Request that AU Member States and RECs/RMs are encouraged to continue their support towards enhancing the civilian and police components of the ASF. In this regard, it is recommended that the Report of the Civilian Dimension of the ASF Meeting held in Lusaka, Zambia from 6 to 7 May 2015 be adopted.
 - d. Re-affirm AU's zero-tolerance policy against SEA as well as all forms of misconduct and abuse and, request that AU Member States should provide additional support, including through the secondment of personnel at own cost, to strengthen the Conduct and Discipline capacity both within the PSOD as well as in current AU peace support operations.
 - e. Request the AU Commission to work towards improving working relations with the RECs/RMs by timely sharing and exchange of information.
 - f. Request the AU Commission to expedite the full operationalization of the CLB, including the presentation of the structure and total budget required for the its operationalization in the next STCDSS Meeting. Further request the finalization of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the AU Commission and the Government of the Republic of Cameroon, on the operationalization of the CLB not later than 31 July 2015.

- g. Encourage Member States to support the mandate of the Police Strategic Support Group (PSSG) in coordinating, harnessing and developing police capacities for peace support operations.
- h. Commend the Government of Algeria for hosting of the Conference of Police Heads in Algiers and, the Government of Zambia for convening the Workshop on the Civilian Dimension of the ASF, in line with the Declaration of the 7th Meeting of the STCDSS. We therefore endorse the recommendations and urge the AU Commission for speedy implementation and to report progress in the next STCDSS Meeting.
- i. Request Member States to ensure a fully functional Military Staff Committee (MSC), with effective participation of Defence Attaches of AU PSC Member States, as per the 2004 Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU. In this regard, request the AU Commission to look into the modalities of addressing this issue. In addition AU PSC Member States should ensure the deployment to Addis Ababa of their respective Defence Attaches.
- j. Recall the decision by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government that 25% of the total AU assessed contribution will be earmarked for peace support operations and calls upon member states to make voluntary contributions to the Peace Fund for current and future peace support operations in order to cover areas such as Strategic lift, in-theatre movement, in-mission sustenance, allowances, and reimbursements for Contingent Owned Equipment.
- k. Request AU Member States to consider contributing Strategic Lift Capabilities (air, sea and land) and other critical enablers for current and future operations.
- l. Encourage AU Member States to provide support for the operationalisation of the Continental Movement Coordination Centre, which is a critical part of the AU strategic lift requirements.
- m. Request the AU Commission to undertake technical assessment of all PLANELMs to ensure implementation of the recommendations on the PLANELMs contained in the Gambari Report in order to enhance coordination between the continental and regional PLANELMs and to operationalise the ASF.
- n. Urge AU member States to find innovative ways of facilitating personnel surge capacity to the PLANELMs for Mission Start-up, through the self-sustained deployment of multidisciplinary experts, on a periodic basis and as may be required to support the planning process of peace operations.
- o. Reiterate the relevant AU decisions on the need to ensure that seconded uniformed personnel to PSOD serve for a period not exceeding three years taking into account equitable regional distribution in line with the AUC Rules and Regulations, and further request that the AU Commission gives a six-month notification to Member States before the expiry of contracts of officers to be rotated. In this context, Member States are requested to ensure speedy replacement of rotated officers.

- p. Urge the AU and RECs/RMs to revise the strategic mission support concept in accordance with the changing requirements of high-intensity nature of most African-led peace support operations.
 - q. Encourage AU Member states to donate C3IS equipment employed during the AMANI Africa II exercise to the AU, in support of current and future peace support operations.
 - r. Encourage AU Member States to support their RECs/RMs in populating the ASC Roster and to adhere to the stipulations of the ASF policy framework, in ensuring that the roster benefits from the diversity of human resources - civil service, civil society, private sector and independent experts.
 - s. AU Member States and RECs/RMs should finalise the AU-RECs/RMs legal framework on the employment of the ASF, not later than 31 December 2015, and ensure AU Commission to adhere to the given timelines.
 - t. The AU Commission encourages member states to confirm their pledges to the ASF, with a view to conduct a verification of the pledges by the end of 2015. In addition the verification of the pledges should be conducted by the AUC and the RECs/RMs.
 - u. Commend progress made by ECCAS, EASF, ECOWAS and SADC standby forces toward the full operationalisation of the ASF. Further urge NARC to re-double their efforts to ensure the full operationalisation of its standby force as part of the full operationalisation of the ASF.
 - v. Commend ACIRC Volunteering Nations (VNs) for their contributions towards ensuring full operational readiness of the ACIRC Force. And further note that ACIRC should begin drawing down as ASF and its RDC become operational by December 2015.
4. With respect to the harmonisation of the ASF-RDC and ACIRC, we declare as follows:
- a. stress the need to guarantee that priority should continue to be given to the full operationalisation of the ASF and its RDC as an important pillar of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).
 - b. Further stress the need in the interim period to integrate ACIRC with ASF RDC concepts in order to avoid duplication of efforts and ensure that ACIRC will assist in expediting the operationalisation process of the RDC.
 - c. Re-affirm that ACIRC works as a transitional arrangement pending the full operationalisation of the ASF and its RDC to provide the AU with flexible and robust force. Notes with satisfaction that the ASF and its RDC aim to achieve its Full Operational Capability (FOC) by December 2015. Recommends that the capabilities of ACIRC VNs should be integrated into the various RECs/RMs. Therefore, ACIRC is

- not intended to replace the ASF RDC and emphasis should be given to achieve the full operational capability of the ASF by the end of December 2015.
- d. Underline the urgency in implementing the adopted recommendations of the Independent Panel of Experts on the Assessment of ASF Operationalisation and Plan of Action for Achieving FOC by 2015 (Gambari Report of December 10, 2013).
 - e. Re-emphasise that AMANI AFRICA II exercise was created and designed to assess the full operational capability of the ASF RDC. As a transitional arrangement until the ASF full operationalisation, ACIRC will be given an opportunity to contribute to the AMANI AFRICA II exercise in order to harmonize its activities in line with Assembly decisions 489(XXI) and 515 (XXII). However, such contribution should not be at the expense of the ASF and the operationalisation process of its RDC in any means.
 - f. Stress the need to continue to provide all required resources to the operationalisation of the ASF-RDC, however the AUC should continue to provide administrative and logistical support to the PSOD ACIRC Cell.
 - g. Recognise the importance of ensuring visibility and that all Member States of the African Union are through the Peace and Security Council (PSC), informed in a transparent manner on the activities of ACIRC until its integration into the ASF.
 - h. Recommend to fully staff the PSOD and to establish and capacitate an ASF Cell within the Capability Development Unit of PSOD manned by representatives from RECs/RMs, at AU cost in order to ensure the full operational capacity and ensure strengthened coordination between the continental and regional PLANELMs. In this regard, Member States are urged to provide the AU Commission with additional funding to cover the costs.
5. We express deep concern of continued attacks and threats posed by terrorism across the continent and declare as follows:
- a. Strongly condemn all acts of terrorism perpetrated across the continent including recent attacks in Cameroon, Chad, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Sudan. The meeting further urged all Member States to support concerted efforts of the Force constituted by the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) Member States and Benin as well as efforts by the Government of Kenya in addressing Terrorism and Radicalisation. In this regard the Meeting took note of the contributions of US\$100million and US\$50million by Nigeria and ECCAS respectively in the fight against terrorism and encouraged the AU Commission to support the LCBC Member States and Benin in the Operationalisation of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram.
 - b. Urge Member States to ensure continued support for the Djibouti Process and the Nouakchott Process on enhancement of security cooperation and the operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture across regions.

6. We take note of the briefing by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Republic of Togo and welcome the ongoing planning and preparations for the forthcoming Extraordinary Summit on Maritime Security and Development in Africa to be held in Lome, Togo from 2 to 7 November 2015. We urge Member States to attend the meeting as part of the efforts to establish a collaborative network to deal with the scourge of maritime security threats and preservation of marine environment.
7. On the situation prevailing in Burundi, the STCDSS:
 - a. Recalls the Extraordinary Summit of the East African Community, held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, on 13 May 2015, and the Communique of the AU Peace and Security Council adopted at its 507th Meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 14 May 2015, on the situation in Burundi.
 - b. Expresses its deep concern over the unfolding developments in the situation in Burundi, including the violent confrontations that have taken place, and continue to do so, in Bujumbura and in other parts of the country.
 - c. Condemns all acts of violence, particularly attacks against civilian populations and the wanton destruction of property. The STCDSS calls for restraint among all the Burundian stakeholders.
 - d. Strongly condemns any attempt to seize power by force and urgently calls on all Burundian political parties and other concerned stakeholders to settle their differences in a peaceful way in the supreme interest of Burundi and its people. In this context, the STCDSS calls for conformity with the relevant AU instruments, including the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.
8. On the Peace Process in Mali, the STCDSS:
 - a. Commends the signing in Bamako on 15 May 2015, of the Peace Agreement between the Government of Mali and the Armed Groups within the framework of the Algiers Process, in the presence of High-Level representatives including President Robert Mugabe, current Chairperson of the AU.
 - b. Acknowledges the efforts made by the Mediation Team led by Algeria with the support of the International community.
 - c. Urge all parties and stakeholders to adhere to their commitments for the effective implementation of the agreement, which will facilitate sustainable peace security, stability and prosperity in Mali. In this regard call upon all AU Member States and Partners to continue to support Mali and the Malian people.
9. We further reiterate the role of the STCDSS as per Decision 227 of the Assembly, in line with the provision of Article 15 of the Constitutive Act of the AU. In this regard, We recommend to the Assembly of the Union at its 25th Ordinary Session, scheduled to take place in Johannesburg, South Africa from 14 to 15 June 2015, to adopt the present Declaration.

10. The STCDSS expressed their gratitude to the people and Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe for hosting the meeting and for the hospitality demonstrated to all delegations.