Twelfth Ordinary Meeting of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security And fifteenth Ordinary Meeting of African Chiefs of Defense Staff and Heads of Safety and Security

*African Union Member States commitments towards silencing the Guns in Africa for a conflict-free Dispensation*

**Cairo, 17 December 2019:** The African Union (AU) will hold the 12th Ordinary Meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defense, Safety and Security (STCDSS) on Friday, 19 December 2019, at ALMASA Capital Hotel, in Cairo, Egypt, to consider and reflect on matters of peace and security with a view to providing policy directives, including those on the development of the African Standby Force (ASF), and its Rapid Deployment Capability, for implementation by Member States, Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, as well as by the AU Commission and other relevant stakeholders. The meeting will be preceded by the 15th Ordinary Meeting of African Chiefs of Defence Staff (ACDS), and Heads of Safety and Security to be held on Thursday, 18 December 2019 and the Experts Meeting that is currently taking place from 15 to 17 December 2019.

The STCDSS Experts are expected to look at some of the key documents to strengthen the Continent’s capabilities towards Silencing the Guns and for promoting durable security in preparation for the subsequent higher-level STCDSS meetings. These upcoming meetings will be attended by African Chiefs of Defense Staff and Heads of Safety and Security, African Ministers of Defence, Safety and Security, as well as Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms. Notably, the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, will attend these meetings and deliver important remarks on peace and security issues in Africa. In this context, among the issues to be raised include the ASF Doctrine on PSOs, AU Border Governance Strategy, illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, combating terrorism and others.

The STCDSS meeting is aimed at contributing towards a peaceful and stable Africa in line with Agenda 2063. In this regard, the STCDSS provides guidance on the on-going efforts towards the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa. Specifically, the meeting aims:
• To provide update on the progress made since the 11th Ordinary Meeting of the STCDSS and the 14th Ordinary Meeting of the ACDS held from 8 to 12 October 2019, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on the Commission’s continued efforts to facilitate, among others, implementation of peace and security initiatives and timely deployment of ASF and its Regional Standby Capability;

• To reflect on the efforts towards silencing the guns in Africa, consolidating the gains so far made and in the process, identify the challenges encountered, as well as forge practical responses and develop tangible action plans at the level of Member States and RECs/RMs;

• To consider the newly developed AU Doctrine on Peace Support Operations, which is aimed at strengthening AU Peace Support Operations (PSOs) in Africa;

• To provide update on African Union Compliance and Accountability Framework on International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights; implementation of the AU Policy on Conduct and Discipline for PSO and the AU Policy on Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) for PSO, as adopted by the AU Peace and Security Council during its 813rd meeting held on 29 November 2018.

The deliberations are expected to come out with tangible proposals on advancement of peace and security in the Continent, including on implementation of the theme of Silencing the Guns in the course of 2020.

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Notes to the Editor

About the Specialized Technical Committee on Defense, Safety and Security (STCDSS)
The Specialized Technical Committee on Defense, Safety and Security (STCDSS) is a key Policy Organ of the African Union established pursuant to Article 14 of the Constitutive Act of the AU (2000). The main mandate of the STCDSS is to provide guidance and direction to the AUC on matters of defense, Safety and security. In that regard, the STCDSS considers and reflects on matters of peace and security and provide policy direction for implementation by the AUC. The AUC is therefore mandated to provide at least a yearly update on the implementation of