



PRESS RELEASE

THE MILITARY OPERATIONS COORDINATION COMMITTEE FOR THE AU MISSION IN SOMALIA CONCLUDES ITS 15TH MEETING IN ADDIS ABABA

Addis Ababa, 30 June 2015: The Military Operations Coordination Committee (MOCC), established by the African Union (AU) to facilitate the implementation of the military and security aspects of the mandate of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), convened its 15th meeting in Addis Ababa, on 29 June 2015. The meeting, which was chaired by the AU Commissioner for Peace Security, Smaïl Chergui, was attended by the Chiefs of Defense Staff and other senior military officers of the AMISOM Troop Contributing Countries (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda) and Somalia, the AMISOM leadership, as well as by representatives of partner countries and institutions (the United Kingdom, the United States of America, the European Union – EU and the United Nations – UN).

The meeting took place in the wake of the Joint AU-UN Mission to review the benchmarks for the deployment of a UN peacekeeping mission and AMISOM operations. The Joint Mission, while acknowledging the tremendous progress made on the ground, also highlighted the many remaining challenges. These relate, notably, to the continued ability of the Al Shabaab terrorist group to disrupt the ongoing political process, through attacks against the Federal Government of Somalia and its security forces, as well as against AMISOM, the UN and civilians. Against this background, the Joint Mission concluded that conditions are not yet met for the deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation, and made a number of recommendations aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of AMISOM, including the extension of the surge in AMISOM strength and of the non-lethal support package to the Somalia National Army (SNA), which were both authorized by the UN Security Council in resolution 2124 (2013) of 12 November 2013, and the generation of additional capabilities.

The meeting provided an opportunity for the MOCC to exchange views on the situation in Somalia, as well as on the findings and recommendations of the Joint Mission. The participants noted with deep concern the recent spate of attacks carried out by the Al Shabaab terrorist group, including against an AMISOM base in Leego, in the Lower Shabelle region of Somalia, resulting in a number of casualties. They stressed that this situation calls for renewed efforts to neutralize Al Shabaab. They paid tribute to the fallen Burundian soldiers and wished a quick recovery to the wounded. They expressed solidarity with the people and Government of Burundi in these trying circumstances.

The participants underlined the relevance of the recommendations made by the Joint Mission, and looked forward to their positive consideration by the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the UN Security Council, so as to pave the way for their early and effective implementation. In this respect, they agreed on the urgency of the measures proposed

towards streamlining the AMISOM command and control, reconfiguring the Mission's forces, facilitating cross-sector operations and enhancing logistical support. The members of the MOCC agreed to actively contribute to the follow-up process.

While expressing appreciation to the international partners for the assistance extended so far to AMISOM and the SNA, the participants called for an enhanced support. In this respect, they looked forward to further interaction with the partners.

The MOCC meeting will be followed by a meeting of the PSC that will review the overall situation in Somalia and decide on the way forward, on the basis of the findings and recommendations of the Joint Mission. Furthermore, from 14 to 15 July 2015, the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services of the member countries of the East African Community (EAC) and of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) will convene their second meeting in Kampala, Uganda, as part of the Djibouti Process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation in the East Africa region. This meeting will notably discuss the best ways and means of enhancing security cooperation in the fight against the Al Shabaab terrorist group.