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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, P.O. Box: 3243 Tel.: (251-11) 5513 822 Fax: (251-11) 5519 321
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
1007th MEETING
8 JULY 2021
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.1007(2021)

COMMUNIQUE

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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1007th meeting held on 8 July 2021 on the Status Report/Roadmap to the full Operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF) and the AU Continental Logistics Base (CLB):

The Peace and Security Council,

Recalling its previous decisions and pronouncements relating to the establishment and operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF), particularly, Communique [PSC/PR/COMM.(CMLX)] adopted at its 960th meeting held on 28 October 2020, Communique [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCCXLXX)] adopted at its 870th meeting held on 20 August 2019; Communique [PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCXCV)] adopted at its 795th meeting held on 20 September 2018, Communique PSC/PR/COMM.(DCCLXVII) adopted at 767th meeting held on 25 April 2018;

Also recalling the Decision of the 14th Extra-Ordinary Session (Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.1 (XIV) adopted on 6 December 2020, particularly paragraph (xi) which “DECIDES to declare the African Standby Force (ASF) fully operational and DIRECTS the PSC to utilise its framework in mandating and authorising AU peace support operations; in this regard, ALSO DECIDES to dissolve the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crisis (ACIRC) taking note of the fact that ASF is operational and REQUESTS the Heads of State and Government of the ACIRC Volunteering Nations to wind down the operations of ACIRC by the February 2021 Ordinary Session of the Assembly”.

Noting the opening remarks made by H.E Ambassador Victor Adeleke, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the AU and Chairperson of the PSC for July 2021, and the statement by H.E Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security;

Further noting the progress reports presented by the representatives of the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), namely: the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the North African Regional Capability (NARC) and the written submission by the East African Standby Force Coordination Mechanism (EASFCOM);

Faithful to the relevant provisions of Article 13 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council on the establishment of ASF composed of multidisciplinary contingents ready for rapid deployment at appropriate notice pursuant to Article 4(h) and (j) of the AU Constitutive Act;

Reaffirming its respect to each Member State’s inalienable right to sovereignty and the vital role of the RECs/RMs as primary responders of crisis/conflict situations in their respective jurisdictions, in line with the cardinal principles of subsidiarity, complementarity and comparative advantage;

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council:

1. **Welcomes** the progress made by the AU and the RECs/RMs regarding the operationalization of the ASF, particularly in areas such as Training, Exercises, Force Generation, Pledged Capabilities, AU Doctrine on Peace Support Operations, the AU Compliance and Accountability Framework, Strategic Support Groups, Strategic Lift, Command, Control, Communication and Information Systems and the ASF Continental Logistics Base (CLB) in Douala, Cameroon;
2. **Commends** the AU Commission for all efforts deployed to establish the CLB and its initial operationalization, as part of the broader AU strategy for the operationalization of the ASF; and in this regard **requests** the Chairperson of the AU Commission to expeditiously work on finalizing a proper structure and financing model followed through with mobilizing funding for the CLB;
3. **Stresses** the need for the AU Commission and RECs/RMs to take all necessary measures to store and utilize equipment at the CLB to prevent them from being damaged and avoid wastages;
4. **Expresses gratitude** to AU Member States that have covered the costs of the secondment of Officers to the Continental Movement Coordination Centre (CMCC) and the CLB, and to Member States that have pledged strategic Lift Capabilities to be utilized for the ASF deployment; in this regard **stresses** the significance of fulfilling pledges upon request and **encourages** others to do the same to ensure that ASF is ready for deployment whenever needed;
5. **Reaffirms** the importance of the full operationalization of the ASF to enable rapid deployment and timeous intervention in conflicts and **emphasizes** the necessity of establishing a special unit for combatting terrorism and violent extremism within the ASF to be deployed upon request by the affected Member State on approval by the AU PSC;
6. **Underscores** the need for the AU Commission and RECs/RMs to redouble their efforts in strengthening the Regional Brigades of the ASF and availing the requisite necessary support, including financial, technical, human and material resources in sustaining the full operationalization of the ASF to enhance Africa's collective Defence and security;
7. **Takes note** of the efforts made by the RECs/RMs in ascertaining the implementation of the ASF framework at regional levels, especially on issues regarding capacity building, exercising and harmonization of processes and procedures; and **emphasizes** the need to continue conducting exercises to provide capacity to the ASF in all regions;
8. **Expresses concern** over the low level of support to the continued operationalization of the ASF due to lack of resources, including predictable and sustainable funding, low visibility of pledged capabilities and therefore **requests** the AU Commission to explore practical ways and means of resolving these challenges, and to brief the PSC in the last quarter of 2021;

9. ***Calls upon*** the AU Commission to finalize and submit the 2021 – 2026 Comprehensive Roadmap on the Enhancement of the ASF, including for the establishment of the special unit for combatting terrorism and violent extremism, with clearly defined timelines to the 2021 Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STCDSS) meeting and to this Council in the last quarter of 2021;
10. ***Underscores*** the importance of regular consultations by the AU Commission with key stakeholders of the ASF, namely the AU Member States and RECs/RMs, aimed at harmonizing political decision-making and mandate processes for the ASF and the AU Peace Support Operations in general;
11. ***Urges*** the Commission and RECs/RMs to scale up efforts towards the finalization of the MOU aimed at facilitating the working relationship for the ASF, and to this effect, ***requests*** the PSC Military Staff Committee to work with the AU Commission to swiftly conclude the drafting of the AU-RECs/RMs Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Deployment and Employment of the ASF MOU before its submission to the PSC for consideration;
12. ***Urges*** the Commission in collaboration with the RECs/RMs to facilitate the development of ASF Military and Police pledged capability roster to ensure efficient planning within the given ASF deployment timelines;
13. ***Calls upon*** the RECs/RMs to collaborate with the AU Commission to provide and upgrade the infrastructure/facilities for the effective deployment of the Regional Logistics Depots to complement the functioning of the CLB;
14. ***Request*** the AU Commission in collaboration with the RECs/RMs to facilitate the immediate deployment of liaison officers from the RECs/RMs to the Office of the Chief of Staff of the ASF in AU Headquarters to enhance the administrative structure of the ASF at the PSOD; in this regard, ***encourages*** willing Member States to effect this deployment at own cost on a temporary basis;
15. ***Urges*** the AU Permanent Representatives Committee to consider and approve the staffing requirements, including military and logistics planners for ~~of~~ the office of the ASF in Addis Ababa; ***also urges*** the AU Permanent Representatives Committee to also consider and approve the staffing requirements of the CLB as a specialized mechanism within the ASF to contribute towards conflict management and resolution on the Continent;
16. ***Requests*** the Commission to immediately set up a multi-agency strategic working group chaired by the AU Commission, to coordinate efforts amongst all the relevant stakeholders on the full operationalization of the ASF and report to the PSC quarterly on progress made;
17. ***Urges*** the AU Commission and RECs/RMs to report on the implementation of the ASF and the CLB quarterly aimed at harmonization of decision-making and reinforcing synergies to effectively and expeditiously respond to security threats in the Continent;

18. **Reiterates its commitment** to hold the annual consultative meeting with the RECs/RMs to exchange views on the status of the operations of the ASF and CLB to ensure common understanding and proceeding with a common purpose;
19. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.