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**REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION ON THE FOLLOW-UP OF
THE COMMUNIQUE OF THE 95TH MEETING OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY
COUNCIL ON THE SITUATION IN THE COMOROS**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 95th meeting held on 10 October 2007, Council approved the recommendations submitted, in conformity with its Communiqué PSC/PR/Comm (LXXXVII) of 13 August 2007, by the meeting of the Ministerial Committee of the countries of the region, held in Cape Town, South Africa, on 18 September 2007. In this respect, Council decided to impose, for an initial period of 45 days, a number of sanctions (restrictions on travel, freezing of funds, other financial assets and economic resources) on the illegal Anjouanese authorities and all other persons impeding the reconciliation process in the Comoros. It was further decided to monitor all air and sea transport to or from Anjouan to ensure that they do not in any way, benefit to the illegal authorities of Anjouan and to their supporters, bearing in mind the need to limit, as much as possible, the impact of these measures on the civilian population.

2. To facilitate the implementation of these sanctions, Council:

- decided to review the mandate of the African Union Electoral and Security Assistance Mission to the Comoros (MAES), and requested the Commission to liaise with the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) for the speedy deployment of additional troops and other elements to facilitate the implementation of the revised mandate of MAES (paragraphs 6 and 7);
- requested the Commission and the Government of the Union of the Comoros to undertake a sensitization campaign to explain to the Anjouanese population that the only objective being pursued is to restore normalcy in Anjouan [paragraph 8];
- directed that an appropriate mechanism be established in Moroni to supervise the application of the sanctions, and requested the Commission to take the necessary steps to strengthen the African Union Liaison Office in Moroni, to enable it to play the role expected of it, and to mobilize the resources required to that end [paragraph 9]; and
- requested the Chairperson of the Commission to formally liaise with a number of international organizations to solicit their support and that of their respective Member States for the implementation of the Council decision [paragraph 10].

3. This report provides an account of the measures taken by the Commission in follow up to the decision of Council, and the reactions by AU partners, as recorded till now. The report makes recommendations on the steps to be taken to achieve the objectives set by Council based on recommendations made by countries of the region, at the expiry of the initial period of 45 days.

II. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNCIL DECISION

4. As mentioned above, Council requested the Commission to take a number of measures to facilitate the implementation of its decision. The following paragraphs present the status of implementation of the various aspects of the decision of Council.

a) Transmission of the decision to all stakeholders concerned and mobilization of support by the international community [paragraphs 5 and 10]

5. On 11 October 2007, the Commission forwarded the Communiqué from Council to all AU Member States to inform them of the measures taken against the illegal authorities of Anjouan. A message was also sent to the AU Liaison Office in Moroni, which, in turn, formally informed the Government of the Union of the Comoros.

6. On 25 October 2007, I sent letters to the Secretary General of the Indian Ocean Commission, Monique Andreas Esoavelomandroso; the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Amr Moussa; the United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon; the Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu; the Secretary General of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, Abdou Diouf; as well as the Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union and High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, and to the EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel. In the letters, I solicited the full support of these organizations and their Member States to facilitate the realization of the efforts deployed by the AU. As regards the United Nations in particular, I requested the Secretary-General to convey my letter and the communiqué of Council to the members of the Security Council for information and appropriate action to be taken in support of the decision of the Council.

b) Finalization of the list of individuals and entities under sanction [paragraph 5(c)]

7. On 16 October 2007, the Government of the Union of the Comoros, in collaboration with the AU Liaison Office in Moroni, drew up an initial list of individuals and entities to be sanctioned. The list, comprising members of the *de facto* Government and of other Anjouanese institutions (the Electoral Commission of the Island and Appeal Court, in particular), members of the civil cabinet of Colonel Mohamed Bacar, the self-proclaimed President of the Island, and other personalities (members of the Island Legislative Assembly, traders, etc...), was subsequently transmitted to all Member States, so that they could immediately take the necessary steps to prevent the entry into or transit through their respective territories of the individuals concerned and also to immediately freeze the funds, other financial assets and economic resources belonging to such individuals and to entities affected by the sanctions. The list was also sent to the United Nations, the European Union and its Member States, the League of Arab States, Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, the Indian Ocean Commission and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, for information and appropriate action.

8. The Government of the Union of the Comoros, in collaboration with the AU Liaison Office, updated the above-mentioned list, which now comprises the names of 168 individuals and entities. At the time this report was being finalized, steps were being taken to forward the list to all Member States and all concerned members of the international community.

c) Strengthening of MAES [paragraph 7]

9. From 10 to 14 November 2007, I dispatched a delegation led by my Special Envoy and comprising officers from the Commission to Tanzania and the Sudan to discuss the modalities for strengthening MAES with the authorities of these two countries. In Tanzania, the delegation met the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bernard Membe, who was accompanied by military and civilian officials. In Sudan, the delegation met the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Elsmani Elwasila, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Defence.

10. Both Tanzania and Sudan reiterated their appreciation of the efforts made by the AU to find a lasting solution to the Comorian crisis, as well as the commitment of their respective Governments to support these efforts. The Tanzanian Minister indicated that his country was ready to supply additional troops, provided the Commission would mobilize the required financial and logistical resources from other Member States in order to confer continental character to the Mission. He stressed the need for elections for the presidency of the Island of Anjouan to be held before the end of December 2007 at the latest. The interlocutors of the team in Khartoum informed my Special Envoy that the Council's request for the strengthening of MAES would be forwarded to the competent authorities for consideration and appropriate action.

11. For its part, the Commission is pursuing efforts on the review of the concept of operation of MAES and the identification of the logistics required, particularly with respect to naval means. At the time of finalizing this report, the Commission was preparing for a technical meeting on this issue. Meanwhile, MAES carried out a first naval patrol mission on 3 November 2007 to verify compliance with the measures taken by Council regarding restrictions on sea links to or from Anjouan. In this respect, it should be specified that the boat used is of civilian passenger type and, as such is not suitable for such operations; moreover, the Mission does not have trained naval personnel for such operations. Besides, MAES elements were deployed in the ports and airports of Moroni and Moheli in order to ensure compliance with the measures imposed with respect to sea and air links to and from Anjouan.

d) Sensitization of the Anjouanese population [paragraph 8]

12. The Commission sent a communication specialist to its Moroni Liaison Office for a period of one month to work out a sensitization campaign as requested by Council. At a more technical level, and following the confiscation by the illegal authorities of Anjouan of the equipment and materials used to relay Comorian radio and television programmes, measures were taken to redirect the transmitters located in Grand Comoros, with the aim of directly reaching the population of Anjouan.

13. As concerns the sensitization campaign itself, religious authorities and representatives of the youth and of women's organizations were called in to explain to the Comorian population the objective being pursued through the imposition of sanctions against the illegal authorities of Anjouan. Accordingly, a daily radio programme was introduced to serve as a forum. Another interactive radio programme (in national language) was also launched to enable the diaspora and the entire Comorian population to take part in the debate. In this respect, free telephone numbers were opened and an experienced Comorian journalist was called in to coordinate the programme. Advertisements in national language were produced and are aired during musical and other radio programmes to inform the population that the sanctions are targeted only at the *de facto* authorities of Anjouan.

14. My Special Envoy also featured as a guest on the synchronized Comorian radio and television news bulletin to explain the measures taken by Council. The Head of the AU Liaison Office in the Comoros holds periodic press conferences, and press releases are published after each meeting of the sanctions follow-up mechanism.

e) Establishment of the Sanctions Follow-up Mechanism and Strengthening of the AU Liaison Office [paragraph 9]

15. To ensure the effective establishment of the Sanctions Follow-up Mechanism, the Commission formally requested the AU Member States concerned, namely the countries of the region and MAES TCCs, to designate their representatives who will sit on the Mechanism and effectively participate in its deliberations in Moroni. Some of the States concerned have already confirmed their readiness to send representatives to Moroni to take part in the deliberations of the Committee. At the request of these countries, the Commission is considering how it could mobilize the resources needed to facilitate their participation. Other countries are represented in Moroni by their embassies and already participate in the deliberations of the Follow-up Mechanism.

16. Meanwhile, I sent my Special Envoy for the Comoros, Francisco Madeira, to Moroni from 29 October to 9 November 2007, to discuss the modalities for the implementation of the sanctions with the Union authorities. He availed himself of the opportunity to formally put the Follow-up Mechanism in place on 2 November 2007. I am pleased to inform Council that the Mechanism is now operational; it meets every Monday and Friday, and whenever the need arises. The Mechanism also has a standing unit at the AU Liaison Office in Moroni.

17. A delegation of the Follow-up Committee comprising my Special Envoy, the Head of the AU Liaison Office and the Commander of MAES in Moroni, the Director of Cabinet of the President and the Secretary-General of the Government of The Union of the Comoros went to Mayotte, from 6 to 7 November 2007, to discuss the modalities for the implementation of sanctions with the local authorities. The French Ambassador to the Comoros also accompanied the delegation on this mission. The delegation plans to undertake other visits to the countries of the region to consider with the relevant authorities the modalities of an adequate follow-up of the sanctions and the contribution they could make in this respect.

18. The Commission is also taking the necessary steps to deploy additional staff to Moroni to support the action of the Liaison Office. To this effect, measures were taken to identify experts who could be rapidly deployed in Moroni.

III. REACTION OF AU PARTNERS

19. Since the adoption by the Council of the communiqué of 10 October 2007, a number of countries and organizations have expressed their support for the AU action and underlined the importance of holding free, transparent and fair elections in Anjouan to help resolve the crisis. The following paragraphs summarize reactions at international level registered to date.

a) Indian Ocean Commission (IOC)

20. Meeting in extraordinary session in the Seychelles, on 10 October 2007, the IOC Council expressed its deep concern about the situation provoked by the attitude of the *de facto* Anjouanese authorities. The IOC Council endorsed the recommendations and conclusions adopted by the Ministerial Committee of countries of the region at its meeting held in September 2007, and pledged its support for any measure or decision that could be taken by Council towards the early resolution of the crisis.

b) United States

21. In a press statement issued by the State Department dated 16 October 2007, the American Government commended the AU for applying sanctions against the unconstitutional authorities of Anjouan, in order to promote democracy on the Island. The US Government expressed its full support for the joint efforts of the Union of the Comoros and the AU to promote free and fair elections in Anjouan as soon as possible, and appealed to the illegal authorities of Anjouan to cooperate fully with the AU in this regard.

c) The European Union and its Member States

22. In a declaration issued on 23 October 2007, on behalf of the European Union, the Presidency of the European Council fully supported the decisions taken by Council during its meeting of 10 October 2007, particularly the measures adopted against the illegal authorities of Anjouan. The EU recalled its support for the integrity and unity of the Comoros, and stressed the need to organize new elections in Anjouan under AU supervision, in conformity with the recommendations made by countries of the region during their meetings held in Cape Town in June and September 2007. The EU declared its readiness to consider what assistance it could provide to the AU for the purpose of implementing the Council's communiqué of 10 October 2007.

23. The 9th ministerial meeting of the Africa-EU Troïka, held in Accra, Ghana, on 31 October 2007, also expressed its concern about the persistent crisis in Anjouan and its ensuing political and socio-economic consequences. The Ministers reiterated their appreciation of the untiring efforts made by the AU to promote peace and lasting reconciliation. To this effect, the European side once again, expressed its support for the Council's decision and its readiness to consider supporting the implementation of the decision.

24. At the end of the visit to Mayotte of the Follow-up Mechanism mentioned above, France reiterated its full support for the Council's decisions, stressing that it would fully contribute to their implementation. Concretely, it was decided, by common accord, to temporarily station Comorian inspectors in Mayotte to monitor the movement of persons and goods between Mayotte and Anjouan, jointly with French authorities. The French authorities have also adopted the principle of transit via the autonomous islands of Moheli and the Grand Comoros for all sea and air links between Mayotte and Anjouan.

25. In a Note Verbale dated 15 November 2007, the French Embassy in Addis Ababa informed the Commission that the persons whose names appeared on the list of individuals under sanction (excluding Franco-Comorians) have now been registered under the French visa control system. Furthermore, in order to stop the Anjouanese in question from obtaining Schengen visas in other countries, France intends to seek systematic consultation with its Schengen partners about all visa applications by Comorian nationals.

26. Regarding financial sanctions, the Embassy stated that the French judicial authorities may be solicited by the Comorian counterparts to freeze assets in case of legal proceedings against illicit activities. France is also examining, at national level, preparatory measures that could be taken pending introduction of a European-scale mechanism.

d) Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF)

27. In a letter dated 5 November 2007, the OIF Secretary-General, Abdou Diouf, having recalled that the OIF had clearly condemned the election for the Presidency of the Island organized by the Anjouanese authorities, pledged to forward the AU appeal for support for the implementation of the sanctions against the illegal authorities of Anjouan, during the meeting of the OIF scheduled for next 19 November in Vientiane, Laos. He indicated his readiness to work together with the AU and other international partners to restore Comorian State authority on the Island of Anjouan, by organizing fresh elections for the presidency of the Island, and to eventually contribute to the revival of efforts to address the problems posed by the Comorian fundamental laws and the sharing of competences between the Union and the Islands.

e) League of Arab States

28. On 10 November 2007, the Secretary General of the League of Arab States sent me a letter expressing the League's support for the Council communiqué of 10 October 2007. He said that the Secretariat of the League had transmitted to all the Member States of the League communiqué of Council and the preliminary list of persons and entities under sanction, for purposes of implementation. He further informed me that the League will be discussing the issue at ministerial level in order to adopt a binding resolution for Member States to impose sanctions against the illegal authorities of Anjouan.

IV. OBSERVATIONS

29. Whereas the Council decision was welcomed by the Union Government and, more generally, by the Comorian people, the illegal authorities of Anjouan reacted defiantly, calling the 10 October 2007 meeting a “non event”. The illegal authorities of Anjouan continue insisting on the holding of inter-Comorian talks as a pre-condition for possibly organizing fresh elections in Anjouan, but also in Grand Comoros and Moheli.

30. The illegal authorities of Anjouan have announced that they had taken a decision prohibiting a number of high-ranking Anjouanese personalities, including the Union Head of State, from visiting the Island. Other personalities opposed to the illegal authorities of Anjouan were banned from leaving the Island. The illegal authorities of Anjouan also forcefully seized containers in transit to Grand Comoro and Moheli that the maritime company SPANFREIGHT had directly transported to Anjouan, in violation of the Follow-up Mechanism requirement that all air and sea links to or from Anjouan should transit via Moroni or Moheli for purposes of inspection.

31. Clearly, it is too early to make an exhaustive impact assessment of the impact of the measures taken by Council. But, based on indications observed by the AU Liaison Office in Moroni, it is evident that the measures have increased the isolation of the illegal authorities of Anjouan and the pressure exerted on them to yield to the demands of the AU and the international community. I am also happy to note that the Council's communiqué of 10 October 2007 enjoys the full support of the international community.

32. The results so far obtained are quite appreciable in view of the fact that the full mechanism required for the effective implementation of the Council's measures is not yet in place. In addition, a time lag has elapsed before the effective enforcement of the sanctions. The delay is due to the time required to compile the list of persons and entities to be sanctioned and to circulate it to the concerned members of the international community. Lastly, the surveillance mechanism is not yet fully set up, and thus sanctions were violated during the period under review.

33. The violation of sanctions by SPANFREIGHT, the major maritime carrier for the illegal authorities of Anjouan, should be pointed out here. Despite AU warnings, the company has continued serving Anjouan directly in disrespect of the Follow-up Mechanism's decision requiring prior transit via Moroni or Moheli, for inspection, applicable to all ships and planes traveling to or from Anjouan. The visit to Anjouan by the President of the autonomous Island of Ngazidja (Grand Comoros) is also worth mentioning. This visit was condemned by Union authorities, who had not been consulted, and the majority of Comorians in the three autonomous islands, irrespective of their political inclinations, denounced its negative consequences on the AU sanctions. On their part, the illegal authorities of Anjouan, in quest of internal and external support to no avail so far, went on to capitalize on this visit.

34. In light of the foregoing, it is appropriate, for the time being, for Council to extend, by 60 more days, the duration of the measures contained in its communiqué of 10 October 2007. The Commission would use this extension to strive with troop contributing countries to strengthen MAES and to seek the necessary support from both the Member States and AU partners. Such support includes appropriate logistics (air and naval) needed to boost efficiency in the implementation of the sanctions and, where necessary, take any other measures as the situation may dictate.

35. In pursuance of its communiqué of 10 October 2007, Council could encourage the countries of the region to carry on with their efforts to find a solution to the protracted crisis in the Comoros. In light of the efforts made in the implementation of their recommendations and of the Council decision, the countries of the region could re-examine the situation and come up with recommendations. They could notably pursue their efforts to persuade the illegal authorities of Anjouan, in any manner they deem appropriate, to conform to the demands of the countries of the region and of Council, including the holding of free, transparent and fair elections, which would pave the way to find effective solutions to the problems of governance in the Islands, including the inadequacies of the current constitutional arrangements.

36. I wish to express my gratitude to the countries of the region, and MAES troop contributing countries, for their constant and determined commitment to resolving the Comorian crisis, and urge them to spare no effort to facilitate the rigorous implementation of Council's decision. I appeal to all Member States in position to assist, to offer the necessary material and financial support for MAES to effectively fulfil its mandate. I commend the support from our partners within the international community. I would like to call on them to further rally support for the AU efforts.

2007

Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Follow-up of the Communique of the 95th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council on the Situation in the Comoros

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