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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

576<sup>TH</sup> MEETING

16 FEBRUARY 2016

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR. (DLXXVI)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 576<sup>th</sup> meeting, held on 16 February 2016, in Addis Ababa, dedicated an open session to the theme: migration, peace and security in Africa.

Council took note of the presentations on migration, peace and security in Africa by the Head of the European Union Delegation to the African Union and by the Representative of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to the African Union. Council also took note of the statements made by representatives of some AU Member States, international partners, specialized institutions, think tanks and civil society organizations.

Council recalled that the 2006 African Common Position on Migration and Development, as well as the Migration Policy Framework for Africa provide a sound basis from which to address some of the challenges linked to illegal migration, which include violent conflicts, bad governance, human rights violations, environmental factors, social exclusion, marginalization, poverty, inequality and underdevelopment, as well as lack of opportunities, particularly for the youth. Therefore, Council urged Member States to take urgent steps to effectively address these push factors for illegal and forced migration, stressing, in particular, the need for availing opportunities for the youth, as well as the need to promote stable, secure, prosperous and inclusive societies.

Council reaffirmed the recognition, in the African Common Position on Migration and Development, that illegal migration is currently taking serious dimensions and alarming proportions that threaten peace, security and stability of the continent. In this context, Council reaffirmed the AU commitment, among others, to strengthen efforts to combat human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, through the implementation of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols against Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants.

Council, while noting that properly managed legal and regular migration within Africa can be a very significant catalyst for promoting the integration of the African continent and that, beyond Africa, migration is an ever-present and growing phenomenon, underscored the need for ensuring the effective protection of economic, social and cultural rights of migrants, including the right to development, in line with the relevant human rights instruments. In the same vein, Council emphasized the need for developing frameworks and agreements on the return, readmission/ re-integration of Illegal and forced migrants.

Council emphasized the need for comprehensive gender-sensitive migration policies, which can ensure that women and girls fleeing violent conflicts and other push factors in their countries of origin are not subjected to exploitation, including human trafficking.

While acknowledging that Africa and the international community have adequate policy instruments for addressing the issue of illegal and forced migration, Council underscored the need for Member States to sign, ratify and fully implement legal instruments on migration, including the African Common Position on Migration and Development, as well as the Migration Framework for Africa, with a view to reverse the persistent trend of illegal and forced migration on the continent.

Council noted the potential link between illegal migration and transnational organized crime, including terrorist and violent extremist groups. In this connection, Council emphasized the need to put in place effective mechanisms for combating corruption and organized crime, including human trafficking and smuggling.

Council also noted that no country is immune to the issue of illegal and forced migration, which is a multidimensional and complex challenge. In this respect, Council underscored the need for effective border management, within the context of strict observance of human rights, as well as for cooperation and information sharing among the countries of origin, transit and destination of illegal migrants. Council also emphasized the need for the AU and its partners, as well as the larger international community to enhance cooperation in addressing the root causes of illegal and forced migration, particularly, in the countries of origin.

Council agreed to remain seized of the matter.