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P.O. Box: 3243, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Tel. : (251-11) 551 38 22 Fax : (251-11) 551 93 21
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
577TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
23 FEBRUARY 2016

PSC/PR/BR.(DLXXVII)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 577th meeting held on 23 February 2016, received from the Commission a briefing on early warning, including an update on the state of operationalization of the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and horizon scanning, as a follow-up to its communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.(CCCLX) on the Full Use of All Available Tools in Preventive Diplomacy”, adopted at its 360th meeting held on 22 March 2013, as well as communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.(CDLXIII) on structural conflict prevention, adopted by Council at its 463rd meeting held on 27 October 2014.

Council took note of the briefing on early warning, including the update on the state of operationalization of the CEWS and horizon scanning provided by the Commission. Council also took note of the statements made by the representatives of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA).

Council recalled the Solemn Declaration on the 50th Anniversary of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)/AU, adopted by the Assembly of the Union, in Addis Ababa, on 25 May 2013, on the occasion of the Union’s Golden Jubilee [Assembly/AU/Decl.3(XXI)], in which the Heads of State and Government pledged not to bequeath the burden of conflict to the next generation of Africans, setting as an objective the elimination of all conflicts by 2020; expressed their determination to anchor African societies, Governments and institutions on respect for the rule of law, human rights and dignity, popular participation and the management of diversity, as well as inclusion and democracy and committed themselves to place the African people at the centre of the Union’s endeavours and to eradicate poverty.

Council acknowledged that the CEWS is the most important tool to achieve conflict prevention in Africa and reaffirmed its commitment to ensure the effective implementation of its decisions on conflict prevention, including the strengthening of the linkage between early warning and early response.

Stressing that the primary responsibility for ensuring effective conflict prevention lies with the Member States, Council reiterated its appeal to those Member States, that have not yet done so to speedily sign, ratify and domesticate the relevant AU instruments, particularly the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, as well as the African Union Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation (Niamey Convention).

Council stressed the need for effective collaboration with respect to information sharing on early warning between the Commission, the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) and the CISSA, which should provide to the PSC such information to enable it take the required decisions in a timely manner. In the same vein, Council called for strengthening coordination and synergy between all AU Commission Departments involved in early warning, with a view to providing timeous and comprehensive early warning information to the PSC.

Council encouraged the Commission and the RECs/RMs to accelerate their efforts towards the full operationalization and strengthening of their early warning systems, and urged AU Member States to provide the necessary financial support to enhance the human resource and technical capacity to this effect.

Council reiterated the need for the Panel of the Wise and AU Special Envoys/Representatives to regularly brief the PSC on potential threats and crises to enable Council to take timeously appropriate decisions.

Council agreed that the AU Commission, working with the RECs/RMs and CISSA, should provide to it, briefings on early warning, on a quarterly basis.

Council agreed to remain seized on the matter.