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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
326th MEETING
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
26 JUNE 2012

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PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 326th meeting held on 26 June 2012, was briefed by the Department of Political Affairs of the AU and the representatives of various organizations engaged in humanitarian activities, on the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in conflict situations in Africa.

Council noted with concern the humanitarian situation of the refugees, IDPs and mixed migrants, in particular women and children and other vulnerable groups, in countries in conflict. In this respect, Council commended the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), all organizations engaged in humanitarian activities and AU partners, for the work done in the protection of refugees, IDPs and mixed migrants.

Council further noted with satisfaction the decrease of IDPs in various African countries and stressed the need of having well designed post-conflict programmes, which will provide for a pragmatic and realistic development intervention to assist returnees and prevent further displacement by stabilizing fragile societies.

Council, in line with the 1969 OAU Convention on Specific Refugees Situations in Africa, reiterated the need to locate refugee camps away from the borders.

Council urged all Member States to provide protection to refugees and IDPs, including through the development of a regional approach that facilitates information sharing and prevention of the flouting of the principle of *non-refoulement* in cases involving asylum seekers.

Council stressed that, in addition to mainstreaming the Protection of Civilians (PoC) in standard operating procedures of AU peace support operations, PoC must form part of the mandate of future AU missions.

Council called upon the refugees, as citizens of Africa, to recognize and uphold their obligations as stated in national, regional and international legal frameworks in the spirit of our continental shared values.

Council called upon Member States that have signed the Convention for the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, to ratify the Convention for its early entry into force. In this regard, Council urged Member States, that have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the Protocol, and to comply scrupulously with all relevant AU instruments governing the protection of refugees and IDPs.

Council agreed to hold, each year, an open session on refugees and IDPs in Africa.