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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
691ST MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
12 JUNE 2017

COMMUNIQUÉ

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 691st meeting held on 12 June 2017, adopted the following decision on the situation in Darfur, Sudan, and the activities of the AU-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID):

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the Joint Special Report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the strategic review of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) [S/2017/437], which was undertaken from 5 to 17 March 2017, as well as of the introductory remarks by Ambassador Smaïl Chergui, the Commissioner for Peace and Security, and the presentation provided by the Joint Special Representative of UNAMID, Ambassador Kingsley Mamabolo. Council also **takes note** of the statements made by the representatives of Sudan and Egypt, in its capacity as an African Member in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), as well as those of the Permanent Members of the UNSC, namely, France, United Kingdom and the United States of America;
2. **Recalls** its previous communiqués and press statements on the situation in Darfur, including communiqués PSC/PR/COMM.(DCV) and PSC/PR/COMM.(DCLXXIII), adopted at its 605th and 673rd meetings, held on 13 June 2016 and 29 March 2017, respectively. Council **also recalls** the UN Security Council resolution 2296 (2016) of 29 June 2016 ;
3. **Reiterates its appreciation** to the UNAMID leadership, in particular the Joint Special Representative, the Force Commander and the Police Commissioner, as well as to the Mission's personnel, for their dedication and contribution to the promotion of peace, security, stability and reconciliation in Darfur. Council **notes with appreciation** the efforts made in the implementation of UNAMID's mandate, particularly with respect to the protection of civilians. In this regard, Council **pays tribute** to the UNAMID personnel who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty for the cause of peace in Darfur. Council **also conveys messages of condolences** to the Government and the people of Nigeria in honour of the peacekeeper, who lost his life recently in line of duty;
4. **Commends** the Government of Sudan for its cooperation with the Joint Strategic Review Team and constructive approach to the review of UNAMID. Council **welcomes** and **notes with satisfaction** the Outcome Document of the 23rd Tripartite Coordination Mechanism meeting held on 22 May 2017 and the spirit of cooperation that characterized the deliberations, as well as the commitment to strengthen coordination between the Government of Sudan, the AU and the UN towards sustainable peace and security in Darfur. Council **also welcomes** the report of the Joint Working Group (JWG) of 26 February 2017 on the UNAMID Exit Strategy, which acknowledged an improvement in the security and humanitarian situation in Darfur;
5. **Notes** the significant decrease of hostilities between the Government of Sudan and the rebel forces, as well as the declaration by the Government, the Sudan Liberation Army/Mini Minawi (SLA-MM) and Justice and Equality Movement/Gibril (JEM/Gibril) of unilateral ceasefires. Council **commends** the steps taken by the Government and the Darfur State Authorities towards the creation of a safe and secure environment and **further applauds** progress made to secure the Chad-Sudan border, as a result of the political commitment of the two countries and the work of the Joint Border Monitoring Force established in 2010;

6. **Strongly condemns** the recent incursion of armed groups into Darfur and **remains concerned** over alleged claims of use of neighboring countries as launching grounds for such acts. Council **further calls on** the Government of National Unity and the rebel movements to pursue the path of direct political talks for a durable solution to the Darfur conflict;
7. **Notes** the important steps taken by the Government of Sudan to advance the Darfur political process, including the incorporation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), which contains critical provisions that address the root causes of the conflict, into the Constitution. Council **further notes** the conclusion of the National Dialogue process on 10 October 2016, with the adoption of a national document, as well as steps taken towards its implementation, including the appointment of a Prime Minister, on 1 March 2017. Council **commends** the subsequent formation of a Government of National Unity, as well as the signing, by the Government of Sudan, the SLA-MM and JEM/Gibril, of the Road Map Agreement proposed by the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), in March and August 2016, respectively;
8. **Stresses** that the overall positive evolution of the situation is consistent with the findings of the visit undertaken by Council to Khartoum and Darfur from 15 to 18 May 2017. Council **expresses its appreciation** to the Government of Sudan for the assistance availed to its Delegation during the visit;
9. **Underlines** that, in spite of the significant progress made, a number of challenges that may impede the speedy restoration of sustainable peace, security, stability and reconciliation, as well as socio-economic recovery remain. In particular, Council **notes** that the security situation remains fragile, mainly due to the continued activities of armed militias, the proliferation of weapons and the prevalence of acts of banditry and criminality, as well as the continued occurrence of inter-communal conflicts closely linked to the root causes of the conflict. Council **further notes, with great concern**, that such challenges exist within a context of inadequate capacity and effectiveness of the rule of law institutions. Furthermore, Council **condemns** the recent attacks perpetrated by Darfuri armed movements in East and Northern Darfur. Council **reiterates** the fact that only an inclusive and participatory dialogue can ensure sustainable peace, security and peaceful coexistence in Darfur;
10. **Notes with concern** that, in spite of the improvement of the security situation in the past months, a total of 2.7 million people are displaced, of whom 2.1 million are in need of humanitarian assistance, and that 300,000 Sudanese refugees are located in neighboring Chad. In this regard, Council **appeals** to the AU Member States and the international community at large, to continue to extend their support to the population in need in Darfur;
11. **Underlines** the relevance of the new strategic orientation for UNAMID as proposed in the Special Report, namely a two-pronged approach combining peacebuilding in the areas outside the Jebel Marra area, where there has not been fighting for an extended period of time, and peacekeeping and emergency attention in the Greater Jebel Marra area, due to the insecurity prevailing in the areas, which is preventing Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from voluntarily returning to their homes;
12. **Endorses** the recommendations of the Strategic Review of UNAMID, as contained in the Special Report , including issues relating to:

- a. the establishment of the Jebel Marra Task Force and the reconfiguration of UNAMID in two phases of six months each, resulting in the reduction of the strength of the military component by 44% and that of the police component by 30%, the closure of 11 team sites in the first phase and the withdrawal of the military component from another 7 team sites in the second phase, it being understood that the Mission shall retain adequate and mobile quick response capabilities to be able to respond to security challenges as they arise;
- b. the effective implementation of the DDPD, including a comprehensive assessment of its provisions, with the view to ensuring a sustained focus on the outstanding provisions of the Agreement, as well as continued support to the AUHIP efforts towards an all-inclusive political process linked to the national dialogue and a national constitutional reform process;
- c. protection of civilians (PoC), with a lead role for the aforementioned Jebel Marra Task Force, working closely with the humanitarian country team, while in the rest of Darfur, PoC efforts will revolve around livelihood issues and police/rule of law capacities;
- d. inter-communal conflict, with priority given to those conflicts that have the potential to cause the highest number of casualties and derail the national political processes;

13. **Looks forward** to the full cooperation of the Government of Sudan with UNAMID, as well as with the AU Commission and the UN Secretariat, to facilitate the effective implementation of the recommendations of the review as approved by Council and the UN Security Council. In this respect, Council **underscores** the imperative need for the Government of Sudan to ensure sustained cooperation with UNAMID in the discharge of its mandate, including the respect of UNAMID's freedom of movement, timely issuance of visas and customs clearances. Council **notes with satisfaction** the progress made in this respect over the past months and **underscores** the need to reinforce this cooperation during this critical transitional period;

14. **Strongly urges** the Government of Sudan, working with UNAMID and the UN Country team, to ensure that it fills the security and humanitarian vacuum that may arise out of the withdrawal of UNAMID, in order to consolidate the progress made on the ground;

15. **Stresses** the need for building capacities of the Sudanese defence and security institutions and for the Government of Sudan to initiate the Security Sector Reform (SSR) process based on the national context, in line with the AU Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform endorsed by the Assembly of Heads of State and Governments Assembly/AU/Dec.472(XX), during its 20th Ordinary Session, held in Addis Ababa, in January 2013;

16. **Expresses its deep concern** over the widespread proliferation of weapons in the areas of returns of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and **urges** the Government of Sudan to urgently implement its Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme, in order to disarm all armed militia, movements and civilians. Furthermore, Council **calls on** all relevant stakeholder to extend their support, in this regard;

17. **Reiterates** its full support to the AUHIP for its efforts to resume negotiations between the Parties on the basis of the Roadmap Agreement including facilitating a cessation of hostilities

between the Government of Sudan and the Darfur armed movements. Council **encourages** that despite the recent flare of hostilities, all parties continue to demonstrate readiness to engage in the quest to find agreement on cessation of hostilities. Council **strongly condemns** continued refusal by Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) to join the mediation process and, once again, **urges** this movement to demonstrate the required spirit of responsibility and **expresses its intention**, should SLA/AW persist in its current attitude, to impose targeted measures against its leadership and to seek the support of the UN Security Council, to this effect;

18. **Encourages** the Government of Sudan, with the support of the international community, to work towards finding durable solutions for the IDP's in Darfur, on the basis of relevant international humanitarian and human rights law instruments, including the Kampala Convention on IDP's;

19. **Appeals** to the international community to provide all the necessary support to the Government of Sudan, including financial support, in its peacebuilding efforts in Darfur, in particular, in socio-economic recovery and development, the setting up the rule of law institutions and the establishment of the institutional and legal framework to address issues of land and management of resources;

20. **Requests** Chairperson of the AU Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, working with international partners, to explore the possibility of convening a pledging conference to generate resources to assist the Government of Sudan with critical post-conflict and reconstruction projects that would assist in averting a relapse to conflict in Darfur, before the end of the first year of commencement of the withdrawal of UNAMID;

21. **Strongly condemns** all hostile actions and attacks against UNAMID personnel and assets, as well as against humanitarian organizations and their staff, and **urges** the Government of Sudan to spare no efforts towards arresting and prosecuting all perpetrators of these criminal acts;

22. **Decides** to extend, for a further period of 12 months, the mandate of UNAMID as defined in communiqué PSC/PR/Comm.(LXXIX) of its 79th meeting held on 22 June 2007 and in UN Security Council resolution 1769 (2007) of 31 July 2007, in line with the recommendations contained in the Report of the Joint Strategic Review. Council **requests** the UN Security Council to do the same;

23. **Requests** the Commission, in collaboration with the UN and UNAMID, to provide quarterly assessments of the implementation process of the reconfiguration of UNAMID military and police components and the evolution of the situation on the ground, in order to enable Council to provide guidance as necessary;

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