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P.O. Box: 3243, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Tel.:(251-11) 551 38 22 Fax: (251-11) 551 93 21
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
489TH MEETING
3 MARCH 2015
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.CDLXXXIX)

COMMUNIQUÉ

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 489th meeting held on 3 March 2015, adopted the following decision on the regional and international efforts to combat the Boko Haram terrorist group and on the way forward:

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the implementation of communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.2(CDLXXXIV) on the Boko Haram terrorist group and on other related international efforts [PSC/PR/2(CDLXXXIX)]. Council **further takes note** of the statements made by the representatives of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria, as members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), as well as by those of the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) and by the representatives of France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, as permanent members of the UN Security Council;
2. **Recalls** its earlier pronouncements on the threat posed by the Boko Haram terrorist group and efforts to address it, including communiqués PSC/PR/COMM.(CDLXIX) and PSC/AHG/COMM.2(CDLXXXIV) adopted at its 469th and 484th meetings held on 25 November 2014 and 29 January 2015, respectively;
3. **Further recalls** the powers entrusted to the Peace and Security Council, as provided for by article 7 of the Protocol relating to the establishment of Council, particularly the power, in conjunction with the Chairperson of the Commission, to authorize the mounting and deployment of peace support missions and to lay down general guidelines for the conduct of such missions, including the mandates thereof, and undertake periodic reviews of these guidelines, as well as the provisions of article 16 of the Protocol stating that the Union has primary responsibility for promoting peace, security and stability in Africa;
4. **Reiterates AU's strong condemnation** of all acts of terrorism committed on the continent by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes. Council **stresses, once again**, the AU's determination to rid the continent of the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism, which cannot be justified under any circumstances;
5. **Strongly condemns** the atrocities being perpetrated by the Boko Haram terrorist group. Council **notes with deep concern** the continuation by Boko Haram of its attacks in Nigeria and Cameroon, as well as the expansion of the group's activities to other countries of the region, as demonstrated by the attacks carried out recently in Niger and Chad, resulting in further killings, displacement of populations, and destruction of property and infrastructure. Council **stresses** that the Boko Haram terrorist group is a threat not only to Nigeria and the neighboring countries, but also to the entire African continent and, as such, the situation calls for a collective African action in line with the relevant provisions of the Common African Defense and Security Policy, as contained in the Solemn Declaration adopted by the 2nd Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Sirte, Libya, on 27 and 28 February 2004, and those of the Non-Aggression and Common Defense Pact, adopted by the 4th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 30 to 31 January 2005 [Assembly/AU/Dec.71(IV)];

6. **Renews AU's full solidarity** with the Governments and people of Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad and Niger, and **expresses its condolences** to the families of the victims of the Boko Haram terrorist attacks and its sympathy to all those injured;
7. **Commends, once again,** the LCBC Member States and Benin for their continued commitment and sustained efforts towards a coordinated and effective regional response to the threat posed by the Boko Haram terrorist group. Council **reiterates its appreciation** to Chad for its swift assistance in the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group, **pays tribute** to the soldiers from Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria who fell on the line of duty, **expresses AU's condolences** to their families and **wishes** speedy recovery to all those injured;
8. **Welcomes** the recent successes recorded on the ground, with the recovery, in the course of February 2015, of several localities by the armed forces of the countries of the region, including Gamboru Ngala, Mongunu Baga and Dikwa, in the Borno State (Nigeria), as well as the operation conducted in the Sambisa Forest (Borno State) and in other areas where the Boko Haram terrorist group is active;
9. **Welcomes** the follow-up steps taken by the Commission in pursuance of the relevant provisions of communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.2(CDLXXXIV), notably the meeting of experts held in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 5 to 7 February 2015, to finalize the strategic Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), and the planning meeting held in Ndjamena, Chad, from 23 to 27 February 2015, to develop the operational-level CONOPS for the MNJTF;
10. **Endorses** the CONOPS agreed upon at the Yaoundé meeting of experts, with a view to facilitating the effective implementation of the mandate and tasks of the MNJTF, as defined in paragraphs 11 (i, ii & iii) and 12 of communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.2(CDLXXXIV). In this respect, Council **notes** that the CONOPS provides that:
 - (i) the MNJTF contingents shall operate freely within the Area of Operation (AoO) as defined, on the understanding that the AoO can be extended by the LCBC Member States and Benin, upon request by the MNJTF Commander;
 - (ii) coordination among all relevant stakeholders shall be ensured through: (a) the Support and Follow-up Group, with the involvement of international partners, acting as a consultative body, to support the implementation of the LCBC Strategy against Boko Haram, and (b) the Joint Coordination Mechanism (JCM), as a political forum composed of the relevant Ministers of the LCBC Member States and Benin and mandated, under the chairmanship of the Political Representative for the MNJTF, to harmonize the efforts of the AU, the LCBC Member States and Benin, as well as those of the partners;
 - (iii) command and control shall be ensured by: (a) the Political Representative for the MNJTF, who shall be appointed by the LCBC Member States and Benin, in consultation with the AU, and (b) the MNJTF Commander, designated on a rotational basis by the Troop Contributing Countries, who shall exercise authority over the forces pledged for the MNJTF;

- (iv) the LCBC Secretariat shall act as the strategic headquarters, in close coordination with the AU Commission;
- (v) the operational headquarters for the MNJTF shall be established in N'Djamena, and it shall be staffed by personnel from the LCBC Member States and Benin, and include liaison officers from relevant bilateral and international partners, as may be required;
- (vi) the LCBC Member States and Benin, supported by the AU, other regional organizations and partners, shall extend the necessary support to the MNJTF through a Mission Support Team (MST) deployed at the headquarters of the MNJTF, while the AU Commission and the LCBC Member States and Benin shall establish a Strategic Cell responsible for the coordination and management of any additional support to the MNJTF;
- (vii) the MNJTF shall include a limited number of civilian and police personnel, to undertake liaison and advisory functions to the MNJTF Commander and other relevant stakeholders, in order to contribute to a close civil-military coordination and facilitate the early stabilization of the situation on the ground; and
- (viii) all operations shall be conducted in strict compliance with international humanitarian law, including the UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP), in line with the relevant provisions of communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.2(CDLXXXIV);

11. **Request** the LCBC Member States and Benin to take the necessary steps for the formal appointments of the Political Representative and the MNJTF Commander, as provided for in the CONOPS, and to formally notify the Commission;

12. **Further requests** the Commission to take all necessary steps in support of the full operationalization of the MNJTF, in line with relevant provisions of the CONOPS, including activating the strategic headquarters, designating liaison officers to the MNJTF operational headquarters in Ndjamen, and operationalizing the Strategic Cell, in line with paragraph 10 (iv, v, and vi) above, as well as to establish a dedicated AU Support Team (AUST), comprising the personnel and expertise needed under the authority of a Senior Coordinator, to facilitate the provision of an effective and coordinated support to the MNJTF. In this respect, Council **calls on** the Commission to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding with the LCBC Secretariat that would clearly outline the respective responsibilities and roles of the AU Commission and the LCBC Secretariat in the implementation of the CONOPS, in line with the relevant communiqués of Council;

13. **Requests** the LCBC Secretariat to submit to the Commission monthly reports on the implementation of the mandate of the MNJTF, as determined in communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.2 (CDLXXXIV), to enable the Commission to regularly update Council in line with the reporting requirements contained in paragraph 19 of communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.2(CDLXXXIV), as well as to the UN Security Council, as it may require in the resolution that would endorse the deployment of the MNJTF;

14. **Notes** that, during the Yaoundé meeting of experts, the LCBC Member States and Benin pledged up to 8,700 military and other personnel, taking into account the operational requirements on the ground. Council **further notes** the need to mobilize adequate enablers and force multipliers

to enable the MNJTF to successfully neutralize the Boko Haram terrorist group, in line with its mandate. Accordingly, and based on the recommendations contained in the report of the Chairperson of the Commission, Council **authorizes** an increase in the strength of the MNJTF from the initial figure of 7,500 to up to 10,000 military and other personnel to be generated by the LCBC Member States and Benin, in strict compliance with the requirements contained in the operational-level CONOPS;

15. **Takes note with satisfaction** of the development by the Ndjamenan expert's meeting of the operational-level CONOPS, including the delineation of the operational sectors boundaries, the definition of the structure of the MNJTF headquarters, the location of sector headquarters, the sequencing of operations, the development of courses of action and the detailed definition of the composition of the pledged capabilities, as well as of additional documents, such as the Mission Support Plan, the Rules of Engagement, the Standing Operating Procedures for the Handling of Detainees and the Guidelines on the Protection of Civilians;

16. **Requests** the LCBC Member States and Benin, with the support of the Commission, to convene a meeting of Ministers of Defense, to be preceded by a meeting of experts, to validate the operational-level CONOPS and other related documents, as developed in Ndjamenan;

17. **Welcomes** the convening of the Extraordinary Session of the Heads of State and Government of the Peace and Security Council of the Economic Community of Central African States –ECCAS (COPAX), in Yaoundé on 16 February 2015. Council **notes with satisfaction** the decisions reached on that occasion, in particular the provision, to Cameroon and Chad, of a financial assistance amounting to 50 billion CFA and logistical support. Council **stresses** that this support is a further testimony to the commitment of the ECCAS leaders to the spirit of Pan-African solidarity;

18. **Further welcomes** the decision of the COPAX Extraordinary Session to promote close cooperation between ECCAS and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), including the holding of a joint Summit to develop a common strategy to combat Boko Haram, as well as to undertake consultations with Nigeria. In this respect, Council **notes with satisfaction** the visits undertaken by the Presidents of the Republic of Congo and Equatorial Guinea to Nigeria, Ghana and Chad, on 24 and 25 February 2015. Council **requests** the Commission to support, as appropriate, coordination between ECOWAS and ECCAS;

19. **Recalls** the adoption by the UN Security Council, on 19 January 2015, of a presidential statement, calling, *inter-alia*, for an increased international support to enhance the operational capacity of the MNJTF, and **commends** the Security Council for its continued concern and expression of support to, and solidarity with, the affected countries, as demonstrated by the adoption of press statements on 2, 5 and 13 February 2015;

20. **Urges** the UN Security Council, following the endorsement of the MNJTF Strategic CONOPS referred to in paragraph 10 above, to urgently adopt, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, a resolution that would: (i) endorse the deployment of the MNJTF; (ii) enable the provision of sustainable, flexible and predictable support to the MNJTF, including through innovative support mechanisms, drawing lessons from previous and present experiences regarding AU-led operations, bearing in mind that support by the UN to the AU in matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security is an integral part of collective security as provided for in the

United Nations Charter; and (iii) call for the provision of additional bilateral and multilateral voluntary support to the MNJTF and other related efforts, including quick impact projects, rehabilitation of affected communities and areas, early recovery, socio-economic development and peace building;

21. **Agrees** to use the opportunity of its 9th annual consultative meeting with the members of the UN Security Council, in Addis Ababa, on 12 March 2015, to engage them on the need and urgency for the adoption of a resolution authorizing the deployment of the MNJTF and the establishment of the required support mechanisms. Council **further agrees** to pursue this engagement through an interaction with the representatives of all the members of the Security Council in Addis Ababa. Council **requests** the Commission to pursue and intensify its efforts aimed at mobilizing the required support from the relevant international stakeholders;

22. **Commends, once again,** the bilateral and multilateral partners extending support to the countries of the region and **encourages** them to enhance their support, and **calls on** AU Member States and other members of the international community to extend all necessary support to the MNJTF, including financial and logistical assistance, equipment, as well as enhanced and timely intelligence sharing, in order to facilitate the early and full operationalization of the MNJTF. Council **requests** the Commission to expedite its consultations with the EU towards the provision of financial support through the Africa Peace Facility (APF). Council **takes note** of the plans by the Commission to organize in April 2015, with the support of the UN, the Donors' Conference that was initially scheduled to take place by mid-March 2015, and **encourages** it to take all the necessary steps for the success of the Conference;

23. **Calls for** the urgent provision of humanitarian assistance to the affected populations and the countries hosting Nigerian refugees. Council **looks forward** to the early visit to the region of the Sub-Committee of the Permanent Representative's Committee on Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Humanitarian Affairs, in order to assess the situation and make necessary recommendations on the best means and ways of mobilizing, from within the continent, additional support to complement the assistance being provided by international partners;

24. **Stresses, once again,** that, in addition to the much-needed military and security operations against Boko Haram and other terrorist groups, sustained national, regional and international efforts should also be deployed towards the improvement of livelihoods, education and job creation, as well as towards the protection of human rights, including those of women and girls, and the promotion of justice and reconciliation. In this respect, Council **appeals** for the mobilization of the required financial and technical support to the countries of the region;

25. **Requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to formally transmit the present communiqué and the Strategic CONOPS of the MNJTF to the UN Secretary-General and, through him, to the UN Security Council, as well as to other relevant partners, for their information and action as appropriate;

26. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.