SOLEMN LAUNCHING OF THE
PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
9TH SESSION
25 MAY 2004
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/AHG/3(IX)

REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION
ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CONTINENTAL
PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE AND
THE STATUS OF PEACE PROCESSES
IN AFRICA

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The adoption by the Inaugural Session of the Assembly of the African Union (AU) held in Durban, South Africa, in July 2002, of the Protocol on the establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) gave rise to real hope with regard to the Continent's determination to deal with the scourge of conflicts and promote the conditions of peace and security without which the current venture of socio-economic development and the consolidation of the democratic processes and the rule of law would be in vain. The entry into force of the Protocol, last December, and the election of the PSC Members, in March this year, reinforced this hope.

2. The present meeting of the PSC at the level of Heads of State and Government, convened to coincide with the celebration of Africa Day, is being held at a time when significant progress had been made in the establishment of the continental peace and security architecture provided for within the framework of the PSC Protocol, as well as in the resolution of some major conflicts tearing our Continent apart. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that there is still a long and difficult road to travel to complete the establishment of the continental peace and security architecture. Furthermore, progress made in conflict resolution is still rather precarious, while there are outbreaks of new crisis such as that of Darfur.

3. In this context, the official launch of the PSC should be an occasion for the Member States concerned to reaffirm their political commitment to promoting peace and security on the Continent. Above all, they should send a clear signal with regard to their determination to translate into concrete action the solemn commitments made by the African leaders and fully assume the responsibilities invested in them by the Assembly of the Union.

4. The present report reviews progress made in establishing the continental peace and security architecture and identifies the challenges yet to be overcome. It also gives an account of the development of various conflict situations in Africa.

II. PROGRESS IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONTINENTAL PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

5.   The Continental Peace and Security Architecture that the AU is endeavouring to establish is underpinned by two pillars: the PSC Protocol, on the one hand, and the Common African Defence and Security Policy on the other. Significant progress has been made in the implementation of these two instruments.

i)   Operationalization of the PSC Protocol

6.   The following represent a summary on the status of the efforts to operationalize the Peace and Security Council.

Signature and ratification

7.   The PSC Protocol entered into force on 26 December 2003, after having been ratified by the required number of Member States, i.e. 27. As of mid-May, 32 Member States had ratified the Protocol. More sustained efforts will be made to ensure that those Member Sates that have not yet done so become parties to the Protocol. The Commission will continue to spare no efforts to sensitizing the Member States concerned for them to sign and/or ratify the Protocol by the end of 2004.

Election of the PSC Members and activities of this Organ

8.   Following the entry into force of the Protocol, the Executive Council, in pursuance of the decision adopted by the Assembly in Maputo, in 2003, adopted the Rules of Procedure of the Council and elected its first members, during its 4th Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, in March 2004. Since then, the PSC has held 7 meetings during which the following conflict situations were considered: Burundi, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Somalia and Sudan (Darfur), as well as the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. It is worth mentioning that, during the period under review, the PSC also authorized the deployment of peace support operations in The Comoros and The Sudan, and renewed, on two occasions, the mandate of the African (Peacekeeping) Mission in Burundi (AMIB). It has also approved the establishment of new Liaison Offices in Nairobi, to support the preparations for the Great Lakes Conference, and in Monrovia, to enable the AU play a more effective role in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed by the Liberian parties, in Accra, in August 2003.

The Panel of the Wise

9.   The Panel of the Wise, which will be composed of five highly respected African personalities, is to support the efforts of the PSC and those of the Chairperson of the Commission, particularly in the area of conflict prevention. In order to facilitate the operationalization of this Panel, the Commission has prepared a document on the modalities for its functioning, which should be approved by the PSC. It is my intention to commence the consultation process for the appointment of the members of the Panel.

The Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)

10.   One of the key provisions of the PSC Protocol is the establishment of a full-fledged CEWS, to enhance the conflict prevention mandate of the Council. In October last year, the Commission organized, in Addis Ababa, a Workshop to brainstorm on the practical modalities and appropriate steps to be taken for the establishment of such a System, drawing from existing international and regional experiences. On the basis of the recommendations made by the Workshop, the Commission is currently in the process of elaborating a roadmap that would guide its efforts.

11.   I should like to note that, over the past years, sustained efforts have been made at the regional level to establish Early Warning Systems, which will be the pillars of the CEWS. ECOWAS and IGAD, in particular, have made significant headway, while other organizations are yet to translate into concrete action the provisions contained in their respective instruments for conflict prevention, management and resolution.

The African Standby Force (ASF) and the Military Staff Committee (MSC)

12.   The PSC Protocol provides for the establishment of an African Standby Force, to enable the Council to perform its responsibilities with respect to the deployment of peace support operations and intervention, pursuant to the relevant Articles of the AU Constitutive Act. As part of the efforts to operationalize the Protocol, the 3rd meeting of the African Chiefs of Defense Staff (ACDS), held in Addis Ababa, in mid-May 2003, adopted a "Policy Framework for the establishment of the ASF and the MSC". The Framework calls for the establishment of the ASF in two phases, up to 2010. The recommendations of the meeting were submitted to the 3rd Extraordinary Session of the AU Executive Council, held in Sun City, South Africa, in May 2003, which recommended that "further consultations be undertaken with all relevant stakeholders to consolidate the proposals contained in the Policy

Framework". Subsequently, the AU Summit held in Maputo, in July 2003, took note of the document.

13. It was against this background that the 4th meeting of the ACDS, followed by the first meeting of the Ministers of Defense, took place in Addis Ababa, in mid-January 2004, to review the recommendations on the establishment of the ASF and the MSC, which will be submitted to the July Summit for endorsement. In the meantime, I would like to report that a number of initiatives are underway at regional level to establish the components of the ASF.

The Relations with the RECs

14. The PSC Protocol stipulates that the Regional Mechanisms are part of the overall security architecture of the Union, which has the primary responsibility for promoting peace, security and stability in Africa. It further provides for the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the AU and the Regional Mechanisms to enhance coordination and cooperation. In order to facilitate the conclusion of such an MoU, the Commission dispatched consultative missions to six of the seven RECs. The draft MoU is being discussed with the RECs and is expected to be finalized by 2005.

ii) The Common African Defense and Security Policy (CADSP)

15. At the Durban Summit, the Assembly of the Union stressed the need for a Common African Defense and Security Policy, in the context of the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the relevant provisions of the PSC Protocol. Subsequently, at their Extraordinary Session held in Sirte, Libya, towards the end of February 2004, the Heads of State and Government adopted the Solemn Declaration on the CADSP. The CADSP, which is largely premised on the concept of human security, identifies the common security threats to the continent ; the principles and values underlining the CADSP; the objective and goals of such a Policy; as well as the implementing organs and mechanisms, and the building blocks of the CADSP. The CADSP provides a framework for a regular review and close monitoring of the implementation of all instruments relevant to Africa's efforts to promote peace and security.

16. The ongoing efforts to elaborate an African Non-Aggression and Common Defense Pact should be viewed in the context of the CADSP. In this respect, and as a follow-up to decision Ext/Assembly/AU/Dec.(II) adopted in Sirte, a meeting of Experts was convened recently in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, to consider the draft Pact. Over the coming years, efforts will focus on

identifying other areas of action, with the view of enhancing confidence among Member States and advancing the concept of human security. In this respect, particular attention will be paid to the issue of mercenarism, which continues to be of concern nearly three decades after the adoption, by the OAU of a Convention on the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa.

iii) Towards building an effective PSC

17. Although the requisite texts for the development of a continental peace and security architecture have been adopted, there are still numerous challenges to be overcome for the PSC to effectively play its role in the promotion of peace and security in Africa.

<u>The role of Member States</u>

18. Undisputedly, the PSC Protocol endowed this organ with all the necessary powers to play a primary role in promoting peace and security. However, it is clear that the Council can only assert its authority and its supremacy if its members fully assume their responsibilities and show the necessary determination in that regard. To this end, PSC Members should:

- strengthen their Permanent Missions to the AU, thereby providing themselves with the means to shoulder their responsibilities as PSC Members;

- devote the necessary time and energy to adequate monitoring of political and other developments on the Continent, particularly conflict situations;

- place special emphasis on prevention, by taking charge of any situation which could degenerate into conflict;

- affirm the leadership of the AU in the management of all crises affecting the Continent, including when it is a question of condemning massive human rights violations and other acts of violence perpetrated against civilian populations.

19. However, the commitment of PSC Members alone will not suffice to produce the expected results; this commitment must be backed by a real political will on the part of other AU Member States. According to the Protocol, AU Member States acknowledge that by fulfilling its responsibilities, the PSC is acting on their behalf; in addition, they undertake to accept and implement the decisions of this organ, and facilitate any action it may carry

out with regard to conflict prevention and resolution. It is imperative that these commitments are translated into concrete action. Specifically, no Member State should, for any reason whatsoever, prevent the PSC from intervening in any situation which if feels requires its attention.

The role of the Commission

20. In addition to the responsibilities of Member States, there are those incumbent on the Commission. For the latter, this essentially involves providing the PSC with the necessary support. As a top priority, the PSC Secretariat should be established, it being understood that the structure of this Organ, as approved by the competent AU organs, needs to be strengthened. The Commission's target is to establish the PSC Secretariat before the end of July 2004, at the very latest.

The Peacekeeping Challenge

21. The importance of the establishment of the African Standby Force for effective of conflict resolution in Africa cannot be overemphasized. In a number of conflicts, often prevailing on suspicion among the parties and the complexity of the issues at stake make the presence of a third party on the ground imperative, often in the form of a peacekeeping operation. At the moment, the AU is managing the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) and two other operations, on a lesser scale, in The Comoros and Ethiopia-Eritrea. Arrangements are being made for the deployment of military observers in Darfur (the Sudan).

22. There is, therefore, an urgent need for Member States to accord due importance to the establishment of the African Standby Force. From this perspective, special efforts should be made to promote real rationalization, particularly since the high number of regional and sub-regional groupings, the overlapping of their competences and the multiple memberships of States constitute an obstacle to ongoing efforts.

23. In the meantime, Member States, particularly Members of the PSC, should provide themselves with the means to respond, in the shortest possible time, to requests from the AU and regional organizations for the deployment of military observers and peacekeeping forces. The all too frequent delays by Member States in this respect are obviously prejudicial to peace efforts on the Continent, particularly in terms of implementing agreements.

Resource Issues

24.   Equally crucial is the issue of resources. Peace, as a prerequisite for the development and consolidation of democratic processes, entails the mobilization of vast resources. For this reason, the PSC Protocol, as an upshot of the Cairo Declaration of June 1993 on the establishment within the OAU of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, provided for the setting up of a Peace Fund, which is currently funded by an allocation of 6% from the AU's regular budget, as well as voluntary contributions.

25.   Since the inception of the Peace Fund in 1993, a total of just over 96 million US dollars has been mobilized – this includes contributions received within the framework of the Special Trust Fund set up for the African Mission in Burundi. Over three quarters of this amount is from partners of the AU and only one quarter from Member States. Besides, it is significant to point out that despite repeated appeals made by the competent organs of the AU, virtually no Member State has contributed to financing AMIB. The only contributions received were from the AU's partners, and due to their inadequacy, the troop contributing countries, namely South Africa, Ethiopia and Mozambique, were forced to bear the greater part of the burden for the deployment of the Mission.

26.   For the AU to play an effective role in conflict management, this state of affairs must change. In other words, while continuing to solicit the support of the international community, Member States, particularly the more richly endowed among them, are duty bound to contribute substantial resources.

The relations between the AU and the Regional Mechanisms

27.   The need for harmonization and close cooperation between the AU and the Regional Mechanisms cannot be over-emphasized. In this respect, one cannot but express concern at the lack of consistency that has characterized the relationship between the AU and certain RECs on the important issue of unconstitutional changes of Governments, as it relates to the situation in the Central African Republic. If the AU and the RECs are to form a single security architecture, as envisioned in the PSC Protocol, decisions taken at continental level should be upheld by the Regional Mechanisms.

IV.   **OVERVIEW OF CONFLICT SITUATIONS IN AFRICA**

28.   During these past years, sustained efforts have been deployed to find negotiated solutions to the different conflicts ripping the Continent apart. Significant progress has been made in this respect, particularly in Angola and

Sierra Leone, where the priorities are now focused on post-conflict reconstruction. However, many difficulties are yet to be overcome.

a)   The Comoros

29.   In The Comoros, major progress has been made since the signing of the 20 December 2003 Agreement on the Transitional Arrangements in the Archipelago. The electoral process has been completed, with the polls of March and April 2004, which elected the members of the Assemblies of the Union and the Islands. In fact, the only institution yet to be established is the Constitutional Court, mandated essentially to arbitrate conflicts of competence between the Union and the Autonomous Islands.

30.   The overall situation however remains precarious. It is, therefore, imperative that the parties demonstrate a spirit of responsibility in operating the institutions of the Union and scrupulously respect the commitments made. Equally crucial is the need for rigorous management of the meager resources of the Archipelago, failing which the international assistance, which the Comoros is in dire need of, cannot be mobilized.

b)   Ethiopia - Eritrea

31.   Relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea remain stable, despite the difficulties being experienced regarding the demarcation of the border, following the ruling of the Boundary Commission, in April 2002. Given the tension resulting from the current impasse and the potential for conflict to start again between the two countries, there is need to continue to encourage and assist the parties to find the ways and the means of overcoming these difficulties and ensuring the implementation of the agreements they have signed as well as the normalization of their relations.

c)   The Sudan

32.   In the Sudan, as yet, no comprehensive peace agreement has been signed, although the Government of the Sudan and the SPLM/A have already signed a series of partial agreements on wealth sharing and security arrangements for the six-year interim period, stipulated for in the Machakos Protocol. Negotiations are still continuing in Naivasha, Kenya, between the two parties, to resolve the outstanding issues. The two parties have expressed their determination to sign a comprehensive peace agreement soon, and developments in the past weeks indicate major progress being made in that direction.

d)   Burundi

33.   In Burundi, about five months to the end of the transition period, in compliance with the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, signed on 28 August 2000, there have been very encouraging developments in the peace process.   Indeed, the implementation of this Agreement, as well as the resulting Ceasefire Agreements whose implementation was greatly facilitated by the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB), made it possible to stabilize the political climate and restore security in 16 of the country's 17 provinces. The majority of the armed political movements are now represented in the transitional institutions.

34.   However, three fundamental issues continue to be the focus of attention:

      a)   the issue of elections for which discussions have reached an advanced stage without the parties reaching a consensus on the date of the elections;

      b)   the process of disarmament and re-integration of combatants, for which preparations have gone far, but which can only be effectively implemented if the pledges for financing from the international community are realized; and

      c)   the issue of the PALIPEHUTU-FNL, the last armed movement which has not yet joined in the peace process.

e)   Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

35.   After the initial difficulties encountered in the implementation of the Comprehensive and All-Inclusive Agreement adopted by the parties to the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in Pretoria, in December 2002, the peace process in the Democratic Republic of Congo accelerated remarkably, between June and December 2003. However, since January 2004, many events have occurred which have contributed to slowing down the peace process.

36.   It was in this context that the events of the night of 27 to 28 March 2004 took place, and that new tension was sparked off between DRC and Rwanda, against the background of deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the two Kivus, as well as in Katanga and the Ituri region.

37.   It should, however, be noted that, in the past few weeks, there have been encouraging developments, particularly in terms of the publication of the transition roadmap; consultation between the Government and the armed groups of the Ituri region, and the appointment of the governors and vice-governors of provinces, which marks a crucial step towards the re-establishment of the authority of the State.

f)   Central African Republic (CAR)

38.   The overall situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) remains of great concern.   The political consensus, which prevailed until recently, between General François Bozizé, who came to power after the 15 March 2003 coup d'état, and several political parties and labour unions, has been undermined.   The latter accuse General Bozizé of leading the Transition single-handedly.   In addition, the new text establishing the Independent Mixed Electoral Commission (CEMI), and the decree appointing the 31 members of this Commission, have been strongly criticized on the grounds that these texts do not guarantee the independence of the CEMI.   The latter sees this as an attempt by the Government to predetermine the outcome of the Transition and electoral process.   Furthermore, the economic situation remains precarious, while the problem of insecurity is far from being resolved.

39.   In this context, it is imperative that the AU stresses the need for its commitment to a genuine return to constitutional order through the organization of free and transparent elections.   There is also a need for greater coherence of action between the AU and the regional groupings concerned.   Such coherence, which should be based on scrupulous compliance with the Lomé Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government, will greatly facilitate the restoration of lasting stability in CAR. In this connextion, it is important to recall the commitment made by General Bozizé, in Libreville, in April 2003, not to participate in the presidential elections to be organized at the end of the transition.

g)   Liberia

40.   In Liberia, notwithstanding some problems, significant progress has been made in terms of the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 18 August 2003. The various institutions which are provided for in the CPA have, in general, been constituted.   There is also a general compliance with the Ceasefire Agreement.   Furthermore, the DDR process, after the initial difficulties encountered to disarm former combatants, has been re-launched since mid-April 2004.

41.   Against this background, it is important that members of the international community who pledged contributions at the February 2004 International Conference on the reconstruction of Liberia honour their commitments, as expeditiously as possible. Indeed, a more sustained support by the international community will enhance the prospects for lasting peace and stability in Liberia.

IV.   SPECIFIC CONFLICT SITUATIONS REQUIRING THE SPECIAL ATTENTION OF THE PSC

a)   Darfur

42.   The grave humanitarian crisis in the Darfur region, in western Sudan, remains a major concern to the African Union and the international community at large. While there are underlying struggles for resources, such as land and water, as well as political discontent among the local communities, the current crisis has been exacerbated by, among others, the destructive activities of the *Janjaweed* militia, which engaged in a campaign of attack and destruction against the civilian population in many parts of Darfur, in recent months.

43.   This situation caused large scale displacement of the local populations, with over 1,000,000 becoming internally displaced persons (IDPs), while close to 200,000 people have taken refuge in the neighbouring Chad.

44.   Given the gravity of the situation in Darfur, sustained efforts have been made by the AU and the wider international community, to ensure that effective measures are put in place to avert further deterioration of the humanitarian situation. This resulted in the Chadian-mediated negotiation between the Government of The Sudan (GoS) and the two armed movements, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) culminating in the signing of a Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement on 8 April 2004. The parties to the Agreement should be commended for accomplishing this first, but important step and encouraged to work towards a comprehensive settlement of the conflict.

45.   The Ceasefire Agreement, which was negotiated with the support of the AU and other members of the international community provides, among others, for a humanitarian ceasefire, the establishment of a Joint Commission and a Ceasefire Commission, as well as for the facilitation of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the creation of conditions conducive to the delivery of emergency relief. The parties also agreed to meet at a later stage to negotiate a global and definitive settlement.

46.   As a follow-up to the Agreement and the decision taken by the AU Peace and Security Council on 13 April 2004, a 10-member AU-led Reconnaissance Mission was dispatched to The Sudan and Chad, from 7 to 16 May 2004. The Mission, which comprised representatives of the UN, the European Union, Chad, France and the USA, was mandated, among other things, to assess the situation on the ground in view of the envisaged deployment of military observers in the Darfur region.

47.   Despite the signing of the Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement, the assessment by the Reconnaissance Mission indicated that the humanitarian situation in Darfur remains very precarious. According to one of the UN representatives that met by Mission in Khartoum, on 8 May 2004, there are over 500,000 internally displaced persons that cannot be reached in terms of the provision of humanitarian supplies. It was noted that half of those IDPs live in camps and the rest were assumed to be hiding in the mountains as their homes were destroyed.

48.   Given the gravity of the situation in Darfur, it is urgent that negotiations resume between the GoS, on the one hand, the SLM/A and the JEM, on the other, in order to find a lasting solution to the interwoven problems, ranging from the competition between communities over the control and ownership of resources, to demands for effective political participation representation and socio-economic development in the region. Equally, it is imperative that a strong military observer mission, with the necessary protection elements, be deployed immediately in the region to support the work of the Ceasefire Commission and to monitor compliance with the Ceasefire Agreement, as well as facilitate the delivery of humanitarian supplies. Such a Mission would also inspire confidence among the affected populations. I should also like to stress the urgent need to bring all those responsible for human right violations in Darfur to justice, in line with the AU's expressed commitment to fight impunity.

b)   Somalia

49.   The conflict still afflicting the country remains a serious challenge to the region, to Africa and the world at large. All peace efforts in the past, from Arta, Djibouti, in 2000, through Eldoret to Mbagathi, Kenya, plus many other initiatives, have failed to bring back peace in Somalia.

50.   The Somalia National Reconciliation Conference, which opened in Eldoret in October 2002, has yet to produce the expected outcome, after more than eighteen months of deliberations. The Conference is now entering into the final Phase III, which is expected to culminate in the formation of a new

Government for Somalia, in July 2004, and the adoption of a transitional programme.

51.   Several factors have hampered the progress of the reconciliation process at the early stages. From the outset, the Conference received multifarious political entities. Some of them lacked clear leadership, culminating in fragmentation of factions and groups and the emergence of new ones, as individuals jostled for leadership positions. In some cases, new leaders back in Somalia have replaced the leadership of a faction at the Conference. In other cases, coalitions have emerged for the purpose of articulating demands upon the mediators, only to disintegrate before long or once the demands have been met.

52.   Furthermore, the existence of many self declared regional and local political and administrative entities, all claiming power and economic control in their areas, also compounded the situation. In addition, the Somali factions and groups tend to rely on their military postures to achieve their objectives. Since the Conference started in October 2002, different faction leaders have moved between the venue of the Conference and Somalia to keep their military forces in a state of alert.

53.   The lack of cohesion among the IGAD Frontline States, who composed the Technical Committee that managed the Conference until the advent of the Facilitation Committee (FC), in October 2003, has also undermined the progress of the Conference. In some cases, the absence of a Frontline State had the effect of dividing the Somali delegates. However, the 5th IGAD Ministerial Facilitation Committee Meeting, held on 6 May 2004 in Nairobi, and attended by Ministers from all the IGAD countries, made a significant headway in fostering cohesion.

54.   Still, the negotiation's are faced with serious financial constraints. The crisis of funding reached its climax in February-March 2003, when the Reconciliation Conference almost closed. The situation has now deteriorated to an alarming stage, with the Conference currently running on a budget deficit of ten million dollars. Clearly, there is need to provide further support to the Kenyan Government, which has borne the burden of hosting the Conference.

55.   A lasting solution to the conflict in Somalia can only be found if Somali leaders and parties place the interests of their country above every other concern and cooperate fully with the IGAD Facilitation Committee. A strong appeal to this effect remains ever vital. Kenya and the other IGAD countries, as well as the IGAD Partners' Forum and the international observers, that have enabled the Somalia reconciliation process to remain, on course, amid the

many obstacles encountered, should pursue their efforts with more vigour. On its part, the AU stands ready to deploy a monitoring mechanism inside Somalia, as soon as conditions permit.

56.   The continued violations of the UN arms embargo against Somalia contribute to the prevailing insecurity and instability in Somalia. The Commission will continue to work closely with the United Nations Monitoring Group in this regard.

57.   In view of the negative impact of the situation prevailing on the ground on the population and the serious regional consequences of continuing instability, the AU and the international community should spare no effort to ensure the successful conclusion of the ongoing efforts. In this respect, the stability and relative peace, as well as the socio-economic progress prevailing in the region of Somaliland, deserve to be highlighted.

c)   **Côte d'Ivoire**

58.   After the signing on 24 January 2003, of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, encouraging progress was made in the restoration of peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire. However, for almost three months, the process has been suspended, due to a series of incidents. The most noteworthy are the suspension, on 4 March 2004, by seven ministers of the PDCI-RDA of their participation in the Government, following a disagreement between this party and the Head of State; the formation of a coalition of convenience, the G7, bringing together four political parties (PDCI-RDA, RDR, UDPCI, MFA) and three former rebel movements (MPCI, MPIGO, MJP); the activism of the «Young Patriots», a group of young partisans of President Gbagbo; the failure of the disarmament programme, which was scheduled to take place on 10 March 2004, as well as the consequences of the repression of the march organized by the G7 in Abidjan, on 25 March, and its repercussions on 26 and 27 March 2004. As a sign of protest against this repression, the coalition of «Marcoussists» suspended their participation in the National Reconciliation Government.

59.   Members of the United Nations Security Council expressed grave concern over this violence, and requested the Ivorian parties to work unconditionally towards the full implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. The AU Peace and Security Council, meeting in its third session on 27 March 2004, deplored the loss of human lives resulting from the violence, and urged all parties to exercise restraint, resume the political dialogue and work together for the unconditional implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement.

60.   The Follow-Up Committee of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement requested the establishment of an International Commission of Inquiry to ascertain the truth about the events of 25, 26 and 27 March 2004. The Ivorian Head of State and Prime Minister also spoke in favour of the establishment of such a Commission. The United Nations Secretary-General granted this request and asked the UN High Commission for Human Rights to expedite an inquiry.

61.   The report of the UN Commission of Inquiry affirms that the march was a pretext for what proved to be an «operation carefully planned and executed by the security forces, as well as special units and parallel forces under the orders and responsibility of the highest authorities of the State». Security Council Members underscored the importance of putting an end to impunity and provided their support for the High Commission for Human Rights to establish a Commission mandated to look into human rights violations in Côte d'Ivoire since the beginning of the armed rebellion, in September 2002.

62.   In the light of the impasse in the peace process, the AU, in concert with its partners, is prepared to help the Ivorian parties to resume political dialogue, in order to facilitate the return to the Government of ministers of the political parties and movements that had suspended their participation, and bring the Ivorian parties to work towards the total and unconditional implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement.

63.   The reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire cannot be lasting as long as the phenomenon of impunity persists. This is why I, in turn, would like to underscore the urgency of establishing the National Human Rights Commission provided for under the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. In the same context, I fully endorse the decision of the UN High Commission for Human Rights to set up a Commission mandated to investigate the human rights violations. In this respect, it is important for the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights to join in the ongoing efforts.

2004

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African Union Commission

Peace and Security

http://archives.au.int/handle/123456789/2198