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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

464TH MEETING

29 OCTOBER 2014

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR.(CDLXIV)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 464th meeting held on 29 October 2014, was briefed by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Peter Maurer, on the activities of the ICRC in Africa and challenges related to humanitarian aspects of crisis and conflict situations on the continent. Council also received a briefing from the Commission, highlighting the cooperation between it and the ICRC.

Council recalled its earlier press statements on ICRC's activities in Africa, and welcomed ICRC's commitment to the partnership and cooperation, as well as to regular consultations with the AU, within the framework of Article 17 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU.

Council noted the increasing demands for ICRC's support in conflict and crisis situations in Africa and the resulting challenges. In this context, Council applauded ICRC for putting Africa high on its priorities. Council re-affirmed AU's commitment to closely work with ICRC to facilitate its activities relating to the provision of support and assistance to populations living in conflict and post-conflict areas, as well as in other situations of violence and need in Africa, so as to strengthen peace, security and stability on the continent.

Council stressed that training in International Humanitarian Law (IHL), aiming at contributing to capacity-building and to laying solid foundations for the prevention violations, is a crucial area of collaboration for the ICRC, the AU and its Member States. In this regard, Council commended ICRC's readiness to do more, especially on pre-deployment training of troops for AU peace support operations.

Council acknowledged the recommendations that emanated from the 12th joint AU-ICRC Seminar held in Addis Ababa, on 22 October 2014, on the protection of health care services in armed conflicts and other emergencies, and strongly condemned all attacks against humanitarian actors. Council warned that those found responsible will be held accountable.

Council acknowledged the efforts being made by the Commission to ensure that AU peace support operations uphold the principles of IHL and International Human Rights Law towards the protection of civilians, women, children and other vulnerable groups in conflict situations. Council further called all Member States to comply with relevant African and international instruments relating to IHL.

Council stressed that humanitarian action is part of peace building, and appealed to all Member States, particularly those countries concerned, to continue to cooperate and facilitate the work of the ICRC in the provision of support and assistance, particularly with respect to facilitating access to communities in need of humanitarian assistance, as well as providing security guarantees for its staff.

Council looked forward to the next meeting with ICRC in 2015.