



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **The African Union Peace and Security Council** **Concludes Field Mission to South Sudan**

**Juba, 31 October 2016.** The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) concluded its field mission to the Republic of South Sudan, which was undertaken from 28 to 31 October 2016, pursuant to a decision adopted at its 609<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 30 June 2016. The field mission, consisting of all fifteen members of the PSC, was led by H.E. Ambassador Catherine Muigai Mwangi, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya in her capacity as the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of October 2016.

The objective of the field mission was to gather first-hand information regarding the political, security, humanitarian and socio-economic situation in the country. During the mission, the PSC held extensive consultations with the President of the Republic of South Sudan, H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit and other members of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU), including the First Vice President of the TGoNU, H.E. General Taban Deng Gai, representatives of SPLM Leaders (Former Detainees) namely, Honourable Deng Alor Kuol, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and Honourable John Luk Jok, the Minister of Transport.

The PSC also visited two protection of civilians sites (POCs) in Juba and Malakal where it interacted with the representatives of the internally displaced persons in these sites.

The PSC further held consultations with the African Diplomatic Corps; the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and her team; representatives of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) and Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM); faith-based and women's groups and representatives of Other Political Parties, including the SPLM/IO; as well as with the Troika and representatives of several bilateral and multilateral partners, including the European Union.

The PSC commended the TGoNU for demonstrating the necessary political will and commitment to implement the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) signed in August 2015. The PSC appealed to all South Sudanese people to fully embrace the peace process. To this end, the PSC encouraged the TGoNU to ensure that the implementation of the Peace Agreement is inclusive and to embark on a nation-wide campaign of civic education, with a view to generating the necessary momentum for the successful implementation of the Peace Agreement.

The PSC underscored the urgent need for the establishment of accountability, justice and reconciliation mechanisms as provided for in the Peace Agreement, including appropriate mechanisms to address issues relating to sexual violence in a timely manner, with a view to ensuring justice for the victims. The PSC welcomed the consent of the TGoNU for the deployment of the Regional Protection Force pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 2304.

The PSC emphasized the critical importance of ensuring humanitarian access and encouraged the TGoNU to facilitate the activities of the institutions that were established by the Peace Agreement, including JMEC and CTSAMM. In addition, the PSC encouraged constructive engagement between the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and UNMISS with regard to the management of POCs.

The PSC reiterated its commitment to support the TGoNU and the people of South Sudan in implementing the Peace Agreement, among others, through the engagements of the AU High Representative for South Sudan, H.E. Alpha Oumar Konare. The PSC strongly urged all South Sudanese to embrace dialogue to find a consensual solution to the challenges impeding the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

The PSC expressed gratitude to the TGoNU and the UNMISS for facilitating the successful conduct of the field mission.