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**EXECUTIVE COUNCIL  
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**EX.CL/ 271(IX)**

**REPORT OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE PERIOD  
JANUARY - JUNE 2006**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In this Report, the Commission has endeavoured to highlight those areas where, since the 8<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the 6<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Khartoum, the Commission has been active in confronting and addressing the challenges facing it and the Member States in consolidating the establishment of our young Union.

In this process of consolidation, one of the priority areas for the Commission is the establishment of the various organs which comprise the architectural structure of the African Union provided for in the Constitutive Act. Since this is a *sine qua non* for the achievement of a properly functioning Union, Council would note that some notable advances have been made in this area. One such instance is the progress made so far in the establishment of the Court of Justice of the African Union; and in that regard, Council will be pleased to learn that in a landmark development, its judges will be sworn in during the forthcoming session of the Assembly in Banjul.

Furthermore, the Commission has also tried to address the matter regarding the establishment of the three Financial Institutions stipulated in Article 19 of the Constitutive Act. Council may wish to note that the setting up of the Technical Committees for the three Institutions has reached an advanced stage.

In the context of our consideration of the above matter which relates to the structure of the African Union, I should like to mention also, the issue of the rationalization of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) which happens to be the main theme of the Banjul Summit. In this regard, mention needs to be made of the Conference of Ministers of Integration held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, at the end of March 2006. The report is submitted to Council and Assembly for consideration.

Additionally, the Commission continued in its efforts to invest the Union with a Pan-African Communications/Media infrastructure through the establishment of the Pan-African Radio and Television Channel, in accordance with the Sirte Summit Decision of 2005. In that regard, a meeting of the Steering Committee was held in February 2006 in Cairo, Egypt, followed by a meeting of AU Ministers of Information and Communication in Addis Ababa, on 14-15 June 2006.

For its part also, the Commission, motivated by the recognition of its role as one of the principal organs of the African Union, and the concomitant need to enhance its functioning, has made efforts to improve its administrative and financial management. To ensure the full and efficient implementation of its programmes, the Commission has endeavoured to complete the recruitment process, as required by the Maputo Decision and the approved revised Maputo structure. During the period under review, the Commission also endeavoured to improve its financial management performance by, inter-alia, systematically implementing the recommendations contained in the report of the Board of External Auditors. The Executive Council will deliberate on the proposals regarding the budget, structure and modalities of funding the budget, as well as the draft of the new Financial Rules and Regulations.

I note with regret, however, that in spite of the adoption of the new scale of assessment and the fact that we are well into the first half of the 2006 Financial Year, the payment of arrears and assessed contributions for 2006 by Member States remain very low. As of the time of finalizing this report, the balance of arrears stood at US\$54,071,239.39. Moreover, only US\$29,194,551.12 had been paid so far for this current year, leaving a balance of US\$40,194,944.88. Council would agree that this is a critical state of affairs that deserves the urgent attention of the membership of our Union.

The Commission is also guided by the imperative of Gender Mainstreaming as one of the means for enhancing efficiency. In that regard, the period under review saw the commencement of efforts devoted to building the Commission's internal capacity to mainstream gender. Plans are afoot to involve all the Departments of the AU Commission, other organs of the AU, the RECs and Member States, in a consultative process aimed at developing a strategic plan and tools to integrate gender in all their programmes.

Conscious as the Commission as a whole is, of the value of its work in the area of conflict prevention, management, resolution and post-conflict reconstruction, other Departments of the Commission have worked to complement the work currently being done by the Peace and Security Department and the Peace and Security Council. This report has highlighted all areas of conflicts in the Continent and the efforts deployed by the Union to address all of them.

Necessarily related to our efforts in the domain of peace and security, are those we continue to make in the field of one of our other main priorities; namely, that of democracy and good governance. The Commission has followed with keen interest, the efforts that Member States have been making to consolidate democracy and good governance; and in that context, the Commission was pleased to honour invitations from a number of Member States to observe elections. In the broader context of our efforts to reinforce our fledgling democracy on the Continent, I wish, to mention the work currently being carried out in the context of the review of the Lome Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes and on the Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance. The Commission is also engaged in the implementation of the Addis Ababa Declaration adopted by the 5th Conference of AU Ministers in charge of Public Affairs.

Regarding the African Peer Review Mechanism, I would like to mention that the process of accession by Member States continues. So far, 26 Member States of the AU have expressed their accession to the Mechanism. I would like to seize the opportunity to encourage more Member States to do so. Similarly, I would like to encourage them to ratify the Convention against Corruption.

Alongside the placing by the Commission of its special spotlight on the creation of a stable political environment conducive to the implementation of the agenda for the economic integration of the Continent, has been its initiation of programmes aimed at moving that process of economic integration forward, hence all the activities carried out at sectoral levels by various sectoral Ministers of our Member States under the coordination of the various Departments and Directorates of the Commission.

In that regard, it is worth recalling the two Special Summits organized during the period under review both hosted by the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in Abuja, namely:

- the Special Summit on HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis (1-4 May); and
- the Special Summit on Fertilizers (9-13 June).

I would like to seize this opportunity to express deep gratitude of the Union to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for hosting these two events.

Finally, in taking further cognizance of the growing recognition that our Union is gaining in the world at large, Council may wish to note, in this regard, that our external relations are still expanding; and that, indeed, since the last Summit in Khartoum in January 2006, the Commission has received the letters of accreditation of 4 more non-African States. This brings the total number of non-African States accredited to the Union to 35.

Beyond our relations with our neighbours in the Arab world, our relations with other regions also remain high on our agenda. We have observed increasing interest on the part of others which is a reflection of the place and position of Africa in the world at large. A case in point is the recent visit by the Japanese Prime Minister to Africa during which he visited the African Union Headquarters. The advent of a new set of relations between our Union with countries like Japan and emerging Asian powers including India and China, should hopefully bring concrete benefits in terms of the lessons that can be drawn from the history of their own development. In the meantime, we continue to deepen our cooperation with other regions of the world including Europe through the EU.

In our bid to strengthen and harness the mutual benefits accruing from our relations with our kith and kin in the Americas and Caribbean, Council would note that actions are being taken on the development of the African Diaspora Process, including the holding of the Africa-South America Summit scheduled to take place in Abuja, Nigeria from 30 November to 1 December 2006. As part of the preparations, efforts are being made to inaugurate the Central-South America Diaspora Network. As I have already done in the main body of this report, I am appealing to all Member States to rally and support both meetings to promote South-South Cooperation as well as our relations with the African Diaspora.

**Alpha Oumar Konaré**

## **LEGAL MATTERS**

### **I. Depositary Functions**

1. I wish to inform Council that, since the submission of the last report in January 2006, there has not been any significant development with regard to the status of OAU/AU treaties. I would like to take this opportunity to urge Member States which have not done so, to accelerate the process of ratification of and accession to all OAU/AU treaties, so as to facilitate their early entry into force.

### **II. Accreditation of Non-African States to the African Union**

2. In accordance with Part II, Section II (3) of the Criteria for Granting Observer Status and a System of Accreditation within the African Union (the Criteria), adopted by the Executive Council in July 2005, I received and considered requests for accreditation from various non-African States, bearing in mind the supreme interest of the Union and the concerns of Member States. Since the last reporting period, I have accepted the Letters of Accreditation of four (4) non-African States, in addition to those that were accredited earlier, in line with the provisions of Part II, Section II (3) of the Criteria for the Granting of AU Observer Status and a System of Accreditation within the AU. The names of the representatives accredited since my last report and their respective States are listed in the Table below:

<b>No.</b>	<b>Names of Accredited Representatives</b>	<b>Country</b>
1.	H.E. Dr. Amin Mohamed Al-Yousfi	Yemen
2.	H.E. Mr. César Castillo Ramirez	Peru
3.	H.E. Dr. Richard Vella Laurenti	Malta
4.	H.E. Mr. Antonio Malouf Gabriel	Guatemala

3. The total number of non-African States accredited to the Union is now thirty-five (35).

### **III. Merger of the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights and the Court of Justice of the African Union**

4. Council will recall that by virtue of its Decision EX.CL/Dec.237 (VIII) adopted in January 2006, in Khartoum, The Sudan, Member States were requested to submit their comments and observations to the Commission by 31 March 2006, on the draft single legal instrument prepared by the Algerian Foreign Minister at the request of the Assembly which was subsequently considered by the Working Group of Legal Experts Meeting in Algiers, Algeria, in November 2005. Additionally, Council had decided that the draft single instrument prepared by the Algiers Working Group, including the comments and observations from Member States, should be submitted to a joint meeting of the PRC and legal experts from Member States for finalization and submission to the next Ordinary Sessions of the Executive Council and the Assembly.

5. To this end, a meeting of the Permanent Representatives' Committee (PRC) and Legal Experts from Member States was held at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa,

Ethiopia, from 16 to 19 May 2006. The meeting considered and finalized the Draft Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights, which has been submitted to this session for consideration.

#### **IV. The Hissène Habré Case**

6. Council will recall that, during the last session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Khartoum, The Sudan, in January, 2006, the Assembly, by Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.103 (VI), decided to refer the case of Hissène Habré to a Committee of Eminent African Jurists to be appointed by the Chairperson of the African Union, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union. The Committee was mandated to consider all aspects and implications of the Hissène Habré Case, as well as the options available for his trial, taking into account the following benchmarks:

- (a) Adherence to the principles of total rejection of impunity;
- (b) Adherence to international fair trial standards including the independence of the judiciary and impartiality of proceedings;
- (c) Jurisdiction over the alleged crimes for which Mr. Habré should be tried;
- (d) Efficiency in terms of cost and trial time;
- (e) Accessibility to the trial by alleged victims as well as witnesses;
- (f) Priority for an African mechanism.

7. The Committee was also mandated to make concrete recommendations on ways and means of dealing with issues of similar nature in the future, and to submit a report thereon to the next Ordinary Session of the Assembly in July 2006.

8. I am pleased to report to Council that the Committee envisaged by the Decision set up in consultation with the Chairperson of the Union met in Addis Ababa from 22 to 24 May 2006. The Committee will be submitting its report to the current session of the Assembly.

#### **WOMEN, GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT**

9. The period under review was mostly devoted to building internal capacity to Mainstream Gender. From 30 to 31 March 2006, a Curriculum Development Workshop for a Gender-Responsive Economic Policy-Making in Africa Course took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This was a joint initiative of the African Union Commission and the UN Institute for Economic Planning and Development (UNIDEP) to increase the capacity of African development planners, researchers and civil society advocates to understand, analyze and utilize gender concepts and tools in development planning and practice. The vision is to overcome the challenges that the integration of gender to economic policies present. The first training course is to be held between October and December 2006.

10. A Consultancy to develop an African Union Five-Year Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan and Budget began on 3 April 2006. The Departments of the AU Commission, other organs of the AU, the RECs and Member States will be consulted to develop a strategic plan and tools to integrate gender into their programmes.

11. In order to implement the AU Heads of State Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, the African Union Women's Committee (AUWC) was inaugurated, and had its first meeting from 28 to 29 April 2006. Drawn from each of the five regions of Africa and from the

African community in the Diaspora, the 25 eminent African Women elected their Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Rapporteur. They also drafted their rules of procedure and adopted their work plan for 2006. The Committee will watch progress made towards gender equality on the continent, within the framework of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

12. As part of the African Union's efforts at strengthening women's voices in peace processes, especially in countries emerging from conflict, the Directorate, in partnership with the UNDP Regional Gender Programme for Africa, has put together a Network on Gender, Peace-building and Governance. This is a community of African thinkers, planners and actors working to promote gender-responsive governance in countries emerging from conflict. The Interim Steering Committee of this Network held its first meeting on the margins of the AU Pre-Summit Women's Forum in Banjul, The Gambia on 23 June 2006.

### **INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITIES**

#### **ACTIVITIES**

13. Since the Khartoum Summit in January 2006, the audit activities undertaken by the Office of Internal Audit have included the review of:

- a) The African Union Mission in The Sudan (AMIS);
- b) Cash and Cash Management at the Headquarters;
- c) Budget Execution and Expenditure Control at the Headquarters;
- d) Inter-African Phyto-Sanitary Council (Yaounde);
- e) Inter-African Bureau of Animal Resources (AU-IBAR, Nairobi).

#### **IMPACT AND CHALLENGES**

14. The Office has continued to assist management in the achievement of the mission, vision and objectives of the Commission, by promoting the establishment of efficient and effective internal controls, assessing risks and recommending measures to mitigate those risks. Accordingly, the Office has played a pro-active and decision-support role in the building of an efficient, transparent and accountable Commission.

15. However, in spite of the critical role that the Office of Internal Audit has been playing, it has an acute shortage of manpower. It is hoped that this problem will be solved with the current recruitment process and a review of the Maputo structure.

#### **THE WAY FORWARD**

16. In accordance with the Strategic Plan of the Commission for the Year 2004-2007, the Office of Internal Audit plans to prepare an Audit Charter and Audit Manual, and organize a workshop for management on the role of Internal Audit, risk assessment and good governance. US\$80,000.00 has been pledged for these projects for the 2006 financial year by the partners of the AU. Such a capacity-building exercise will assist the Office to provide the required services to the Commission and to meet the concerns of AU partners that have arisen in the light of enhanced relations and support. It is expected that the workshop will mitigate passive resistance from auditors, foster a pro-active approach to the risk

management process, and encourage managers to work diligently and positively with the Office of Internal Audit.

## **AFRICA CITIZENS DIRECTORATE (CIDO)**

### **Introduction**

17. The activities of the Africa Citizens Directorate (CIDO) for the period under review focused on: a) support for the consolidation of the ECOSOCC process; b) further development of the plan of action for practical, effective and sustainable relations between civil society organizations (CSOs) and the peace, security, democracy and governance agenda of the AU and to facilitate the operationalization of Article 20 of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) Protocol; c) support for the 2nd Conference of Intellectuals scheduled to take place in Bahia, Brazil, from 12 to 14 July 2006 and the development of the African Diaspora process; and d) capacity-building for the CIDO in the aftermath of its transformation from the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA).

#### **a) Support for the Consolidation of ECOSOCC**

18. Following the approval of the budget of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union (ECOSOCC) at the Sixth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council in Khartoum, in January 2006, work began on the process of national and regional consultations and elections into the post-interim ECOSOCC Assembly. The process kicked off in the national roots of the Presiding Officer in Kenya in February 1, 2006, when she convened a meeting of all Kenyan civil society organizations in Nairobi. The meeting established a National Steering Committee and appointed conveners for each of the established Clusters. The process was designed to be all - inclusive and its inherent advantage was that it would provide both a comprehensive database and a groundswell of popular participation and democratic reference framework for elected delegates in ECOSOCC. The ECOSOCC framework was expected to accommodate national peculiarities, but this example stood out as a model. The difficulty was that it ran the risk of being cost intensive, and financial support for the Kenya experience was derived, in part, from the stature of the Presiding Officer, Prof. Wangari Maathai.

19. The process also directed that members of the Interim National Assembly should take initiatives for driving the consultation process for elections in their different countries. This was the consensus of the Standing Committee at its first meeting in Nairobi in April 2005, and the direction provided in the Strategic Plan of Action of ECOSOCC developed in July 2005. The Office of the Presiding Officer was established in Nairobi to support the ECOSOCC Secretariat in Addis Ababa and to assist the leadership in driving this process. The Office directed that each member should provide a report on what had been done with regard to the national consultation processes.

20. The result showed that a few members such as Mozambique and Uganda had taken the initiative in this respect. The difficulty was that the ECOSOCC budget provided funds for regional, continental and Diaspora consultations but not national consultations. The expectation was that civil society organizations themselves would raise funds internally and among the donor communities to drive the process within countries, as a mark of ownership and independence, and in accordance with the spirit of partnership provided for in the



Constitutive Act of the Union. The CSOs have not been able to meet this challenge. Rather, national representatives of ECOSOCC have often approached the Secretariat for financial support to enable the process of national consultations and elections.

21. Accordingly, the Secretariat began to sensitize donor communities and friends and partners of the AU on this requirement so that it would be in a position to provide the necessary assistance, if so directed by the Presiding Officer and the Standing Committee. In this regard, I am happy to observe that we have had encouraging contacts, particularly with Spain and France.

22. As a complement, the Presiding Officer and the Bureau have also initiated a process of regional strategic planning meetings, to further appraise the situation and coordinate support for national processes. Accordingly, a SADC Regional ECOSOCC Strategic Planning meeting was held in Harare, Zimbabwe, from 27 to 28 April 2006; and a Regional Consultative Meeting for the West and Central Africa sub-regions was held in Ota, Nigeria, from 15 to 17 June 2006. The processes were led by the Deputy Presiding Officers for the Southern and West Africa regions respectively, in close collaboration with the Presiding Officer. The purpose was to review activities of ECOSOCC to date, facilitate intensive consultation on progress made and the work programme, establish appropriate national networks and feedback mechanisms for ECOSOCC and further define the process of election of members, with emphasis on modalities and guidelines for instituting and supporting national processes. The outcome is expected to feed into a subsequent meeting of the Standing Committee that is expected to hold after the July 2006 Summit of the AU to finalize the work programme and set precise timetables and a calendar for continent-wide elections. A report on election processes would then be submitted at the next Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the Assembly. It is commendable that the regional planning meetings were financed and sustained by the Deputy Presiding Officers with funds raised on their initiative, without recourse to the ECOSOCC budget. Moreover, their efforts constitute a challenge to the larger civil society.

23. In appraising the progress made by ECOSOCC, it is important to note that the absence of programme fund support for 2005, meant that about 10 months of calendar time was lost in the implementation process. Vigorous attempts have been made in the last three months to actualize its plan and programme of action. We envisage a very intense and active phase in the next few months, in line with the work programme and timetable for elections that is being defined by the Standing Committee. The proceedings of the next few months will also be instrumental in determining the period of the Interim ECOSOCC mandate. It may prove necessary to replace the time lost to lack of funds, to enable the Interim ECOSOCC to complete its mandate by the end of 2007 rather than February 2007, as originally planned. This however, would depend on the timetable agreed upon by the Standing Committee and the experience in the field as elections commence. In the meantime, ECOSOCC is also working to mobilize national, regional and continental support for its work programme.

**b) Governance, Democracy and Security Agenda**

24. The Commission has also continued to work on strengthening CSO support for the peace, governance and democracy agenda, with the support of the Danish Africa for Peace programme. Other international partners have also become interested in the programme

and consultations are underway to harmonise contributions and ensure that they are streamlined to provide effective support for the AU programme.

25. As part of this process, the African Leadership Forum in collaboration with the AU Commission, hosted a follow-up Tri-regional (North, Central and West Africa) Consultative Workshop on enhancing AU-CSO collaboration on the Peace and Security Agenda of the AU in Abuja, Nigeria, from 5-7 April 2006. The workshop reviewed and refined the outcomes of the Ghana Workshop and focused on adaptation of the CSO role to provide effective support for the policy implementation process of the African Union. It further reviewed the post-conflict reconstruction framework developed by the Peace and Security Department with a view to providing effective inputs from civil society. The input was harmonized with the previous text as a basis for an Expert Group review by Member States. Consequently, there was agreement that this framework of CSO consultation would be applied to other policy instruments, with a view to harnessing effective inputs of civil society in the policy-making process.

26. Arrangements are also underway for a third bi-regional workshop envisaged for the Southern and East Africa sub-regions in September/October 2006. The outcome will be a publication of proceedings and reports and a policy framework document for consideration by the Peace and Security Council, that will outline modalities and procedures for the operationalization of Article 20 of the PSC Protocol.

**c) Support for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference of Intellectuals in Bahia, Brazil, from 12 to 14 July 2006 and the Development of the African Diaspora Process**

27. As the focal point within the Commission, CIDO has also continued to provide effective support for the organization of the 2nd Conference of Intellectuals from Africa and the Diaspora (II CIAD), scheduled to be held in Bahia, Brazil, from 12 to 14 July 2006, as well as for the Africa-South America Summit that is now scheduled to take place in Abuja, Nigeria, from 30 November to 1 December 2006. Intensive consultations have been held on II CIAD and planning and preparations for the Africa-South America Summit have begun in earnest.

28. I appeal to all Member States to rally in support of both meetings which will serve as anchors for our desire for greater South-South Cooperation and feed effectively into our plans for engagement and mobilization of the African Diaspora for the building of the African Union. In a Note Verbale Ref. CIDO/03/02/071.06 dated 17 May 2006, the Commission invited all Member States to sponsor at least two intellectuals to the II CIAD meeting in Brazil. I therefore urge all Member States to take full advantage of this request, in order to ensure effective participation of the African continent in the meeting. The Permanent Representatives' Council has also been fully briefed on plans and preparations for the meeting.

29. Arrangements are also underway to inaugurate the Central-South American Diaspora Network, in time to feed into the Africa-South America Summit. Initial plans to inaugurate the chapter in May 2006, as approved in the calendar of meetings, have had to be postponed to the third quarter of the year: late September or early October 2006. Effective plans are underway to ensure the realization of this programme.

**STRATEGIC POLICY PLANNING, MONITORING,  
EVALUATION AND RESOURCE MOBILISATION**

**I. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION**

**1. Introduction**

30. During the period under review, the activities of the Commission in the area of Resource Mobilization focused on intensifying efforts aimed at securing funding for the implementation of the AU's priority activities for 2006 as reflected in the approved programme budget. At the same time, the Commission continued to engage International Partners on ways and means of improving cooperation arrangements as well as effectiveness in the delivery of development assistance, with the ultimate objective of receiving direct budget support as opposed to individual project funding.

**2. Responses and Framework for Implementation**

31. In this context, several key activities were undertaken as follows:

- The monthly dialogue with International Partners established under the new partnership framework was continued. This structured dialogue aims at streamlining, simplifying and harmonizing donor procedures and practices with a view to reducing transaction costs. The dialogue also focused on exploring common support mechanisms by International Partners to introduce predictability and flexibility on the delivery of development assistance to the AU.
- Structured meetings involving all the AU Commission's Departments/Directorates/Units and International Partners were organized to enable the latter acquire in-depth understanding of short medium term priorities and capacity building requirements.
- Regular financial and narrative reports were prepared and submitted to International Partners in fulfillment of obligations emanating from ongoing financing agreements.
- Pledges made by International Partners were followed up, programmed and spending plans prepared.

**3. Results and Performance Appraisal**

- Concrete steps are being put in place to prepare for the gradual shift away from funding individual projects towards greater programme support and ultimately direct budget support. This has taken the form of designing some short-term common financing mechanism known as the ***Process Facility*** that aims at pooling International Partners' resources for primarily financing the Institutional Transformation Programme (ITP) and other capacity strengthening needs of the AUC.

- Some detailed background work has been undertaken for the programming of the €55 million pledged by the EC for financing AU priority programmes over a period of three years. It is expected that the whole programming exercise, including the development of a financing proposal with the EC, will be completed within the coming months to allow for approval and release of the first installment of funds during the last quarter of 2006.
- Some new resources amounting to €7 million have been secured from Germany, and discussions are at an advanced stage to secure US\$3.2 million from Norway. It is expected that in the near future additional resources will be secured from other International Partners through the Process Facility.

#### **4. Outstanding Problems and Related Issues**

**32.** A recently completed Institutional Assessment aimed at testing the efficacy of the AU Commission's administrative and financial management systems, has highlighted some weaknesses in these areas. Such an assessment relied heavily on the work already done under the auspices of Ernst and Young and the ITP. The AU Commission is determined to address these weaknesses in the context of the ongoing ITP, and has in this context initiated discussions with Norway to fund the implementation of the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) to the tune of US\$3.2 million in 2006.

**33.** A related challenge is to enhance the absorptive capacity of the AU. This will entail, among other things, strengthening the Commission's capacity to develop and implement robust programmes and provide regular progress reports in formats mutually agreed with International Partners.

#### **5. The Way Forward**

**34.** The Commission will continue holding regular consultations with International Partners, with a view to consolidating the emerging new partnership, thus mobilizing consensus and building confidence. Efforts will also be made to put in place concrete measures towards common donor support mechanisms aimed at paving the way for direct budget support, thereby reducing transaction costs and introducing some degree of resource predictability and flexibility for the implementation of the programme budget.

### **II. PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

**35.** During the period under review, the activities of the Commission in the area of planning, monitoring and evaluation, included the preparation of a planning manual and the 2<sup>nd</sup> mid-term monitoring and evaluation report, both of which are still being processed.

**36.** In addition, with a view to enabling AU staff to better understand result-based planning and management, improve their skills in the area of monitoring and evaluation of programmes, and support the formulation of the mid-term monitoring and evaluation report for the Programme Budget of the Commission, a Workshop on "Result-Based Management" was organized in collaboration with the Canadian Partners, at AU Headquarters from 20 to 21 February 2006. It was attended by staff from various Departments of the Commission as well as its regional offices. The Workshop was held in the context of the first step in the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the AU Commission's Institutional Transformation Process. The next phase will

comprise on-the-job training for staff, on the basis of a plan which has been issued. Action has also been taken regarding the implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation System.

### **III. POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH DIVISION**

#### **1. Introduction**

37. Designed within the Strategic Policy Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Resource Mobilization Directorate, the Policy Analysis and Research Division has the responsibility to conduct analytical studies with a view to providing clear insight into the major challenges facing the African Union. Furthermore, given the importance currently being accorded to the development approach based on the capacity to discharge tasks, resolve problems, set and attain objectives, the Division plans to develop training and capacity building programmes.

38. The Division hereby presents the activities carried out between September 2005 and December 2005, as contribution to the Report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for the period covering the first half of 2006.

#### **2. Activities of the Division**

39. As part of the Strategic Policy Planning Directorate, which itself is accountable to the Chairperson of the Commission, the Division's activities focused mainly on the analysis of documents and making appropriate observations for a greater insight into matters of interest to the African Union. The Division examined the following issues, each with a succinct explanatory note.

##### **a) Proposal for Use of the Canadian Fund**

- part of the Canadian Fund should be set aside for the preparation of White Papers in January, February and March 2006;
- a Consultant should be recruited to carry out study on one of such White Papers.

##### **b) Comments and Documents Analysis**

40. The Division proffered comments and carried out analytical studies on the following issues:

- European Union's Strategy for Development Partnership with Africa;
- African Union's Vision on the promotion of volunteers corps at country level;
- African Financial Market and African Properties Stock Exchange;
- African Union Fund for Oil Price Fluctuation;
- Cooperation between the African Union and the African Development Bank;
- *Aide Mémoire* on the modalities of financing the African Union;
- Report on the Political, Security and Socio-Economic Situation in the Central African Republic.

### **3. Conclusion**

41. From the analytical studies conducted on the above issues, it may be seen that the Policy Analysis and Research Division has so far confined itself to meeting the demands of the Commission in terms of brainstorming issues of concern to the leadership of the AU. While this task is clearly within the Division's area of competence, the responsibility is beyond its real capacities. Two major functions define the Division's research role. The first relates to the design and development of a work programme to guide policy analysis as part of the strategy of the Commission. The second function consists of anticipating the areas of concern to the Commission by choosing for brainstorming major themes likely to assist the management to easily conceptualize issues. Pursuant to this orientation, there is the need to finalize the planned recruitments; but in the meantime, reputable African Consultants should be invited to cover the activities programmed by the Division.

### **IV. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT DIVISION**

42. The African Union Commission is entering the second stage of the Institutional Transformation embarked upon to make the working atmosphere in the Pan-African Institution more convivial and more rational.

43. This second stage of the process is geared generally to the creation of a knowledge management system, which will network the different structures both within and outside the Commission, and serve as interface between its functional Departments.

44. In pursuance of this objective, the capacities of the Strategic Policy Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Resource Mobilization Directorate were given a boost with the establishment of Knowledge Management Division whose objectives are:

- Obtain knowledge (acquire knowledge, create knowledge);
- Capture knowledge (determine what is worth capturing);
- Apply knowledge in context depending on their accessibility and availability;
- Reuse knowledge, if need be, in the process of knowledge spiral.

45. The progress achieved in the pursuit of the above objectives may be measured with the following indicators:

- Increased demand for information by the staff of the African Union;
- Improved "perception" of transparency, and increased flow of inter-departmental information; and
- Reduced complaints level across the Departments of the Commission.

46. The ultimate objective of the Knowledge Management System is to create an additional intellectual capacity for the African Union Commission.

47. The Knowledge Management Division will be fully operational in the second half of 2006.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION**

**48.** The design and implementation of an integral and comprehensive Communication Strategy which takes account of the need to popularize the activities of the African Union both within and outside the Continent, were at the center of the Programme of Action of the Information and Communication Division during the first half of 2006 (January-June).

**49.** The Division, as a horizontal structure, redoubled its efforts at disseminating information on the activities of all the technical Departments of the Commission. These activities involved the promotion and defense of the ideals and values of the Union and wide publicity of the actions of all the active structures, both in Addis Ababa and outside the host country.

**50.** To this end, the Division invested efforts in developing the information component *per se*, in cooperation with the print media world wide (News Agencies and Newspapers), the audio-visual (radio and television) and the electronic media (e-media) of the African continent and the world at large with a view to showcasing the Union both to the wider and the initiated public.

**51.** In addition to the publication of Newsletters in English and Arabic, the communication team focused essentially on the dissemination of information on the activities undertaken by the Commission, especially through coverage of ministerial meetings, Summits and experts' meetings, as well the initiatives in support of these activities such as the production of various promotional items.

**52.** The Division also developed special media programmes, notably on Darfur, with a view to rendering targeted and sustained account of the measures undertaken for management of some issues by the structures of the Union.

**53.** The Division is presently in the process of issuing a series of periodic publications as part of a centralized and harmonized editorial policy. The priority projects planned by the Division include publication of the Annual Report of the Commission, the "Letter of the Chairperson of the AUC" and the "African Integration" Journal.

**54.** The restructuring and updating of the Commission's website similarly forms part of the activities of the Division, and is being carried out with the technical support of the UNFPA, with the objective of reorganizing this vital tool of the communication strategy.

**55.** Furthermore, as a technical structure of the Commission, the Division has responsibility to successfully implement the dossier on the establishment of a Pan-African Radio and Television Channel in conformity with the Sirte Summit Decision of July 2005. To this end, the Division ensured the effective organization of the Follow-up meeting in Cairo, Egypt, in February 2006, followed by the Conference of Information and Communication Ministers held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 14 to 15 June 2006.

**56.** However, in relation to the scope of the responsibilities assigned to the Division, this structure lacks adequate work tools to implement a media strategy worthy of a huge organization like the African Union.

57. A plan to restructure the Communication and Information Division devised on the basis of the new communication strategy is currently under study. It is expected to endow the Commission with an effective, modern and integrated communication and information system, and empower the managers of the sector to achieve their set objectives with the requisite efficiency and professionalism.

## **ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**

58. During the period under review, the Directorate of Administration and Human Resources Development carried out the following activities:

### **ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT**

#### **I. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

##### **a) Recruitment**

59. Following a selection process conducted by a team of independent consultants, the Human Resources Services Division has been implementing the decisions of AU Management on the recommendations of that team.

60. Out of 107 successful candidates, 45 have been recruited and are now reporting for duty.

##### **b) AU Staff Rules and Regulations**

61. The AU Staff Rules and Regulations will be presented and recommended for approval by the AU Organs after internal discussions and adoption by the Commission. They will be ready for presentation to the Executive Council at the January 2007 Summit.

##### **c) Procedures Manual for the AU Staff Rules and Regulations**

62. The Procedures Manual for the AU Staff Rules and Regulations will be developed after the formal approval of the Staff Rules and Regulations by the AU Organs.

#### **II. SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM**

##### **i) The Commission's Pension Scheme**

63. Council will recall that it had mandated the Commission to carry out a study to improve the Staff Pension and Insurance Scheme. In pursuance of that decision, I decided to enlist the services of an Actuary Consultant to conduct the necessary studies on:

- i) evaluation of the existing provident fund;
- ii) definition of a new actuarial model that takes into account staff aspirations;
- iii) designing a new Plan for the attention of Council, as well as legal documents, communications tools, modalities for transforming the existing pension scheme into the proposed new scheme, selection of managers for the new scheme as well as the composition and terms of reference of the Management Committee of the new Fund.



64. In an effort to provide the Commission with a viable pension scheme, the latter held several meetings with sister organizations especially the United Nations and the African Development Bank so as to draw extensively from their pension scheme management experiences. The Commission launched a tendering procedure, which resulted in the selection of an Actuary Consultancy Firm to carry out the necessary studies. The process of signing a contract with this Firm is about to be finalized and the studies could effectively take off in the coming weeks. The report of the study will be submitted to you at your next session for consideration.

**ii) Group Life Insurance Policy**

65. The Commission has also embarked upon a radical reform of the Group Life Insurance Scheme in line with the Maputo Decision. The Tendering process has been completed and the Commission will report the outcome of the proposed reform to the next session of Council.

**iii) Staff Medical Insurance Scheme**

66. The existing staff medical scheme has shown a number of limitations. In conformity with the Maputo mandate, I got the Commission to brainstorm this issue, and this could lead to the establishment of a staff medical scheme suited not only to the needs of the staff of the Commission and its medical services, but also to the scheme's management environment and technical realities. To this end, the Commission initiated tendering procedure, at the end of which two companies were pre-selected. The final selection will be done after the competent Departments of the Commission have looked into other considerations. An appropriate report on the mode of management of a suitable medical scheme for the Commission, in terms of scope of coverage and cost of insurance, will be submitted to you for consideration and approval. The report will examine, among other things, whether to:

- introduce a new insurance formula to be managed by a private company, or
- maintain the existing medical insurance scheme with some adjustments.

**iv) Harmonization of the Salary Structure**

67. The existing salary structure resulting from the Maputo Decision and effective since 1 January 2004, is fraught with inconsistencies which I had earlier brought to the attention of Council. As a matter of fact, there are two co-existing salary structures for the General Staff Category. On the other hand, the structures applicable to the Professional Staff Category contain overlappings which sometimes extend over three grade levels; and given the fact that the salary scales in the Commission were structured on those of the SADC Secretariat, a number of structural defects were noted and need to be corrected if the salary structure of the Commission is to fulfil the basic statistical criteria of any salary conversion operation. During consideration of the documents relating to the Commission's strategic plan, Council, in approving the plan, had mandated me to carry out that study. In pursuance thereof, the Commission launched an Invitation to Tender and then selected a firm of consultants to conduct the study for harmonization of the salary structures. This

study, which is already underway, should continue up to August 2006. I will, on behalf of the Commission, render a report thereon to the next session of Council.

**v) Other Staff Social Benefits**

68. Council will recall that during consideration of the relation between the salary of the staff members in the Brussels and Geneva offices and the cost of living, in Khartoum in January 2006, it had recommended that the Commission adopt a global approach in fixing the salaries and entitlements of all staff in the various duty stations. In implementing the proposal, the Commission drew up of the terms of reference for a study whose conclusions will be submitted to the next session of Council for consideration.

**vi) Educational Allowance for Locally Recruited Staff**

69. The decision of the Executive Council on Education Allowance for locally recruited staff (Decision Ext/EX.CL/Dec/2(VII) adopted by the 8th Extraordinary Session of the Executive Council held in Khartoum, The Sudan, has been implemented.

**III. STAFF DEVELOPMENT ISSUES**

70. The Executive Council would recall its directive to the Commission to develop a Training Policy, in order that staff skills are continually upgraded. The Directorate has commenced the process of developing a comprehensive and updated policy for training and staff development in the Commission. The policy is being developed in a participatory and consultative manner to involve all the stakeholders, including the staff of the Commission at Headquarters and in the representational and regional offices. Moreover, the policy will be benchmarked with best practices in organisations similar to the Commission.

71. It is planned that the draft AU Training Policy will be presented for consideration by the AU Organs at their next meeting.

**IV. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (MIS)**

72. The MIS activities during the period under review focused on the following:

**1. VSAT project**

73. Since January 2006, the MIS Division of the Commission has been involved in the VSAT project with the objective of establishing a private communication infrastructure between the Commission and the Regional and Representational Offices.

**2. ICT Policy**

74. The MIS Division is currently developing an ICT policy for the AU Commission. The policy document will be ready by the end of June 2006 and will provide procedures, regulations, standards and guidelines to establish prudent and acceptable practices on the usage and security of the existing AU ICT resources.

**3. Medical System and Translation System for Conference Services Directorate**

75. In order to automate and introduce modern working methods, the MIS division has evaluated the work processes of the two departments. Currently, the Division is finalising the Request For Proposals (RFPs) for computer-aided translation tools, machine translation tools, electronic medical records and a medical practice management system. This upgrade will enable the two directorates to become more efficient and effective in their service provision to the user departments.

**PROGRAMMING, BUDGETING, FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING**

**I. ENHANCED PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT**

76. During the period under review, the Commission continued to improve its performance by systematically implementing the recommendations contained in the Ernst and Young Report, as well as those of the Board of External Auditors.

**II. SPECIFIC PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:**

**a) Implementation of Integrated Financial Management And Information System**

77. The bid document has been vetted and cleared by the Legal Counsel and the invitation for bids has been forwarded to all Member States and posted on AU web site .The bids will be opened after 45 days; and, subject to availability of funds, the first phase of installing an Integrated Financial Management and Information System (IFMIS), beginning with the Headquarters, will commence in January 2007.

**b) Staffing Matters**

78. The staff strength of the Department of Programming, Budgeting, Finance and Accounting (PBFA) has significantly improved at both the Headquarters and Regional Offices. However, the implementation of the revised structure that had been approved by the Executive Council in Khartoum in January has been delayed. This is because it was pegged to the task of collection of arrears, which is proving difficult for the Commission. Once the funds have been collected, the staff complement will be promptly implemented, bringing the Department to full strength, in order to meet the current and emerging challenges.

**c) Operations**

79. In pursuance of the Executive Council's Decision adopted in Khartoum, the Commission prepared and submitted for internal discussion and then to the PRC, a position paper on the budget structure and modalities of funding. It is anticipated that the Council will adopt the proposals during its deliberations in Banjul. The Commission is of the view that implementation of these proposals will ensure that the budgeting process involving the Commission and Member States becomes interactive, creating and enhancing a sense of shared responsibility. In the meantime, the Commission has embarked on a process of in-

house sensitization and training of all staff members, with a view to inculcating a culture of budget discipline.

**d) Accounting for Peace Keeping Funds**

80. The volume of peacekeeping funds has increased significantly, and the Commission recognizes the imperative to subject them to standard accounting procedures, as well as consolidating and reporting on them in its statement of income and expenditure. In view of this, the Finance Unit in the Peace and Security Department will soon be integrated into the PBFA, in order to streamline the accounting and reporting procedures for peacekeeping funds.

**e) Audit Reports**

81. The Department continues to draw immense support from the constructive oversight role and the recommendations of the Directorate of Internal Audit and the Board of External Auditors. The Department continues to implement these recommendations within the limitations of both financial and human resources.

**f) Revision of Financial Rules and Regulations**

82. The draft Financial Rules and Regulations proposed by Ernst and Young has been considered by the appropriate organs and commended by the PRC. It is hoped that the new Financial Rules and Regulations will be adopted by the Executive Council in Banjul, The Gambia.

**III. CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MEMBER STATES**

83. Following the conclusion of the first five months of the financial year, the Commission has noted that the collection of arrears and assessed contributions from Member States has been below expectation. The status of receipts is as follows:

**Arrears**

▪ Arrears as at the beginning of the year	US \$ 63,124,102.29
▪ Receipts from Arrears	US \$ 9,052,862.90
▪ Balance as at 7/6/2006	US \$ 54,071,239.39

**Current assessed contributions**

▪ Assessed Contributions for 2006	US \$ 69,389,496.00
▪ Receipts for the Current Year	US \$ 29,194,551.12
▪ Balance Outstanding	US \$ 40,194,944.88
▪ Advance Payments	US \$ 624,978.00

<b>Total assessed contributions (arrears + current contributions)</b>	<b>US \$ 94,266,184.27</b>
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#### **IV. EXPENDITURE**

84. The contributions so far received from Member States hardly cover staff costs and vital operating costs and there is nothing left for programmes. Consequently, the Commission's liquidity position has been adversely affected. Accordingly, it may not be able to implement either its organizational structure or execute its annual plans.

85. To date, the Commission has received from the Federal Government of Nigeria, a generous contribution of US \$10M (Ten Million) towards the Solidarity Budget. I am grateful for this timely gesture and would like to appeal for further contributions to enable the Commission execute the approved programmes.

86. The Commission had hoped that the status of contributions of Member States would greatly improve as from 2006, after the adoption of the new scale of assessment that was based on Member States capacity to pay. However, the situation, as described above, reflects the contrary.

### **PEACE AND SECURITY**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

87. This report covers the activities carried out by the Commission in the area of Peace and Security since January 2006. It focuses mainly on the status of the establishment of a continental Peace and Security architecture; the efforts deployed to prevent and resolve the conflicts on the Continent; post-conflict reconstruction and the initiatives undertaken in the fields of terrorism and disarmament.

#### **II. ESTABLISHMENT OF A CONTINENTAL PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE**

88. During the period under review, the Commission has pursued its efforts towards the establishment of the Continental Peace and Security Architecture, especially with respect to the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and the African Standby Force (ASF).

##### **a) Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)**

89. The Commission has continued with its efforts towards the operationalization of the CEWS provided for by the Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC). In this regard, the Commission organized a Consultative Workshop on Early Warning at the end of April 2005, which included participants from the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other key stakeholders. The Workshop focused on the review of the draft Roadmap developed by the Commission in July 2005, with the assistance of some experts. The Consultative Workshop made various recommendations on the way forward, including the need to work closely with the RECs in developing a continental framework for information gathering and analysis. The participants stressed the need to hold annual early warning meetings facilitated by the Commission and hosted by the RECs on a rotating basis. SADC proposed to host the first meeting by the end of 2006.

90. The next steps in the development of CEWS will include the convening of a meeting of experts from Member States to consider and adopt the draft Roadmap. In the meantime, the Commission has continued with efforts to strengthen its Situation Room, which is responsible “for data collection and analysis on the basis of an appropriate early warning indicator module”. In this regard, collaborative efforts have been made in capacity building and skills training with the United Nations Department of Peace Keeping Operations (UNDPKO) and other relevant institutions through training of the AU Situation Room staff and sharing of experiences.

**b) African Standby Force (ASF)**

91. At its Khartoum session, the Executive Council was briefed on the initial steps taken to implement the Roadmap for the Operationalization of the ASF elaborated by the Commission and the RECs/Regions, in 2005. The Roadmap, which was a follow-up to the ASF Policy Framework Document adopted by the AU Summit in July 2003 and called for the establishment of the ASF in two phases, up to June 2010, provided for the convening of Workshops to produce the working tools of the ASF on Doctrine, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Command, Control, Communication and Information Systems (C<sup>3</sup>IS), Training and Evaluation, and Logistics. The Workshops were hosted by the designated RECs and Regions between 13 January and 28 April 2006.

92. Regarding the Peace Support Operations Doctrine, a preliminary draft Doctrine was produced and subsequently discussed by representatives of the various regions. Pursuant to this, a pre-Workshop meeting was organized from 6 to 10 February 2006 in Windhoek, Namibia, during which a second draft Doctrine was produced. This formed the basis for the Doctrine Workshop, hosted in Gaborone, Botswana, from 27 February to 3 March 2006.

93. The Workshop on Training and Evaluation was held in Luanda, Angola, from 7 to 13 March 2006. It reviewed the ASF training policy and the ASF training standards documents. These had been produced at a pre-Workshop held between 30 January and 3 February 2006. The Workshop also produced substantial drafts on evaluation and validation, centres of excellence, training publications and training costs that had not been fully addressed at the pre-Workshop.

94. Equally important was the first meeting between the AU Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD) and the African Peace Support Training Centres Association (APSTA), which was held in Luanda, on 13 March 2006. Representatives from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre (KAIPTC), the National War College (NWC) of Nigeria, as well as a representative from ECOWAS, were in attendance. This meeting was aimed at discussing the modalities for collaboration and cooperation between the AU PSOD and APSTA in training the ASF, sharing of information through the establishment of websites, accreditation of training centres of excellence and evaluation, validation and coordination of ASF training. In terms of the way forward, the KAIPTC has been mandated to conduct a training needs analysis for the ASF and a training costing meeting to be held later this year as a step towards the finalization of the training and evaluation policy end products.

**95.** The ASF Logistics Workshop was hosted in Mombasa, Kenya, from 27 to 31 March 2006. The Workshop adopted a draft logistics concept and manual for the ASF. There is however some outstanding work that still needs to be completed.

**96.** In the area of C<sup>3</sup>IS, the Workshop was held in Cairo, Egypt, from 5 to 12 April 2006. The Workshop made changes to the framework document as deemed necessary. In terms of the way forward, expertise and dedicated staff will be required to build, align and manage the C<sup>3</sup>IS environment for the future. The outsourcing of the many projects that will be required for completion thereof shall be considered.

**97.** The Workshop on SOPs was held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 24 to 28 April 2006. The Workshop was a follow-up to a pre-Workshop held in Abuja from 20 to 24 March 2006, which produced a first draft SOPs for discussion. Despite the significant progress made, further work is required to refine the second draft SOPs.

**98.** In general, the products that were formulated by the Workshops are about 85% complete. All the ASF Workshops were successfully conducted, with each of them enjoying full cooperation from the RECs/Regions, as well as the G8 and other Partners within the framework of the Joint Africa/G8 Plan to enhance African capabilities to undertake peace support operations, adopted at Evian, France, in June 2003. What is left is mainly translation into AU official languages and formatting to meet common AU standards for documentation. The responsible regional brigades have been tasked to complete these and submit the final documents. Harmonization of the documents is expected to take place later this year, beginning early in September 2006.

**99.** Regarding the establishment of the regional brigades, there is now clear and tangible progress made by most of the regions in the following aspects:

- establishment of Planning Elements – PLANLEMs (South, East, Central, West);
- establishment of Brigade Headquarters (South, East, Central, West);
- pledging of troops and units (South, East, Central, West, North);
- identification of location of regional military depots (all regions);
- agreement and signing of a policy framework establishing the ASF brigades (all regions);
- agreement on host agreements wherever ASF facilities are located (some still need to be signed and scrutinized by the AU).

**100.** However, the ASF North and Central regions require a sustained effort to assist them. The Commission must carry out on – site verification in all the regions before they can be considered for deployment as regional brigades.

**101.** In terms of the overall way forward, efforts will be pursued with respect to the following:

- a harmonization meeting, which is expected to be convened in September 2006, to ensure the consistency/conformity of the end products of all the Workshops;

- policy formulation for three more critical areas that have been identified, namely, finance, legal aspects and military medical aspects;
- the commencement of work on the civilian dimensions of the ASF (police and non-uniformed civilians), which is lacking in the Framework Document establishing the ASF.

**102.** The Commission intends to convene a series of meetings that will culminate in a meeting of the Ministers of Defense and Security, with a view of reviewing the progress made so far in the establishment of the ASF, ensuring greater harmonization of efforts in this respect, and charting the way forward.

### **III. DEVELOPMENTS RELATING TO CONFLICTS AND OTHER SITUATIONS**

**103.** Generally, the period under consideration was marked by contrasting developments in different crises and other conflict situations in the Continent. On the one hand, progress was made concerning the Darfur conflict, with the conclusion of the 5 May 2006 Peace Agreement; the reconciliation process in The Comoros reached a crucial stage with the holding of presidential elections in April and May 2006, thus giving effect to the principle of rotating presidency laid down in the Constitution of the Archipelago; and in the situation in Côte d'Ivoire, where despite considerable delays in the implementation of many aspects of the peace process, significant progress was made in the quest for a lasting solution to the crisis. In addition, post-conflict reconstruction efforts continue in Liberia, the Central African Republic (CAR), South Sudan and Burundi, to consolidate the recently regained peace. Similarly, the process of restoring constitutional order in Mauritania is still underway.

**104.** On the other hand, the situation in Somalia has seriously deteriorated, particularly with the fighting in Mogadishu, further undermining efforts aimed at promoting peace and reconciliation. The situation in Chad took a disturbing turn, particularly with the attack on the capital, N'Djamena, by armed elements in April this year, while relations between this country and The Sudan remain a source of serious concern. The impasse persists in the peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea, as well as in the situation in Western Sahara.

#### **a) The Comoros**

**105.** During the period under consideration, there were positive developments in the national reconciliation process in the Archipelago, reflected mainly by the holding of presidential elections in April and May 2006. In this regard, it should be recalled that Article 13 of the Constitution of the Union of The Comoros stipulates that the Presidency shall rotate among the islands. The President and the Vice President shall be elected together by a direct majority through one round of universal suffrage for a four (4) year renewable term of office, while respecting the principle of rotation among the islands. A primary election shall be organized in the island on which the presidency devolves and only three candidates having obtained the largest number of votes may run for president. In application of this principle, the Comorian parties agreed that for the elections scheduled this year, the presidency of the Archipelago should devolve on the autonomous island of Anjouan. The following dates were subsequently fixed for the elections by the National Commission for Elections in The Comoros (CNEC): 16 April, for the primaries in Anjouan, and 14 May for the elections at national level.



**106.** Following a request addressed to the Commission on 11 October 2005 by the President of the Union of The Comoros, and at the unanimous request of all the Comorian parties for the AU to secure the electoral process in The Comoros, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) considered, on 21 March 2006, at its 47<sup>th</sup> Meeting, the arrangements to be made in order to observe and supervise the presidential elections. The PSC authorized the deployment until 9 June 2006, under the overall responsibility of a Special Representative, of an African Union Mission for Support to the elections in The Comoros (AMISEC), comprising 462 military and civilian police, with South Africa as the framework nation, as well as the necessary support staff. Immediately after, the Commission, in close collaboration with South Africa, took the necessary measures for the deployment of AMISEC, which comprised essentially South African soldiers, together with military and civilian police from Congo, Egypt, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria and Rwanda.

**107.** Concerning the 16 April primary elections in Anjouan, thirteen candidates participated, at the end of which the three candidates who won the largest number of votes were authorized to run in the presidential elections at national level, on 14 May 2006. The three candidates were Ahmed Abdallah Sambi, with 23.70% of the votes; Mohammed Djanfari, with 13.10%; and Ibrahim Halidi, with 10.37%.

**108.** At the end of the elections, the international observer mission issued a press release on 17 April 2006, in which it highlighted certain shortcomings. It however felt that these shortcomings did not undermine the credibility of the elections. In this respect, and in the lead up to elections at national level, members of the international community present in Moheli recommended that a number of specific measures be taken, including strengthening the capacities of Comorian election management bodies to enable them to provide appropriate assistance.

**109.** In this context, the AU, in close collaboration with its partners of the international community in The Comoros, took special measures with a view to ensuring the smooth conduct of the 14 May 2006 presidential elections, namely by:

- strengthening AMISEC by providing additional soldiers. In this regard, and at the request of the Commission, on the eve of the elections, South Africa deployed 763 additional soldiers in the Archipelago;
- technical assistance to the Comorian election management bodies through the provision of international electoral experts and the training of polling station officials; and
- the active participation of the Comorian civil society in election observation operations.

**110.** In its evaluation of the elections at national level, the international observer mission felt that the 14 May 2006 presidential elections had been free, transparent and credible, and that the conditions under which they were organized and conducted had been quite satisfactory compared to the primaries of 16 April 2006 by the official results of these elections Ahmed Abdallah Sambi was declared the winner, with 57.85% of the votes. The investiture of the new President took place on 26 May 2006, in Moroni, in the presence of

delegations from neighbouring countries and other members of the international community. The Commission was represented at these ceremonies by the Deputy Chairperson.

**111.** The smooth conduct of the presidential elections in The Comoros was largely due to the joint efforts of AMISEC which played a decisive role in securing the elections, and the international observers from the following international organizations and countries: African Union, International Organization of the Francophony (OIF), the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), the League of Arab States, France, the United States of America and the Netherlands. The countries that contributed soldiers and police should be commended, particularly South Africa, the AMISEC framework nation, and the countries coordinating the efforts of the region's countries, as well as the AU Troika on The Comoros for their commitment and efforts. Gratitude also goes to the AU's partners on the Comorian issue for their cooperation and support, particularly the European Union for its financial support towards the deployment of AMISEC. The authorities, the candidates and the people of The Comoros should also be commended for having demonstrated a high sense of responsibility during this critical phase of the national reconciliation process.

**112.** The African Union and its Commission will continue to support the national reconciliation process in The Comoros. The international community for its part, should ensure that the commitments made during the Donors Conference for the Union of The Comoros held on 8 December 2005, in Mauritius, are honoured.

**b) Somalia**

**113.** During the reporting period, the situation in Somalia witnessed new developments, particularly with the marked deterioration of the security situation in Mogadishu and surrounding areas. As a result, severe obstacles to the accomplishment of reconciliation among the political stakeholders and immense security challenges continue to confront the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) and, in particular, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG).

**114.** It is worth recalling here that, since its formation, in October 2004, the TFG has been embroiled in a series of internal political conflicts. In fact, the TFG's progress in establishing itself in the country was hampered by the refusal by a number of high officials to join the rest of the Government, when it settled in Jowhar as a transit seat, until conditions allow for its installation in the designated capital, Mogadishu. High among those senior officials who would not go to Jowhar but relocated to Mogadishu was the Speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP). The Speaker, because of his status as head of the legislative branch of the Government, assumed a very high profile and, around him, gravitated a number of members of Parliament, including some senior Ministers such as the Minister for Internal Security, Mohammed Qanyare Afrah, as well as Ministers Muse Sudi and Omar Fillish. This schism meant that the TFIs (the TFG and the TFP) could not function as a coordinated entity of governance.

**115.** The preceding situation, needless to say, impacted negatively on the general situation within Somalia and also on most of the international partners whose assistance and collaboration is essential for the consolidation of the outcomes of the Somali National Reconciliation Conference that took place in Kenya in 2002-2004. Indeed, the need for a broad consensus among the TFIs was among the issue considered imperative by the United Nations Security Council in providing further support to the peace efforts in Somalia,

particularly with respect to the exemption from the arms embargo imposed on Somalia since 1992. The negative impact on the international partners also meant that one of the essential vehicles of Somalia's reconstruction – the Coordination and Monitoring Committee (CMC) – could not operate. It should however be added that there were also some basic differences of approach within the donor community, which further contributed to the paralysis of the CMC.

**116.** In early January 2006, President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed and TFP Speaker Shariff Hassan met in Aden, Yemen, at the invitation of that country's President, who had deployed extensive efforts prior to the consultations between the two leaders. On 5 January, the two leaders signed an agreement establishing broad parameters for the pacification of the capital and, in the interim, for the early convening of the TFP inside the country, at a venue to be agreed upon, to pave the way for the smooth running of the Government.

**117.** On 26 February, the TFP formally met in the town of Baidoa, in the presence of President Abdullahi Yusuf. For the opening session, some 211 MPs participated. The figure was highly impressive considering the fact that the total membership of the TFP is 275 and that 10 MPs have died of natural causes since the formation of the Parliament. Attendance by such a large number of MPs indicated, among other things, that politicians had become psychologically exhausted of the perennial bickering and wanton battles that ultimately affected the prospects of reconciliation and reconstruction of their country. To most, continuation of conflict was a no-win situation. Note should be taken of the fact that the town of Baidoa and its environs, until that point, had been under the control and influence of three contending leaders and their militias. Because of the agreement reached between the two national leaders, the three leaders of the area (who are senior Government officials) agreed to remove their militias from the town and to have them encamped and disarmed some 30 kilometers outside Baidoa. The Parliament has now overwhelmingly voted Baidoa as the transit seat of Government instead of Jowhar. As a result, the AU Liaison Office in Jowhar, established there to support the Somali peace process and which became operational towards the end of last year, will be relocated to Baidoa.

**118.** Since that opening session, the TFP has put in place sector committees that have been in full swing. Among other things, the TFP is about to discuss and, hopefully, adopt a National Security and Stabilization Plan (NSSP), which has already been endorsed by the Council of Ministers. More generally, Parliament is now focused on what is required for putting into place the governance building blocks. The establishment of national security institutions has been initiated. These are to be headed by a National Security Council, which will be the highest decision-making body on all matters relating to national security in Somalia. With donor support, a plan for administrative structures and capacity building has also been elaborated, and the first steps towards its implementation have been taken.

**119.** Action for the creation of an enhanced security situation remains now the priority and critical issue. In this respect, an IGAD Summit, preceded by a meeting of the Council of Ministers, took place in Nairobi in March 2006. Once again, IGAD reiterated its determination to launch IGASOM. The question of the UN arms embargo loomed large in the discussions, and a decision was taken to entrust the task of achieving the lifting of, or a waiver on, the arms embargo to a Panel composed of IGAD/AU/TFG, with a clear injunction that IGASOM should be launched to be followed, as per the relevant decisions of the PSC, by an AU Peace Support Mission. As a follow-up to the decisions of the IGAD Summit, the Panel met in Nairobi on 18 April, and endorsed a programme of action that will lead to a

demarche to the United Nations Security Council for an exemption from the arms embargo, the fund raising for a peace support operation and, ultimately, the deployment of a peace support mission, if possible by mid-July. In this respect, it is to be recalled that, following the request made by the PSC in May 2005 for an exemption from the arms embargo, the Security Council, in July 2005, issued a statement urging the TFIs to conclude without delay a national security and stabilization plan, to include a comprehensive and verifiable ceasefire agreement leading to a final disarmament; it also expressed its expectation that the AU and IGAD will work out a detailed mission plan, in close coordination with the broad consensus of the TFIs and consistent with a NSSP.

**120.** In a related development, the Monitoring Group established by resolution 1519 (2003) with respect to the situation in Somalia submitted a report in early April. The Monitoring Group identified the TFG, the Mogadishu-based opposition alliances, the militant fundamentalists, the business elite, pirate groups and feuding sub-clans as the main actors to whom arms, military material and financial support continue to flow, in violation of the arms embargo. In resolution 1676(2006) adopted on 10 May 2006, the Security Council stressed the obligation of all Member States to comply fully with the arms embargo and expressed its intention to consider specific actions to improve implementation of, and compliance with, measures imposed by resolution 733 (1992), and requested the Secretary General to re-establish the Monitoring Group for a period of six months.

**121.** It is against this background that fighting broke out in Mogadishu between the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism (ARPC) and the Sharia Courts system, an entity that, for the last decade, has run not just the Courts but also provided a rudimentary schooling system and health facilities. The fighting, which has resulted in hundreds of Somali dead, mostly civilians, started on 18 February 2006 between two clan militia leaders, namely Haji Abukar Adani (a religious leader among those considered “extremists”) and Bashir Rage, a leading businessman-cum-warlord, over the control of the road leading to the natural seaport of El Ma’an, which is not only a strategic asset but also a largely lucrative economic entity. Soon after, the ARPC was formed, composed of Cabinet Ministers who refused to go to Jowhar, the then transitional seat of the TFG, and relocated instead to Mogadishu, principally Mohammed Qanyare Afrah, Minister for Security, Muse Sudi Yaolhow, Minister for Trade, and a group of businessmen. In the meantime, most of the militias deemed to be within the Sharia Courts system threw in their lot with Haji Abukar Adani and the continuing battles were thus compounded. At the time of finalizing this report, it was clear that the ARPC had lost the battle, as the Islamic Courts have seized control of Mogadishu, amid reports of external support to the parties involved. In this respect, President Abdullahi Yusuf as well as Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi have voiced concern over the financial support being given to the so-called anti-terrorism coalition by external parties.

**122.** While the overall impact of the latest developments in Mogadishu is yet to be fully assessed, the prevailing situation highlights now more than ever before the need for concerted support to the TFG to enable it assert its authority and lead efforts to reestablish peace and security, including the fight against terrorism. This is all the more necessary as the TFIs are now working closely together and are concentrating on the key aspects of the national reconciliation process. In this respect, it is encouraging to note the agreement finally reached on a revised mandate and operational procedures for the CMC, as well as the initiatives for the convening of a Donors’ Conference. On its part, the Commission, at the time of finalizing this report, was making arrangements to convene, in cooperation with

IGAD, a meeting bringing together all stakeholders to review the situation, in light of previous IGAD and AU decisions, and agree on the best way forward.

**c) Ethiopia – Eritrea**

**123.** During the period under review, the Commission has continued to closely monitor the evolving of the situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The military situation in the Mission area was assessed as being tense but stable by the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE).

**124.** In early January 2006, the United States of America launched a diplomatic initiative, with a view to overcoming the impasse in the peace process and encouraging the parties to resume the process of demarcation their common border. This initiative followed earlier appeals by the UN Secretary General to the Witnesses of the Algiers Agreements of June and December 2000 to play a concerted role in assisting the two countries to resolve the current stalemate.

**125.** On 22 February 2006, the Witnesses (namely, Algeria, the African Union, the European Union, the United States, and the United Nations) met in New York. In a statement issued following the meeting, the Witnesses affirmed that they remain fully committed to the implementation of the Algiers Agreements, and welcomed and endorsed the initiative by the United States of America, in cooperation with, and with the full support of the other Witnesses, to resolve the current impasse in the peace process, in order to promote stability and good relations between the parties and lay the foundation for sustainable peace in the region. They recognized the special role of the AU and its importance to confidence building between the parties in support of any initiative in the demarcation process.

**126.** The Witnesses recalled that both Ethiopia and Eritrea committed themselves to accepting the delimitation and demarcation determinations of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) as final and binding, and expressed their expectation that each Government would uphold its commitment and cooperate with the EEBC to implement its decisions without further delay. The Witnesses urged the EEBC to convene a meeting with the parties and to consider the need for technical discussions with the support of a neutral facilitator to assist with the process of demarcation. They strongly urged the parties to attend the EEBC meeting and to cooperate with and abide by all requirements specified by the Commission in order to successfully conclude the demarcation process. The Witnesses further noted that demarcation of the border could not proceed unless UNMEE were allowed full freedom of movement throughout its area of operation. In this respect, they urged the parties to permit UNMEE to perform its duties without restrictions and called on them to ensure the free movement of UNMEE personnel in the performance of their responsibilities.

**127.** At its meeting held on 24 February 2006, the Security Council welcomed the successful convening of the meeting of the Witnesses to the Algiers Agreements and their efforts to resolve the current impasse between Eritrea and Ethiopia, in order to promote stability between the parties and lay the foundation for sustainable peace in the region. The Security Council emphasized that both parties bear the primary responsibility for the full, unconditional and expeditious implementation of the Algiers Agreements, and called on both sides to cooperate with the EEBC to implement its decisions without further delay. The

Security Council urged the EEBC to convene a meeting with the parties to prepare to resume demarcation, and strongly urged the two parties to attend the EEBC meeting and to cooperate with and abide by the requirements specified by the EEBC, in order to successfully conclude the demarcation process. The Security Council demanded that the parties permit UNMEE to perform its duties without restrictions and provide the Mission with the necessary access, assistance, support and protection for the performance of these duties, including its mandated task to assist the EEBC in the expeditious and orderly implementation of the Delimitation Decision.

**128.** From 10 to 11 March, and on 17 May 2006, the EEBC convened meetings with the parties, in London. Another meeting of the EEBC is scheduled to take place at The Hague on 15 June 2006. While no tangible progress has been reported so far, the participation of the parties to the meetings convened by the EEBC is encouraging. The Commission urges them to cooperate with the EEBC.

**129.** In the meantime, the Security Council, in its resolution 1661 (2006) of 14 March 2006, demanded that the two parties fully comply with resolution 1640 (2005), particularly paragraphs 1 and 5. It should be recalled that, in these paragraphs, the Security Council demanded that the Government of Eritrea reverse, without further delay or preconditions, its decision to ban UNMEE helicopter flights as well as additional restrictions imposed on the operations of UNMEE, and provide UNMEE with the access, assistance, support and protection required for the performance of its duties; and that Ethiopia accept fully and without further delay the final and binding decision of the EEBC and take immediately concrete steps to enable, without preconditions, the EEBC to demarcate the border completely and promptly. On 15 May 2006, the Security Council adopted resolution 1678 (2006), in which it demanded that the parties fully comply with resolution 1640 (2006), particularly paragraphs 1 and 5, as it did in resolution 1670 (2006) of 13 April 2006, and decided, in the event it determines that the parties have not demonstrated full compliance in light of the EEBC meeting of 17 May 2006, it shall adjust the mandate and the troop level of UNMEE.

**130.** On 31 May 2006, the Security Council adopted resolution 1681 (2006), in which it, *inter alia*, extended the mandate of UNMEE for a period of four months until September 2006, and authorized the reconfiguration of UNMEE's military component, approving, in this regard, the deployment within UNMEE of up to 2,300 troops, including up to 230 military observers, with the existing mandate. The Security Council demanded that the parties fully comply with resolution 1640(2003). It called upon both parties to cooperate fully with the EEBC, in order to resume the demarcation process, stressed that the parties have primary responsibility for the implementation of the Algiers Agreements and called again on the parties to implement completely and without further delay the decision of the EEBC and to create the necessary conditions for the demarcation to proceed expeditiously. The Security Council demanded that the parties provide UNMEE with the necessary access, assistance, support and protection for the performance of its duties, including its mandated task to assist the EEBC in the expeditious and orderly implementation of the Delimitation Decision, and demanded that any restrictions be lifted immediately.

**131.** In conclusion, the AU, which played a crucial role in the efforts that led to the conclusion of the Algiers Agreements, has a vested interest in the early completion of the demarcation process and the promotion of lasting peace and stability between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The AU remains available to continue working with the other Witnesses to assist

the parties to overcome the current difficulties and restore peaceful and cooperative relations between them.

**d) The Sudan**

**(i) *Darfur***

**132.** The Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on the Conflict in Darfur, which started in Addis Ababa, in July 2004, culminated the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) between the Government of the Sudan (GoS) and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) group led by Minni Arkou Minawi, on 5 May 2006, after six Rounds held in Abuja, Nigeria. The negotiations during the 7<sup>th</sup> Round lasted over 5 months. They were held under the leadership of Salim Ahmed Salim, Special Envoy and Chief Mediator, assisted by an AU Mediation Team, a co-Mediator (Chad), Facilitators (Nigeria, Libya and Eritrea), international partners, resource persons and experts.

**133.** During that 7<sup>th</sup> Round, the Talks were complicated by many difficulties relating, *inter alia*, to the lack of confidence between the Government and the Sudanese Movements – the SLM/A and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), as well as to the procrastination and lack of negotiating skills on the part of some of the representatives of the Movements, to the three Commissions established to address the issues of power sharing, wealth sharing and security arrangements. The division which occurred within the Movements notably the SLM/A, with two groups led respectively by Abdulwahid El Nour and Minni Arkou Minawi, aggravated by a split within Abdulwahid's own group, slowed down the negotiation process.

**134.** These problems notwithstanding, the Mediation Team intensified its efforts to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion of the Talks. The negotiations received a substantial boost on 8 April 2006, when the AU Chairperson, President Denis Sassou Nguesso, with the involvement of President Olusegun Obasanjo of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and in the presence of Vice-President Ali Osman Taha of the Sudan and the Leaders of the Movements, undertook intensive consultations to move the process forward. Even though no significant breakthrough was achieved, the Vice-President of the Sudan decided to remain in Abuja for about a month, and engaged in direct negotiations with the Leaders of the Sudanese Movements.

**135.** These initiatives were taken against the background of the deadline set by the PSC, on 10 March 2006, for the Talks to be concluded by the end of April 2006. In order to meet that deadline, which was endorsed by the UN Security Council, the Chief Mediator submitted the draft DPA to the parties on 25 April 2006. The draft was a delicately negotiated and balanced document, finalized in close consultation and coordination with the international partners who had always accompanied the process.

**136.** The Government of the Sudan, despite its reservations on some of the proposals put forward by the Chief Mediator, indicated its readiness to sign the DPA. However, despite the strong appeals by all the partners to the parties to sign the DPA, none of the Movements agreed to do so.

**137.** The deadline was extended twice to take advantage of the presence of the current Chairperson of the AU, President Denis Sassou Nguesso, and the Chairperson of the

Commission in Abuja, as well as of the arrival of two high level delegations from the US and the UK, led, respectively, by the US Deputy Secretary of State, Robert Zoellick, accompanied by the US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Jendayi Frazer, and the UK Secretary for International Development, Hillary Benn. The last ditch effort made by the Mediation supported by the international partners was aimed at trying to accommodate some of the concerns of the Movements by improving few of the proposals already submitted.

**138.** These efforts yielded some positive results as, eventually, Minni Minawi of the SLM/A, who made last minute efforts to rally the other two Movements behind the peace deal, decided to sign the DPA. The signing ceremony took place on 5 May 2006. During the ceremony, a splinter group from Abdulwahid's SLM/A led by his chief negotiator, Abdulrahman Musa, announced its desire to be associated with the agreement and addressed a letter to this effect to the Chief Mediator. The Abdulwahid faction of the SLM/A and the JEM were urged by the Heads of State to sign the document during the grace period of 10 days, which the Leaders announced at the end of the signing ceremony.

**139.** After the signing of the DPA, Abdulwahid El Nour indicated that he was ready to remain engaged with the GoS and the AU, in order to find a solution before the deadline of 15 May. Consequently, a small group from the Mediation remained in Abuja in order to explore how this might be achieved. On 10 May, Abdulwahid El Nour wrote to the AU Chief Mediator, Salim Ahmed Salim, indicating his readiness to sign the DPA provided that certain clarifications were made and certain assurances given. The clarifications sought included his concern that the \$30 million for compensation should be regarded as seed money and not as the total amount, and that the SLM would be fully engaged in monitoring certain aspects of security arrangements, with particular reference to the disarmament of the Janjaweed. The assurance demanded was that the AU would recognize any additional agreement reached by the parties as a supplement to the DPA.

**140.** In a letter he addressed to Abdulwahid El Nour on 12 May 2006, Salim Ahmed Salim, in his capacity as Chief Mediator, assured him that his specific clarifications were not inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the DPA and could be accommodated during the implementation of the agreement; he also indicated that any steps agreed upon by the parties during the implementation would be acceptable to the AU. A number of international partners, including U.S. Assistant Secretary Jendayi Frazer and UK Secretary of State Hilary Benn also telephoned Abdul Wahid to urge him to accept Dr. Salim's assurances and to reiterate their support for the DPA. Unfortunately, Mr. Abdulwahid rejected these assurances and still refused to sign the DPA. In the interim, he continued to negotiate directly with the GoS with a view to having the DPA revised to cater for his demands. That attempt has so far been unsuccessful. The GoS indicated that most of Abdul Wahid's demands had been taken care of in the DPA.

**141.** At the same time, the AU sought Abdulwahid's assurance that he would comply with the provisions of the Comprehensive Ceasefire in the DPA. On 15 May, Mr. Abdulwahid wrote to the Chairperson of the Commission restating his commitment to the existing ceasefire agreements.

**142.** On its part, the PSC met on 15 May 2006 and endorsed the DPA. It commended the courage of the GoS and the leaders of the Movement that signed the DPA and those individuals and groups that subsequently identified themselves with the agreement and



requested to be considered as partners in its implementation. It further urged all concerned to respect their commitments and implement the agreement in good faith and without delay. The PSC deeply regretted the failure of the SLM/A group led by Abdulwahid El Nour and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) of Khalil Ibrahim to sign the DPA, despite all the efforts made by the Mediation, African Leaders and the representatives of the AU partners present in Abuja during the final phase of the Peace Talks, and subsequent to the signing of the Agreement on 5 May 2006. It urged those groups to sign the DPA by 31 May 2006, failing which it shall consider measures, including sanctions, to be applied against the leadership and members of the concerned groups. The PSC demanded that all groups in Darfur immediately commit themselves to be bound by the provisions of the DPA, particularly those relating to the Comprehensive Ceasefire, as well as relevant previous agreements. It undertook to review regularly, in close coordination and consultation with the UN Security Council, the implementation of the DPA and to take strong and effective measures against any individual or group in Darfur that violates the Ceasefire Agreement and those who may attempt to block the implementation of the DPA, including a request to the United Nations Security Council to impose a travel ban and assets freeze, as provided for in resolution 1591 (2005).

**143.** In its resolution 1679(2006) adopted on 16 May 2006, the Security Council called upon the parties to the DPA to respect their commitments and implement the agreement without delay. The Security Council urged those parties that have not signed the agreement to do so without delay and not to act in any way that would impede the implementation of the agreement, and expressed its intention to consider taking, including in response to a request by the AU, strong and effective measures, such as a travel ban and assets freeze, against any individual or group that violates or attempts to block the implementation of the DPA.

**144.** Subsequent to the PSC meeting, the AU Mediation engaged with Abdulwahid, first in Abuja, and then in Nairobi, in coordination with the EU Special Representative, Pekka Haavisto, to urge him to sign. Throughout, the AU Mediation and all partners insisted that the DPA could not be re-opened for re-negotiation, while Abdulwahid continued to insist on the need for a "Supplementary Agreement". Contacts were also made with JEM to urge it to sign the DPA.

**145.** It is against this background that the Sudanese First Vice-President Salva Kiir invited Abdulwahid El Nour to a meeting to be held in Yei, in Southern Sudan, on 15 June 2006. The meeting, also to be attended by Minni Minawi, was intended to bridge the remaining gaps. The AU Mediation, jointly with the EU Special Representative and the Government of Norway, made strenuous efforts to facilitate this meeting. Without extending the deadline of 31 May, the AU Commission was prepared to ensure that the PSC is apprised of the outcome of this meeting before taking any additional steps with respect to the SLM/A-Abdulwahid. Twice, Abdulwahid El Nour delayed his decision to travel to Yei. On 2 June, he spoke with the First Vice-President and confirmed his acceptance of the invitation, but within hours reversed that decision and cut off all contacts. Thereafter, in a press statement, the SLM/A-Abdulwahid announced the end of its engagement with the AU and called on the United Nations to take over the Darfur file for the settlement of the conflict.

**146.** Contrary to the general expectation, since the signing of the DPA, there has been a marked deterioration in the security and humanitarian situation on the ground. A pattern of negative propaganda and outright misrepresentation of the DPA has now been launched by

those who are against the agreement. This is especially true within the IDP camps located in areas controlled by the SLM/A group of Abdulwahid El Nour. As is now widely known, some of the recent attacks were directed at AMIS personnel and infrastructure by some elements in the IDP camps who are against the agreement. The attacks were clearly intended to create a climate of fear in Darfur, undermine the implementation of the DPA, intimidate peaceful and law-abiding Darfurians and aggravate the already worsening humanitarian situation in Darfur.

**147.** At another level, it is also becoming evident that JEM of Khalil Ibrahim and dissident SLM/A leaders Adam Shogar and Sharif Harir, who, until recently, were based in N'djamena, Chad, have launched an anti-DPA campaign, to raise resentment against it, and the courageous decision taken by Minni Minawi to sign the DPA. These efforts seem to be aimed at discrediting Mr. Minawi among the people of Darfur. It is also evident that the military wing of JEM has in recent weeks received fresh military supplies from sources outside the Sudan.

**148.** Apart from the negative actions of the Movements that refused to sign the DPA, AMIS, innocent civilians and their property have also been the target of Arab militia who continue to attack villages in parts of Darfur. For instance, on 7 May 2006, armed men suspected to be Janjaweed, attacked Abugaragel and surrounding villages, looting livestock and abducting some people, including innocent women. The Janjaweed also attacked Labado village, killing some twenty people. Similar attacks were also carried out by unknown Arab militia along Menawashe-Shangil Tobaya Road, killing and raping women on 14 May 2006; attacks were also launched in Graidia and Niteaga areas, in South Darfur, between 19 and 20 May 2006. These attacks have resulted in an increase in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), particularly in the Graidia and Niteaga areas.

**149.** The most recent attack on AMIS patrol was perpetrated on 26 May 2006 at Misteria in West Darfur by about 12 armed militia men. One AMIS personnel was killed in the attack and another critically injured.

**150.** At its 51<sup>st</sup> meeting of 15 May 2006, the PSC requested the Commission, in liaison with the parties and all other stakeholders, to take all necessary steps to facilitate the scrupulous implementation and follow-up of the DPA, in line with the Modalities and Mechanisms contained therein. The PSC also stressed the urgent need to review the current mandate of AMIS and to increase significantly its strength, particularly in light of the additional tasks to be performed by the Mission as part of the implementation of the provisions of the DPA relating to the Comprehensive Ceasefire and Final Security Arrangements.

**151.** As part of the implementation of this decision, steps have been taken to establish the DPA implementation team within AMIS, under the supervision of the Head of Mission. The Commission has also activated efforts towards developing a new concept of operations (CONOPS) for enhancing AMIS to enable it perform the tasks assigned to it by the DPA. The CONOPS was elaborated in close collaboration with the United Nations and consultations with other stakeholders. The new CONOPS will imply the adjustment of AMIS mandate with the inclusion of additional tasks, significant increase of AMIS strength and the restructuring of sector commands among others.

**152.** A pledging conference to mobilize the resources needed for the enhancement and sustenance of AMIS is scheduled to take place in Brussels on 7 July 2006. In this regard, a detailed budget and concept of logistics on AMIS requirements in the light of the new CONOPS has been prepared for presentation at the conference.

**153.** The 51<sup>st</sup> meeting of the PSC also decided that, in view of the signing of the DPA, concrete steps should be taken to effect the transition from AMIS to a UN peacekeeping operation. To that end, the PSC urged the UN and the GoNU to engage in consultations in line with the provisions of paragraph 6 of its communiqué of 10 March 2006 and as a follow-up to the statement issued by the President of the United Nations Security Council on 9 May 2006, so as to ensure the commencement of the UN operation in Darfur at the earliest possible time. In its resolution 1679(2006) of 16 May 2006, the Security Council endorsed the PSC communiqué and called upon the parties to the DPA to facilitate and work with the African Union, United Nations, regional and international organizations and Member States to accelerate transition to a United Nations operation and, to this end, called for the deployment of a joint African Union and United Nations technical assessment mission. The Security Council stressed that the Secretary General should consult jointly with the African Union, in close and continuing consultation with the Security Council, and in cooperation and close consultation with the parties to the DPA, including the GoNU, on decisions concerning the transition to a United Nations operation.

**154.** It is against this background, and after preparatory discussions in Addis Ababa on 7 and 8 June 2006, that the Joint UN/AU technical assessment mission led by United Nations Under Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, Jean-Marie Guehenno, and the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Saïd Djinnit, traveled to the Sudan on 9 June, with a twofold purpose: to assess what needs to be done to strengthen AMIS to enable it perform the additional tasks assigned to it by the DPA, and to examine the requirements for a possible transition of AMIS to a UN operation. The mission has already completed the first stage of its visit to Sudan, which involved wide ranging consultations with Government Ministers and other senior officials, as well as with other stakeholders. At the time of finalizing this report, the mission was in Darfur for meetings with a wide range of stakeholders. Following that visit, the mission will return to Khartoum for further consultations with Sudanese authorities on the strengthening of AMIS and preparations for a possible transition of AMIS to a UN operation, as well as other areas where the UN and the AU can provide direct support to the implementation of the DPA.

**155.** It should also be noted that a Security Council Mission visited the Sudan and the African Union Headquarters during the month of June for discussions on the situation in Darfur and the transition to a United Nations operation.

**156.** In conclusion, tribute should be paid to President Olusegun Obasanjo of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and President Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo, Current Chairperson of the AU, for their highly valuable efforts, which helped in bringing about a successful conclusion to the Abuja Peace Talks. Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, the Special Envoy and Chief Mediator, and his Mediation Team led by Ambassador Sam Ibok seconded by Mr. Boubou Niang, as well as Ablassé Ouedraogo, Berhanu Dinka and General Christophe Garba, who facilitated the discussions in the Commissions established to address specific issues, should also be congratulated for their great performance throughout the negotiations. The Commission also expresses appreciation to the Chadian co-Mediation, the Facilitators and Observers (Nigeria, Libya, Eritrea and Egypt) and the

International Partners (Canada, France, the Netherlands, Norway, the UK, the US, the EU, the League of Arab States and the UN) for the support they extended to the AU Mediation and to the parties.

***(ii) Implementation of the CPA***

**157.** Since the last report to the Executive Council, the implementation process of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed on 10 January 2005 by the Government of the Sudan (GoS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), has witnessed some commendable progress.

**158.** Council will recall that the implementation process of the CPA was initially slowed down by a number of aspects, key amongst them being the death of the former First Vice-President of the Sudan and Chairman of the SPLM/A, Dr John Garang de Mabior, on 30 August 2005. Be that as it may, both parties have been resilient in overcoming incessant hurdles and therefore continued to work jointly to establish the remaining necessary institutions as prescribed by the CPA. Important Commissions such as the Ceasefire Political Commission (CPC), the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC), and the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC), the Ad Hoc Committee on the North/South Border, the Joint Defense Board (JDB), the National Petroleum Commission (NPC) and the National Council for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Coordination (NCDDRC), the National Judicial Service Commission (NJSC), and the Financial and Fiscal Allocation Monitoring Commission (FFAMC), amongst others, have now been formed and are meeting.

**159.** One of the key creations of the CPA is the AEC, which is chaired by Ambassador Tom Vraalsen from Norway. The AU is represented in this body as an observer by the Special Representative in the Sudan, Baba Gana Kingibe. The AEC chairperson has so far held very useful meetings with the Sudanese officials, including President Omar Hassan Al Bashir, First Vice-President Salva Kiir and Second Vice-President Ali Osman Taha. The Commission has also traveled to Juba, in Southern Sudan.

**160.** As Council is aware, the CPC is mandated to supervise the implementation of the ceasefire and security arrangements. The CPC has been formed, and met for the first time on 23 February 2006. During that meeting, it was agreed that, in future, the Commission shall meet on a monthly basis. During its meeting in April, the CPC decided to expedite the formation of the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs) and Other Armed Groups Collaborative Committee (OAG-CC). The OAG-CC is a formation of the two parties, aided by the UN, to bring on board the Other Armed Groups (OAG's) in the Sudan. Meanwhile, on 29 December 2005, President Al-Bashir issued a decree establishing the JDB, which is meant to co-ordinate between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the SPLA and to command the JIUs, following the endorsement of the JIUs Act by the National Assembly on 19 December 2005.

**161.** However, there are other key Commissions which are yet to be established both by the Government of National Unity (GoNU) and the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS). With regard to GoNU, these include the Human Rights Commission, the National Civil Service Commission, the Land Commission, the National Electoral Commission and the Commission for the Protection of the Rights of non-Muslims in the National Capital. The

GoSS, on the other hand, has yet to establish the Human Rights Commission, the Anti-Corruption Commission, and the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, *inter alia*.

**162.** The Interim National Legislative Assembly (INL) reconvened on 2 April 2006, in Khartoum, while the Transitional Southern Sudan Legislature (TSSL) reconvened on 10 April 2006 in Juba. These two bodies discussed, *inter alia*, the 2006/2007 budgets for the Sudan – the Federal Budget and the Southern Sudan budget, respectively.

**163.** One of the main tenets of the CPA is the recognition of the need to legitimize the arrangements agreed to in the CPA by adopting fair electoral laws and holding free and fair elections at all levels of government. These elections are to be held half way through the implementation process of the CPA. Together with civil society organizations and experts, the Sudanese parties are in the process of drafting a Political Party Registration Act. The electoral law is also being prepared. Furthermore, the Population Census Council was established by a Presidential Decree on 7 January 2006.

**164.** It will be recalled that consultations on the new Sudanese currency started soon after the signing of the CPA. It was agreed that a new currency to be called “THE POUND” will be printed. The new currency is expected to be issued in the course of 2006, and the South will have the priority in the replacement process.

**165.** The SPLM held the inaugural meeting of its Interim Political Bureau (IPB) in Rumbek, Southern Sudan, from 2 to 5 April 2006. Major issues discussed by the bureau included the transformation of the SPLM into a political organization and equipping it to face multiple transitions. In this connection, the IPB reaffirmed the “national vocation of the SPLM and its commitment to continue the struggle, through political democratic means, to achieve its objective of creating a new Sudan”. The SPLM further resolved that the GoNU should give urgent, immediate and undivided attention to the peaceful settlement of the conflicts in Darfur and Eastern Sudan, so that peace becomes comprehensive and all-embracing.

**166.** From 27 to 29 May 2006, the lead parties in the implementation of the CPA (the National Congress Party – NCP – and the SPLM) held a conference in Khartoum, for the first time, as partners. The Conference was attended at the highest levels of the parties, with President Omar Hassan Al Bashir leading the NCP delegation, while First Vice President Salva Kiir led the SPLM delegation. The conference was aimed at discussing CPA implementation progress and exploring ways of moving the process forward, including the resolution of the Abyei Border Commission (ABC) report impasse. The parties agreed to explore other approaches to settling this matter, including recalling the ABC members to give further explanations on how they reached their conclusions. Council will recall that the ABC report is supported by the SPLM and has been rebuffed by the NCP, as the latter contends that the ABC had overstepped its mandate. Nonetheless, both parties pledged to continue working together to ensure the success of the CPA and retention of the unity of The Sudan.

**167.** The all-important conclusion of the South-South dialogue finally came to pass on 8 January 2006, when First Vice-President Salva Kiir and the leader of the South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF), Major-General Paulino Matip, signed the Juba Declaration on Unity and Integration of the SPLA and the SSDF forces. However, other members of the SSDF led by Gordon Koang refused to join the SPLA, citing, *inter alia*, discomfort with the retention of the name “SPLA” for the southern Sudan army.

**168.** Regarding the security situation, skirmishes have erupted in and around regions such as Lakes State, Warrap State, and northern Bahr el Ghazal, where reports indicate that local communities differ over such issues as natural resources, livestock, water, grazing and farming land. Such developments are not only impacting negatively on the Juba Declaration, but also the overall performance of the CPA. Furthermore, since the signing of the CPA, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has been a menace to the people of Southern Sudan - let alone Northern Ugandans. A number of attacks have been reported. Both the Government of Uganda and the GoSS have made efforts to deal with this issue and have continued to do so. All efforts should be made to resolve the LRA issue as soon as possible.

**169.** During the period under review, the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) continued to support the Sudanese parties in the implementation of the CPA. Furthermore, the first Sudan Consortium meeting sponsored by the World Bank, the United Nations and the IMF took place in Paris, from 9 to 10 March 2006. This was a follow-up meeting to the Oslo Donors Conference held last year, following the signing of the CPA. Whilst the meeting, which was attended by the Commission, appreciated the fact that the GoNU and the GoSS were operating under strenuous circumstances, the need for transparency and cooperation between the two partners to the CPA was highlighted. Furthermore, the meeting stressed the need for sustained efforts towards delivering a peace dividend to the people of The Sudan and the resolution of the Darfur conflict.

**170.** At its meeting held in Sirte, Libya, in July 2005, on the margins of the Executive Council Session, the Ministerial Committee on Post-Conflict Reconstruction in the Sudan agreed to undertake a visit to the Sudan. The Committee desired to get first hand information and on-the-field observations on the implementation process of the CPA. The visit was undertaken from 17 to 18 January 2006, and afforded the Committee an opportunity to meet the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Sudan, the Joint National Transitional Team (JNTT), the AEC and the GoSS. The Committee is expected to meet on the margins of the present session of the Executive Council to assess the implementation of the CPA and decide on the way forward, including the need for Member States to provide assistance for the post-conflict reconstruction efforts and the consolidation of peace.

**171.** Overall, progress is being made in the implementation of the CPA. However, more efforts are required to bring the process to a successful conclusion and make unity attractive to the people of Southern Sudan at the end of the interim period. The AU and the larger international community have a key role to play in this regard, especially in holding the parties accountable to their commitments under the CPA.

**e) Burundi**

**172.** Council will recall that the series of elections organized in Burundi during the summer of 2005 resulted in a new political configuration, marked by the coming to power of the former rebel movement, the CNDD-FDD, and the establishment of institutions in which all components of the Burundian society are represented.

**173.** Since then, the new Government has embarked on a reconstruction policy geared to poverty alleviation as well as national reconciliation and justice. At socio-economic level, the Government made education the basis of reconstruction, by eliminating from the outset,

compulsory tuition fees in primary schools, starting from the 2005-2006 school year. Another measure involves making medical care free for certain categories of the population in public hospitals. In addition, there has been a reduction in the prices of staple foods and consumer products, as well as a 15% increase in the salaries of civil servants.

**174.** At political level, many initiatives have been taken which are eloquent proof of the Government's determination to pursue its efforts. These measures include the temporary release of 3,299 political prisoners between the months of January and March 2006 and the beginning of the process for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Committee as well as a special tribunal, which will have jurisdiction over the crimes that brought bloodshed to the country for forty years.

**175.** In order to successfully implement its reconstruction policy, the Government appealed to donors on 28 February 2006, the date on which it presented its "2006 Emergency Programme" with an estimated cost of 168 million dollars. In fact, this programme covers the first year of the three-year poverty alleviation strategic framework which will be the subject of a Round Table slated for September 2006. Burundians were also asked to contribute, over a four month period, to a national solidarity fund created mainly to cope with famine, which affects mainly five provinces that have been declared disaster areas.

**176.** Furthermore, it will be recalled that the attitude of the Palipehutu-FNL, which stayed out of the peace process, constituted a source of concern for the Burundian authorities as well as countries of the region and Burundi's partners. In this regard, it should be pointed out that on its advent to power, the new Burundian authorities reached out to this armed movement, which first rejected the overture.

**177.** By its Resolution 1653(2006) of 27 January 2006, the United Nations Security Council demanded that all armed groups operating in Eastern Congo, including the Palipehutu-FNL, lay down their arms and engage voluntarily and without any delay or precondition in their disarmament and in their repatriation and resettlement. While this pressure was brought to bear on the movement, the countries of the region, mainly through the United Republic of Tanzania, initiated efforts of persuasion, following which Agathon Rwasa, the leader of the movement, announced his intention to negotiate with the Government without any conditions. It was in this context that South Africa, at the request of the Regional Peace Initiative for Burundi, recently appointed Charles Nqakula, Minister of Safety and Security, as Mediator mandated to facilitate discussions between the two parties.

**178.** Consequently, pursuant to the announcement made following Minister Charles Nqakula tour of the region, negotiations between the Government of Burundi and the Palipehutu-FNL officially began on 29 May 2006, in Dar-es-Salaam, and this after the Mediator, assisted by the AU Special Representative in Burundi and the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General, as well as by a Regional Technical Committee comprising experts from Uganda, Tanzania and South Africa, succeeded in ironing out the last difficulties arising from the request made by the Palipehutu-FNL to postpone the negotiations. In this regard, it was agreed:

- to officially launch the negotiation process on 29 May, then establish two Technical Commissions, one of which would deal with political issues and the other with military issues;
- to allow the Technical Commissions to do the groundwork in an informal framework, with the assistance of the Regional Technical Committee made up of Uganda, South Africa, Tanzania, the African Union and the United Nations;
- to begin negotiations in an informal framework on Monday, 5 June 2006; and
- to hold a plenary session on Saturday, 10 June 2006.

**179.** At the end of these deliberations, a regional summit will be convened for the signing of an agreement between the Government and the Palipehutu-FNL.

**180.** At its 52<sup>nd</sup> Meeting held on 29 May 2006, the PSC was briefed on developments in Burundi and efforts made with a view to consolidating peace in the country. The Meeting then welcomed the launching of peace talks between the Government of Burundi and the Palipehutu-FNL. The PSC affirmed its support for these talks, and expressed the hope that they would shortly lead to an agreement which would consolidate the peace and reconciliation process in Burundi. The PSC decided to consider the situation on Burundi on the basis of a report which would be submitted by the Commission. In the meantime, an appeal should once again be made to the international community, including Member States in a position to do so, to provide the necessary assistance for the reconstruction of Burundi and the consolidation of peace and reconciliation in this country.

**f) Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**

**181.** The period under consideration was dominated by preparations for the electoral process which would crown the transition that had been underway in this country since 30 June 2003. Consequently, following the enactment of the Constitution of the Third Republic on 18 January 2006, the electoral law was adopted by the two Chambers of Parliament on 18 February 2006 and enacted on 9 March 2006. On the same day, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) published a provisional calendar for the elections, according to which the submission of lists of candidates for the legislative and presidential elections had to be done between 10 and 23 March 2006, while the first round of the legislative and presidential elections should be held on 18 June 2006.

**182.** Subsequently, and at the request of several political parties, the deadline for the submission of candidatures was extended to 2 April 2006. By this deadline, 73 candidates had been registered by the IEC for the presidentials (candidates sponsored by political parties and independent candidates) and over 10,000 for the legislative elections, for 500 seats to be filled. All the “significant” political parties, with the exception of the *Union pour la Démocratie et le Progrès Social (UDPS)*, submitted candidatures. The Supreme Court retained 33 candidates for the presidential elections and 9,632 for the legislative elections. Registration of candidatures from the provinces for the 632 seats to be filled closed on 31 May 2006.



**183.** On 30 April 2006, the IEC published the final election calendar, scheduling the first round of the presidentials and the one round of the legislatives for 30 July. The electoral campaign will begin on 29 June and end on 28 July. South Africa pledged to provide the ballot papers. The date of the provincial elections will be published later.

**184.** The progress achieved in the electoral process was made possible by the determination of the Congolese people to endow themselves with democratic institutions, the willingness of the coordinators of the transition to fulfil the mandate entrusted to them by the Comprehensive and All-Inclusive Agreement resulting from the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, as well as the support of the United Nations and the international community as a whole. Steady determination is required to overcome the many challenges that persist before the successful completion of the process.

**185.** At the security level, the ceasefire, which is generally respected by the main former combatants, is still fragile, particularly in some provinces. In North Katanga, for a long time, armed militia (Mai-Mai) carried out atrocities and looting against civilians, serious human rights violations and the illegal exploitation of human resources. Despite regular joint operations conducted against the militias by the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) and the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), security is still not completely re-established in Ituri. In the Kivus, reprisals frequently carried out by foreign armed groups against civilians in reaction to joint operations by the FARDC/MONUC and the rebellions of soldiers, particularly within the 83<sup>rd</sup> brigade of the 8<sup>th</sup> military region, constitute a threat to peace and security in this sensitive part of the country. Lastly, the continued presence of Rwandan, Burundian and Ugandan armed groups in the East of the DRC should be noted.

**186.** In this regard, it should be pointed out that during its 50<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on 28 April 2006, the PSC was briefed on the conduct and results of the Military Reconnaissance Mission which travelled to the DRC, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, from 12 November to 3 December 2005, within the framework of the follow-up to the decision on forced disarmament and neutralization of ex-FAR-Interahamwé and other armed groups in the East of the DRC, adopted at its 23<sup>rd</sup> Meeting held in Libreville on 10 January 2005. Members of the Council exchanged views on the results of the Reconnaissance Mission and agreed to continue consultations on the recommendations of the Mission and meet later at appropriate level to finalize their discussions.

**187.** It is in this context that the general elections will be held in the DRC. In order to overcome these challenges and win the stakes, the Congolese Government and the international community expressed their determination to accelerate the process of training 18 FARDC brigades and the national police, to render them operational before the elections. It was also in a bid to ensure the smooth conduct of the elections, before and after the elections themselves, that MONUC placed all its logistics at the disposal of the IEC, with a view to meeting the deadlines. To ensure the security of elections prior to, during and after the polls, the United Nations requested and obtained the agreement of the European Union for the deployment of a European force in the DRC. The deployment of this force, known as Eufor R. D. Congo, was authorized by UN Security Council Resolution 1671(2006).

**188.** Within the framework of support to the ongoing dynamics in the country, the Chairperson of the Commission paid a working visit to Kinshasa, from 17 to 19 April 2006.

On that occasion, he held talks with representatives of the international community in Kinshasa, regrouped in the International Committee for Support of the Transition (CIAT). To all his interlocutors, he expressed the political support of the African Union for the electoral process and the need for the Congolese parties to continue to work closely together in order to successfully complete the ongoing process.

**189.** It was also within the same framework that the PSC considered the situation in the DRC at its 54<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on 2 June 2006. On that occasion, the PSC requested the Commission to speed up the ongoing preparations for the timely deployment of a strong AU Civilian Electoral Observer Mission. Furthermore, the PSC also authorized the deployment, if necessary, of a Military Observer Mission under AU authority and in coordination with the Commission in order to contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to holding elections. In addition, it should be noted that the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and SADC offered to support the process.

**g) International Conference on the Great Lakes Region**

**190.** During the period under review, the UN/AU Joint Secretariat which has the responsibility to facilitate the process of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, in collaboration with the National Coordinators (NCs), carried out a series of activities aimed at maintaining the momentum of the preparatory process of the second Summit due to take place in Nairobi, in November 2006. In this context, several meetings were organized to finalize the Projects and the priority Protocols under each of the four themes of the Conference, namely: peace and security; democracy and good governance; economic development and regional integration, and social and humanitarian issues, and to rally the various concerned players behind the objectives of the Conference.

**191.** The third meeting of the Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee (RIC) held in Bangui, Central African Republic (CAR) from 20 to 22 February 2006, resulted in the finalization and adoption of the Draft Security, Stability and Development Pact, the Projects and the priority Protocols on the four themes of the Conference, as well as the Draft Memorandum on the Institutional Follow-up Mechanism of the Conference. Regarding the other meetings, they enabled the Joint Secretariat to sensitize the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), representatives of the private sector, civil society organizations, the Youth and Women on the Pact and its content, and to discuss with them the modalities of their involvement in the implementation of this instrument.

**192.** The RIC adopted four action programmes comprising ten (10) Draft Protocols and thirty-seven (37) Projects; with seven (7) Projects and one (1) Protocol under the “peace and security” theme, four (4) Projects and five (5) Protocols under “democracy and good governance”, one (1) Protocol and fifteen (15) Projects under “economic development and regional integration” and, lastly, three (3) Protocols and seven (7) Projects under “social and humanitarian issues”. The RIC decided that the Regional Follow-up Mechanism of the Conference (RFM) should be known as “Regional Follow-up Mechanism”. The RIC also decided that the Special Fund for Reconstruction and Development (SFRD) would be domiciled in the African Development Bank (ADB). The other organs of the RFM are: the Summit of Heads of State and Government which will meet every two years with rotational Chair; the Inter-Ministerial Committee to be convened twice a year; the Secretariat of the Conference and the National Coordination Mechanism.

**193.** With respect to the meetings designed to mobilize the various players and partners, the Commission hosted that of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) active in the eleven field countries, a meeting enlarged on 11 April 2006 to include eleven NCs; followed by the meeting of the NCs on 12 April 2006. The objectives of the RECs meeting were, among other things, to harmonize their pertinent regional mechanisms and the broader mechanisms of the Conference; build a common understanding of the content of the Pact; agree on the role of the RECs in its implementation and brainstorm the strategies and cooperation mechanisms for use between the RECs and the Secretariat of the Conference, as well as the strategies for mobilizing the requisite resources to implement the Pact. It should be mentioned that the Security, Stability and Development Pact to be adopted in Nairobi will comprise the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration, the Action Programmes made up of Projects and Protocols, as well as the Regional Follow-up Mechanism adopted by the RIC at its meeting in Bangui in February 2006.

**194.** At their meeting in Nairobi on 15 May 2006, convened to finalize discussion on the allocation of responsibilities to the RECs for implementation and follow up on the Projects, as well as on the modalities of establishing the Regional Follow-up Mechanism, the National Coordinators (NCs) exhaustively discussed the transition period and the possibility of establishing the Secretariat of the Conference before the Summit. In this connection, the NCs recalled the appeal made by the Security Council on 29 March 2006 to the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General to assist in establishing the Secretariat of the Conference before the Summit. They also discussed the appointment of an Executive Secretary for the Secretariat and the country to host it.

**195.** On matters relating to the establishment of the Secretariat of the Conference, the NCs observed that putting the Secretariat in place before the Nairobi Summit or before an official decision by the Heads of State would generate legal and political problems. They therefore recommended that the AU Summit due to take place in Banjul should be used as opportunity to convene a mini-Summit of the countries of the region. They also agreed to institute a transitional period immediately after the Nairobi Summit during which transfer of responsibility would take place between United Nations and the Secretariat of the Conference. The establishment of the Regional Secretariat and the gradual phasing out of the UN/AU Joint Secretariat will be effected within the framework of a Protocol Agreement between the Joint Secretariat and the field countries. The UN/AU Joint Secretariat will prepare this Protocol.

**196.** The preparatory process of the Conference is thus moving towards its final stage, namely, the Nairobi Summit. This Meeting is expected to adopt the Pact which will bring together the individual eleven (11) Member States of the process and the entire region in the important fields that constitute the four themes of the Conference. The progress thus achieved would not have been possible without the political, diplomatic, technical and financial support of the development partners, members of the Group of Friends of the region. Implementation of the Pact will require not only increased mobilization of the international community but also, and above all, the strong engagement of the countries of the region. To this end, their contribution to the Special Fund for Reconstruction and Development set up by virtue of the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration will be crucial. Moreover, the speedy ratification of the Pact will serve as a strong signal and an expression of the will of the Parties to materialize the vision enshrined in the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration.

**197.** The ongoing AU meetings in Banjul offer Member States of the process, the opportunity to consult and exchange views on how best to contribute to the Fund. They should similarly take advantage of the Summit to agree on a date for the Nairobi Summit and on the country to host the Secretariat of the Conference.

**h) Central African Republic (CAR)**

**198.** The situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) has been encouraging, despite the continued financial and security difficulties facing the country. The Commission has continued to monitor it and remains engaged in the efforts aimed at consolidating the gains so far made.

**199.** Following the fact-finding Mission on the security and humanitarian situation in the region which the Commission fielded to CAR, Chad and Cameroon, from 25 October to 8 November 2005, the PSC met on 29 December 2005 to examine the situation in light of the Mission Report. In a communiqué issued at the end of the meeting, the PSC expressed concern at the continued insecurity in the North of the CAR and the resultant displacements of the populations towards Southern Chad. In this connection, the PSC welcomed the assistance provided to the Central African refugees exiled in Chad and the efforts deployed by the countries of the region, the multi-national Force of the Central Africa Economic and Monetary Community (FOMUC) and by the United Nations through the UN Office in CAR (BONUCA), to address the insecurity problem, help create conducive conditions for socio-economic recovery in the CAR and consolidate peace and stability in the country. Council also encouraged the Chairperson of the Commission, in collaboration with the competent institutions, including the African Development Bank (ADB) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to despatch a multi-disciplinary Mission to Bangui to identify the urgent needs of the country and find out the type of assistance that Member States and AU Partners could provide to the country.

**200.** Pursuant to the 29 December 2005 Decision, the PSC held a public meeting on the CAR on 30 March 2006. On that occasion, the representatives of the Government of the Central African Republic, CEMAC/FOMUC and of BONUCA made presentations to sensitize Member States and AU Partners on the situation in the CAR, both security, socio-economic and political, as well as on the most urgent needs in the country. Regarding the multi-disciplinary Mission recommended by the PSC, it visited the CAR from 3 to 15 April 2006. It was led by the former Senegalese Prime Minister, Mamadou Lamine Loum, and comprised experts from ADB, ECA and officials of the AU Commission. The report of that Mission will be presented to the PSC in due course for appropriate action.

**201.** Furthermore, at the instance of the Executive Secretariat of CEMAC, the Commission solicited the EU to renew the financing for the CEMAC multi-national Force to the tune of 7.5 million Euros (for 12 months, from July 2006 to June 2007) under the Peace in Africa Facility established by the EU at the request of the AU, to help finance AU-led peace support operations. A Joint AU/EU Mission was in Bangui from 3 to 7 April 2006 to evaluate the results of the previous 8 million Euros financing (operation FOMUC II covering the period July 2005 - June 2006) and examine the objectives of the new financing. It should be mentioned, on this score, that between December 2005 and March 2006, the North of the country saw a resurgence of attacks on, and fresh displacements of, the populations to Southern Chad, particularly the attack on the city of Paoua by unidentified armed groups and the resultant mopping up operation carried out by the CAR Army. These

operations were received with mixed feelings and generated intense controversy within the political class.

**202.** On the economic and political front, the discussions with bilateral and multilateral donors which have been under way since 2004, have continued. A Joint Mission of the IMF, World Bank, ADB and the EU was in the country from 29 April to 6 May 2006 (following a previous Mission in November 2005) to evaluate the results achieved by the economic and financial programme, with the support of an emergency post-conflict assistance arrangement. While the Mission concluded that some progress had been made in the implementation of economic and financial reforms, it did not hesitate to emphasize the need to pursue the reforms and achieve more satisfactory results, thereby paving the way for an agreement under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF).

**203.** The CAR has, on the whole, continued to accumulate arrears. Clearing these arrears remains a major factor, which frustrates any discussion. The IMF has indicated that it would not be in a position to provide the CAR with financial assistance under the PRGF unless a solution is found to this problem of arrears. The AU Multi-disciplinary Mission observed that discussions were in progress with the World Bank and the ADB to devise a strategy to clear the arrears, a strategy that all the bilateral and multilateral donors are expected to support. The Mission also observed that, in light of the 2006 Finance Law, there was 27.1 billion FCFA deficit which has to be cleared, failing which the country would build up fresh arrears.

**204.** On 2 May 2006, President François Bozizé forwarded a letter to the Chairperson of the Commission expressing his appreciation for the efforts deployed by the AU to support his country and, in particular, soliciting further AU support towards the conclusion of an agreement with the IMF under the PRGF. In this regard, the Commission will take the requisite follow-up measures, including implementation of the recommendations put forward by the Multi-disciplinary Mission. In the meantime, it is incumbent on the international community to assist CAR in consolidating the new-found peace and stability in the country.

**i) Chad and the Relation between Chad and The Sudan**

**205.** During the period under review, the situation in Chad saw a number of worrying developments. Council will recall that, on 18 December 2005, the Chadian city of Adré near the border with The Sudan, was attacked by armed elements. On that occasion, the Chadian Government accused The Sudan of having assisted the authors of the attacks and of seeking to destabilize Chad. A few days later, the Government of Chad declared a “state of war” with The Sudan. The latter, for its part, rejected the accusation and affirmed that Chad had, on several occasions, made incursions into The Sudanese territory and violated its airspace.

**206.** Concerned by the tension between the two countries, the Chairperson of the Commission despatched to N'Djamena and Khartoum respectively, from 21 to 26 December 2005, a Mission led by the AU Special Representative in The Sudan and Head of AMIS, Ambassador Baba Gana Kingibe. The objective was to obtain first-hand information on the developments and examine with the two Governments how best to defuse the tension and ensure an early return to normalcy along their common border.

**207.** On 29 December 2005, the PSC was seized with the situation. On 4 January 2006, the Conference of CEMAC Heads of State and Government meeting in an extraordinary session in N'Djamena, adopted a Declaration condemning any attempt to destabilize Chad and called on the PSC to look into the serious situation prevailing along the Chad -Sudan border with greater attention and urgency.

**208.** It is against this background that the Libyan Leader, Colonel Muammar Al-Gaddafi, took a number of initiatives which resulted in the 8 February 2006 Tripoli Agreement for the resolution of the dispute between the Republic of Chad and the Republic of The Sudan. This agreement was accompanied by a Declaration known as the Tripoli Declaration on the situation existing between the Republic of Chad and the Republic of The Sudan. At its 46<sup>th</sup> Meeting on 10 March 2006, the PSC endorsed the Tripoli Declaration and Agreement and urged both governments to fully implement the commitments they had made. The PSC also invited the Commission to take all measures necessary and to render all possible assistance towards implementation of the Tripoli Declaration and Agreement. Subsequently, the Commission presented to the PSC proposals on the modalities of possible AU support on the ground to facilitate implementation of the Tripoli Agreement. In its 21 March 2006 Decision, the PSC requested the Commission to continue to explore all possible options to assist implementation of the Tripoli Agreement, including support by AMIS, taking into account the existing capacities of the Mission, particularly in terms of logistics and financial resources, the legal aspects of the matter as well as the views expressed by the troop- contributing countries, and to expeditiously submit an appropriate report to enable it to take a decision on the issue. As at the moment of finalizing this report, the Commission was getting ready to submit the report as requested by the PSC.

**209.** In the meantime, on the night of 14-15 March 2006, there was an attempted coup d'état in N'Djamena. The Chairperson of the Commission condemned the coup and reiterated AU's rejection of any attempt to seize power by force. He also made an urgent appeal to the Chadian political stakeholders to have recourse to dialogue to resolve their differences. On 13 April 2006, a column of armed men of the United Front for Change (FUC) – a coalition of several politico-military Movements equipped with vehicles and heavy weaponry, attacked the capital N'Djamena and the city of André. The Chadian Government, once again, accused The Sudan of having masterminded the attacks and decided to break diplomatic and economic relations, and close its border with The Sudan. The Chadian government further decided to withdraw Chadian Facilitators from the Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on the Conflict in the Darfur, which was then being held in Abuja, Nigeria.

**210.** Meeting on that same day, the PSC condemned the attack which, in its view, was an unacceptable attempt to overthrow a Government in place by unconstitutional means. It also condemned the incursions of armed elements into The Sudanese refugee camps in Chad. The PSC further underscored the need for the Chadian Government to urgently enter into dialogue with all the political forces in the country with a view to finding a consensual solution to the difficult problems facing the country, and consolidating the democratic process. In this regard, Council encouraged the Chairperson of the Commission to take all the necessary measures to facilitate the dialogue.

**211.** Subsequently, the Commission fielded a Mission to N'Djamena from 21 to 27 April 2006 in order to obtain the information needed for effective follow-up on the PSC Decision. The Chadian authorities, on that occasion, reiterated the accusations regarding the

involvement of The Sudan in the 13 April 2006 attacks; and in this connection, presented the weapons, ammunition, vehicles and various documents seized during the attacks as evidence of The Sudanese Government support for the Chadian rebels.

**212.** The visit of the Mission took place against the background of the presidential elections scheduled for 3 May 2006. As a matter of fact, this issue repeatedly came up during discussions held by the Mission in N'Djamena. The Government, the Patriotic Movement for National Salvation (MPS, the Party in power) and a section of the civil society organizations and associations called for the elections to be held as scheduled to allow for the continuity of State institutions and avoid a legal vacuum which would have been prejudicial to peace and stability, while maintaining that the dialogue with the political forces could take place after the elections. The opposition and another section of the civil society organizations, for their part, called for suspension of the electoral process, the opening of dialogue with all the political forces in the country, including politico-military Movements as a way to create more propitious conditions for elections that would be acceptable to all and sundry. The Presidential elections indeed took place on 3 May 2006. On 14 May 2006, the Electoral Commission released the provisional results which showed that President Idriss Deby had won, a victory subsequently confirmed by the Chadian Constitutional Court.

**213.** The AU Mission to Chad went on to visit The Sudan from 2 to 7 June 2006, to ascertain that country's position on the accusations levelled against it by Chad. During Talks with the Mission, the Sudanese authorities denied the Chadian allegations and affirmed, instead, that Chad had been hosting and arming rebel elements hostile to the Darfur Peace Agreement, and seeking to undermine peace in the region.

**214.** The report of the Mission which will also cover the discussions it held in Chad and in The Sudan and as well as other activities it undertook on the ground will, in due course, be submitted to the PSC for consideration and appropriate action. For its part, the Commission would like to once again appeal to the two countries to refrain from any action likely to aggravate the situation and to purposefully work towards an early normalization of their relation in light of the Tripoli Agreement. The Commission would also like to underscore the urgency of holding a political dialogue of all the Chadian Parties and its readiness to offer assistance in that direction.

**j) Côte d'Ivoire**

**215.** The period following the Khartoum Executive Council Session was marked, overall, by an encouraging evolution of the situation, despite the considerable delay in the implementation of the roadmap submitted to the Prime Minister by the International Working Group (IWG) and adopted by the Ivorian Government at a seminar held in Yamoussoukro in February 2006.

**216.** Council will recall that as part of the implementation of the decision of the 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the PRC held on 6 October 2005, and Resolution 1633 (2005) adopted by the UN Security Council on 21 October 2005, Charles Konan Banny, former Governor of the Central Bank of West Africa, was appointed to the post of Prime Minister on 4 December 2005. At the end of the tour that took him to Niger, Nigeria, South Africa and Congo for discussions with the leaders of these countries, and following in-depth consultations with the Ivorian parties, the Prime Minister formed his Government on 28 December 2005.

**217.** Upon his assumption of duty, the Prime Minister declared his willingness and readiness to work in close collaboration with the Head of State and underscored the need for a social truce in order to create a conducive environment for the organization of elections. It was in this spirit that a Government-sponsored seminar on the roadmap to end the crisis was organized at his initiative in Yamoussoukro from 9 to 11 February 2006. The seminar made it possible for the Government to take ownership of the roadmap and introduce a number of measures aimed at consolidating the peace process.

**218.** Thereafter, the Prime Minister, on 28 February 2006, convened in Yamoussoukro, a meeting of the main political leaders of Côte d'Ivoire, namely President Laurent Gbagbo, Henri Konan Bedie of PDCI-RDA, Alassane Dramane Ouattara of RDR and Guillaume Soro of *Forces Nouvelles*. The meeting made it possible to obtain encouraging results, including the commitment to respect the full implementation of previous agreements; the holding of elections within the stipulated time frame; the invitation to the Head of State and the Prime Minister to consult each other to avoid possible conflicts of interpretation of the Constitution and resolution 1633; the decision on an immediate resumption of dialogue between the Commands of the *Forces de défense et de sécurité de Côte d'Ivoire* (FDSCI) and the *Forces armées des Forces nouvelles* (FAFN), regarding the dismantling of the militias and the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (DDR); the agreement to conduct the identification process and the registration of voters simultaneously; the support for the measures taken by the Government to ensure equal access by all parties to the RTI; the need to meet frequently to exchange views on the peace process and ensure that political life takes place in a peaceful atmosphere; and the acceptance of the arbitration of the High Representative for the Elections regarding the Bureau of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). The Yamoussoukro meeting helped to improve the political climate and to facilitate the return to Abidjan, on 14 March 2006, of Guillaume Soro, Secretary General of *Forces Nouvelles*, to rejoin the Government after 16 months of absence.

**219.** The Khartoum Executive Council Session took place in a context marked by the incidents that occurred in Abidjan following the decision of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the IWG, on 15 January 2006, regarding the mandate of the National Assembly. President Olusegun Obasanjo, then Current Chairperson of the AU, proceeded to the Ivorian capital on 18 January 2006 to help resolve the crisis. During his visit, he called on the President of the Republic and the Prime Minister to continue with the discussions in order to find a political situation to the crisis.

**220.** On 27 January 2006, the spokesperson for the Presidency of the Republic read out a Communiqué in which President Gbagbo informed the Nation that the National Assembly was still functioning with all its powers. The democracy and peace parliamentary group comprising the opposition parties decided to boycott the National Assembly sessions. Despite the statement of the United Nations Secretary General underscoring the need to refrain from any unilateral action, re-echoed by the fourth meeting of the IWG on 17 February, the National Assembly convened on 9 February 2006 in the absence of the majority of the opposition members of Parliament. Despite the boycott of the opposition, the National Assembly continued to meet and its Speaker had the rules of procedure modified on 1 June 2006 in order to reinforce sanctions against the absentees.

**221.** Furthermore, issues of disarmament and identification were at the center of a dispute between the parties and organizations of the presidential camp, on the one hand, and the opposition, on the other. The presidential camp argued that disarmament was a pre-



requisite while the *Forces Nouvelles (New Forces)* maintained that identification should take place prior to the laying down of arms. At the end of the consultations held by President Denis Sassou Nguesso, Current Chairperson of the AU during his visit to Côte d'Ivoire from 6 to 8 April 2006, it was agreed that the disarmament and identification process should be carried out concomitantly and without delay, under the authority of the Government and the Prime Minister.

**222.** Meanwhile, General Gaston Ouassenan Kone was appointed Coordinator of the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (PNDDR). In this capacity, he undertook a tour of the Western part of the country during which he contacted the various militias in the region to sensitize them on their dismantling. Furthermore, the public hearings pilot project began at the seven sites on 18 May 2006. Coupled with this were the steps taken by the *Forces de défense et de sécurité de Côte d'Ivoire* (FDSCI) and FAFN to begin without delay the pre-cantonment of the combatants under the DDR programme.

**223.** At the security level, the foiled attack launched by an armed group against the two Akouedo military camps on 2 January 2006 rekindled the feeling of insecurity among the population and mistrust in the political class and all the Ivorian parties. Similarly, the demonstrations organized by the Young Patriots, from 16 to 19 January 2006, following the Communiqué by the IWG, led to a serious deterioration of the security situation both in Abidjan and in some localities inside the country. In the West of the country, in particular, the United Nations personnel, the humanitarian organizations and cantonment sites of the UNOCI forces were the subject of violent attacks. The departure of the humanitarian personnel and the evacuation from Côte d'Ivoire of about 400 UN staff have created a void which impacted very negatively on close to 14, 000 refugees, displaced persons and members of ethnic minorities who depend on the activities of United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organizations. Since mid-March, UNOCI has tried to redeploy its forces in Western Côte d'Ivoire.

**224.** During the period under review, the humanitarian situation remained precarious and a source of serious concern. Education, health, water and sanitation were similarly sources of continued concern. Mention should also be made of the numerous human rights violations recorded in the two areas.

**225.** At its 52<sup>nd</sup> session held on 29 May 2006, the PSC commended the continued collaboration between the Head of State and the Prime Minister, and encouraged them to pursue their efforts in order to create conditions necessary for the holding of free, open and transparent elections, not later than 31 October 2006. The Council, like the IWG at its 7<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 19 May 2006, expressed its deep concern at the considerable delay in the implementation of the roadmap. In this connection, the Council demanded that all the Ivorian parties cooperate closely with the Government and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) with a view to ensuring that the identification and DDR process are conducted with determination and extended to the entire territory, immediately on completion of the pilot project of public hearings and pre-cantonment of combatants, and that the rehabilitation of the cantonment sites for DDR as well as the redeployment of the administration and the restoration of authority of the State are successfully carried out.

**226.** Furthermore, the Council urged the Ivorian authorities to ensure that those responsible for incitement to hatred and violence, as well as human rights violations are

identified and punished. It also urged them to see to it that the independence and neutrality of the Ivorian Radio-Television (RTI) are guaranteed and that RTI can broadcast throughout the entire national territory. The Council also requested the Security Council Sanctions Committee to take appropriate measures against those who obstruct or intend to obstruct the implementation of the peace process. It urged the Security Council to give rapid and favourable consideration to the proposals made by the United Nations Secretary General to reinforce UNOCI.

**227.** Even though significant progress has been achieved since last October, there are still many challenges to be addressed to bring the peace process to a successful conclusion. It was in this context that the PSC at its meeting referred to above requested the IWG to submit to it an overall assessment of the situation and the state of progress, including recommendations on how to speed up the implementation of the roadmap, with a view to holding free, fair and transparent elections not later than 31 October 2006. Such an assessment will enable the PSC to pronounce itself on the peace process and decide on the measures to take to ensure that it is brought to a logical conclusion within the stipulated timeframe.

**k) Liberia**

**228.** Since her election, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has embarked on the arduous task of rejuvenating and jump-starting the development process of Liberia. After almost two decades of Government mismanagement, civil war and economic collapse, the Liberian State is taking the first step on the long road to recovery and sustainable development. The new Government has pledged that Liberia would never again be considered the epicentre of conflict in West Africa but a bastion of development and progress in the sub-region and the Continent at large.

**229.** To this end, the Government's reconstruction and development strategy will be driven by the Liberian Reconstruction and Development Committee (LRDC), under the guidance of the President as Chairperson, and anchored on four pillars, namely:

- expanding peace and security;
- revitalizing economic activity;
- rebuilding infrastructure and providing basic services; and
- strengthening governance and the rule of law.

**230.** It is envisaged that the LRDC and its pillars will form the ingredients of the Government's Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, which articulates its medium-term reconstruction and development strategy for the country. In order to achieve this, the issue of sound and disciplined fiscal and economic management becomes a *sine qua non*. Therefore, continued progress of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme (GEMAP) becomes obvious in the face of the need for more robust approach to economic governance in Liberia, with immediate and firm remedial efforts. The GEMAP has translated into increased revenue collection for the Government, while current efforts by the multilateral system, namely the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, are assisting the country to build appropriate system and requisite capacity to be able to draw up budget, execute it and report on progress being made by ensuring transparency and accountability.

**231.** The new Government, nonetheless, faces enormous challenges, particularly with respect to security and stability. As part of the provisions of the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of August 2003, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), the Liberia National Police Force (LNPF) and other security apparatus of the State were all reformed, reorganised, demobilised and deactivated, respectively. The exercises were carried out in the midst of salary arrears owed to these men from the previous administration. The challenge is that the Government, though making strenuous efforts to cover these arrears, has been unable to duly complete it and this now poses a security challenge. Fortunately, the effectiveness of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has managed to contain any threat.

**232.** Another major challenge is the continued regime of sanctions. The Chairman of the Sanctions Committee of the United Nations Security Council, Ambassador Margathe Loj, paid a fact finding five-day visit to the country, in April 2006, to gain first hand knowledge of the situation with regard to the need or otherwise of continuing the regime of sanctions placed on Liberia. It was the general consensus that there is need to continue the regime of sanctions as it relates to the arms embargo. However, concern was expressed on the continued regime of sanctions on timber and diamond. The consensus was that, owing to significant progress in sanitizing the timber industry, the Committee should seriously consider lifting sanctions on the commodity, while that of diamond will largely depend eventually on compliance with the Kimberly Process.

**233.** As stated earlier, the Government of Liberia is presently facing a lot of challenges in the midst of very scarce resources. It is, therefore, necessary that the Member States and International Partners of Liberia come to the assistance of the Government at this crucial moment. Liberia needs urgent assistance and renewed infusion of funds to enable it tackle development problems and offer the dividend of peace to its people at the shortest possible time. It is in this light that the Commission urges that early lifting of sanctions on timber and diamond, as a means of addressing resource shortfall, be undertaken by the UN Security Council. On its part, the Commission shall continue to remain seized of the Liberian situation and to assist the country in its post-conflict reconstruction efforts, including through the AU Liaison Office in Monrovia and the Special Envoy Ramtane Lamamra.

**I) Mauritania**

**234.** In pursuance of the mandate given to the Commission by the 37<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the PSC devoted to consideration of the situation in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, held on 8 September 2005, the AU has maintained regular contact with the authorities of that country through political and technical Missions. It is in this context that Ambassador Vijay Singh Makhan, Special Envoy, paid several visits to Mauritania and remained actively engaged in the various stages of the ongoing transition in the country. In January 2006, the Commission despatched an Elections' Expert to Mauritania to assist the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Recently in early June, the AU also fielded two other experts to Mauritania to assist the Mauritanian Parties in matters relating to the financing of the political parties and women's access to elective offices.

**235.** It should be recalled that, in response to the concerns expressed by the international community in general and the AU in particular, the Mauritanian authorities decided to reduce the transitional period from 24 to 19 months (from August 2005 to March 2007). The elections will begin on 25 June 2006 with the constitutional referendum and terminate on 11 or 25 March 2007 with the presidential elections depending on whether or not there will be a

Second Round. On this score, it is worth mentioning that, following the request by the Mauritanian authorities for the AU to send an Observer Mission to the different elections being organized under the electoral process, the Commission, exceptionally, decided to field a small observer group for the constitutional referendum due to take place on 25 June, in view of its special nature, and because the referendum will mark the commencement of a process that will lead to the return of constitutional order in Mauritania.

**236.** Respecting the election deadlines set by the Mauritanian Parties implies the mobilization of resources to finance the electoral process and ensure the proper conduct of the transition. It should however be observed that of the US\$20,463,717 total budget of the electoral process, US\$7,192,864 was yet to be raised as at the end of that year. In this connection, the Mauritanian government, with the support of AU, organized in Nouakchott, on 25 April 2006, a Donors' Round Table to raise financial resources for the electoral process. AU Member States and Partners as well as the bilateral and multilateral partners of Mauritania were invited to the Round Table. Also present were: Senegal represented by its Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs; The Gambia represented by its Minister of Territorial Administration; Gabon represented by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; a delegation of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, as well as Libya, Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia, all represented by their respective Ambassadors in Nouakchott. The Partners in attendance were the United States of America, Germany, France, Japan and Spain, in addition to the United Nations, the International Organization of the Francophonie (IOF), the League of Arab States (LAS) and the European Union (EU).

**237.** On that occasion, the Commission called on Member States and AU Partners to demonstrate solidarity and to do their utmost to assist the Mauritanian authorities to successfully conduct the electoral process in the best possible condition. The Commission also encourages the Mauritanian Parties and other concerned stakeholders to continue to work hand-in-hand to ensure the early return of constitutional order in Mauritania, pursue and deepen the dialogue and consultation among all the concerned players, and consolidate democracy and the rule of law.

**m) Western Sahara**

**238.** During the reporting period, the AU has continued to monitor the situation in Western Sahara and to provide support to the United Nations Mission in Western Sahara (MINURSO), through the Office of the African Union to MINURSO, headed by AU Senior Representative, Yilma Tadesse. Council will recall that, last summer the UN Secretary-General appointed a new Personal Envoy, in the person of Ambassador Peter Van Walsum. Subsequent to his appointment, the Personal Envoy undertook an exploratory mission to the region, meeting with King Mohamed VI of Morocco and President Mohamed Abdelaziz of SADR. He also met with Presidents Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria and Ely Ould Mohamed Vall of Mauritania. The Personal Envoy met with other stakeholders within the international community, and paid a visit to the Commission, during which he exchanged views on the situation with the Chairperson of the Commission.

**239.** The confrontation between the Moroccan forces and the Sahrawi pro-independence and human rights activists continues in Western Sahara, albeit intermittently, at the moment. Appeals to the international community to end human rights violations, as well as for the respect of the rights to self-determination by the people of Western Sahara, continue unabated. The UN Human Rights Commission sent a delegation to Western Sahara and to

the Tindouf refugee camps, to look into allegations of human rights violations and propose measures that would enable the UN to more effectively address concerns in that regard.

**240.** Following the report on Western Sahara submitted by the UN Secretary General on 19 April 2006, the Security Council adopted, on 28 April 2006, resolution 1675(2006), in which it reaffirmed its commitment to assist the parties to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. The Security Council also extended the mandate of MINURSO till 31 October 2006, to enable efforts to continue towards finding a just and lasting solution to the dispute.

**241.** The Commission remains concerned at the continued stalemate in the peace process, with the resulting growing frustration of the people of Western Sahara. This situation deserves the closest attention of the international community, which should act urgently and decisively to enable the people of Western Sahara to exercise their right to self-determination in conformity with international legality and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

#### **IV. POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT (PCRD)**

**242.** At its session in Khartoum, the Executive Council was briefed on the process of elaborating a PCRD Framework as directed by decision EX.CL/171(VIII) adopted in Sirte, Libya, in July 2005, and which requested the Commission to develop such a Framework based on the relevant provisions of the PSC Protocol and the experience gained thus far on the continent. In pursuit of the mandate given by the Executive Council, a Brainstorming Retreat of the PSC members and other Permanent Representatives of the Member States took place on 4 – 5 September 2005, in Durban, South Africa, and considered the draft PCRD presented by the Commission. Subsequently, the 39<sup>th</sup> meeting of the PSC, held on 30 September 2005, endorsed the report of the Brainstorming Retreat, as well as the Commission's proposal to convene a meeting of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and international partners. The meeting took place in Addis Ababa from 6 to 7 February this year. From 8 to 9 June 2006, the Commission convened a meeting of Government Experts to consider the PCRD Framework Document, before its submission to the Executive Council for approval.

#### **V. CHILD SOLDIER ISSUES**

**243.** In July 2005, the Commission elaborated an outline proposal for the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of child soldiers. The proposal was subsequently followed by a work plan covering the period January 2006 to December 2007 and identifying clear objectives, benchmarks, activities and their estimated costs. Arising from both the proposal and the work plan, the Japanese Government provided two million US dollars for the implementation of the ex-child soldiers project. An updated work plan has since been produced and activities are set to begin shortly.

#### **VI. SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS**

**244.** During the period under review, the Commission was involved in preparations for the United Nations Conference to review progress in the UN Programme of Action to Prevent,

Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the promotion of the African Common Position in this regard. The Commission participated actively in the Preparatory Committee for this Conference, which was held in New York in January 2006. It is to be recalled that, in December 2005, the AU convened a meeting of Governmental Experts, in Windhoek, Namibia, to prepare an African Common Position to take to the Review Conference. At the 8<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, in Khartoum, in January 2006, Member States were called upon to defend this Common Position.

**245.** At the time of writing this report, the Commission was preparing to participate in the Review Conference, and to ensure that African interests pertaining to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are taken into account. The Review Conference shall take place at the same time as the Summit of Heads of State and Government, in July 2006. The Commission has also published a Compendium of all African documents related to small arms and light weapons, at both continental and regional levels, to popularize African efforts in this area. This publication shall be launched during the UN Review Conference.

## **VII. PELINDABA TREATY**

**246.** At its Khartoum session the Executive Council was briefed on the status of ratification of the Treaty of Pelindaba (Treaty establishing Africa as a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone). The Treaty, which was opened for signature on 12 April 1996, has not entered into force because, to date, only twenty (20) African countries have deposited their instruments of ratification with the AU Commission, while twenty-eight (28) instruments of ratification are required. The decision adopted in Khartoum called on Member States that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty to do so, for the Treaty to enter into force during the tenth year of its opening for signature, and requested the Commission to follow up on the matter with Member States.

**247.** As a follow-up to the Executive Council decision and earlier OAU resolutions, the PSC held an open meeting on the Pelindaba Treaty on 31 May 2006 in Addis Ababa. The meeting, chaired by Mr. Oluyemi Adeniji, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, issued a communiqué requesting the Chairperson of the Commission to take all necessary steps, including through the appointment of a Special Envoy, to speed up the entry into force of the Treaty and the signing and ratification by all those concerned of the three Protocols appended to the Treaty. The Commission is in the process of taking all the required follow-up measures to facilitate the early entry into force of the Treaty.

## **VIII. TERRORISM**

**248.** As its last session, the Executive Council approved both the structure of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) and a budget for its operations. Since then, several initiatives have been taken towards the full operationalization of the ACSRT. In February 2006, a team from the Commission, comprising officers from the Departments of Peace and Security, Human Resources and Administration, and Programming, Budgeting, Finance and Accounting, visited the Centre on an assessment mission, after which a programme was developed to effect the full operationalization of the Centre and to ensure that the ACSRT function in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Commission. Ten (10) positions, which were deemed to be critical for the successful start-up phase of the ACSRT, were identified and advertised.

Among them was the position of the Director of the Centre, which has been filled recently. The other positions are still in the process of being filled.

**249.** Concurrent to these administrative processes, the ACSRT has also been active in fulfilling its mandate. In the first half of 2006, the Centre organized a seminar on the neutralization of explosives, from 12 to 14 April 2006. The second meeting of national and regional focal points was also held from 18 to 20 May 2006. This meeting adopted documents deemed crucial to the successful functioning of the Centre, namely, a Code of Conduct regulating the relationship between Focal Points and the ACSRT and a Threat Assessment Template for Focal Points, which will be used to determine the status of threat in their respective States and regions.

## **IX. UNREC**

**250.** At its Khartoum Session, the Executive Council was briefed on the status of the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. In the decision it adopted on the issue, the Executive Council requested the Commission to examine the proposal by Togo, which called on the Commission and Member States to support the Centre, and to make recommendations on its sustenance. The Executive Council also called upon Member States to make voluntary contributions to the Centre to maintain its operations pending recommendations by the Commission and adoption of a decision by the policy organs of the Union.

**251.** To that end, the Commission has sent communications to all Member States, urging them to provide the Centre with financial support, while discussions continue with the Togolese authorities and the United Nations, to guarantee adequate resources to support the Centre's activities. On its part, the UN Secretariat has established a consultative mechanism of interested States to examine the situation of the Centre and to develop a plan to revive its activities and reorient them to better serve the needs of the continent. In the meantime, and in order to ease its current financial predicament, the Commission is considering how best to assist the Centre, including through the provision of financial assistance from the AU regular budget.

## **POLITICAL AFFAIRS, DEMOCRATIZATION, GOVERNANCE,** **HUMAN RIGHTS, HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS**

**252.** The consolidation of the democratic process set in motion in the Continent, as well as the promotion of good governance and human rights, constitute the major axis of activities carried out by the Commission during the period under consideration.

**253.** With regard to the consolidation of the democratic process, the debate was initiated on the revision of the Lomé Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government, with a view to strengthening it. Proposals were made in this respect within the framework of the commitments formulated in the Draft Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. In this regard, it is gratifying to note the firm commitment to promote democracy reaffirmed by Member States during meetings organized by the Commission on the Charter.

**254.** Member States continued to accede to the African Peer Review Mechanism. To date, 26 countries have joined. We encourage Member States that have not yet done so to accede to it.

**255.** Furthermore, a series of elections were held in the Continent. In conformity with the regulations in force, the Union sent observers where it was invited. Generally, these elections took place under regular conditions, although in some countries, they were preceded by conflicts.

**256.** Efforts were made, in close collaboration with partners, to promote the ratification of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption with a view to its entry into force. In this regard, it is deplored that, to date, very few Member States have acceded to it and the number of ratifications needed for its entry into force has not been obtained. An appeal is made to Member States to ratify the Convention as soon as possible.

**257.** With regard to governance, the Commission also worked towards the implementation of the Addis Ababa Declaration adopted by the 5<sup>th</sup> Pan-African Conference of Ministers in charge of Public Administration; and this, in collaboration with the NEPAD Secretariat, the Conference being chaired by South Africa.

**258.** Lastly, a series of activities were conducted on the humanitarian level as well as within the framework of the promotion of respect for human rights in the Continent, which, to some extent, involved stakeholders operating on the ground and representatives of the civil society. Particular attention was given to strengthening the African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights, in accordance with the relevant Council and Assembly decisions.

## **I. DEMOCRATIZATION AND ELECTION OBSERVATION**

### **A. ELECTION OBSERVATION IN MEMBER STATES**

**259.** During the period under consideration, the Commission sent observer missions to Uganda, Chad and The Comoros.

**260.** Following the 23 February 2006 presidential elections in Uganda, Mr. Yoweri Museveni, candidate of the National Resistance Movement, was re-elected President of the Republic with 59.28% of the votes.

**261.** In Chad, presidential elections were held on 3 May 2006. President Idriss Déby Itno of the Mouvement Patriotique du Salut, was re-elected with 77.5% of the votes.

**262.** In The Comoros, out of the three candidates that emerged from the Anjouan primary elections, Mr. Abdallah Sambi obtained 73.72% of the votes in Moheli, 45.70% in Anjouan and 64.50% in Ngazidja (Grande Comoros). In conformity with the provisions of the new constitution of the Union of The Comoros, the rotating presidency devolved on a national from Anjouan.

### **B. DEMOCRATIZATION-RELATED ACTIVITIES**

**263.** In conformity with Decisions EX/CL/Dec.31(III) and EX/CL/Dec.124(V) adopted by the Executive Council in Maputo, Mozambique, in July 2003, and in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



in July 2004, respectively, the Commission convened a series of meetings of independent experts, government experts and Ministers to examine the Draft African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

**264.** During these meetings, the experts and Ministers were also called upon to consider a report on the revision of the Lomé Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa, which the Commission had prepared in application of the terms of the Communiqué issued on 24 July 2003 by the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in which the Commission was requested “to make an in-depth review of the Lomé Declaration, in light of the developments that have occurred since its adoption, in July 2000, and submit to it, for subsequent consideration by the competent policy organs of the AU, concrete proposals aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the Declaration, including the rejection of any participation, particularly as candidates, of the perpetrators of coup d’Etat, or any other form of unconstitutional change, in elections organized to restore constitutional order”.

**265.** At the end of these different meetings which were held in Addis Ababa in April and May 2006, and in Brazzaville in June 2006, the Draft Charter was finalized and submitted to the Executive Council for consideration and adoption.

**266.** Furthermore, within the framework of the implementation of the provisions of the Durban Declaration of July 2002 on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa, the Commission carried out two studies: a Feasibility Study on the Establishment of a Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit, and a Feasibility Study on the Establishment of a Democracy and Electoral Assistance Fund.

**267.** These two studies were submitted to a meeting of independent experts held in Addis Ababa from 2 to 4 May 2006 for critical evaluation. The studies were subsequently submitted for the consideration and validation of government experts during another meeting held in Brazzaville, from 5 to 6 June 2006.

**268.** The updated versions of the two studies, the Report of the Meeting of Government Experts, and the appropriate draft decisions have been submitted to Council.

## **C. RESULTS AND PERFORMANCE**

**269.** The electoral processes were conducted smoothly in the above-mentioned Member States. Dispatching observer missions to these countries demonstrated, once again, the will and the commitment of the Commission to do its utmost to ensure that electoral processes in Member States are carried out in peace and national concord, which are essential factors for harmonious economic and social development.

**270.** The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, once it has been adopted and enters into force, will constitute an indispensable additional tool for consolidating the Rule of Law, Democracy and Good Governance in Member States.

## **D. OUTSTANDING ISSUES**

**271.** A study on the evaluation of the electoral observation action of the African Union was recently initiated. This study should enable the Organization to learn from past experiences, with a view to improving its future election observation activities. Furthermore,

the preparation of a guide for election observers will begin shortly. Lastly, during the second half of the current year, it is planned to convene a meeting of pan-African national electoral bodies, to enable them to exchange experiences on certain aspects of election management and electoral observation.

## **E. PROSPECTS**

**272.** The Commission plays and will continue to play its rightful role in the promotion of democracy and democratic elections in the Continent. The imminent establishment of a Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit and Fund will undoubtedly contribute to strengthening the Commission's capacity in this respect. Lastly, the adoption of the Draft Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance will endow the Organization with a legal instrument for consolidating the commitment of Member States to democracy on the Continent.

## **2. GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

**273.** Within the framework of the implementation of Decision EX.CL/Dec.243(VIII), the Commission participated in a meeting of the Steering Committee of the Pan-African Conference of Ministers and Officers in charge of Public Administration held on 10 March in Johannesburg, South Africa, which considered issues relating to financing the activities to be carried out in 2006.

**274.** On the other hand, the Commission, the NEPAD Secretariat and the South African Ministry of Public Service and Administration met from 10 to 11 April 2006 to harmonize their work plans in the area of governance and public administration as well as anti-corruption related issues. The harmonized work plan was presented to the meeting of the Bureau of the 5<sup>th</sup> Pan-African Conference which took place in Abuja at the end of April 2006 in Nigeria.

**275.** On 23 June 2006, the Commission celebrated Public Service Day. A programme was designed in this respect, in close collaboration with the Chair of the Pan-African Conference and the NEPAD Secretariat, comprising a series of events at the headquarters of the Union and in Member States, which were duly sensitized in this regard. On that occasion, I addressed a message to Member States.

## **3. HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFRICA**

**276.** Since my last report to the Summit in Khartoum, in January 2006, the African Union Commission has continued to implement the Kigali Declaration on Human Rights. Its actualization has also been enhanced by the African Union's Vision, Mission and 4-year Strategic Plan, which includes building the delivery capacity of member states, independent national human rights commissions, human rights defenders, civil society organizations and the media.

**277.** During the period under review, the African Union Commission carried out the following human rights related activities:

### ***3.1. Workshop on Human Rights for Countries in or emerging from Conflict***

**278.** In collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, it organized a workshop on the promotion of human rights, and the culture of peace and respect for constitutions in countries in, or emerging from, conflict in February 2006 in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Representatives of Member States, national human rights institutions, international and regional organizations, including civil society organizations, attended the workshop. The workshop welcomed the efforts of various local, regional and international organizations, including the African Union, in addressing armed conflicts, which have a negative impact on the development of the continent. It underscored the need for the respect of human rights, good governance and constitutions, to ensure the attainment of security, peace and stability in the continent. It also called upon the African Union to continue its peace efforts and post-conflict reconstruction programmes in the continent, and to ensure that the respect of human rights is at the heart of such initiatives.

### ***3.2. The Resource Centre for Democracy, Governance and Human Rights***

**279.** Through its Resource Centre for Democracy, Governance and Human Rights, the African Union Commission continued to provide first-hand information in the field of governance, democracy and human rights to diverse users, including representatives of Member States and civil society organizations. The Commission continued to popularize the Centre and equip it with human resources, internet facilities and publications, to meet the needs of the increasing number of users. The Commission appreciates the efforts of all its partners that have contributed to this development.

### ***3.3. Commemoration of the Rwanda Genocide***

**280.** On 7 April 2006, the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the authorities of the Republic of Rwanda, commemorated the 12th Anniversary of the Rwanda Genocide at its Headquarters. The event comprised a 100-day time-line of the genocide, a documentary film on the genocide, a discussion involving speakers from the Gacaca Court and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and culminated in the signing of a statement book. The event was attended by representatives of the diplomatic corps, UN agencies, humanitarian organizations, civil society organizations and the religious community. It was also attended by members of the Rwandan community in Ethiopia, and members of the African Union Commission and AU organs.

### ***3.4. Promoting the Work of African Human Rights Defenders***

**281.** In my last report, I indicated that the African Union Commission was considering launching the first edition of the African Union Nelson Mandela Award for Human Rights Defenders in 2006. The Award is intended to give greater protection, visibility and legitimacy to human rights defenders in Africa, so that they can more effectively carry out human rights work and, by so doing, expand the environment in which human rights defenders are able to exercise their right to defend human rights.

**282.** I would like to express our appreciation to all Member States, civil society organizations, national human rights institutions and other partners for their invaluable role in making this Award a reality.

### ***3.5. Supporting the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights***

**283.** The African Union Commission continued to support the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, as a priority. In this regard, the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, organized a Brainstorming Session on the Strengthening of the African Commission and a Consultation among AU organs on human rights promotion and protection, in May 2006 in Banjul, The Gambia.

**284.** The meeting noted that while the African Commission continues to make progress in the promotion and protection of human rights in the continent, it is faced with administrative and financial challenges that need to be urgently addressed so that it can effectively discharge its mandate. The Consultation among AU Organs noted the need for greater cooperation among the said organs especially with the African Commission, with a view to improving their relationships and strengthening the capacity and the role of the ACHPR. The meeting underscored that the African Commission is an organ of the African Union, and emphasized the need to enhance its independence. The meetings were attended by representatives of the African Union Commission, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Permanent Representatives' Council, Pan African Parliament, ECOSOCC, Peace and Security Council, independent experts, civil society organizations and national human rights institutions.

**285.** The African Union Commission facilitated the holding of the 39th statutory session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and also attended the Session. The Commission of the African Union will continue its support, aimed at increasing the resources and building the capacity of the African Commission.

**286.** The African Union Commission has also been working closely with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in the Commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, with a view to promoting the Charter and enhancing the protection and promotion of human rights on the continent.

### ***3.6. Second African Union National Human Rights Institutions Conference***

**287.** The African Union Commission organized the second African Union National Human Rights Institutions Conference in May 2006 in Banjul, The Gambia. The Conference was in furtherance of the African Union's commitment to strengthen national systems as a way of building a culture of human rights in the African continent, especially with a view to enhancing the promotion and protection of human rights at national level.

**288.** The Conference noted the achievements of the national human rights institutions including programmes on economic, social and cultural rights, the right-based approach to development and advocacy of legislative reforms. It welcomed the establishment of national human rights institutions by some Member States and encouraged those that have not yet done so to urgently take similar action; provide them with adequate financial and other resources for their proper functioning, and guarantee their independence in line with the Kigali Declaration on Human Rights. The organization of the Conference on the margins of the 39th Ordinary Session of the African Commission was welcomed, as it enhanced cooperation between the African Commission and the national human rights institutions,

similar to what happens in the NGO Forum that traditionally takes place on the eve of the Session.

#### **4. FUTURE PLANS**

**289.** The AU Commission's human rights-related activities for the next semester, will include a workshop on realizing Women's Rights through Human Rights Education, thematic reports on Press Freedom and the Death Penalty, Human Rights Capacity Building for AU Staff, Celebration of African and International Human Rights Days, and Reinforcement of the Resource Centre for Democracy, Governance and Human Rights

#### **5. HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS DIVISION**

**290.** A report was submitted during the last session of the Executive Council held in Khartoum, The Sudan in January 2006, on the situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa. Since then the African Union Commission has continued to closely follow developments, as Member States face numerous challenges in the search for a durable solution to the problem of forced displacement and, to a certain degree, that of natural disasters. The challenges are further complicated by donor fatigue. I therefore wish to express my gratitude to the host countries that continue to offer hospitality to the millions of refugees and IDPs; but at the same time, I wish to appeal again to the international community to support the efforts of the host countries by extending the much-needed assistance.

**291.** On its own part, the Commission will continue to seek ways to improve the welfare of victims of forced displacement, by identifying new and innovative African solutions. This will be done with our traditional partners, mainly the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) including African NGOs.

**292.** During the period under review, the Commission witnessed important developments in the area of forced displacement. Several refugees and IDPs who had been in exile for several years, particularly in the West, East and Southern regions, opted to return home in safety and dignity. In East Africa, as one of the ways of supporting the return programmes, and given that the UNHCR is facing difficulties in mobilizing sufficient resources for the South Sudan Repatriation Programme, the African Union, contributed US\$ 100,000.00 to the UNHCR's operations in the South of Sudan, an important component in the implementation of the humanitarian aspect of the Peace Agreement. This gesture was made in mid- March 2006, during the joint AU/UNHCR Donor Supplementary Appeal for the Return and Reintegration Programme for 400,000 Sudanese Refugees and 4 million Internally Displaced Persons to South Sudan from Khartoum and the Kassala States of the Sudan. The funds will be specifically used for the provision of post-primary education facilities in Southern Sudan. This contributes to the implementation of Council Decision EX.CL.Dec.240 (VII) adopted in Khartoum, The Sudan in January 2006, to the effect that the Commission should develop a policy to ensure the provision of post-primary education for victims of forced displacement.

**293.** In West Africa, Liberia saw the end of return of over 300,000 internally displaced persons to their areas of origin, in April 2006. These persons had been living in refugee-like

conditions for more than ten years. However, the challenge of their long-term sustainable reintegration remains. In the same region, the Commission continued to monitor closely, developments in the situations in Côte d'Ivoire and Mauritania.

**294.** I am concerned that even though the humanitarian situation has somewhat improved over the past months, there were some negative developments that affected the well being of the people in general and the refugees and IDPs in the continent in particular. In North Africa, over 50,000 Saharawi refugees were, for example, greatly affected by the floods in Tindouf refugee camps in Algeria. Some of the seven IGAD countries also suffered from floods and famine, while a number of countries in Southern Africa faced food insecurity.

**295.** Furthermore, I remain very much concerned at the increased general insecurity and difficult humanitarian situation along the border of Chad and Sudan; and accordingly, I sent field missions to both countries. One of the major problems highlighted by the missions was the security situation that had aggravated the suffering of victims of forced displacement and would, further, have a negative impact on the humanitarian situation in the neighbouring countries. I am particularly distressed by reports that parties to the conflict in Darfur are forcibly recruiting children, in violation of the key protective provisions of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. During the reporting period, the Commission was shocked by allegations of sexual exploitation of victims of forced displacement, particularly women and girls in Darfur by some members of the civilian and military component of AMIS in The Sudan. We immediately responded by setting up an International Committee to inquire into these serious allegations against our peace-keepers. As in the past, I wish to reiterate once again that the African Union has zero tolerance for any form of sexual and gender-based violence against the people we have been mandated to protect. Those implicated and found responsible for such reprehensible conduct will be severely sanctioned.

**296.** Member States are facing new challenges in addressing forced displacement, which requires the concerted efforts of all Member States and other stake holders. In that regard, I wish to recall that Council requested the Commission, in Decision EX.CL/Dec.179 (VI), "to convene a Ministerial Conference on refugees, returnees and displaced persons in 2006, in Burkina Faso in collaboration with the (AU PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees, and Internally Displaced Persons),.....and other relevant partners". Furthermore, in another Decision, EX.CL/ Dec.240 (VIII), Member States were invited to actively contribute to the success of the Ministerial Conference. Consequently, a Task Force was created at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa to prepare for the Ministerial Conference. It comprised some members of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons and Representatives of our partners as well as the Commission. The Task Force was able to accomplish its assignment in time for the Ministerial Conference.

**297.** I am glad to report that due to the intensive preparations made by the authorities in Burkina Faso and the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees Task Force, the Ministerial Conference was well attended. I, wish to take this opportunity to commend Burkina Faso for hosting the Conference.

**298.** The most important outcome of the Conference was the Declaration of the 2006 Ouagadougou Ministerial Conference on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, which deliberated on the legal framework for the protection of and assistance to IDPs; a policy on access to post-primary education for refugees and IDPs;

reaffirmation of the principle of voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity, and measures to ensure its sustainability; strengthening Refugee Protection under the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, especially maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and promoting inter-African resettlement; access to assistance for refugees, returnees and IDPs; and a strategy for resource mobilization for victims of forced displacement in Africa. The Declaration will be presented to this Council and Summit for endorsement, and thereafter the Commission will follow up on its implementation. This should go a long way in the search for durable solutions to the problems of victims of forced displacement.

**299.** Furthermore, the Executive Council in Decision EX/CL/Dec 127 (V) of July 2004 requested the Commission “to collaborate with relevant cooperating partners and other stake-holders to ensure that internally displaced persons are provided with an appropriate legal framework to ensure their adequate protection and assistance”. In another Executive Council Decision EX/CL/Dec. 240 (VII) of January 2006, the Commission was further requested “to formulate a policy that will facilitate access of refugees and displaced persons to education, including at the post-primary level”. To this effect, the Commission held two experts meetings during the months of April and May 2006: the AU Independent Experts Meeting towards developing a Draft Policy on Access to Post-Primary Education for Victims of Forced Displacement in Africa and the Experts Meeting on the Legal Framework for Internally Displaced Persons. The outcomes of the meetings were presented to the Ministerial Conference in Burkina Faso in June 2006 and will be submitted to the present Council Session for further follow-up.

**300.** As part of the humanitarian affairs programme of the Commission, the latter participated in various meetings that were organized by AU partners. These included the IGAD Regional Conference on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons that was convened in February in Nairobi, Kenya. The main objective of the Conference was to come up with a regional policy/strategy and respond to challenges in protection of and assistance to populations affected by displacement. It was an important Conference given that the region has a staggering figure of 11 million victims of forced displacement. The Commission will play its role in contributing effectively towards the implementation of the recommendations and the Declaration that emanated from the Conference.

**301.** On the other hand, I am disheartened that since the adoption of Council Decision 211 on Free Movement in Africa in 2005, the Commission has been unable to convene the Committee of Experts, due to a lack of response from Member States. The Commission will continue to exert efforts to ensure that this decision is fully implemented and that the ideals of the African Union are realized. The Commission is once again seeking the guidance of Member States on how to proceed with the implementation of this important decision.

**302.** In addition to the meetings, in June 2006, the Commission fielded some missions to Kenya, Chad and The Sudan, and made an appraisal of the current humanitarian situations in those countries.

**303.** Finally, there is no doubt that significant progress has been made in the area of forced displacement. However, the challenges are many and need the concerted efforts of Member States and the support of the international community. I would like to remind Council that on 20 June every year, World Refugee Day is celebrated. This year, the theme

was “Hope” Let us, therefore, give hope to the millions of victims of forced displacement in our Continent so that they can return home in safety and dignity.

### **AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION**

**304.** The African Union recognizes the importance of Afro-Arab Cooperation for the benefit of the two peoples who are highly interdependent and fundamentally linked one another, due to current geographical and historical imperatives and the challenges of globalization, conflicts and terrorism.

**305.** As agreed in Cairo, Egypt, where the first Afro-Arab Summit was held in March 1977, the Afro-Arab Summit was to take place every three years while the Council of Ministers was to convene every eighteen months. However, neither the Summit nor the meeting of the Council of Ministers has taken place since 1977.

**306.** I wish to recall that, following the agreement reached at the high level discussions I had with the Secretary General of the LAS, which took place on the margins of the 17th Arab Summit in Algiers, Algeria, in March 2005, the African Union and the League of Arab States held an AU/LAS inter-secretariat consultative meeting from 10 to 12 May 2005, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The objective of the meeting was to review the findings and conclusions of the various meetings aimed at revitalization of Afro-Arab Cooperation and come up with concrete recommendations for the consideration of the policy organs of the two organizations. The AU/LAS consultative meeting underscored the need to review the Cairo agreements and adopt clear directions to Afro-Arab Cooperation, while continuing the implementation of on-going programmes and projects. To this end, the meeting recommended the early convening of the 2nd Afro-Arab Summit. The meeting also proposed the creation of a standing Afro-Arab Development Forum, similar to TICAD and the China-Africa Forum, and an institutional mechanism, under the auspices of Afro-Arab Cultural Institute for Afro-Arab Strategic Studies.

**307.** The African Union Commission and the League of Arab States have now resumed consultations for the preparation of the Second Afro-Arab Summit, which will possibly be held in 2007, on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Cairo Summit. As part of this process, the Commission and the League of Arab States will embark on a detailed evaluation of Afro-Arab Cooperation to identify major achievements and failures, and analyze the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of and threats to Afro-Arab Cooperation. The outcome of the evaluation will assist the African Union and the League of Arab States to draw lessons from past experiences and formulate a new vision and mission as well as formulate coherent Plan of Action with sound implementation, financing, coordination and monitoring mechanisms. The documents shall be endorsed at various levels before they are presented for the consideration of the 2nd Summit.

**308.** Pending the Second Summit, the following regular and interim programmes are being implemented:

- i) Organization of the 7th edition of the Afro-Arab Trade Fair (AATF)
- ii) Regular programmes of the Afro-Arab Cultural Institute (AACI)
- iii) Creation of an institutional mechanism for Afro-Arab Strategic Studies

**309.** Council is invited to give guidance on this issue..



**HUMAN RESOURCES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**1. YOUTH PROGRAMME**

**Pan African Youth Charter**

**310.** With support from UNFPA, the Commission developed a draft pan-African Youth Charter, in response to an AU report on the status of youth in Africa. The Charter is aimed at providing African youth with a legal and political framework within which Member States and the youth themselves can harness their potential for Africa's development, taking into account the needs of the youth.

**311.** The Charter has been circulated to all Member States for their comments and has been discussed in two meetings of African youth and experts held in Addis Ababa in January and May 2006 respectively. Emanating from the youth meeting of May 2006, a report and a draft Declaration of Ministers were presented to the first AU Conference of Ministers in charge of Youth, from 26 to 28 May 2006.

**312.** This first AU Conference of Ministers in charge of Youth considered and adopted the Charter, and endorsed a Declaration committing themselves to its implementation and to providing all necessary support to Youth organizations in their countries. The Ministerial report, the Charter, the Declaration of the Ministers and the Draft Decision will be submitted to the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2006 for approval.

**Establishment of a Youth Federation**

**313.** During the Youth Forum and Experts' meeting held in January 2006, it emerged that there were deficiencies in the services provided to youth organisations by the existing structures for engaging with Youth within the African Union. From the discussions, it emerged that just as the AU was undergoing institutional transformation (from the OAU) in order to meet the new African Vision, it was also necessary to institute changes to enable the Pan-African Youth Union meet the fresh needs of African youth.

**314.** The meeting requested the AU Commission to urgently carry out an urgent evaluation of the Pan African Youth Union (PYU). This was considered necessary in order to develop a strategy for re-organising the PYU to fit into the envisaged role of a Pan-African Youth Federation.

**315.** A Pan-African Youth Federation is expected to improve the quality of partnership between the African youth and the AU Commission, build a communication strategy for African youth organizations at all levels, and ensure popularisation and effective implementation of the Youth Charter at the national and regional levels.

**316.** It was recalled that the Pan-African Youth Union (PYU) has been in existence for many years as a Pan-African organisation created to coordinate African youth organizations, and facilitate communication between the regional and national sub-structures. Accordingly, an evaluation was necessary to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the PYU, in view of the new and emerging needs of the African youth.

**317.** In carrying out its evaluation of the PYU, the AU Commission found that the structure and objectives of the PYU were sound, and consistent with the concept document of the proposed Federation. It was also however established that PYU lacks an appropriate communication strategy, and is in dire need of financial resources. A recommendation was therefore made to revitalize the PYU, and a strategy was developed for this purpose.

**318.** The Pan African Youth Forum and the Ministerial Conference in May 2006 examined and adopted the proposed strategy to revitalize the PYU by providing it with the appropriate means to achieve its objectives, especially regarding implementation of the Charter.

### **Capacity Building and Vocational and Technical Education**

**319.** The AU Commission commenced a survey of the status of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Member States, through their Embassies in Addis Ababa. The responses from the Member States, which are slowly coming in, will be compiled and analyzed to shed light on the needs and capacities of different countries.

**320.** Based on the outcome of that survey, a continental strategy will be developed, with the support of partners such as UNESCO and GTZ. The strategy will be submitted to a technical committee for consideration during the second half of 2006.

### **Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD)**

**321.** Young people who are often vulnerable due to their unskilled, unemployed or uneducated status, have long been used as instruments for creating and managing conflict, as rioters or soldiers. The Commission has developed proposals to provide youth in post-conflict and other difficult situations with alternative livelihoods, for their own self-fulfilment, and to contribute to the socio-economic systems of their countries. Proposals include formal education, alternative education as well as technical training and skills development.

**322.** During the second half of 2006, the Commission will begin the process of developing curricula and training materials, and the training of service providers, with support from GTZ. The aim will be to produce rehabilitated youth with entrepreneurial and practical skills for post-conflict reconstruction.

### **Management of AU Specialized Institutions**

#### **International Centre for Girls and Women's Education in Africa (CIEFFA)**

**323.** The Sixth Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union adopted the 2006 budget, which included financial support to the tune of US\$ 500,000.00 to CIEFFA.

**324.** As requested, the coordinator of CIEFFA provided the AU Commission with a programme budget on the detailed activities to be carried out. The documents provided are being examined to determine whether they are compatible with the AU Strategic Plan, before they are distributed. Currently, however, there seems to be a problem with the availability of funds for programme activities within the HRST Department.

**The Pan African Youth Union (PYU)**

**325.** As mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, a strategy for the revitalization of the Pan African Youth Union (PYU) has been discussed and adopted by the Youth Forum and the Ministerial Conference. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will soon be developed between the PYU and the Commission to determine the role of each party in the capacity-building process to enable the PYU to carry out its mandate.

**2. EDUCATION**

**Introduction**

**326.** Africa entered the Millennium with an education deficit at every level, formal and informal. In spite of the dedication of a Decade of Education in Africa (1997-2006), much remains to be done to achieve the desired levels of access to education, improve quality and relevance, and ensure equity in the education system.

**327.** In recognition of the status of education in Africa, the Sixth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, adopted a decision to launch a Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006 – 2015) and the Framework for Action endorsed by the Conference of Ministers of Education.

**328.** The following are the areas of focus adopted for the Second Decade of Education for Africa.

- Educational Management Information Systems
- Quality of Education
- Girls' and women's education, as well as ensuring retention of boys
- Science and technology
- Higher education
- The education of vulnerable children and young people, and education in difficult situations.

**329.** The Second Decade of Education for Africa will provide an umbrella for all education programme activities of the Commission for some time to come and ensure continued momentum and follow-up on the implementation of the Decade. It will also assist in the harmonization of the education activities of the African Union, and provide a basis for a more harmonized engagement with Partners.

**Second Decade of Education for Africa**

**330.** The Conference of Ministers of Education, in their extra-ordinary meeting in January 2006, established AU Working Groups that met in Johannesburg, South Africa from 5 to 8 June 2006 to develop a Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa, under the oversight of the Bureau of the Conference. The AU Commission wishes to acknowledge the financial and technical support of the Republic of South Africa, the World Bank and UNESCO.

**331.** The late development of a Plan of Action was the main disadvantage of the first Decade of Education in Africa. This time round, it is intended that the Second Decade of Education for Africa will be launched at the same time as its Plan of Action. The Republic of Mozambique has confirmed its offer to host an Extra-ordinary Conference of Ministers of Education in Maputo from 5 to 8 September for this purpose.

**332.** It is anticipated that the Regional Economic Communities will play a role in implementing the Second Decade of Education. The AU Commission will therefore hold a meeting with the RECs on 30 of June in Banjul, to discuss the issues of collaboration and capacity-building for this purpose.

**333.** The AU Commission is also in the process of developing a publicity strategy for the Second Decade of Education, in collaboration with the Communications Unit.

### **Higher Education**

**334.** The challenges facing Africa, as noted in the 2004-2007 Strategic Framework of the African Union, cannot be addressed without a strong academic and research culture, and promoting technological innovation, invention and knowledge production. Higher education is at the core of this imperative, as it is the engine for producing human resources of the highest quality, making available research products for development in every sector, and for pushing the frontiers of knowledge.

**335.** However, Higher Education has not featured prominently on the African development agenda for many reasons. Emphasis by the international partners and donors on basic education, and the dubious conclusion that higher education does not contribute to development, have been at the core of declining public support for it in Africa.

**336.** Africa's recognition of the importance of higher education will be taken care of in the Second Decade of Education for Africa, as one of the six areas of focus. The Commission will be seeking to formalise working relationships with the Association of African Universities to assist in managing the implementation of the said Plan of Action.

**337.** During the period under review, the Commission's document "Revitalising Higher Education in Africa: A Synthesis Report" was considered by a second meeting of experts. The meeting was held in Accra in February 2006, with hosting support by the Association of African Universities (AAU) and financial sponsorship by the UK Department for International Development (DIFID).

**338.** The plan for revitalization of higher education will address a wide range of issues, including policy reform, leadership and management, infrastructure, quality and relevance, and cross-sectoral linkages.

**339.** To support the implementation of the Plan of Action, a Permanent African Union Expert Group on Higher Education shall be established to advise and support the AU Commission's Higher Education programmes.

## **Management of Specialized Institutions**

**340.** To assist in the implementation of its programme activities in Education, the AU Commission is in the process of renewing formal working relations with the Association of African Universities (AAU), and Pan-African Institute for Education (IPED).

### **Association of African Universities (AAU)**

**341.** The AAU has had Observer Status with the OAU for forty years. However, working relations eased off during the transition period from OAU to AU. The AAU has therefore re-submitted its statutory documents and Articles so that the Commission can re-assess its status.

**342.** The membership of the AAU is drawn from the universities and other tertiary education institutions from all over Africa and in all AU's regions. It is therefore well placed to be an implementing partner in the area of higher education.

**343.** The Commission will therefore seek to expedite arrangements to establish new working relations with the AAU, especially in light of the renewed interest of the African Union in higher education as critical to the attainment of its vision of integration, prosperity, and peerage in the global knowledge economy.

### **Pan-African Institute for Education**

**344.** The IPED has been a specialized institution of the OAU since 1988, when it was known as BASE. IPED has re-submitted its audited reports and business plans to the AU Commission to facilitate the process of re-establishing working relations with the latter.

**345.** The Department has discussed with IPED, the possibility of establishing it as a pan-African Education observatory. This will be an important institution for the implementation of the Second Decade of Education for Africa.

**346.** It will be necessary to re-structure and build the capacity of IPED, so that it can take up the responsibility of following up on the implementation of the Second Decade, especially in the area of educational management information systems.

## **3. THE AU BIOSAFETY PROJECT**

**347.** The AU Biosafety Project entitled "Support of the AU in the Matters of Biosafety" is an outcome of the cooperation between the AU and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. The three-year project is to provide the AU Commission with the necessary capacity and effective instruments to support its Member States in using the AU African Model Law on Safety in Biotechnology and implementing the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. A planning workshop was held in December 2005 to update the project's Plan of Action.

**348.** In this project, the Commission will develop an AU Strategy on Biosafety, establish continuous information exchange between the AU and Member States, and spearhead strategic options to strengthen existing capacities in Member States and RECs.

**349.** During the period under review, the Commission has accomplished the following under the Biosafety Project:

- Establishment of the AU Biosafety Unit within the HRST Department;
- Organisation of the Preparatory Meeting of African Delegates from 11 to 12 March 2006 in Curitiba, Brazil, in order to prepare African delegates for the Third Meeting of Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety;
- Identification of prominent experts to constitute the AU Technical Advisory Committee on Biosafety: the Committee will be officially launched during the second semester of 2006;
- Preparations towards the development of an African Strategy on Biosafety; and on reviewing the African Model Law on Safety in Biotechnology.

**350.** The challenge currently facing the project is that, despite the fact that the Project funds have been available for over one year, the Commission is yet to have equipped offices for the AU Biosafety Unit.

**351.** The Commission wishes to express its appreciation for the financial and technical support from GTZ.

#### **4. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

**352.** During the period under review, the Commission organised the first AU Conference of African Ministers responsible for Communication and Information Technologies in Cairo, Egypt in April 2006. The Commission expresses its appreciation for the support of the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt for this successful meeting.

**353.** The following Member States were elected to the Bureau:

- |                                     |   |              |
|-------------------------------------|---|--------------|
| - Chairperson:                      | → | Egypt        |
| - 1 <sup>st</sup> Vice-Chairperson: | → | The Gambia   |
| - 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chairperson: | → | Kenya        |
| - 3 <sup>rd</sup> Vice-Chairperson: | → | South Africa |
| - Rapporteur:                       | → | Burundi      |

**354.** The meeting endorsed the establishment of a statutory Conference of African Ministers responsible for Communication and Information Technologies. The Commission will communicate the date and venue of the next meeting of the Communication and Information Technology Ministerial Conference, including the Bureau and Steering Committee meetings, in due course.

**355.** Noting the rapid dynamism in ICT, the Conference suggested that a Ministerial Conference be held once every year, rather than once in two years as is the AU practice. The meeting agreed that to ensure continuity, when electing new members of the Ministerial Conference structure, one member from the outgoing Ministerial Bureau and one from the Steering Committee shall be included in the incoming Bureau as ex-officio members.

**356.** The Arab Republic of Egypt proposed the establishment of an e-forum for African Ministers responsible for Communication and Information Technologies. The Conference

called for the establishment of focal points to deal with all technological issues within government structures of Member States.

## **SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

### **HEALTH, NUTRITION, MIGRATION AND POPULATION**

#### **Health**

**357.** In the area of health, the AU Commission is preparing background documents for the Special Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Health dedicated to reproductive health which will take place in Maputo, Mozambique, in September 2006. The Commission is also finalizing a Framework Programme for Strengthening Health Systems in Conflict Situations and the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa envisaged in Assembly Decision 55 of January 2005.

**358.** The highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) is now pandemic in Asia, having established an ecological niche in poultry. The H5N1 virus which causes the deadly bird flu has infected poultry in Asia, Europe and, most recently, Africa. Over 206 people globally have contracted HPAI and half of them have died. The disease poses a bigger challenge for Africa than any other part of the world, as the region is not adequately prepared.

**359.** Eight countries in the African Union have reported cases of bird flu. These are Nigeria, Egypt, Niger, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Sudan and Djibouti. Out of these, Egypt and Djibouti have reported human cases, with Egypt also reporting some fatalities.

**360.** In preparation for the avian flu threat, the African Union Commission, in collaboration with WHO, convened a meeting on HPAI Preparedness and Response in January 2006 in Brazzaville, Congo, which brought together experts from both the animal and human health sectors. While emphasis is still on containing the pandemic in the animal sector, the human sector preparedness and response plan includes stockpiling of Tamiflu and strengthening surveillance systems. Member States have been asked to put in place, plans to ensure adequate preparedness. On its part, the African Union Commission is negotiating with the European Union for necessary support in the event of a human pandemic. During the Conference of African Ministers of Health in Gaborone, Botswana, this issue was discussed and it was recommended that WHO should assist countries to stockpile adequate drugs for treating avian flu and related respiratory infections.

**361.** The African Union Commission would like to thank the World Health Organization for rushing supplies of Tamiflu to the affected countries to mitigate the situation.

**362.** To ensure adequate preparedness, the Commission has urged Member States to urgently request Medical Control Councils and National Regulatory Authorities to register Tamiflu which is known to be the best medicine available to treat the virus. Another drug, Relenza, has also proved to be effective. The efficacy of these two drugs, however, depends on their administration within 48 hours, after onset of symptoms suggesting the need for prompt diagnosis and appropriate treatment. This is a matter that the health systems in Africa will have to address.

**363.** To facilitate emergency preparedness and response, I would like to emphasize that the people of Africa should remain vigilant, and report any suspected cases of the disease to health officials. It is further recommended that border controls and travel restrictions to affected areas should be introduced and importation of poultry products from affected areas avoided as long as the threat remains.

**364.** For poultry farmers, it is recommended that they stick to in-door operations to minimize the risk of transmission from wild birds. Governments should provide advice and technical support to these farmers to minimize economic losses related to the pandemic.

### **Reproductive Health**

**365.** In the area of reproductive health, the Commission is pleased to report that the Continental Policy Framework for the Promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Africa, that was adopted by the Conference of African Ministers of Health in Botswana in October 2005, has been duly endorsed by the African Union Assembly and that preparations for a Special Session of Ministers of Health dedicated to reproductive health are under way. In the field of nutrition, the Commission would like to report that the Revised African Regional Nutritional Strategy, adopted by Health Ministers during the Conference of African Ministers of Health in Botswana in October 2005, has also been duly endorsed by the African Union Assembly. The Commission is now in the process of establishing a Nutrition Task Force whose Terms of Reference are being finalized. The document is being processed for printing and will be circulated to Member States, pending the Experts' Meeting scheduled for 17-22 December 2006.

### **Migration**

**366.** With respect to migration and development, the Commission, in pursuit of Executive Council Decision EX.CL/Dec.264 on Migration and Development (VIII), which was adopted during the January 2006 Khartoum Summit, convened an Experts' Meeting on Migration and Development in Algiers, Algeria, at the kind invitation of the Government of Algeria from 3 to 5 April, 2006. Over 42 countries attended the Meeting and the discussions were lively and constructive. A number of Regional, International and Non-Governmental Organizations and Institutions were also represented. These included: ILO, IOM, ALO, UN/AIDS, UNDP, UNICEF, ICMPO, ARLAC, OATUU, the Vatican, ICRC, Pan-African Youth Organization, and FAO. In addition the following organizations working in the field of migration in the Diaspora attended the meeting: African Federation of Women Entrepreneurs (AFWE), the Foundation for Democracy in Africa, and African Foundation for Development (AFFORD).

**367.** At the end of the meeting, the delegates adopted a Draft African Common Position on Migration and Development which covers a number of areas including Migration and Development, Human Resources and Brain Drain, Remittances, Trade, Migration and Peace, Security and Stability, Migration and Human Rights, Gender, Regional Initiatives and Access to Social Services, to mention but a few.

**368.** The Draft African Common Position on Migration and Development also contains a set of recommendations at the national, continental and at international levels, aimed at addressing migration and development issues. The delegates also adopted the Report of the Experts' Meeting, which among other things, mandated the African Troika to address



the issue of migration and development with the European Troika, during their meeting in Vienna, Austria on 8 May , 2006.

## **Population**

**369.** In the field of population, the African Union Commission is preparing the 2006 State of the African Population Report which will be launched on 11 July, 2006, as part of the activities marking the World Population Day. The Draft report has already been reviewed by the African Population Commission Bureau during the Bureau Meeting in Nairobi in April 2006, and is now in the final stages of preparation.

## **THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV/AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA**

**370.** During the period under review, HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB) and Malaria, the three commonest causes of morbidity and mortality in Africa, were kept high on the AU agenda. Close collaboration with Development Partners was maintained. The main challenge remains the acute shortage of human resources. The activities undertaken were in the framework, and culminated in the 5-year review of the implementation of, the 2000/2001 Abuja Declarations and Plans of Action on Malaria, HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases. Fighting these diseases is synonymous with fighting poverty and promoting socio-economic development and the following activities have been undertaken:

- i) Dissemination of the adopted AIDS Watch Africa (AWA) Strategic Framework through the AWA Chairperson to AWA Heads of State and Government; for consideration and implementation. In this regard, a Meeting of AWA Presidential Advisors or Chairpersons of AWA National AIDS Councils (NACs) is to be organized. At the same time, any available opportunity for advocacy by AWA Leaders at various fora should be taken advantage of, including G8 Summits and other fora like the UN General Assembly.
- ii) In February 2006, the AU Commission participated in the Workshop on HIV/AIDS and the Militaries, held in Windhoek, Namibia, and organized by the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) and the Namibia Defence Minister as chair of SADC Militaries. Targeting the Militaries for special attention in the fight against HIV/AIDS is particularly important as the Militaries are at high risk of contracting HIV. Access to treatment, care and support is a challenge as the patient may be living away from home and from the family. Unless awareness is raised, the Militaries can disseminate HIV in their permanent or temporary communities. This issue also needs to be addressed in Peace Keeping Missions. It is in view of this that the Militaries or Peace Keepers are listed in the AU Commission HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan and AWA Strategic Framework as a vulnerable/target group.
- iii) Following the establishment of the Global Steering Committee on Scaling Up Towards “Universal Access to Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support” by the 2005 World Summit, the AU Commission, in collaboration with UNAIDS and WHO, coordinated country consultations that culminated in the Continental Consultative Meeting on the subject in Brazzaville, Congo on 6-8 March 2006. The Government delegations, working closely with Civil Society Organizations

and Development partners, adopted the Brazzaville Commitment on “Scaling up Towards Universal Access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support in Africa by 2010”. This was submitted to the Global Steering Committee (GTT) together with contributions from other continents. The Report of the GTT was submitted to the UN General Assembly Special Session on AIDS, June 2006.

- iv) It is now clear that malaria has gender concerns that have to be addressed for effective control. For example, pregnant women are at risk of Malaria, together with under-5 children. Women also tend to be carers whereas economic power lies mainly with males. It was in appreciation of these and other related facts that the AU participated in the Workshop on Malaria and Gender in Arusha, Tanzania, (13-15 March 2006), organized by the Swedish NGO (Kvinnoforum), Multilateral Initiative on Malaria (MIM), and the Roll Back Malaria Partnership. This was aimed at empowering national actors to intensify advocacy and support communities. Related to malaria control, the MIM is sponsoring a Researcher to enhance the limited AU human capacity for one year.
- v) On 11 April 2006, the AU, in collaboration with WHO, UNAIDS, ECA, UNICEF and other UN Agencies, organized a programme at the AU Conference Centre to Launch “2006 as the Year for HIV/AIDS Prevention”, as was declared by the Resolution of the WHO Regional Director for Africa. In attendance were, H.E. the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, the AU Commission Chairperson, Executives of WHO and UNAIDS and the Diplomatic Corps, among other people. This is a campaign aimed at focusing efforts on HIV/AIDS Prevention as the only sure way to conquer the pandemic, there being no proven cure or effective vaccine to date. Emphasis will be laid on young people and other groups at high risk of new infections. Member States are called upon to carry on the campaign and accelerate efforts towards HIV/AIDS prevention among all communities.
- vi) The AU Commission participated in the Ethiopian Programme for Commemoration of Africa Malaria Control Day (25 April 2006) with the theme: “Get Your ACT Together” and slogan: “Universal Access to Effective Malaria Treatment is a Human Right”. The theme had the double meaning of urging for collective action as well as for promotion of access to the effective treatment with Artemisinin-based Combination Therapy (ACT). It should be reiterated that Malaria Control is the role of every individual community. Furthermore, the AU Commission is supporting efforts by the youth to mobilize funds and procure mosquito nets for pregnant women, particularly those with HIV/AIDS.
- vii) All the above-mentioned activities culminated in the Special Summit on HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria, which was held in Abuja, Nigeria, 2-4 May 2006 on the theme: “Universal Access to HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Services by 2010”. A Report on the outcome of the Special Summit is being presented as a separate Agenda Item to the AU Assembly.

## **LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT AND MIGRATION.**

**371.** The AU Commission is planning to conduct activities as a follow-up to the Ouagadougou Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, with concrete proposals to be implemented during 2006, jointly supported by the Government of Sweden and Norway and in close co-operation with ILO, UNECA, RECs and Member States

**372.** 5 Regional workshops on integrated employment policies will be organized in the five AU regions. The objectives of the workshops will be to build capacity for the AU Commission, in advocating for the creation of a viable, decentralized and integrated employment promotion system in Africa; assist Member States in developing, promoting policies, strategies and action plans for integrated employment systems development; harmonize existing policies, strategies and programmes of Member States with a view to promoting integrated employment promotion systems and capacities; monitor and evaluate integrated employment policies and programmes, as well as compile and disseminate best practices at national, regional and continental levels. The project on Integrated Employment Promotion Policies and Programmes in Africa is fully funded by the Governments of Sweden and Norway.

**373.** Pursuant to implementation of the Extraordinary Summit Decision on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, the First Biennale Report was submitted to the 4th Ordinary Session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission, which was held in Cairo, Egypt, from 22-26 April 2006.

**374.** The Fourth Ordinary Session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission met in Cairo from 22 to 26 April 2006. Different issues were considered by the meeting of Experts and adopted by the Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs. These include the Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the implementation of the outcome of the Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa; the Draft Social Policy Framework for Africa; the Progress Report on the Establishment of the Advisory Council on Ageing; and the Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the Activities of the African Group in Geneva.

## **SOCIAL WELFARE**

### **CHILD SURVIVAL, PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT**

**375.** "Putting Children First" remains high on the Agenda of the African Union Commission. The Department of Social Affairs has continued its activities in popularising the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and addressing the challenges facing African children on the continent. It is encouraging to note that to date, 38 Member States have ratified the African Charter. However, more lobbying is needed to get all AU Member States to accede to the Charter. I am, therefore, appealing once again, to Member States which have not yet done so, to urgently ratify the African Charter.

**376.** Pursuant to Assembly Decision AU/Dec.75(V), adopted in July 2005, on "Accelerating Action for Child Survival and Development in Africa to Meet the MDGs" particularly MDG 4 on reducing child mortality and morbidity, the AU Commission is working

closely with UNICEF and WHO to develop a roadmap on achieving this goal. On the question of orphans and vulnerable children, collaboration has continued between UNICEF and the AU Commission and the AU has participated actively in regional meetings convened by UNICEF on the issue. The AU Strategic Plan and Plan of Action on HIV/AIDS also provides strategies to address the issue of children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, especially orphans and vulnerable children. The AU Commission also participated in the Conference on Violence against Children organized by the African Child Policy Forum in May 2006.

### **AU AWARD FOR CHILDREN'S CHAMPIONS IN AFRICA**

**377.** With a view to enhancing the rights and welfare of the African child, the AU Commission has decided to offer the first AU Award for Children's Champions in Africa. The Award is a way of giving recognition to initiatives taken by individuals or organisations in promoting the rights of the child and their commitment in raising the living standard of children in their communities. The award will also serve as an instrument to encourage other prospective individuals or organizations to take similar exemplary initiatives in improving the well-being and social conditions of African children. The Winner will receive the Award during the 7th Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2006.

### **AFRICAN COMMON POSITION ON CHILDREN – AFRICA FIT FOR CHILDREN**

**378.** It will be recalled that the African Common Position on Children, which constitutes a Declaration and Plan of Action, was Africa's contribution to the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) held in 2002. The Plan of Action provides a set of guidelines for attaining an "Africa Fit for Children" and a framework for a coordinated, comprehensive and concerted approach for Governments and other stakeholders to identify priority actions to be undertaken for the well-being of children in Africa. As mandated in the Plan of Action, the Commission is preparing for the mid-term review meeting to be held later in 2006, to assess the level of implementation of the Common Position and chart the way forward. Member States are called upon to submit reports to the AU Commission on achievements made in the implementation of the Plan of Action. The mid-term review meeting will also provide a forum to prepare Africa's position to the UN Special Session on Children to be held in 2007.

### **DAY OF THE AFRICAN CHILD**

**379.** To mark the Day of the African Child on 16 June this year on the theme: "Right to Protection: Stop Violence against Children", the AU Commission issued a Press Release on the theme. A statement by the Chairperson of the Commission, focusing on Female Genital Mutilation as one form of violence against the girl child, was also forwarded to Member States to be read on that day.

### **AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD**

**380.** It will be recalled that the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) was established in 2001 to monitor the implementation of the provisions enshrined in the African Charter. The eleventh Member of the ACERWC who was elected by the Khartoum Summit in January 2006, will be sworn in at the next meeting

of the ACERWC later this year. In its effort to pursue its mandate, the Committee has adopted modalities for handling states parties reports, and developed a Plan of Action for 2005-2009. It should be highlighted that only three countries, namely: Egypt, Mauritius and Rwanda, have so far submitted their reports to the Committee. An appeal is therefore being made to Member States whose reports are due, to forward them to the Committee. A detailed report on the activities of the Committee will be presented to the Executive Council.

### **PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF THE AGED AND AGEING**

**381.** As reported during the last Executive Council, the Commission has been focusing on the implementation of the AU Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing, which was adopted by the Durban Summit in 2002, in tackling the challenges facing the ageing population. As provided for in the Plan of Action, a proposal on the establishment of an Advisory Council to monitor the implementation of the Plan of Action was submitted to the 4th Session of the AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission. It was recommended that the financial implications be worked out and a clear time-frame set for the establishment of the Advisory Council. Member States were also called upon to establish National Advisory Councils to address the plight of the elderly people at national level.

**382.** It should be reported that, in March 2006, the AU Commission, in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Zambia and HelpAge International, organised an Inter-Governmental Regional Conference on Social Protection in Africa. The outcome was the adoption of a Call for Action which, among other things, recommended the institutionalization of a biennial conference on social protection under the auspices of the African Union.

### **AFRICAN DECADE OF DISABLED PERSONS (1999-2009)**

**383.** It will be recalled that the African Rehabilitation Institute (ARI) was mandated to oversee the implementation of the African Decade of Disabled Persons. However, the limited human and financial capacity of ARI has adversely impeded the implementation process of the Decade's objectives and Plan of Action. With a view to enhancing the institutional and operational capacities of the ARI, revitalizing it and enabling it achieve its mandate, the Government of the Republic of Congo organized a Strategic Orientation Workshop in February this year. The outcome was the adoption of recommendations on various issues raised, which were presented to the 17th ARI Governing Board meeting held in Niger in March 2006. It is pertinent to highlight that if the objectives of the decade are to be achieved, it is imperative for ARI to receive all technical and financial support. Indeed, there is a need to review ARI's mandate and enhance its capacity to make it more effective in addressing the challenges facing people with disabilities.

### **AFRICAN CENTRE FOR APPLIED RESEARCH AND TRAINING IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (ACARTSOD)**

**384.** It will be recalled that the African Centre for Applied Research and Training in Social Development (ACARTSOD) was established under the aegis of the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the then Organization of African Unity to, among other things, coordinate applied research and training activities in the field of social development at the national, sub-regional and regional levels in Africa. As Co-Chair of the Governing Board, the AU Commission attended the 17th Governing Board Meeting held in Libya in January 2006.

In conformity with the usual practice, a report on ACARTSOD's activities was presented to the 4th Session of the AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission. Among other things, the Commission called on Member States to capitalize on existing institutions such as ACARTSOD in conducting research on social development in the Continent. The Commission also supported the Gaddafi Initiative to establish youth training programmes to improve the lives of children, women and youth in Libya and other African countries. It was recommended that ACARTSOD be the link between the Libyan authorities and the AU Commission in implementing the objectives of the Initiative.

## **CULTURE**

**385.** The AU Commission has put considerable emphasis on the role of culture as a dynamic force for continental integration, African renaissance and sustainable socio-economic development in Africa. Over the past few months, the Social Welfare has been undertaking a number of activities along this line some of which include finalization of the Charter for the Cultural Renaissance of Africa and the Statutes of the Academy African Languages (ACALAN), both of which were adopted by the January 2006 Summit in Khartoum.

**386.** In the process of implementing the Khartoum Decisions in the cultural sector, the AU Commission organized, on 20-21 June 2006, a Ministerial meeting to inaugurate the Interim Governing Board of ACALAN and to officially launch 2006 as the Year of African Languages. ACALAN has now become one of the specialized organs of the AU to conduct research in African languages, provide policy directives, and advise on matters related to language and development in Africa.

**387.** Moreover, preparations are underway to convene the 1st Pan-African Cultural Congress in November 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya, as was decided during the Khartoum Summit. This landmark event is expected to bring together intellectuals, practitioners, policy makers, producers, activists, and various stakeholders in the different branches of culture. Though this is essentially a meeting of independent experts and producers of culture, Member States are encouraged to participate and help the AU Commission in identifying distinguished men and women of culture in their respective countries.

**388.** It is worth mentioning that the AU Commission signed, in January 2006, a Memorandum of Understanding with UNESCO, to intensify cooperation in the field of culture as well as in other sectors within the mandates of both the AU and UNESCO. This re-engineered partnership between the two institutions will undoubtedly contribute to the successful implementation of cultural programmes in Africa.

**389.** The Commission took part in a number of meetings and cultural events during the reporting period, with a view to strengthening partnership and coordinating and harmonizing cultural policies and programmes in Africa.

## **AFRICAN CENTRE FOR INFECTIOUS AND ENDEMIC DISEASES AND HIV/AIDS (EGYPT)**

**390.** During the Fifth Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) Assembly which took place in Sirte, Libya in July 2005, H.E. President Hosni Mubarak of the Arab Republic of Egypt submitted a proposal for the establishment of the African Centre for Infectious and

Endemic Diseases and HIV/AIDS as a Centre of Excellence that will link Ministries of Health in Africa in order to render support to the preventive and therapeutic services, control of communicable and endemic diseases and contribute to the upgrading of skills of health workers in Africa. It will also render the necessary support, research, monitoring and treatment to all sectors and provide effective health services in Africa. The Assembly further requested the Chairperson of the AU Commission to study the matter and report to the next Ordinary Session of the Executive Council in January 2006.

**391.** Egypt had organized, in Cairo on 28 – 29 June 2005, a meeting attended by 27 African Ministers of Health and by the WHO Director General. The AU Office in Cairo represented the AUC. Following were the two major outcomes of the meeting:

- An outline of the possible objectives of the Centre, and
- The Establishment of a Technical Committee to draft the basic Constitutive Documents for the establishment of the Centre.

**392.** The Technical Committee met in September 2005 but was only attended by two countries, namely Egypt as chair and Algeria representing North Africa. The Report of the Technical Committee meeting was presented to the Conference of African Ministers of Health in Botswana in October 2005.

**393.** The Conference considered the documents submitted by the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt in support of its proposal. The AU Commission also presented an explanation to the Conference on the process followed and on the role of the Commission.

**394.** After consideration of the matter, the Conference of African Ministers of Health felt that it did not have sufficient information upon which to make a recommendation as was requested by the Sirte Assembly. It therefore requested the AU Commission to further study the matter as mandated by the July 2005 Summit decision. In this respect, AUC was requested to obtain more details from the Arab Republic of Egypt and advise Member States accordingly.

**395.** The Commission has studied the proposal by Egypt and the recommendations of the Gaborone Conference of Ministers of Health and made the following recommendations:

1. The AU Commission supports the development of centres of excellence to deal with the major causes of disease burden in the continent. In this regard, the AUC supports the recommendation contained in the Expert's Report of the Gaborone Conference of African Ministers of Health that, to be more effective and more focused on the needs of the continent, such centres of excellence should be established in each of the Regional Economic Communities, to deal with manageable aspects of endemic infectious diseases in the Africa region. However, the Commission is unfortunately not in a position to recommend that the proposed Africa Centre be established as an AU institution at this stage as the financial implications and the Centre's relationship with other existing centres could not be clearly determined.
2. As a general matter, the AUC feels that, to be more effective, the Assembly may consider identifying existing centres as regional centres of excellence that would concentrate on different aspects of infectious and endemic

diseases of the continent rather than a single institution dealing with all aspects of the infections in the continent. The advantage of such an approach include the fact that the African Union would benefit from infrastructure that already exists in the form of national and regional institutions that are already in operation. Supporting existing institutions would be more cost effective. However, given the offer made by H.E. Hosni Mubarak, the proposed Africa Centre could also be considered alongside existing centres.

3. The Technical Committee should be reconvened under the auspices of the AUC to revisit and agree on the mechanisms for designating existing centres as “**regional centres of excellence**”. The proposed Africa Centre could be considered as one such centre. The regional representatives of the Technical Committee should consult all the countries in the region they represent to ensure that the views of all Member States are considered in their presentations. In this regard WHO/AFRO and WHO/EMRO should also be involved to provide the necessary expertise and guidance. This Committee should be convened as soon as possible and make recommendations to the AU Commission which will, in turn, submit a comprehensive report to the Assembly on the establishment of centres of excellence in general and the proposed Centre in particular.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY**

### **Introduction**

**396.** The period beginning January 2006 saw some significant milestones attained by the Commission in the infrastructure and energy sectors. The year began with the Commission initiating dialogue with the European Union on cooperation in the development of transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructure in Africa. The Commission also organized three Ministerial meetings in the fields of electric energy, railway transport and air transport, whereby the respective sector Ministers adopted plans of action and resolutions/declarations committing them to ensuring the development of those sub-sectors.

**397.** The Commission attended the 14th Session of the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD-14) in New York where it made a presentation on the state of the energy sector in Africa as well as the outcome of the 1st AU Meeting of African Ministers responsible for Electric Energy. The latter-mentioned meeting had taken place in Addis Ababa from 23 to 24 March 2006, and made a request for the necessary support of global stakeholders for the development of sustainable energy resources and infrastructure in Africa.

**398.** The period was also characterized by a special focus on air transport, as the Commission took the unprecedented initiative of organizing jointly with the African Development Bank (ADB), a high level meeting of African airlines in Tunis in May 2006. This was essentially with a view to addressing the serious difficulties and high cost of air travel in the continent that are hampering development and integration efforts.

**399.** In addition, the implementation of other key activities in this area, including the preparation of the Integrated Transport Master Plan for Africa, the VSAT project and the Pan-African e-Network project for tele-education and tele-medicine, proceeded smoothly during the period.



## **I. TRANSPORT**

### **Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Railway Transport**

**400.** The African Union Commission, in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of the Congo, organized the First Conference of African Ministers responsible for railway transport on the theme “Towards an Efficient Railway Transport system at the service of African Development and Integration”, from 13 to 14 April 2006 in Brazzaville, Congo. A preparatory session of Experts held from 10 to 12 April 2006 preceded the meeting.

**401.** The Ministerial Conference examined exhaustively the current state of the railways in Africa, and adopted indispensable strategic guidelines for reviving and modernizing existing networks and extending new ones in Africa.

**402.** The railway serves as the backbone on which other transport means are hinged in the sound functioning of a multi-modal transport network. It further constitutes a veritable instrument of integration and socio-economic development, and is suited to the transportation of bulk goods over long distances, especially goods bound for or coming from landlocked countries.

**403.** The Brazzaville meeting expressed the strong desire for African States to give their railway companies a clear market orientation and to incorporate railway development as part of a global, harmonious vision for the transport sector, which will include an Integrated Transport Master Plan for Africa on transport infrastructure.

**404.** The report of the Ministerial Conference, which included the Declaration and Action Plan adopted by the Ministers, was tabled as a separate item on the agenda to be examined and adopted by the Executive Council.

### **Second Meeting of African Ministers Responsible for Air Transport on Air Safety**

**405.** The African Union Commission, in collaboration with the Government of the Gabonese Republic, organized the Second Conference of African Ministers responsible for Air Transport on the theme “Air Safety Problems in Africa”, from 18 to 19 May in Libreville, Gabon. A preparatory meeting of Experts held from 15 to 17 May 2006, preceded the Conference.

**406.** The Conference reviewed all air safety initiatives currently underway in Africa, particularly those relating to the strengthening of air safety, such as the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), thus underscoring the importance of regional, continental and international cooperation in the domain of air safety in Africa.

**407.** The Conference paid particular attention to the last recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization relating to the need for all ICAO Member States to effectively publish the results of civil aviation audits by March 2008.

**408.** The Second Conference of Ministers Responsible for Air Transport also examined the situation of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) whose provisional agreement with ICAO will expire at the end of this year (2006). The Conference decided to seek urgent measures to boost this development tool of the African air transport industry.

**409.** The Conference further noted that the Sun City Resolution of May 2005 had started being applied. This resolution was adopted to speed up the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision of 1999. The Conference emphasized that the Decision, which is an essential component of Africa's air transport policy, should be implemented as soon as possible.

**410.** At a time when globalization is invading all aspects of economic life, Africa needs to clearly define its common external air transport policy. In this respect, the Ministerial Conference examined the draft Directives submitted by the African Union Commission for negotiations with Third Parties, particularly the European Union and the United States.

**411.** The Second Conference reaffirmed the importance of air transport to economic development and integration in Africa, since it fosters not only contacts among peoples but also the generation of wealth by facilitating trade in various forms. Accordingly, it adopted two Libreville Resolutions relating to improvement of air safety and the African common external civil aviation policy respectively, as well as an Action Plan. These three documents have been annexed to the Ministers' report.

#### **High Level Meeting of African Airlines**

**412.** In view of the serious difficulties facing air travellers in Africa, due both to poor route connectivity as well as high tariffs, the Commission, in collaboration with the African Development Bank (ADB), decided to convene a meeting of top-level managers of African airlines in Tunis, Tunisia on 29 and 30 May 2006. National aeronautical and civil aviation authorities as well as relevant African and international organisations participated in the meeting.

**413.** It discussed the critical issues of air travel in Africa today, relating to policy, and the institutional, operational and regulatory framework. In particular, the lack of direct connections between a number of African destinations as well as between regions, and the comparatively high tariffs of intra-Africa services, were considered at length. In the end, the meeting came up with a comprehensive action plan for enhancing the efficiency of intra-African air services and the strengthening of the African airline industry.

**414.** The report of the meeting will be presented to the Executive Council as a separate agenda item.

#### **Implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision on the Liberalisation of Access to Air Transport Markets in Africa**

**415.** The 1999 Yamoussoukro Decision on the Liberalisation of Air Transport Markets in Africa, a politically and legally binding instrument is currently, the key strategy for the consolidation and strengthening of the African air transport industry, in the face of ongoing globalisation and fierce competition in this sector. Lack of significant progress in the implementation of the Decision is, therefore, of major concern to the African Union.

**416.** It would be recalled that the lack of progress in the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision was addressed at length during the First African Union Meeting of African Ministers responsible for Air Transport in Sun City, South Africa, in May 2005.

**417.** The Commission would like to use this opportunity to urge all its Member States to direct their efforts towards ensuring that the Yamoussoukro Decision is fully implemented in their countries. It should be borne in mind that this Decision is the only hope for Africa in its bid to build a strong airline industry in the continent, that would be able to effectively compete with global carriers in well-established market blocs in Europe and America.

**418.** Furthermore, the Commission, working through the Monitoring Body of the Yamoussoukro Decision, and in its capacity as Chairperson, was able to successfully facilitate the amicable resolution of a longstanding dispute between the aeronautical authorities of Egypt and Nigeria. This was with regard to the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision on the issue of the free granting of air traffic rights between destinations in the two countries, as provided for under Article 3 of the Decision.

### **Preparation of the Transport Infrastructure Master Plan for Africa**

**419.** As part of its mandate, and to assume its leadership role as the lead institution in infrastructure development in Africa, the Commission of the African Union, through the Department of Infrastructure and Energy, has undertaken the preparation of an optimum, integrated all-modes Transport Infrastructure Master Plan for Africa. The Master Plan includes railways, ports and waterways, roads and highways, as well as airports based on all the development programmes of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), countries and all the major institutions and partners.

**420.** This Master Plan, a management tool par excellence, is: (i) an instrument to foster regional integration, economic development and poverty alleviation in Africa; (ii) a tool for analysis, planning, decision-making and monitoring to the benefit of managers at country, REC and AU levels; (iii) a source of information for African and foreign investors; (iv) an instrument for research; and (v) an instrument for mobilization of funds for priority investment in the infrastructure sector.

**421.** The technical tool adopted for the preparation of the Master Plan is the Geographic Information System (GIS). This system requires the acquisition of geospatial data and information (images, maps, and plans) covering all modes of transport, existing and planned, on the corridors of development. The database is being developed jointly with ECA, as part of an African Regional Spatial Data Infrastructure (RSDI) to be used not only for the preparation of the Master Plan, but also for all the related AU activities in Rural Economy and Forestry, Health, Education and Social Affairs, and Science and Technology.

**422.** On the basis of an agreement between the AU Commission and the ECA, a joint AU/ECA team is carrying out this task, backstopped by short-term consultants. This team will produce: (i) a Master Plan In “Atlas Form”, (ii) short, medium and long-term priority projects, including estimated costs, possible sources of funding, and implementation schedule; and (iii) a GIS database.

**423.** The AU/ECA team has already started its work by: (i) integrating the Consensual Transport Master Plan for Central Africa (Plan Directeur Consensuel des Transports en Afrique Centrale – PDCT-AC); (ii) sorting out the corridors of the Trans African Highway (TAH) network; and (iii) exploring the transport network of the Northern Corridor (Burundi, DRC, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Southern Sudan and Northern Ethiopia).

**424.** The Department of Infrastructure and Energy is working with the following major institutions in support of this work: (i) the European Commission (EU). In the framework of the Europe-Africa Partnership in the field of Infrastructure, the EU has made a commitment to support this work. This commitment is very relevant since the EU itself is now preparing a Master Plan of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T Network), which methodology is applicable to the preparation of the Transport Infrastructure Master Plan for Africa; (ii) the French “Institut Géographique National (IGN)” and its international branch, IGN France International (IGN FI), for the provision of the relevant GIS data covering all of French-speaking Africa; (iii) the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), for the continuation of the funding of the Studies of TAH and for filling the gaps in these networks; (iv) Her Majesty’s Ordnance Survey for the acquisition of a rich collection of maps, images, and related information products covering all of English-speaking Africa; and (vi) the Canadian Space Agency (CSA), which has already accepted to provide access to radar-based high-resolution remote sensing image products that are used for resource mapping, and are very useful in the cloudy situations that exist in much of tropical Africa.

**425.** The AU/ECA team will undertake, starting early June 2006, working sessions with the RECs, NEPAD Secretariat, ADB and African technical institutions, to review their various programmes and networks; and establish technical and social-economic criteria for the development of the optimum continent-wide major networks of highways, railways, airports, ports and waterways.

**426.** A preliminary pre-projection of the Master Plan will be established by the end of December 2006. This will be discussed and delineated with the RECs and the technical associations, within the first quarter of 2007, followed by working sessions and firming-up with transport Ministers by mid -2007.

## **II. ENERGY**

### **First AU Conference of Ministers responsible for Electric Energy**

**427.** The Commission organized the First AU Conference of African Ministers responsible for Electric Energy from 23 to 24 March, 2006, preceded by an Experts’ Meeting from 20 to 22 March, 2006, under the theme:

**« Common Vision and Strategic Framework for a Continental Policy in the African Electricity Sector. »**

**428.** The main objective of the Conference was to define guidelines and strategies to promote the development of the electric energy sub-sector, taking into account the immediate needs as well as the medium and long term prospects.

**429.** The Conference was attended by experts from 36 African countries, six Regional Economic Communities, five Regional Energy Pools and Regulatory Bodies.

**430.** The Conference achieved important results, as evidenced by the Ministerial Declaration and a two-year Plan of Action, the main commitments and decisions of which are as follows:

**431.** Main decisions:

- Establish, under the aegis of the African Union Commission, the Conference of African Ministers of Energy as the Continental Central Coordinating Organ of Electric Energy Policies and Strategies, the Secretariat of which shall be managed by the African Energy Commission (AFREC). The Conference shall convene once a year;
- Work together to develop the energy potential, particularly the hydroelectric potential of Africa, as a major renewable energy option to ensure sustainable development, regional integration, energy security and poverty eradication;
- Establish a Coordination Commission for the development of major integrating hydroelectric projects;
- Develop a holistic vision and a Master Plan for the development of the continent's electric sector based on the policies and programmes of the Regional Economic Communities in the field of electrification in order to streamline the use of energy resources in the medium and long terms;
- Strengthen and harmonize the legal and regulatory frameworks, and develop the human capacities for sustainable energy development;
- Establish an African Electricity Fund including a special window designed specifically to finance rural electrification, of which a study conducted under the auspices of the African Union Commission will determine the implementation modalities;
- Hold under the auspices of AFREC the Consultative General Assembly of the African Electro technical Standardization Commission (AFSEC).

**432. Main Commitments:**

- Include energy as a sector of focus in the priorities and national integrated energy programmes, with special emphasis on universal access to modern energy as well as production of technologies and equipment that could promote socio-economic development;
- Elaborate and implement at the level of our States, sectoral development strategies and policies of the energy sector within the framework of the on-going economic reforms refocused on a more integrated development approach;
- Support and strengthen the African Energy Commission (AFREC) to enable it to fully play its role;

- Highlight the importance of integrating regional projects including the inter-connection of electric networks, the establishment of gas and oil pipelines, as well as trans-boarder rural electrification, and give them priority in our respective governments;
- Harmonize the rules and promote good governance in order to create an environment conducive to increased direct investment, both national and foreign;
- Urge multilateral and bilateral financing institutions to create special windows and innovative financing mechanisms for regional projects.

### **Preparation of the Conference of African Ministers of Petroleum and Gas**

**433.** The African Union Commission is in the process of conducting a prospective study on oil and natural gas in Africa with the aim of determining oil and gas reserves in Africa; projecting oil and gas scenarios in the world; drawing for Africa the necessary lessons from probable future evolution and proposing strategies that oil and/or gas importing and exporting countries can adopt, individually and collectively, to improve their situation and cope with the oil price fluctuations and the possible depletion of these highly strategic resources.

**434.** The proposals or recommendations arising from this study should be carefully and thoroughly examined in order to determine the economic, political, legal and technological implications. All this should lead to the organization, before the end of the year, of an AU Conference of Ministers in charge of oil and gas.

### **III. TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)**

#### **Pan-African Telecommunications Network Project**

**435.** During the Pan-African Parliamentary Session held in Johannesburg, South Africa in September 2004, the President of the Republic of India, H.E. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam announced his country's pledge to finance a Pan-African Telecommunications Network Project through satellite and fiber optics to link the 53 member States of the African Union. The project is designed to provide, among other things, tele-medicine and tele-education services to Member States.

**436.** The project initially estimated to cost US\$50 million was presented in May 2005 to the African Union Commission by a delegation of the Indian Government. Following that presentation, the Chairperson of the Commission convened from 20 to 22 July 2005 a Special Advisory Committee of representatives of Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the African Union Commission, NEPAD and African and International Telecommunication ICT institutions in the continent. The Special Advisory Committee was mandated to:

- ascertain the appropriateness of the project as offered by India, bearing in mind the strategic objectives of the African Union and its political independence;
- analyze the technical quality of the project; and
- study the implementation modalities of the project.

**437.** The Special Advisory Committee concluded that:

- the Indian project was interesting and relevant, will contribute to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and bridge the digital gap;
- the Indian promoters have mastery over what they are offering Africa and are experienced;
- the project is perfectly in line with the objectives of the African Union.

**438.** The Committee recommended the adoption of the Project by the African Union Commission. The Committee however indicated that the viability and sustainability of the network and the services proposed would require a firm commitment on the part of Member States and the African Union.

**439.** Two agreements were later signed within the context of the project. The first Agreement signed between the Indian Government and the African Union Commission relates to the general aspects of the establishment of the Pan-African Network; the second concluded between the African Union Commission and Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL) concerns the supply, installation, operationalization and maintenance of the network by TCIL for a 5 year period. Furthermore, the agreement to be signed between TCIL and each Member State was initialled by the two parties.

**440.** After the signing of the agreements, the African Union Commission set up a project implementation Steering and Monitoring Committee and set out to sensitize Member States on the need to participate in the project by concluding the Agreement with TCIL. The project is currently being implemented as follows:

- Convening of 2 meetings of the Steering Committee and its Technical Sub-Committees which had adopted the programme of activities and several technical project documents;
- Evaluation of the dossiers submitted by candidate Member States to host the Hub Earth Station of the VSAT network. The final choice of the country to host the station is underway;
- Launching of the request for the expression of interest to Member States wishing to host the regional nodal hospitals and universities of the network;
- on-going evaluation of the Tele-Education and Tele-Medicine Services to be provided by the network.

**e-Governance Project (VSAT)**

**441.** The e-Governance Project (VSAT) of the African Union is aimed, within the context of the institutional transformation, at ensuring full connectivity and providing modern telecommunications services between the Headquarters of the Commission and the Regional Offices, Foreign Missions, Regional Economic Communities and Member States, through the establishment of a satellite interconnection network.

**442.** The project will enable the African Union to have its own telecommunications system and a greater autonomy in terms of services and availability. The network will provide the African Union with video conference capabilities, high speed internet, IP telephony and instant messaging services, coupled with video discussions in real time. It will also make it possible to share knowledge and know-how as well as information, and will promote teamwork, thereby enhancing productivity and maximization of resources (savings on communications, travel costs, etc).

**443.** The first phase of the project will concern the Headquarters of the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, the Regional Offices, the Specialized Institutions and the Regional Economic Communities. The second phase will consist in extending the network to link Embassies and Member States in Addis Ababa, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs/External Relations of Member States.

**444.** The specifications were prepared and invitation to tender for the selection of the supplier of satellite services was issued. The evaluation of the tenders has been completed. A draft contract is in the process of being prepared for discussion with the company which will be selected.

**IV. COOPERATION**

**Mission undertaken by the Department of Infrastructure and Energy to the European Commission**

**445.** The Commissioner in charge of Infrastructure and Energy led a mission of the Department to the European Commission in Brussels from 20 to 30 February 2006.

**446.** The mission was a follow-up to the meeting held in Brussels on 12 October 2005 between the European Commission and the African Union Commission, and was designed essentially to continue and deepen the discussions begun earlier on.

**447.** The main objectives were as follows:

- Exchange views on the integration experiences of the European Union;
- Identify specific cooperation activities on the area of infrastructure and energy; and
- Examine practical modalities for the implementation of this cooperation.



**448.** At the end of the discussions, the two parties agreed on the following priority areas of cooperation:

1. Integrating and Consensual Master Plans in the fields of transport infrastructure, communication (Telecommunications and Information and Communications Technologies) and energy in Africa.
2. Harmonization of sectoral policies: the European Union will support the African Union in the harmonization of sectoral policies with a view to the formulation of common African transport communication and energy policies.
3. Establishment of close cooperation between the European Union and the African Union in the area of civil aviation.
4. European Union's support to the African Union in the area of energy, to enable the latter to:
  - prepare major electric energy production and transportation projects;
  - acquire appropriate mini and macro electric production technologies; and
  - organize an exhibition of mini and macro energy production units and equipment.
5. Capacity building and equipment of the African Union Commission. The aim is to enable the African Union Commission to fully play its leadership role in the development of infrastructure in the continent.
6. European Union's contribution to the financing of these programmes.

The details of these various programmes will be the subject of future consultations with a view to their realization.

### **RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE**

**449.** During the period under review, the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, on behalf of the Commission carried out significant activities within the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Programme (CAADP) and the Sirte Declaration on the Challenges of Implementing Integrated and Sustainable Development in Agriculture and Water in Africa. This has contributed to moving the orientation of the Strategic Plan (2004-2007) forward. One of the examples of significant progress, following the adoption of Decision EX.CL/Dec.194 (VII) by the Executive Council during its Seventh Ordinary Session in Sirte, Libya in 2005, [requesting the African Union Commission to integrate the Implementation of the Sirte Declaration on Agriculture and Water with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)], is the endorsement by AU Ministers of Agriculture, in Bamako, Mali in January 2006, of the CAADP-Sirte Integrated Plan which will drive the agriculture agenda in Africa in a more comprehensive, coherent and focused manner.

**450.** More specifically within the framework of the CAADP and Sirte Declaration, the Commission, through its department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, has continued to focus its interventions on key selected areas of comparative advantage where its leadership has value-added and could make a significant impact on Africa's sustainable agricultural and rural development:

**I. IMPLEMENTATION OF CAADP PRIORITY PILLARS**

**A. IMPLEMENTATION OF CAADP PILLAR 1**

**a. Cooperation in Trans-boundary Water Management.**

**451.** The "Sirte Declaration on the Challenges of Implementing Integrated and Sustainable Development in Agriculture and Water in Africa, encouraged the development of bilateral agreements for the joint management of trans-boundary waters and requested the Commission to facilitate the development of these agreements. Currently, barely a dozen out of almost sixty such water courses are being jointly managed. To this effect and in partial implementation of the Declaration on Water, the Commission, with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), has engaged in a process of developing guidelines that could help Member States enter into cooperation agreements for the management of basins that they belong to. The Commission will in the near future organize a regional experts' meeting to review the Guidelines and propose their adoption by the Executive Council.

**452.** Given the importance of water resources to economic and social development and environmental sustainability as well as poverty reduction in African countries, Member States that belong to a common river/lake basin are requested to consider joint actions to develop and harness the potentials of their shared waters. The Commission will play its catalytic role as appropriate. For the existing river basin organizations, the Commission is aware of their federation into an African Network of River Basin Organizations (ANBO). ANBO is an instrument for the strengthening of River Basin Organizations, through exchanges of experiences and lessons learnt, as called for in the Sirte Declaration. The Commission will support the federation of Basin Organizations.

**b. African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD)**

**453.** Regular and consistent environmental monitoring is not only key to timely early warning of environmental disasters, but also crucial for data and information generation for development planning and implementation. In recognition of this, ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC, CEMAC and IOC, beneficiaries of an EDF project called the "African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD)", have requested the African Union Commission to host the Project Management Unit (PMU) of the project, which is likely to take off in 2007. The Commission has accepted to host the PMU. AMESD is a successor to a 2000 to 2005 project, called "Preparation for the Use of Meteosat Second Generation for Africa (PUMA)". Through the PUMA Project, almost all Member States of the African Union had satellite-receiving stations installed or existing ones refurbished, mainly in national meteorological services. The PUMA project also trained about 350 African experts to maintain and operate the stations. The objectives of the successor AMESD are to:

- Design, implement, monitor and evaluate regional and continental environmental policies in support of sustainable development;
- Improve the socio-economic and environmental well-being of African populations;
- Meet obligations towards international environmental treaties; and
- Participate in international efforts of global environmental monitoring.

**454.** The project will increase Africa's visibility in the global environment observation processes, build the capacity of the Commission in monitoring environmental and natural resource evolution in the continent for policy advice, and benefit participating Member States and their respective Regional Economic Communities. The Commission will however need resources to build a fitting office for the project, which will become a permanent feature of the Commission's activities.

**c. Green Wall for the Sahara Initiative**

**455.** It will be recalled that H.E. President Olusegun Obasanjo, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, proposed a "Green Wall for the Sahara Initiative", at the 5th Ordinary session of the Assembly in July 2005, which was widely supported. In pursuit of the implementation of the Initiative, the Commission convened two informal contact group meetings to brainstorm the way forward. Based on the request of these meetings, the Commission has also prepared a Concept Paper, which proposed the creation of Steering and Technical Committees to guide implementation as well as other technical considerations. Member States in the Sahelo-Saharan zones that will be affected by the Initiative have been invited to propose representatives to the two Committees. The Commission is indeed optimistic about the Initiative and hopes that the African Union, Member States concerned and the development partners, will provide sufficient funding for the implementation of the comprehensive action plan that will come out of the consultations of the Technical Committee.

**d. Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Bamako Convention**

**456.** It will further be recalled that the Government of the Republic of Mali offered to host the first Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Bamako Convention in Bamako, Mali, in November 2005. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, the Government requested that the COP be deferred to 2006. I am glad to report that arrangements are under way for the convening of the Conference in Bamako in the month of November this year. The Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of the Trans-boundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa, came into effect in 1998 and its first COP has been due since 1999. However, due to the exercise of restructuring then being undertaken by the then Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the subsequent transition to the African Union, the COP could not be held. The Conference, when held, will promote cooperation for the implementation of the Convention and agree on its Rules of Procedure and Financial Rules. As at now, 29 Member States have signed the Convention, 21 of which have ratified it. Being one of the long-standing conventions of the African Union and given its importance in protecting the African continent against unwanted wastes, the Commission urges those Member States that have yet to ratify it to do so as soon as possible. The Commission also urges all Member States to attend the Conference of the Parties.

## B. IMPLEMENTATION OF CAADP PRIORITY PILLAR III

457. In recognition of the importance of agriculture in poverty reduction and in response to the negative trend in agriculture, the African Heads of State and Government endorsed the “Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa” in July 2003 at the Second Ordinary Summit of the Assembly of the African Union where all countries made a **“commitment to the allocation of at least 10% of national budgetary resources to agriculture and rural development within five years”**. Following the Abuja Summit that requested the Commission to **define**, in collaboration with Member States and the NEPAD Secretariat, **the core areas of agriculture and rural development relevant to the 10% allocation**, significant achievements have been realized in collaboration with the NEPAD Secretariat and the activities undertaken culminated in an Experts’ report which was endorsed by the AU Conference of Ministers of Agriculture held in Bamako, Mali, in January 2006.

458. To date, 19 countries have submitted data using the recommended methodology that is comparable across countries. This data shows that for 2004, three countries were allocating above 10 percent, 4 countries between 5 and 10 percent and 12 countries allocated below 5 percent.

459. Similarly, the Commission continued to implement the decision adopted at the Sirte Summit in February 2004, calling for the enhancement of Early Warning Systems at regional level and their establishment where they do not exist, as well as their coordination at the continental level, in order to avert the negative impact of drought, desertification, floods, natural resources and pests. During the period under review, the Commission, in collaboration with FAO and with support from the EU, finalized the assessments that were conducted in West Africa, Southern Africa and the Greater Horn of Africa, including consultations with CILSS, SADC and IGAD that were discussed at regional workshops. The continental synthesis report, which will review both the strengths and weaknesses of existing EWS on food security, and assess the extent to which they are relevant, credible, cost-effective and sustainable, is currently being finalized and will be presented to AU Member States’ experts in late 2006.

## C. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CAADP COMPANION DOCUMENT (PILLAR V)

460. There are pressures on the marine biodiversity and fisheries resources supported by the Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) of Africa, and particularly the resulting imbalance between catches of fish and sustainable production levels. However, despite the existence of a number of programmes that provide technical direction and targets for sustainable fisheries in the LMEs of Africa, there are still very limited financial resources in most countries to implement the needed governance reforms, to prevent over-exploitation of the fisheries resources.

461. It is in this context that, within the framework of CAADP, the Strategic Partnership for a Sustainable Fisheries Investment Fund in the Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) of Africa was created. This Strategic Partnership Initiative is a financing mechanism to make available US\$ 60 million in GEF grants over the next 10 years, to co-finance country-level projects aimed at sustainable marine fisheries. The Initiative is advised by a Regional Advisory Committee chaired by the African Union Commission, in partnership with the African Regional Fisheries Organizations, the FAO, the WWF, the GEF, and the World

Bank. The first tranche of \$25 million has been approved by the GEF and the Fund will be launched officially in May 2006.

## **D. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**

### **A Framework and Guidelines for Land Policy in Africa**

**462.** In view of the importance of land to Africa's social, political and economic development, as well as to sustainable resource management, an African-led consortium comprising three of African's regional institutions, namely, the African Union/NEPAD (AU/NEPAD), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Development Bank (ADB), under the leadership of the African Union Commission (AUC), are working in partnership to lead the process of developing an Africa-wide Land Policy Framework and Guidelines, as well as modalities for its implementation at country, regional and continental levels. This is aimed at securing land rights, increasing productivity, improving livelihoods, enhancing natural resource management and contributing to broad-based economic growth in the continent. In order to build consensus among key players in Africa on the vision for and adoption of a successful land policy and land reform framework and guidelines in Africa, a time-bound process of 16 to 18 months that delineates the critical path of important decision-making is envisaged. During the period under review, significant progress was made through the holding of the Consultative Workshop in March 2006. The workshop brought together representatives of African Governments, Regional Economic Communities, civil society including farmers' organizations, the African private sector, centres of excellence and development partners.

**463.** The outcome of the workshop comprised key messages and recommendations in thematic issues that would characterize the Framework and Guidelines; features of a vision and guiding principles; actions and activities needed to develop the land policy Framework and Guidelines; roles of stakeholders and partners, and resource mobilisation. This has set the stage for the next steps to be undertaken, including regional assessments and consultations.

## **II. SPECIALIZED PROGRAMMES**

### **PATTEC**

**464.** It will be recalled that at the 36th Ordinary Summit of the African Heads of State and Government held in Lomé, Togo, in July 2000, Decision AHG/Dec. 156 (XXXVI), urging Member States to act collectively and rise to the challenge of eradicating tsetse flies from the continent of Africa, was adopted. In accordance with this Decision, the Secretary General of the OAU was assigned the task of initiating and coordinating a Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign (PATTEC).

**465.** During the period under review, the Commission undertook various activities. The PATTEC Coordination Office developed training manuals on various themes, including the application of GIS in tsetse control; the Sterile Insect Technique in tsetse and trypanosomiasis control interventions; and organised a number of other training courses and workshops for participants from Member States, in an effort to build the technical capacity required in the implementation of the campaign. It also organised a one-month regional training Session in Nairobi, Kenya, from 17 March to 13 April 2006, on Data base

collection and management, in collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In addition to training, the Commission has produced information materials to ensure effective dissemination of information, with a view to creating awareness of the PATTEC initiative.

**466.** In collaboration with the African Development Bank (ADB), the Commission has developed detailed Project Documents for Angola, Botswana, Namibia and Zambia in the South and for Rwanda and Tanzania in the East, in preparation for the second phase of the ADB supported programme.

**467.** Despite some progress, the Commission is still faced with the challenge of mobilizing all infested countries to participate collectively in the programme, as well as mobilizing external resources and convincing prospective participating countries to make complementary contributions to begin their national programmes.

### **AVIAN INFLUENZA AND INTERVENTIONS IN AFRICA (IBAR)**

**468.** In response to the current outbreak of the Avian Flu, the Commission, through its Specialized Technical Office, IBAR, prepared comprehensive prevention, surveillance and emergency preparedness plans for the control of the highly Pathogenic Avian influenza (HPAI). It is also working within the FAO/OIE GF-TADS and Alive mechanisms, to seek national and international financial support from donors for the establishment of emergency preparedness plans and the control of the Avian Influenza. Collaboration with international partners such as the FAO, OIE, the World Bank and the WHO, is being sought in these international efforts.

**469.** The Commission, in collaboration with OIE, FAO and USDA - APHIS, initiated and organized a regional workshop on the harmonization of emergency preparedness plans against avian influenza from March 18th to 19th, 2006 in Bamako, Mali. It was intended for the countries in West and Central Africa, taking part in the PACE programme. The representatives of thirteen countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo) and of various international or regional organizations or institutions (OIE, FAO, WHO, OCHA, AU-IBAR, ECOWAS, WAHO, USDA-APHIS, EISMV) took part in the workshop.

### **LIVESTOCK PROGRAMME**

**470.** During the 7th Ministerial Conference in Kigali, it was however observed that while the IBAR Action Plan has very well articulated some of the emerging livestock and related programmes, it has not fully brought on board some of the ongoing and planned REC priorities. It was in this regard that it was felt that it would be critical that NEPAD and AU/IBAR consider the convening of a meeting that would bring on board, REC Livestock and related programmes, as well as FARA's programmes, to ensure that there is a common approach under the overall coordination of AU/IBAR in the implementation of the CAADP Livestock Programme.

### **PANVAC**

**471.** Since January 2006, PANVAC has been fully transferred and placed under the AU Commission structure. Its strategic plan (2005-2008) has been prepared and its constitution

is awaiting finalization. In addition, a project proposal for revitalization of PANVAC has been submitted to the Japanese Government and the IAEA.

**472.** During the period under review, PANVAC carried out the Standardization of Veterinary Biological products and as such, the biological stocks such as Vaccine strains, Cell lines, Reference Vaccine Preparation, Reference anti-sera and antigens were properly stored and made ready for distribution. In addition, vaccine seeds were sent to the National Veterinary Laboratory of Jordan upon request in Feb.2006. Request has also been received from International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) for the supply of various vaccines seeds. Currently, PANVAC has adequate repository stocks of various biological products which are stored at the Vaccine Bank unit.

**473.** The Commission, through the PANVAC programme, promoted harmonised quality control techniques to African Laboratories. Bench training and study tours were organized by PANVAC personnel from the laboratories of Chad, Mali, Nigeria and The Sudan. A set of manuals on PPR vaccine production and quality control has been prepared and is ready for publication.

**474.** During the period under review, the Commission undertook training workshops for senior veterinary field officers from Ethiopia and a manual for Training African Experts has been prepared as model in AU Member States. In March 2006, a new website for PANVAC was launched.

#### **FOUTA DJALLON HIGHLANDS**

**475.** The Commission, through the Fouta Djallon Highlands Programme, promotes the preservation and sustainable management of strategic and fragile natural resources, particularly in highlands areas. Activities during the period under review undertook the promotion of regional cooperation through the development and validation of a legal institutional framework which is under review by Member States. In addition, a Regional Project for the Integrated Management of the Fouta Djallon Highlands Natural Resources has been finalized in collaboration with FAO. The programme will aim to ensure the protection of the environment and the development of natural resources available in the Fouta Djallon Highlands, with a view to contributing to the improvement in the living conditions of the populations of the region and those of regions irrigated by rivers originating from the Highlands. The funding from GEF, of about US\$11 million over two phases, covering a period of ten years, has been secured. However, the total project cost is estimated at US\$44 million. To this end, the Commission in collaboration with UNEP and FAO, has initiated several actions for the mobilization of the needed extra resources.

**476.** The Commission, through its Fouta Djallon office, held the 10th meeting of the Consultative Committee of the Regional Programme for the Integrated Development of the Fouta Djallon Highlands, from 31 January to 2 February 2006 in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The meeting was attended by Focal Points from all Member countries, representatives from OMVS, UNEP, FAO as well as by officials from National Technical Departments, the Parliament, NGOs and the media of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

**477.** The main objective of the 10th session was to identify the activities and measures to be carried out or undertaken by Member Countries, the African Union, UNEP and FAO, for a rapid starting-up of the Project for the Integrated Management of Natural Resources that

has been approved for funding by GEF. The meeting also considered the ways and means leading to strengthened collaboration between the Fouta Djallon Programme and the Basin Organizations. The recommendations of the meeting included: the need to finalize institutional arrangements and map out detailed arrangements for the implementation of the project to enable FAO, as the Executing Agency, to finalize its work plan and budget for approbation by GEF; letters of commitment from Member Countries as regards their contribution to the projects' co-financing; additional co-funding to be sought from other financial partners; and the holding of the Ministerial Conference of Member countries of the Programme that would aim at the official launching of the project.

**478.** The Regional Consultative Meeting also suggested that the African Network of Basin Organizations (ANBO) would constitute an appropriate tool for enhanced cooperation between the Fouta Djallon Programme and the Basin Organizations.

#### **AU – SAFGRAD OFFICE**

**479.** The Commission, through the Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development Office (SAFGRAD), accomplished the following during the period under review:

##### ***i) The African Striga Research and Control Project.***

**480.** *Striga hermonthica* is a parasitic weed causing substantial damage to cereals. It affects negatively the livelihood of more than 100 million people in Africa alone. To address the issue of striga, the African Striga Research and Control Project was initiated and designed to cover a very large geographical area due to the importance of this pest in the semi-arid areas of Africa. It has a more developmental focus with a strategy to scale up best-bet technologies to combat striga in farmers' fields. The ultimate goal is to improve participating countries' capacity to scale-up diffusion of proven striga control technologies and increase awareness of this pest, in order to facilitate or promote formulation of policies conducive to the mitigation of striga.

**481.** Across West and Central Africa, 23 striga tolerant and resistant (STR) maize, 3 cowpea varieties and one variety each of soybean and groundnut have been tested and are ready for release. Under the leadership of AU/SAFGRAD, more than 100 farmers received training for striga biology and control as well as on-farm seed production and scientists from seven countries including Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali and Nigeria were backstopped for striga research and control.

##### ***ii) Enhancement of Rainwater and Nutrient Use in the Volta Basin***

**482.** This project is aimed at reducing poverty and improving food security, income and livelihoods of small-scale, resource-poor farmers in the Volta basin. A system approach that integrates water-use efficiency, nutrient and crop management, and improved germplasm, together with market opportunity identification and rural agro-enterprise development to benefit both the environment and the rural poor, was used. AU/SAFGRAD has assumed the leadership role for an activity whose core element is to promote and scale-up and scale-out best-bet crop, water, and nutrient management strategies, through more efficient information and methodology-dissemination mechanisms.



483. An inventory of available technologies to conserve soil and water was undertaken in Burkina Faso. Indigenous technologies (zai stone bonds etc..) have been reported in the study. Equally novel ways of marketing and inventory related credit schemes, the sahelian ecofarm concept which combines fast growing acacia species, a domesticated tree (*Ziziphus Mauritania*) and water conservation devices (half-moon), are being scaled up in order to improve the livelihood of the farmers in the pilot studies areas in Burkina Faso and Ghana.

**iii) Promotion of Sustainable Agricultural Farming Systems to control desertification in Africa**

484. As the focal point of the 6th thematic network programme (sustainable farming systems network) within the Regional Action Programme for Africa, of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), activities on the popularization of the network have been undertaken. This was partly accomplished by the publication and distribution of documents on the network as well as advocacy for fund mobilization to undertake critical network activities. To that end, development partners (e.g., UNEP/GEF) have been consulted for the possible development of Africa-wide projects, through GEF, in line with the objectives of the thematic programme network.

485. AU/SAFGRAD prepared a concept note on 'Scaling-up Successful and Innovative Sustainable Land Management Practices at sub-regional and regional levels in the framework of Regional Action Programme; as part of the preparation for consultation with UNEP/GEF on possibilities of soliciting GEF support for implementation of a project. The discussion with UNEP/GEF led to a shared understanding of the relevance of the ideas reflected in the concept note and on the possible identification of countries of focus from each of the sub-regions. Subsequent consultation is in progress.

**ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

486. During the period January to June 2006, the Commission, through the Department of Economic Affairs, undertook a number of activities in relation to its mandate.

**A. THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS) AND POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES**

487. From 26 to 28 March 2006, an African Plenary meeting on Poverty Reduction and the Implementation of the MDGs, was held in Cairo, Egypt. The Plenary was co-organized by the Commission of the African Union, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Plenary reviewed the implementation of First Generation Poverty Reduction Strategies (FGPRSs), assessed progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by African countries and made recommendations to guide the formulation and implementation of the next cycle of Poverty Reduction Strategies, hereafter called Second Generation PRSs (SGPRSs). The recommendations were underpinned by the overarching concern about the credibility of PRSPs as truly African-owned strategies and the effectiveness of FGPRSs in generating a level and pattern of growth that is consistent with achieving the MDGs.

488. The Plenary observed that several African countries were completing their FGPRSs and were in the process of formulating and, in some cases, implementing SGPRSs.

Consequently, the Plenary underscored the need to take stock of progress made so far with respect to FGPRSs and ensure that SGPRSs are informed by the lessons and experiences of FGPRSs; that they are sufficiently growth-oriented, reflect an appropriate balance between social and productive sector investments and are firmly anchored on the MDGs. It noted with satisfaction, the improved macroeconomic stability and growth in several African countries, as indicated by the fact that in the last 5 years, a number of African countries have sustained an average growth rate of 5 percent or more. There was, therefore, need to draw lessons from several middle-income African countries, including Botswana, Tunisia, Egypt and Morocco, that have made good progress in achieving the MDGs.

**489.** However, the Plenary observed with grave concern, the slow progress of the majority of African countries in achieving the MDGs. Of particular concern was the rising incidence of poverty; persistent spatial and gender inequality; skewed distribution of income; and volatile and inadequate growth. The Plenary also noted that even in fast growing African countries, the concentration of such growth was in the extractive sectors. This had compromised the spill-over effects of growth and reduced its impact on poverty reduction and the achievement of the MDGs. The Plenary therefore emphasized that Africa's efforts to achieve the MDGs would be hampered unless it generated higher rates of broad-based growth; improved ownership, leadership and accountability in the formulation and execution of its development programs; developed integrated capacity-building strategies for the implementation of PRSs; and worked with donor partners to design an aid architecture that would reduce transaction costs and support the implementation of national policy priorities, as reflected in PRSs.

**490.** The Plenary noted with appreciation, the work undertaken by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Secretariat, in collaboration with the ECA, the African Development Bank (ADB), and the UNDP, in reviewing the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Africa. Further, it commended the collaborative efforts that resulted in the preparation of an "African Common Position on the Review of the MDGs", which was presented to the African Heads of State and Government at their Summit held in Sirte, Libya, in July 2005.

**491.** The Plenary underscored the importance of debt cancellation for African economies and the reallocation of the saved resources to growth sectors, notably physical infrastructure, agriculture and key social sectors such as education and health. In this regard, it commended the efforts made by African Heads of State and Government in pushing for debt cancellation during the Gleneagles Summit of July 2005. Further, it welcomed the fact that fourteen (14) African countries have been earmarked for debt cancellation and called upon the international community to urgently deliver on its commitment to assist these countries in their efforts to achieve the MDGs by the target date of 2015. It also recommended that the African Union continue to push for debt cancellation for the remaining African countries, to ensure that the benefits of debt cancellation go to all African countries. It was, however, noted that while debt cancellation was necessary, it was not a sufficient condition for achieving the MDGs. Success in achieving the MDGs also depends on African countries' and the international community's commitment to addressing key priority areas for the Continent. These include Peace and Security; Good Governance; Investment particularly in Infrastructure; Domestic Resource Mobilization; Gender Equality; HIV/AIDS and other diseases; Capacity Development and Financing of the MDGs. In this regard, it urged the African Union to play its political leadership role in implementing, as

soon as possible, its plan of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the MDGs in Africa.

**492.** While noting the improvements associated with the FGPRSs, the Plenary was of the view that African governments needed to do more to formulate pro-poor growth policies and programmes; address capacity constraints; and improve ownership by institutionalizing consultation mechanisms. External partners are also expected to accelerate aid harmonization. The following recommendations to guide the formulation of SGPRSPs and for accelerated growth and achievement of the MDGs, were proposed:

- a) *A pattern of growth that is inclusive and consistent with the achievement of the MDGs should be facilitated.*
- b) *African policymakers should resolve to improve stakeholder participation in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of development programmes to promote substantive and deeper country ownership and accountability of PRSs.*
- c) *Policymakers in Africa should improve country-level capacity to effectively implement PRSs.*
- d) *Aid effectiveness should be improved.*
- e) *PRS Policy Dialogue should be sustained.*

**493.** The African Plenary on Poverty Reduction Strategies and Implementation of the MDGs, proved to be a valuable forum for exchange of views and articulating new policy thrusts for African countries to take into account in their programmes to fight poverty and achieve the MDGs.

## **B. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AS STIPULATED IN ARTICLE 19 OF THE CONSTITUTIVE ACT**

**494.** The Department has obtained the names of the experts who will be on the technical committees for the three institutions. The respective host countries are also expected to serve on the technical committees. In this respect, the Department is still awaiting the decision of the Central and West Africa regions on host countries for the Monetary Fund and the Central Bank respectively. The setting-up of the technical committees is now at an advanced stage. That will allow the feasibility studies to commence, once resources are made available.

## **C. RATIONALIZATION OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES**

**495.** The Department convened consultative meetings at experts' level in Accra, Ghana, in October 2005 and in Lusaka, Zambia in March 2006. These consultations culminated in the Conference of Ministers of Integration, which was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso at the end of March 2006. The Ministers noted the need for rationalization of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and made a number of recommendations, which will be submitted to the Assembly in Banjul. They also issued a declaration in which they agreed to:

- i. Request the Assembly of the African Union (AU) to halt the recognition of new RECs. Accordingly, only the following eight RECs should remain recognized:
  - Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS);
  - Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA);
  - Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS);
  - Southern African Development Community (SADC);
  - Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD);
  - Arab Maghreb Union (UMA);
  - Community of Sahelo-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) ; and
  - East African Community (EAC).
- ii. Recognize, besides the eight RECs listed above, the past and ongoing cooperation and integration efforts by existing Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs) on the continent;
- iii. Revisit the Abuja Treaty, in order to rearrange the timetable of its implementation, taking into account the provisions of the Sirte Declaration of 9.9.99, and finalize the new Protocol on Relations between the AU and the RECs, for signature in the shortest time possible;
- iv. Request the AUC and the RECs to:
  - Harmonize and coordinate policies and programmes of the RECs as important strategies for rationalization;
  - Put in place mechanisms to facilitate the process of harmonization and coordination within and among the RECs;
  - Carry out an institutional audit of the RECs to assess the challenges and efficiency constraints to implementing the Abuja Treaty. The AUC should, in consultation with the RECs and in collaboration with ECA, provide a clear timetable and benchmarks for the implementation of the Treaty, taking into account the Sirte Declaration of 9.9.99;
- v. Encourage the RECs to promote free movement of persons, goods, capital and services, in order to enhance continental integration;
- vi. Urge Member States to honour their financial and other obligations to the RECs, to enable them carry out their mandates, with particular reference to the integration process;
- vii. Invite the African Union to institutionalise the meeting of African Ministers responsible for Integration to follow up on the continental integration process.

**496.** As this is part of the theme of the Banjul Summit, the Assembly is expected to give further guidance on the way forward on the rationalization of RECs in Africa in order to accelerate continental integration.

#### **D. ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATISTICAL SERVICES UNIT**

**497.** In the framework of statistical activities, the Department has undertaken several activities.

**498.** The data collection process is still on-going in order to fill all the indicators, which have been identified. This data on socio-economics, MDGs and the African Peer Review Mechanisms (APRM)'s indicators on Member States, Average on Africa, Regional Economic Communities' basic indicators, and information about African National Offices of Statistics and African Central Banks, have been incorporated into MS Excel files and can be downloaded on the web page of the African Union Statistical Unit.

**499.** Regarding cooperation on statistics issues among Pan-African and National Institutes of Statistics, the African Union Commission participated and presented papers on the use of statistics within the AU and contributed to the elaboration of the Regional Reference Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF), as a guide for African statistical development in the next 10 years. The Department also attended the second meeting of the Forum for African Statistical Development (FASDEV-II) from 9 to 10 February 2006, at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This forum acknowledged the commitment of the AU to make statistics more visible within its Commission, by the creation of a Statistics Unit, and urged the African Union to provide critical political support to statistical development in Africa.

**500.** The development of an Online-Integrated database with the following components: sectors related to socio-economic areas, MDG indicators, the APRM's indicators, time period, geographic areas, data view, tables, graphs and a few functions such as average, sum, max, min, mode is on-going; and will be operational at the beginning of June 2006.

**501.** Ongoing activities for the implementation of the Regional Reference Strategic Framework for statistical capacity-building in Africa (RRSF) have been undertaken with the African Development Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

#### **E. AFRICA- EU DIALOGUE**

**502.** In the framework of the Africa-EU dialogue, the sixth Ministerial Meeting of the African and EU Troikas met in Vienna, Austria, on 8 May 2006. A meeting of Senior Officials held on 6-7 May 2006 preceded the Ministerial meeting. The Ministers noted that in December 2005, the European Union had adopted a new Strategy for Africa. This Strategy provides a common, comprehensive and coherent framework for action for all EU Member States and the European Commission to support Africa's efforts to reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. The Strategy reflects Europe's interest that Africa develops into a stable and prosperous continent; and 2006 will be a key year for implementation. Ministers reviewed progress achieved since the 5th Ministerial Troika Meeting in Bamako and decided on the way forward.

**503.** In this regard Ministers

- *endorsed* a Joint Implementation Matrix to monitor the implementation of the commitments made;

- *agreed* to work on a proposal for an outline of a Joint EU-Africa Strategy, ideally to be adopted at the 2<sup>nd</sup> EU-Africa Summit;
- *welcomed* the envisaged increase in the financial support to the African Union and in particular the forthcoming support programme of 55 million € financed from the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF;
- *further welcomed* the short term replenishment of the Africa Peace Facility with 50 million € from the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF to finance the African Union Mission in The Sudan and the provision of 300 million € from the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF in order to continue the Africa Peace Facility from 2008 to 2010.
- *welcomed* the development of a Governance Initiative for Africa which will aim to establish a consensus and support for the implementation of programmes on governance.
- *agreed* to regularly discuss Human Rights issues, including on expert level, in a modified troika format;
- *looked forward* to the holding of the first EU Africa Business Forum in Brussels in autumn 2006;
- *welcomed* the increase in the level of financing for cooperation via the European Development Fund, by making available 22.682 billion € under the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF for the period 2008 – 2013.
- *looked forward* to the holding of an EU-Africa ministerial meeting on migration, bearing in mind the UN High Level Dialogue on migration which will be held in September 2006;
- *welcomed* the preliminary report of the Continental Assessment of Early Warning Systems for Food Security, conducted under the auspices of the FAO and financed by the EU;
- *looked forward* to the establishment of a Trust Fund to underpin the EU-Africa Partnership for Infrastructure with an initial amount of 60 million € in grants from Community assistance and up to 260 million € in loans managed by the EIB. This partnership will take into consideration and contribute to the NEPAD I-STAP;

**504.** Ministers agreed to monitor the implementation of the commitments arising from the Dialogue, through a regular update of the Joint Implementation Matrix. The matrix will be updated every three months by the Troikas at Ambassadors' level and presented to the Ministerial Troikas at their biannual meetings. Ministers agreed to actively work towards an Africa-EU Summit, which has been outstanding since the last one held in Cairo, Egypt in 2000. Portugal remains a possible venue for the Summit, which could take place in 2007.

**505.** Ministers welcomed the decision to create the 10th European Development Fund, providing an amount of 22.682 billion Euro for the six-year period 2008 – 2013, the bulk of which will be destined for sub-Saharan Africa. Ministers expressed the desire that the programming of the national and regional strategies would be completed towards mid-2007 in order to contribute to the timely commencement of the implementation of the 10th EDF. Ministers welcomed efforts made by the European side to accelerate outstanding implementation from previous EDF programmes.

**506.** Ministers took note of the African proposal that, given the institutional transformation of the AU, it should be given a Pan-African envelope within the 10th EDF to finance agreed programmes and activities from the EU Strategy for Africa.

**507.** The African side welcomed the European Commission's proposal to mobilise 30 million € against Avian Flu through the existing partnership and mechanism of the AU. The EU invited the AU to participate in the next Senior Officials Meeting scheduled to take place in Vienna on 6 and 7 June 2006, following on the Beijing Pledging Conference. This meeting will be an opportunity to highlight the specific situation of African Countries in the context of the Avian Flu spread and to propose that the next meeting be held in Africa.

## **TRADE AND INDUSTRY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

**508.** During the period under review, the Commission undertook to implement the Declarations and Decisions issuing from the 6th Assembly of Heads of State and Government and the 8th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council held in Khartoum, The Sudan in January 2006. These endorsed the recommendations of the 2nd Extraordinary Conference of Ministers of Trade held in Arusha, Tanzania, in November 2005 and related mainly to intra-African trade liberalization and integration including customs cooperation, multilateral trade negotiations and commodities.

### **CUSTOMS COOPERATION**

**509.** On 3-7 April 2006, the Commission convened the 2nd Ordinary Session of the AU Sub-Committee of Directors-General of Customs in Harare, Zimbabwe. The Sub-Committee was established by Decision EX.CL/Dec.111(V) of the 5th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council. The main theme for consideration was the issue of Continental/Regional Integration from the point of view of the role of customs administrations, as the main actors in the implementation of trade facilitation programmes, both within countries and at the borders at RECs level. The Directors-General carried out an in-depth examination of the strengths, weaknesses, constraints, challenges and opportunities faced by their administrations in terms of trade facilitation, in an environment of multiple and overlapping membership of the RECs and duplication of mandates; and made and made pertinent recommendations on the need for the rationalisation of the RECs. They also made appropriate recommendations regarding the impact of the negotiations of Economic Partnership Agreements on trade facilitation, the need for the strengthening of the Customs Division of the AU Commission and financing requirements for the coordination, monitoring and implementation of customs programmes.

### **FORUM ON THE PAN-AFRICAN COMMODITY MARKET**

**510.** Pursuant to Decision EX.CL. Dec. 253 (VIII) of the 8<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Executive Council held in Khartoum, The Sudan, requesting the Commission to implement the commitments contained in the Arusha Declaration and Plan of Action on Commodities, the Commission organized a Forum of African Economic Operators and Experts from 8 to 10 May 2006, in Gaborone, Botswana, to prepare the launch and implementation of a Pan-African Commodities Stock Exchange. The objective is to make the commodities market more transparent, boost intra-African trade and the income of producers, and consolidate

the role and place of African commodities on the international market. The Forum came up with a roadmap which spelt out the stages leading to the establishment of the Stock Exchange planned for August 2007. The establishment of the Stock Exchange calls for a robust public-private partnership. The African Union Commission should provide support towards this project through advocacy actions, give the requisite political orientations, and in particular, put in place an appropriate legal framework to enhance the efficiency of the Stock Exchange.

**511.** From 6 to 8 June, the Commission, in collaboration with the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC), held consultations with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) Experts on the strategies and modalities for implementing the decisions contained in the Arusha Declaration. The consultations led to the adoption of a harmonized programme of work on:

- commodities development and diversification;
- mechanism for the creation of the commodities stock exchange at regional and continental levels;
- boosting the capacities of commodities producers' and exporters' associations;
- constituting a task force; and
- advocacy for the establishment of a diversification fund.

#### **4th Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of Trade**

**512.** In line with the Declaration of the Assembly, AU/Decl.1 (VI), adopted at the 6th Ordinary Session held in Khartoum, requesting the AU Commission to take the necessary measures to continue to coordinate the common African position, give the necessary technical support to African negotiators at the WTO, and get policy guidance on other trade issues critical to Africa's development, the Commission convened the 4<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of Trade in Nairobi, Kenya from 12 to 14 April 2006. The Conference examined issues pertaining to WTO and Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) negotiations, trade liberalization and integration in Africa, the WTO Aid for Trade initiative, AGOA, China-Africa cooperation and Trade and Migration. In view of the deadline of end April set for modalities in Agriculture and Non-Agricultural Market Access in the WTO negotiations, the Conference issued the Nairobi Ministerial Declaration on the Doha Work Programme, which constitutes the African Common Position for guiding African negotiators in Geneva. It also issued the Nairobi Declaration on EPAs, intended to guide the concerned RECs at the crucial stage of their negotiations with the EU. The Conference discussed at length, the issue of integration and issued a Resolution on the Rationalisation of RECs. Finally, it made appropriate recommendations on the WTO initiative on Aid for Trade, on AGOA, on China-Africa cooperation and on Trade and Migration.



## **Institutional Partnership and Africa' Development Agenda and Priorities**

**513.** Last year's global review of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) highlighted the fact that, with a few exceptions, given current trends, Africa as a continent will not meet most of the MDG targets within the set timeframes. In this regard, African leaders and governments, working collectively under the auspices of the African Union, have agreed to scale up their efforts within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to achieve the goals and their other political and socio-economic priorities. The recent response from the international community to the situation in Africa and pledges of support to meet the NEPAD priorities has been most encouraging.

**514.** In order to respond proactively to these realities, ECA and the African Union Commission and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) have decided to step-up their efforts to work collaboratively and synergically. It is worth welcoming the initiative of our partner, the new Executive Secretary of ECA, to reposition ECA, so that in line with its mandate, and the African Union's agenda, it can focus on achieving results in two related areas, namely: **(i) Promoting Regional Integration in support of the African Union vision and priorities;** and **(ii) meeting Africa's special needs and challenges in line with the NEPAD agenda.**

**515.** The support that ECA will provide to the AU's regional integration agenda will help the AU and its Commission to accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent, promote and defend African common positions, and establish the necessary conditions to enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy. This will include support on a range of cross-border activities and initiatives in several sectors, such as Infrastructure, ICT, Energy, and HIV. A major component of the ECA reform is the empowerment of its Sub-Regional Offices (SROs), which will enable ECA to upscale its efforts of addressing the specific needs of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) of the African Union.

**516.** A strong partnership between Africa's major regional institutions is critical to moving this agenda forward. In this regard, the commitment of ECA to actively participate in the work of the joint African Union Commission (AUC) – African Development Bank (ADB) - ECA secretariat, which was revitalised earlier this year under the leadership of the AU Commission, is encouraging.

**517.** The AUC will continue to work with the UN Secretary General in his efforts to promote increased coherence of the ECA's activities in Africa. In this regard, ECA will continue to lead the UN regional consultative mechanism to bring coordinated UN support to the implementation of the NEPAD Programme agenda. Now, at the request of the UN Secretary General and the African Union Commission, this will be expanded to include responsibility for coordinating the UN system support to the AU. The AUC will work with ECA to convert this mechanism into a process of regular and frequent consultations on AU/UN collaboration with the other UN entities in Addis Ababa. ECA will also work closely with the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) to present and advocate African interests and African views to the broader international community.

**518.** The proposals for repositioning ECA have just been endorsed by the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development held in Ouagadougou

from 12 to 15 May, 2006. The Executive Secretary also consulted African Union Ambassadors, the African Union Commission and the international partners who encouraged him to pursue this bold initiative and drive it to fruition in collaboration with the African Union Commission.

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