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**14th ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SPECIALISED
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, SAFETY AND SECURITY**

**12 MAY 2022
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

DECLARATION

**DECLARATION OF THE 14th ORDINARY MEETING OF THE SPECIALISED TECHNICAL
COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, SAFETY AND SECURITY HELD IN ADDIS ABABA ON 12 MAY
2022**

1. We, the members of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STCDSS) of the African Union (AU) met at the 14th Meeting held in Addis Ababa on 12 May 2022 and considered the Conclusions of the 17th Meeting of the African Chiefs of Defence and Heads of Safety and Security (ACDSS) held on 11 May 2022, which was preceded by a Meeting of Experts held from 9 to 10 May 2022.
2. On the basis of our deliberations, we declare as follows:
 - a. **Adopts** the draft policy on Child Protection in AU PSOs and the Policy on Mainstreaming Child Protection into APSA.
 - b. **Requests** all stakeholders at regional and Member State levels, to continue supporting the Commission in ensuring domestication and implementation of the African Union Master Roadmap (AUMR) on Silencing the Guns initiatives, at all levels to enable realisation of its vision and objectives.
 - c. **Takes note** of the update on the AU Peace Fund (AUPF) and commends Member States for their continued contributions to the Peace Fund towards ensuring predictable and sustainable funding of AU peace and security priorities. In this regard, **requests** the Commission to facilitate full operationalization of the AUPF. Further **requests** Member States to support all efforts aimed at enabling UN support to AU PSOs authorised by the UN Security Council, including through the use of UN Assessed Contributions.
 - d. **Takes note** of the Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the AU and the RECs/RMs on the African Standby Force (ASF) submitted by the Commission regarding the modalities for the employment of the ASF. Within this context, **request** the AU to establish a Working Group that shall include representatives of the AU, RECs/RMs, Member States to undertake further consultations and inputs to the MoU between the AU and the RECs/RMs on the ASF by 1 September 2022 for submission to an Extraordinary meeting of the STCDSS to be conveyed on 1 November 2022.
 - e. **Requests** the AU, working closely with the RECs/RMs, to undertake a comprehensive review of the ASF Concept to ensure it is aligned with the African Union Doctrine on Peace Support Operations (PSO) adopted by the 3rd Extraordinary meeting of the STCDSS, for submission to the 15th meeting of the STCDSS. The review of the ASF Concept should also be informed by a lessons learned study on the ASF.
 - f. **Requests** the Commission in consultation with the AU PSC to expedite the establishment of a counter terrorism unit within the ASF pursuant to paragraph 24 of the decision adopted by the 35th Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in February 2022 [Assembly/AU/ Dec.815 (XXXV)]. The

commission should also take note of ongoing efforts of the RECs/RMs in this regard.

- g. **Takes note** of the draft 2021-2025 Work plan on the Enhancement of the ASF. Within this context, **requests** the Commission, working closely with the RECs/RMs, to undertake a comprehensive review of the 2016 - 2020 Maputo Work plan on the ASF. This review should form the basis for additional inputs to the 2021-2025 Work plan on the Enhancement of the ASF. Within this context, the updated 2021-2025 Work plan should be shared with the RECs/RMs for final inputs and validation by 30 November 2022 for submission to the 15th meeting of the STCDSS. Further request the Commission to sequence the review of the ASF Concept and the MoU between the AU and the RECs/RMs on the ASF as well as the modalities for the establishment of the Special Unit on counter terrorism to ensure they contribute to the finalization of the 2021-2025 ASF workplan.
- h. **Requests** all Member States and RECs/RMs to establish and enhance their PSO policies, processes and mechanisms for compliance and accountability to International Humanitarian Law (IHL), International Human Rights Law (IHRL), as well as applicable Conduct and Discipline standards. **Further requests** all Member States to ensure that all training of personnel for PSOs are anchored on the AU Compliance Framework for PSOs to increase adherence to international norms and standards.
- i. **Requests** all Member States to support efforts for the approval of an appropriate structure of the Continental Logistics Base (CLB) by the relevant AU Policy Organs to enhance the operations and functions of the CLB. Within this context, **requests** the Commission to also support the RECs/RMs in the establishment and operationalisation of their respective Regional Logistics Depots (RLDs). **Further requests** Member States to support approval of required funding for additional infrastructure development, to optimise the operations of the CLB.
- j. **Requests** AU Member States to support the operationalization of the ASF Command Control Communication and Information Systems (C3IS) project, including calling on those that have such capabilities to offer it to the Commission to ensure enhanced effective communication, command, control and coordination of the ASF and AU PSOs. Recognises the importance of C3IS in the operationalization of the ASF and therefore calls on the Commission to consult or engage with international partners including the European Union (EU) regarding the modalities for the acquisition of this capability.
- k. **Emphasize** that the AU Staff Rules and Regulations currently being reviewed should incorporate a special arrangement to facilitate expedited recruitment for the ASF and PSOs through the African Standby Capacity (ASC) Roster. Within this context, **requests** Member States to support this position at the relevant AU Policy Organs for adoption and implementation.

- l. **Request** Member States to continue enhancing their PSO capacities in line with the ASF Training Directives and requirements to enable effective response to current and emerging conflict trends. Further request the Commission to support PSO capacity building in all Member States.
- m. **Requests** the RECs/RMs to facilitate verification and reporting on their pledges to the AU to confirm personnel and equipment that are available for rapid deployment of the ASF when required, and as shall be directed by the relevant AU and RECs/RMs policy organs.
- n. **Reiterates** the directive of the 12th STCDSS, and **requests** the Commission to conduct a Mapping Study on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) by the end of 2022.
- o. **Emphasises** the importance of coordinated approach and synergy of efforts by AU Member States in the collective desire to prevent and combat the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism, foreign fighters, and mercenaries within the African continent. This should include but not limited to efforts to enhance cooperation, information sharing and partnerships.
- p. **Reiterates** its call to Member States in regard to paragraph 3(o) of the declaration of the 12th STCDSS to ratify the AU Convention on Cross Border Cooperation, also known as the Niamey Convention (2014), and to develop national border policies in line with the AU Strategy for Better Integrated Border Governance. Additionally, and pursuant to AUPSC Communique adopted at its 1024th Meeting held at ministerial level on 19 August 2021, extend the deadline for the demarcation of African borders to 2027. Furthermore, endorses the need for a dedicated capacity and required resources for the AU Border Programme within the Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) Department.
- q. **Notes** the upcoming Extraordinary Summit on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government to be held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from the 27-28 May 2022 and looks forward to its outcome document.
- r. **Requests** Member States to support the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), including closer collaboration and coordination among the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) in terms of joint operations against Alshabaab and through the provision of required capabilities and resources that will contribute to the implementation of its mandate towards the transfer of security responsibilities from ATMIS to the Somali Security Forces by 31 December 2024. Also **requests** Member States to support the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) in terms of financial and material resources.
- s. **Requests** Member States and other relevant stakeholders to provide the requisite strategic, technical and financial support to the Commission to

guarantee progress in ongoing efforts and processes to ensure effective implementation of the mandates of all PSOs on the continent.

- t. **Takes note** of the briefing of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) regarding terrorism in the DRC, the issue of proxy wars, the activities of armed groups and negative forces and the need for effective prevention and response measures to address these multiple challenges. In this regard, Member States **expressed** solidarity with the DRC in its efforts to address the issue of terrorism and violent extremism on its territory.
3. **Thank all** delegations for their participation and the AUC for facilitating the meeting.
4. **Encourages** the Commission to continue to provide regular updates and reports on progress towards the implementation of our decisions, particularly continued implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), in the next meetings of the STCDSS.
5. **Further** reiterate the role of the STCDSS as per Assembly/AU/Dec. 227 (XII) and in line with the provisions of Article 15 of the Constitutive Act of the AU (2000). In this regard, we hereby submit this Declaration to the 42nd Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the AU for onward transmission to the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, scheduled to take place in February 2023.

