PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
521st MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
30 JUNE 2015

PRESS STATEMENT
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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 521st meeting held on 25 June 2015, reviewed the situation in the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. Council took note of the briefings provided by the Commissioner for Peace and Security and by the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for Guinea-Bissau, as well as of the statement made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guinea-Bissau. Council also took note of the statements made by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Senegal to the AU, Chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the ECOWAS Commission, the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN).

Council recalled communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.(CDXLII) adopted at its 442nd meeting held on 17 June 2014, through which it decided, in light of the successful holding of the legislative and presidential elections of April and May 2014, which marked the completion of the transition process and the restoration of constitutional order, to lift the suspension of the participation of Guinea-Bissau in the activities of the AU, as contained in paragraph 6 of communiqué PSC/PR/COMM. (CCCXVIII) adopted at its 318th meeting held on 17 April 2012.

Council noted with satisfaction the steps taken by the new Bissau-Guinean authorities to consolidate the gains made following the holding of the presidential and legislative elections, including with respect to socio-economic recovery and defense and security sector reform. Council encouraged the Bissau-Guinean authorities and the other stakeholders to pursue and enhance their efforts, with particular focus on defense and security sector reform, justice and reconciliation and socio-economic recovery. Council emphasized the critical importance of reforms in these areas, in order to sustain the gains made.

Council expressed appreciation to ECOWAS for its continued commitment to the promotion of lasting peace, security and stability in Guinea-Bissau, as shown by its multifaceted support to the country, including in the area of defense and security sector reform. Council encouraged ECOWAS to continue its efforts and, in this respect, welcomed the decision of the 47th Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, held in Accra, Ghana, on 19 May 2015, to extend the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau (ECOMIB) until 31 December 2015. Council called on the international community to extend the necessary support to ECOMIB.

Council also expressed appreciation to all the other concerned international stakeholders for their continued support to Guinea-Bissau, noting in particular the coordinated role of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN). Council also noted with satisfaction the holding of the donors’ roundtable for Guinea-Bissau in Brussels, Belgium, on 25 March 2015. Council called for the early disbursement of the pledges made.

Council welcomed the dispatching to Guinea-Bissau, from 2 to 12 March 2015, of a Joint Assessment Mission of the Defense and Security Sector Reform, led by the AU Commission and including representatives of ECOWAS, the EU, the UN and the CPLP. Council requested the Commission, working closely with the Bissau-Guinean authorities and all concerned international actors, to ensure the effective implementation of the recommendations of the Mission.
Council noted with deep concern the recent evolution of the situation, which is marked by tension among political leaders. Council stressed that this tension, if not swiftly defused, has the potential of seriously undermining the progress made thus far and complicating the efforts to mobilize adequate support both from the region and the larger international community. Accordingly, Council strongly urged the Bissau-Guinean stakeholders to exercise restraint and show a high sense of responsibility, in order to resolve the current challenges, and to focus on the issues that are central for the well-being of their people and the long-term stability and prosperity of their country.

Council welcomed the efforts being deployed by the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for Guinea-Bissau, as well as by the Chair of ECOWAS, in order to help all concerned parties in Guinea-Bissau to overcome their differences, in the higher interest of their country. Council encouraged them to pursue their efforts.

Council noted the invitation extended by the Bissau-Guinean authorities for it to dispatch a delegation to Guinea-Bissau, as soon as possible, in order to interact with the Government and all other stakeholders and encourage them to redouble their efforts towards achieving lasting stability and development. Council responded positively to this invitation, and agreed to undertake the visit in due course.

Council requested the Commission to continue to monitor the situation closely and to provide regular updates thereon, to enable it take the decisions that may be required.