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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
777th MEETING
1 JUNE 2018
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR. (DCCLXXVII)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), dedicated its 778th meeting, held on 1 June 2018, to an open session on the theme: “Delimitation and Demarcation of Boundaries in Africa: The Way Forward to Resolve Inter-State Conflicts in Africa” in commemoration of the African Border Day.

Council and participants took note of the opening remarks made by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Sierra Leone, H.E. Ambassador Osman Keh-Kamara, in his capacity as PSC Chairperson for the month of June 2018, as well as the introductory remarks made by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, H.E. Ambassador Smail Chergui. Council and participants also took note of the briefing made by the Acting Head of the Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Division within the Department of Peace and Security of the AU Commission (AUC). They further took note of the statements made by AU Member States and representatives of Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), partners, international organizations and specialized institutions.

Council recalled Assembly decision, Assembly/AU/Dec. 145(VIII) adopted by the 8th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government held from 29 to 30 January 2007, in which the Assembly encouraged the Commission to pursue its efforts towards the structural prevention of conflicts, including through the speedy implementation of the AU Border Programme, as well as Assembly decision, Assembly/AU/Dec. 408 (XVIII), adopted by the 18th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government held from 29 -30 January 2012. Council also recalled the African Union Convention on Cross Border Co-operation (Niamey Convention) adopted by the 23rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held from 26 to 27 June 2014 in Malabo, in Equatorial Guinea.

Council further recalled Press Statement [PSC/PR/BR. (DCIII)], adopted at its 603rd meeting, Open Session, held on 7 June 2016, and all the relevant OAU/AU decisions on the peaceful settlement of border disputes, particularly, Resolution AHG/Res.16 (1) of the Heads of State and Government, adopted in July 1964, which stipulates the principle of respect for borders existing on achievement of national independence as also reaffirmed in the AU Constitutive Act and the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

Council and participants noted that undefined and ill-defined borders hinder regional integration, economic growth and constitute a potential source of inter-state conflicts in Africa, particularly if strategic natural resources are discovered in areas where the borders are not clearly defined. In this regard, Council and participants underscored the importance of physical demarcation of borders. They commended the AU Commission for the efforts being deployed,

and progress already made in the delimitation and demarcation of boundaries, promotion of cross border cooperation, and provision of capacity building support to Member States with a view to preventing inter-state border conflicts and promoting peaceful resolution of all existing border disputes in the continent. They also stressed the importance of Member States to make effectively use of the facilitation provided by the AU Border Programme and resolve their border disputes peacefully.

Council and participants underlined the importance of close cooperation and coordination between and among border agencies. In this regard, they commended all Member States which have already established one-stop border posts and encouraged others to do the same, with a view to promoting good neighbourliness, cross border cooperation and regional integration. Council requested the Commission to assist all Member States, which have not yet done so, to also establish their own one-border posts.

Council commended all Member States which have already signed and ratified the Niamey Convention and urged those which have not yet done so to also do the same without any further delays. In this respect, Council requested the Commission to popularize the Convention.

Council encouraged Member States concerned to make all necessary efforts, in order to meet the 2022 AU deadline for the delimitation, demarcation and reaffirmation of all African borders. In this context, Council requested the Commission to continue to provide technical support to the Member States concerned.

Council took note of the financial and human resources capacity constraints being faced by the AU Border Programme. Council encouraged Member States and AU partners to provide necessary financial support, in order for the AUBP to be more effective in discharging its mandate. In the same context, Council commended all partners for their continued invaluable technical and financial support to the AUBP.

Council appealed for the harmonisation of existing approaches on border governance and emphasized that the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA), the Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community relating to the Free Movement of Persons, Rights of Residence and Right of Establishment, as well as the Niamey Convention are all complementary and mutually reinforcing instruments for the realization of the aspirations of Agenda 2063 and the AU Vision of a peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa.

Council agreed to remain seized of the matter.