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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
665TH MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
13 MARCH 2017

PSC/PR/COMM(DCLV)

COMMUNIQUE

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 665th meeting held on 13 March 2017 in Addis Ababa, adopted the following decision on the activities of the AU Panel of the Wise for the year 2016:

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the statement made by Ambassador Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security and the presentation made by a member of the Panel of the Wise, former Vice President of the Republic of Uganda, H.E. Dr. Speciosa Wandira-Kazibwe;
2. **Recalls** its decisions on the activities of the Panel of the Wise in Africa, and **commends** the work done by the Panel during 2016. Council further **recognizes** the demonstrated usefulness and important role that the Panel of the Wise has played since its establishment in December 2007, ten years ago, which contributes to enhancing the effectiveness of the PSC in discharging its mandate in the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, within the overall context of the African Peace and Security Architecture and African Governance Architecture, particularly in the areas of conflict prevention and mediation;
3. **Commends** the exemplary work undertaken by Elder Edem Kodjo, a Member of the Panel of Wise, former Prime Minister of Togo and former Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, in facilitating, among other cases, the mediation process in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which has prepared the ground for the hard-won and complimentary political agreements of 18 October and 31 December 2016;
4. **Welcomes** the progress made in the development of the Modalities for the Establishment of the African Network of Women in Conflict Prevention and Peace Mediation (FemWise). In this context, Council **requests** the AU Commission to submit the Modalities to the relevant bodies for finalization and adoption, as well as to accelerate the operationalization of FemWise;
5. **Emphasizes the need** for the Panel of the Wise to continue to focus its activities on conflict prevention, mediation, reconciliation and dialogue. Council also **stresses the need** for the Panel of the Wise to keep the Council informed, including through horizon scanning, as part of early warning efforts, with regard to potential peace and security crises on the continent, in order to enable the Council to take appropriate and timely decisions;
6. **Encourages** the Panel of the Wise to closely work with all relevant stakeholders, in particular the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution(RECs/RMs), to harmonize its activities and to further enhance coordination between continental, regional, national and local efforts in prevention and mediation efforts;

7. **Looks forward** to the convening of a meeting of the Panel of the Wise and the Panafrican Network of the Wise (PanWise) with the youth on how to mainstream the youth in all tracks of mediation and conflict prevention efforts in Africa with a view to developing guiding tools and best practices;
8. **Welcomes** the invitation by the United Nations Security Council to the Panel of the wise to the Arria Formula meeting of the UN Security Council to provide a briefing on increasing the participation of women in conflict prevention and mediation through the FemWise, to be held on 27 March 2017, in New York. Council **calls on** the Panel of the Wise to use this opportunity to promote the common African positions on peace and security issues, 'African solutions to African problems', as well as to showcase the African ingenuity;
9. **Underscores the urgent need** for enhancing the capacity of the Secretariat of the Panel of the Wise, including through the mobilization of additional human, material and financial resources, with a view to ensuring that the Panel discharges its mandate more effectively. In this regard, Council **requests** the Commission to urgently look into the needs of the Panel and submit proposals to the relevant AU policy organs for enhancement of the capacity of the Panel in its functions ;
10. Stresses the need to expedite the establishment of the Mediation Support Unit at the AU Commission in accordance with Assembly Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.558(XXIV), in order to provide the relevant technical support to the African mediation efforts on different levels, including through the Panel of the Wise.
11. **Decides** that the Panel of the Wise shall make quarterly briefings to the PSC, in order to enhance the conflict prevention capacity, early warning and timely decision- making processes of the Council;
12. **Takes note** of the early warning report and advice provided by the Panel of the Wise, including on the situation relating to Drought and Famine in Africa, and **requests** the Commission to take the necessary actions in order to provide a comprehensive report on the same subject;
13. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.