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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

672ND MEETING

28 MARCH 2017

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR.(DCLXXII)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), held its 672nd meeting on 28 March 2016, an open session dedicated to the theme: “Peace, Reconciliation and Justice in Africa”.

Council took note of the presentations by the AU Commission and Professor Adebayo Olukoshi, Regional Director of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA). Council also took note of statements made by AU Member States, bilateral and multilateral partners and international organizations/institutions, as well as civil society organizations.

Council recalled all its previous decisions and pronouncements on peace, reconciliation and justice, in particular its press statement [PSC/PR/BR.(DXXV)] adopted at its 525th meeting held on 23 July 2015. Council further recalled the decision of the 22nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU Heads of State and Government, which declared 2014-2024 as the Madiba Nelson Mandela Decade of Reconciliation in Africa.

Council agreed that the sequencing of peace, reconciliation and justice on the African continent is a complex domain that still require further elucidation taking into account various factors including the political context and nature of conflict of the involved country;

Council underscored that the concepts of reconciliation and justice are indivisible in the pursuit of a successful post-conflict process, which avoids relapse into violent conflict. In this regard, Council emphasized that there is no successful reconciliation without justice and vice versa.

Council acknowledged that African countries have different historical and cultural backgrounds. In this context, Council recognized that the issue of achieving an equilibrium between reconciliation and justice is work in progress in the continent and that there is no universal approach or model in applying these two concepts on the ground. To this end, issues of timing, type and level of justice are imperative in determining the appropriate dispensation of justice in accordance with the nature of the conflict and the dynamics in the country concerned.

Council stressed that mechanisms for peace, reconciliation and justice must be tailored in accordance with the peculiar situation of each country, to include the traditional and cultural mechanisms of a respective country or community.

Council recognized the imperative of justice that is not limited to punishing crime and impunity but that adequately addresses the factors and original sources of conflict so as to avoid the fragmentation and polarisation of the country. In this connection, nuancing of the dispensation of justice to allow for balancing retributive, reparative and distributive types of justice should be considered for effective conflict management and peacebuilding.

Council acknowledged the need for investment in institutions and processes of reconciliation which tend to be neglected in broader post-conflict reconstruction and that could complement institutions of justice. Council also underlined that reconciliation processes

should be inclusive in order to address grievances and heal wounds of the affected persons and communities, as well as to address the root causes of the conflict.

Council also recognized the need for concerted effort in conflict prevention by paying more attention to gathering and responding to early warning in conflict management and peace-building.

Council stressed the imperative of sharing experiences and lessons learned, in particular from countries which have undertaken reconciliation and justice processes, with a view to assisting countries emerging from conflict, to address their challenges in an effective manner. Furthermore, Council emphasized that the reconciliation and justice processes must be locally owned and driven, in order to ensure a formulation of a locally owned solution to a local problem. Council further stressed the need for the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders including traditional leaders, women, and civil society in peace, reconciliation and justice processes towards enhancing conflict prevention and resolution, as well as post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

Council recognized the catalytic role played by regional economic communities and regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution (RECs/RMs) in the resolution, management and prevention of conflicts. The RECs/RMs were encouraged to enhance their efforts in peace building and post-conflict and reconstruction efforts relating to justice and reconciliation in countries emerging from conflict.

Council welcomed the progress made by the AU Commission in the drafting of the AU Transitional Justice Policy Framework, as recommended by the Panel of the Wise at its 2011 report titled "Non-Impunity, Truth, Justice and Reconciliation", with a view to assisting countries emerging from conflict in their pursuit of sustainable peace, justice, reconciliation, accountability and social harmony and to avoid relapse. In this context, Council requested the AU Commission to accelerate its finalization for adoption.

Council underscored the importance of good governance, respect for the rule of law and observance of human rights in the promotion of peace, reconciliation and justice.

Council emphasized the need to work toward the objective of silencing the guns in Africa by 2020, pursuant to the Solemn Declaration adopted by the 21st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union on the occasion of the OAU/AU 50th Anniversary and the effective implementation of the AU Master Roadmap on Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa adopted at the 28th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union.

Council agreed to remain actively seized with the matter.

2017-03-28

Press Statement of the 672nd Meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union Held on 28 March 2017, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Peace and Security Council

African Union Commission

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