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**REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION
ON THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In the communiqué on the situation in Somalia adopted at its 80th meeting held on 18 July 2007 [PSC/PR/Comm(LXXX)], Council decided, *inter-alia*, to extend the mandate of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) for an additional period of six months. In the press statement adopted by its 104th meeting held on 20 December 2007 [PSC/PR/BR/(CIV) (2)], Council, having stressed that the situation in Somalia represents one of the most serious peace and security challenges facing the continent, agreed to meet by mid-January 2008, before the expiry of the mandate of AMISOM, to review the situation and determine the best way forward in preparation for the 11th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, scheduled to take place from 31 January to 2 February 2008, in Addis Ababa.

2. This report, which is submitted in accordance with the above-mentioned communiqué and press statement, covers the political, security and humanitarian developments in Somalia since last July, as well as issues relating to the deployment of AMISOM and the implementation of the arms embargo imposed on Somalia by Security Council resolution 733 (1992) of 23 January 1992. It concludes with recommendations on how best the African Union (AU) could further support the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia.

II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

3. One of the major political developments during the period under review was the convening of the National Reconciliation Congress (NRC), in Mogadishu, from 15 July to 30 August 2007. Over 2,600 delegates took part in the Congress, which was independently organized and managed by a National Governance and Reconciliation Committee (NGRC) headed by former President Ali Mahdi Mohamed. However, some of the actors who could have contributed significantly to the NRC decided to stay away; these included a section of the Hawiye clan in Mogadishu, as well as opposition groups based abroad. The AU, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda sent officials to the opening ceremony. Representatives of the international community based in Nairobi, who were expected to travel to Mogadishu, did not finally attend the opening ceremony, due to security concerns.

4. Council will recall that, at its meeting of 18 July 2007, it welcomed the launching of the NRC as a significant step towards an all-inclusive and genuine reconciliation process, within the framework of the Transitional Federal Charter (TFC). In this respect, Council requested all the representatives of the Somali people participating in the Congress to bear their responsibilities and engage constructively in the process, and to seek peaceful solutions to the problems facing Somalia. It urged the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs), in keeping with the objective of the NRC, to spare no effort to reach out to all sections of the Somali population, with a view to facilitating the reconciliation process.

5. In its resolution 1772 (2007) of 20 August 2007, the United Nations Security Council also welcomed the convening of the NRC, urged the TFIs and all parties in Somalia to respect the conclusions of the Congress and to sustain an equally inclusive ongoing political process thereafter, and encouraged them to unite behind the efforts to promote such an inclusive dialogue. The Security Council reiterated the need for the ongoing political process to agree both on a comprehensive and lasting cessation of hostilities and to produce a roadmap for a comprehensive peace process, including democratic elections at the local, regional and national levels, as set out in the TFC.

6. Immediately after the opening, the NRC went into bridging the existing inter-clan, as well as intra-clan differences, which have now become central to the crisis in Somalia. The early discussions were marked by solemn expressions of repentance for the wrongs committed and declarations of amity and reconciliation. The second phase of the Congress debated the programmes of the Government in general and sought to chart out a roadmap towards progress in governance and development. During this phase, particular attention was paid to the establishment of basic administrative structures and the re-invigoration of the judicial system, as crucial components towards the consolidation of peace and security.

7. Significantly, the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP) adopted, earlier on, formal decisions to recognize the NRC, and undertook to institute legislation necessary for the implementation of the recommendations of the Congress. A similar undertaking to ensure the implementation of those recommendations was made by the President of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG).

8. The Congress concluded its deliberations with the parties agreeing on a number of issues. Among others, mention should be made of the announcement of an end to the civil war and conflicts that have torn Somalia apart since 1978; the call on all Somali parties to voluntarily disarm and return looted property; the request to the TFIs to implement all the constitutional processes provided for by the TFC that would lead to the achievement of federalism in the country; the conduct of a population census, and the holding of free and fair elections that would usher in a democratically elected government before the end of 2009. The Congress also called for the establishment of an effective government, whose members would be drawn both from within and outside the TFP.

9. At the closing of the NRC, President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed pledged to continue the dialogue process. Furthermore, just prior to the conclusion of the NRC, members of the international community supporting the Congress, including the AU, met with the NGRC Chairman, in Nairobi. On that occasion, they stressed the need to devise ways to fully implement the outcome of the Congress, to pursue efforts to reach out to all opposition groups both within and outside Somalia, as well the need for the TFIs to fulfil their obligations under the TFC, especially with regard to federalism, the constitutional process and the preparations for elections. In a separate meeting with Mr. Ali Mahdi, my then Special Representative for Somalia, Ambassador Muhammad Ali Fom, insisted on the need to urgently establish a mechanism to ensure the implementation of the NRC recommendations.

10. Following the conclusion of the NRC, the TFG President, Abdullahi Yusuf, the then Prime Minister, Mohammed Ali Gedi, the Speaker of the TFP, Adam Mohammed Nour, the Chairman of the NGRC, Ali Mahdi, as well as tribal sheiks and other representatives of various Somali factions, travelled to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Under the auspices of King Abdullah, the Somali leaders signed, on 16 September 2007, an agreement regarding the implementation of the recommendations made by the NRC. In the remarks he made on the occasion, King Abdullah urged the Somali parties to follow through the undertakings made, stressing that “reaching an agreement is the first step and must be followed by a full commitment to its provisions, as well as hard work to put it into practice”. On his part, President Abdullahi Yusuf called for the deployment of a joint Arab-African force in Somalia, under the command of the United Nations, to restore peace and security in his country, and urged all Somalis to back such a force. The agreement reached in Jeddah was rejected by the opposition groups, in particular the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC).

11. In the meantime, the various opposition groups met in Asmara from 6 to 13 September 2007, where they held a parallel Congress, attended, among others, by representatives of UIC, the ‘Free Parliamentarians’ led by the former Speaker of the TFP, Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, members of the Somali Diaspora and some clan leaders. The meeting agreed on the formation of an Alliance for the Liberation and Reconstitution of Somalia, with the stated aim of liberating Somalia from “Ethiopian occupation” and launching a political process that would involve all Somali stakeholders and rebuild the Somali state. The Alliance, which predicated talks with the TFG on an Ethiopian withdrawal from Somalia, elected Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, a senior UIC member, as Chairman of its executive committee, while former TFP Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden was appointed Chairman of its Central Committee, which comprises 191 members. The TFG dismissed the Alliance as a terrorist one, stating that it did not pose a real threat. Furthermore, members of the opposition to the TFG, including from the Hawiye clan, disassociated themselves from the Asmara conference and its outcome.

12. On 10 September 2007, the International Contact Group (ICG) on Somalia met in Rome. The meeting, at which the AU was represented, welcomed the commitments of the NRC, as well as those of President Abdullahi Yusuf made at the closing session of the Congress to “pave a new political path that will win the confidence of the Somali people” and to continue the dialogue process. The ICG called upon the TFIs to implement in good faith the recommendations of the NRC, including the urgent elaboration of a roadmap for the remainder of the transitional period. During the meeting, the AU offered to host the next meeting of the ICG, at its headquarters, in Addis Ababa. Subsequently, the Commission initiated steps for this meeting to take place towards mid-December 2007. The idea was to organize this session of the ICG back-to-back with an AU-sponsored high-level meeting on Somalia that would bring together regional, continental and international stakeholders, with a view to re-focussing international attention on the situation and promoting a concerted and better coordinated approach in support of the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia. However, due to calendar constraints, the Commission could not proceed with its plan. Efforts will continue to be made for the convening of the meeting at the appropriate time.

13. The period under consideration also witnessed heightened tension within the TFG, with a deepening rift between President Abdullahi Yusuf and Prime Minister Ali Gedi over issues of transparency and accountability, as well as diverging interpretations of the TFC regarding the term of office of the Prime Minister and the implications thereof. This tension was eventually overcome with the resignation of Mr. Gedi. In an address to the TFP, in Baidoa, on 29 October 2007, Mr. Gedi called on all the members of the Parliament to stand firmly behind the TFG, stressing that, “for all its imperfections, it provides a blueprint for the way forward towards the creation of a new state and for development in Somalia”. He stated that time had come for someone else to lead the Government and take the ongoing process in Somalia to its next stage, and confirmed that he had offered his resignation to the President. On his part, President Abdullahi Yusuf issued a declaration accepting the resignation of Mr. Gedi, seen as a remedy to the then unfolding constitutional crisis, and stating, among others, that there would be no “exclusion and marginalization of the associates of the Prime Minister or any other negative action against them”.

14. Subsequently, Deputy Prime Minister Salim Aliyow Ibrow was appointed as acting Prime Minister. He has since been replaced by Nur Hassan Hussien, a former Head of the ICRC in Somalia. Following extensive consultations, the Prime Minister has now formed a new cabinet based, as the previous one, on the 4.5 clan power sharing formula. The TFP has overwhelmingly endorsed the new cabinet, which includes a substantial number of technocrats, including those from the Diaspora. The first cabinet appointed by the Prime Minister was met with strong disapproval within the TFP, as well as the international community, and, as a result, had to be dissolved even before being presented to Parliament – among others, mention should be made here of the fact that only a few of its members were non-parliamentarians, although the TFP had amended the TFC to allow appointing ministers from outside Parliament.

15. I am glad to note that, since his appointment, the new Prime Minister has repeatedly stressed that reconciliation would be at the core of his activities during his tenure in office. In this respect, it is worth noting the assurances he gave to the AU, as well as to the participants to the meeting convened by the United States’ Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, in Addis Ababa, on 5 December 2007, to discuss developments pertaining to peace and security in the region. In a presidential statement adopted on 19 December 2007, the Security Council, on its part, welcomed the appointment of the new Somali Prime Minister. The Security Council stressed that his appointment offered a renewed opportunity to make further progress on political reconciliation, addressing the humanitarian crisis in Somalia, and on implementing the outcomes of the NRC, leading to a roadmap for the remainder of the transitional period and democratic elections in Somalia, as set out in the TFC.

16. On 17 December 2007, the new Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, briefed the Security Council on the situation on Somalia. On that occasion, he proposed three possible approaches regarding the involvement of the international community in Somalia: *status quo*, with the continuation of the current “business as usual” attitude, with the attendant likelihood of further divisions and violence; organized withdrawal of the international community, which, in effect, would recognize its inability to protect the population and bring about a

lasting peace; and, finally, an immediate and effective action both on the political and security fronts, including the establishment of a government of national unity and the deployment of extra troops to reinforce AMISOM and stabilize the country. In its 19 December presidential statement, the Security Council, while strongly supporting the efforts of the Special Representative, indicated that it was looking forward to hearing more details on the proposals he submitted.

17. In an effort to enhance AU's efforts in support of the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia, I appointed, in October 2007, a new Special Representative for Somalia, in the person of Mr. Nicolas Bwakira. Mr. Bwakira, a Burundian national, has held several senior international positions, including that of Director for Africa at the UNHCR. I would like to seize this opportunity to pay tribute to my former Special Representative, Ambassador Ali Fom, for his tireless efforts and commitment and for the key role he played both during the Somali National Reconciliation Conference, held in Kenya from October 2002 to October 2004, and in subsequent initiatives aimed at furthering peace and reconciliation in Somalia.

18. Following his appointment, Mr. Bwakira undertook, in December last year, visits to Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, to establish initial contacts with the national authorities concerned, as well as with members of the international community, including the United Nations, the European Union (EU) and AU's bilateral partners, and representatives of regional and international NGOs. He seized the opportunity to stress the need for renewed and concerted efforts to overcome the current difficulties in Somalia and to reiterate AU's determination to do whatever it can to contribute to the early restoration of peace and stability in Somalia. My Special Representative is scheduled to travel to the other countries of the region for further consultations. In the meantime, steps are underway to staff his office with the required personnel as well as facilitate his early deployment to Mogadishu, to assume the overall leadership of AMISOM.

III. SECURITY SITUATION

19. While the TFG and Ethiopian forces have continued to make sustained efforts to improve security in the country, the overall situation remains precarious. In Mogadishu, there is an average of 5 to 6 incidents per day. Most of the incidents reported during the period under consideration involved the use of grenade attacks, roadside bombs, mortar attacks and small arms fire against the TFG and Ethiopian forces, as well as clashes between the security forces and anti-government elements, many of whom are believed to belong to the extremist al-Shabaab militia, the youth wing of the UIC.

20. The attacks by the armed elements opposed to the TFG increased significantly immediately after the NRC, in October, but abated thereafter, following the intensification, in November, by the Ethiopian and TFG forces of their operations, particularly in the districts where these armed elements are reported to be hiding. On 12 December 2007, the newly Ethiopian trained Somali troops were deployed in Northern Mogadishu. These better-trained and equipped troops have made it possible to enhance the presence of the Government forces on the ground.

21. Over the past weeks, the anti-government forces have spread their activities to regions that were previously peaceful, though not necessarily under Government control. Their strategy seems to be to further weaken the TFG by destabilising as many areas as possible, fully aware of the fact that the Government does not, at the moment, have the capacity to deploy significant numbers of troops in all the regions.

22. In the Middle and Lower Jubba regions, the al Shabaab are reported to be training new recruits and planning attacks, taking advantage of the instability created by clashes between clans, especially over revenue collected from the Kisimayo port. Armed elements are also reported to be using the Lower Shebelle region to ferry arms. Recently, the TFG forces in the area were attacked and forced to withdraw to Bardoogle. In the Bay region, there have also been stepped up attacks on TFG and Ethiopian positions. Baidoa being the town that hosts the TFP and the majority of the TFG Ministers, the presence of these armed groups poses a real threat. In Bakool, the situation is not different. Due to insurgent threats, since 17 December 2007, the Governor and his key staff have relocated to Baidoa. In Galgaduud, where the presence of the TFG is limited and which is the home of former UIC Chair, Cheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, the regional Governor and police commander are reported to have left the region for Galkayo, in Puntland, citing threats by elements belonging to the UIC.

23. During the past months, there has been increased tension between the semi-autonomous region of Puntland and the self-declared independent Republic of Somaliland. On 17 September 2007, forces loyal to Puntland's authorities clashed with local pro-Somaliland militias near Laascaanood, the capital of the disputed Sool region, in the central north of Somalia. The fighting, which continued sporadically for the remainder of September 2007, escalated in October, claiming several lives and leading to a further deterioration of the situation in the Sool and Sanaag regions. Laascaanood has since remained under the control of the Somaliland forces. At the time of finalizing this report, there were reports of fresh fighting between the two sides. These repeated clashes, which are a matter of deep concern, particularly as they affect an area that had previously largely remained peaceful, are linked to conflicting territorial claims by the two sides: while Puntland claims parts of the area in view of the ethnic make up of its inhabitants and their clan ties to Puntland, Somaliland maintains that the disputed region lies within its colonial era borders.

24. The period under review also witnessed incidents involving AMISOM. On 8 October 2007, mortar attacks targeted AMISOM position at Kilometre 4; there were no casualties. On 24 October, three soldiers suffered minor injuries following a grenade attack on the Mission's position at Km 4. On 19 December, insurgents attacked AMISOM troops guarding the airport; the attack was repulsed without any casualties on the side of AMISOM.

25. Somalia is one of the highest-risk areas for piracy in the world. According to available statistics, during the first nine months of 2007, 26 incidents against ships sailing in or near Somali waters were recorded, a further indication of the absence of effective coastal surveillance in the country. Over the past years, the AU has regularly been approached by a number of countries whose citizens were taken hostage or kidnapped in Somali waters. For instance, on 26 August 2007, the Government of

Pakistan formally wrote to the Commission for it to assist in securing the release of two vessels and their crews hijacked by pirates around Somalia.

26. This situation, amongst others, poses a threat to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, especially since about 80% of the assistance to Somalia by the World Food Programme (WFP) is shipped by sea. It is against this background that the WFP and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) made appeals for concerted international efforts to address the problem and that the United Nations Security Council, in its resolution 1772 (2007), “encouraged member states whose naval vessels and military aircrafts operate in international waters and airspace adjacent to the coast of Somalia to be vigilant to any incident of piracy therein and to take appropriate action to protect merchant shipping, in particular the transportation of humanitarian aid, against any such act, in line with relevant international law”. On 2 October 2007, the French Government wrote to the Commission to confirm France’s readiness, through its navy, to escort ships transporting WFP humanitarian supplies to Somalia. I would like to welcome the concrete steps that have since been taken by the French Government, as well as the consultations undertaken with the AU in this respect in order to facilitate coordination with AMISOM, especially when the escorted ships are about to dock.

IV. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

27. The prevailing insecurity in Mogadishu, in particular, and in Somalia, in general, has negatively impacted on the humanitarian situation in the country. The violence and fighting in Mogadishu have resulted in a number of casualties among the civilian population, especially in the months of October and November 2007. Furthermore, there have been, over the past months, massive displacements of civilian population. According to the United Nations, over 240,000 people have moved out of Mogadishu since the end of October 2007; in mid-December, the total number of civilians who fled the city in 2007 was estimated at about 600,000. While the prevailing insecurity in Mogadishu stands out as the major cause of these displacements, other secondary factors are also at play: they include lack of livelihood and requests by the authorities that people evacuate some neighbourhoods to facilitate the search operations conducted by the Government forces in order to rout out insurgent elements, as part of their efforts to restore security.

28. While most of the IDPs went to the Lower Shabelle region, especially Afgooye, 30 km west of Mogadishu, large numbers of people fled even further to Bay, Mudug and Hiraan regions. These movements of population constitute an additional burden for host communities that are already facing an acute humanitarian situation, compounded by the disruption, as a result of insecurity, of the livestock and agricultural markets in Mogadishu, which provide crucial income for the producers based in the Lower and Middle Shabelle. It should also be noted that the fighting that took place in the Sool region between Puntland and Somaliland forces has also led to large-scale displacement. About 30,000 displaced people are reported to be vulnerable and in need of assistance.

29. The prevailing insecurity constitutes a serious constraint for the delivery of assistance to the needy population, especially as incidents targeting the humanitarian organisations and workers continue to be reported. Humanitarian efforts are further hindered by *ad hoc* roadblocks, including on the Mogadishu/ Afgooye road, which is a major area of humanitarian operations. Despite exemptions granted by the TFG, humanitarian workers indicate that they are often requested to pay taxes at these roadblocks, whose number reached 336 in the month of November 2007. As a result, the cost of transportation has increased, while the delivery of much needed humanitarian assistance is being further delayed.

30. In view of this situation, I welcome the discussions between the United Nations and the Somali authorities in order to address the problems being encountered and overcome the mistrust between the TFG and the international humanitarian agencies, as well as the pledge by Prime Minister Hassan Hussein that his Government will fully support the relief efforts. On its part, the Commission has seized every opportunity to impress upon the Somali authorities on the need to do all they can to facilitate the work of the humanitarian organizations and access to needy populations.

31. In spite of the challenging environment in which they are operating, the humanitarian organisations continue to play an important role in alleviating the suffering of the affected population. Thus, a “wet feeding” programme was initiated in Mogadishu, while food distribution benefiting about 180,000 people has taken place along the Mogadishu/Afgooye road. Furthermore, several WFP ships escorted by the French navy and carrying food aid docked at Marka seaport. Immunisation campaign aimed at reaching children and women in several settlements situated along the Mogadishu/Afgooye road have also been undertaken. It should be pointed out that the relief work in Somalia is carried out by local partners and national staff of international NGOs and UN agencies as the security conditions do not make it possible to deploy international staff. I would like to express AU’s appreciation to all the personnel concerned for their courage and dedication.

32. The Consolidated Appeal (CAP) for Somalia for the year 2008, which was launched on 11 December 2007, amounts to US\$ 406 million, out of which a little over 26 million are already available. Among others, the priorities identified in the CAP revolve around the following: provision of assistance to about 1,5 million needy people; protection of, and respect for, human rights, and enhancement of local capacity for the delivery of basic social services and for disaster preparedness and response. I appeal to the international community, including Member States in a position to do so, to contribute financial assistance to cover the outstanding requirements of the CAP. The 2007 CAP amounted to US\$ 383 million, out of which 275 million were received by mid-December.

33. As part of its mandate, and in spite of the constraints facing the Mission, AMISOM has continued to provide medical services, including treatment for minor illnesses, gunshot wounds, pregnant women and children, to between 200 and 500 people a month. It also provides water to the population residing within the immediate surroundings of the Mission’s Headquarters, in Mogadishu.

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF AMISOM MANDATE AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR A POSSIBLE UN OPERATION

34. During the period under review, no significant progress was made in strengthening AMISOM, owing to the continued financial and logistical constraints facing the Commission. The total budget for AMISOM for a year amounts to about US\$ 622 million. So far, a little over US\$ 32 million have been contributed, originating exclusively from AU partners, namely the EU, Italy, Sweden, China and the League of Arab States. The United Kingdom has pledged £ 8.5 million for AMISOM deployment, and provided assistance for the establishment of AMISOM Support Management Planning Unit (SMPU). The EU has also pledged 5 million Euro for the SPMU and another 500,000 to cover insurance cost, in addition to technical assistance for budget related matters. The United Nations has deployed a team of military and civilian experts to the AU Headquarters to support mission planning and management. Furthermore, the US continues to provide significant logistical support to the Ugandan contingent, as well as communication equipment for the Mission' strategic Headquarters in Addis Ababa, and has pledged to facilitate transportation to Somalia for Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs). NATO has also pledged to airlift troops to Somalia. Also, as reported to Council earlier, Algeria provided airlift for the initial deployment, while Kenya offered other facilities in support of the operation. On its part, Nigeria pledged a financial contribution of US\$ 2 million. Yet it is clear that the resources and the logistical support mobilized so far fall far short of what is required for the full deployment of AMISOM and the sustenance of its operations.

35. As a result, to date, out of the 8,000 troops authorized by Council in January 2007, only 2 Ugandan battalions and an advance team of 192 Burundian soldiers, which were deployed on 23 and 24 December 2007, are on the ground, in Mogadishu. However, at the time of finalizing this report, steps were underway to deploy the main body of the first of the two battalions pledged by Burundi. The US is providing the support required for the ongoing Burundian deployment. The remaining Burundian battalion is ready for deployment, but assistance has yet to be mobilized for major equipment, in-theatre logistical support, and payment of troops allowances. No timetable has yet been set for the deployment of the contingents pledged by Ghana (350) and Nigeria (1 battalion of 850). In this respect, it should be noted that a Ghanaian envoy visited Addis Ababa to discuss issues relating to the deployment of the Ghanaian contingent; the Commission also intends to dispatch a team to Nigeria to follow-up on the pledge made by that country. During the period under review, no new contributions of troops were recorded. The Member States approached by the Commission either indicated that they were not in a position to deploy troops or are yet to formally communicate their responses.

36. Consequently, AMISOM has not been able to expand its activities. The Mission continues to provide VIP escort, to conduct confidence-building patrols within its immediate area of operations and to ensure the protection of the airport, seaport, Kilometer 4 and Villa Somalia, which hosts the presidency. AMISOM also contributed to ensuring security during the convening of the NRC. Furthermore, the Mission has continued to receive weapons surrendered by various armed elements for storage and destruction. Finally, and as indicated above, the Mission provides limited humanitarian

support to the local population, as well as on-demand escort for humanitarian organizations.

37. I would like, once again, to express my appreciation to the Ugandan troops for their efforts, in spite of the very challenging conditions in which they are working. My appreciation also goes to the Ugandan Government for its continued commitment to the promotion of lasting peace and reconciliation in Somalia. I also wish to commend the Government of Burundi for providing troops to AMISOM. I would like to seize this opportunity to express gratitude to Member States and all AU partners that have made contributions in support of AMISOM.

38. In late September, the Commission organized a five-day working visit for the African Defence Attaché based in Addis Ababa. During the visit, they held discussions with AMISOM Force Commander and TFG officials. This provided them with a better understanding of the needs of AMISOM in terms of strength and equipment. A similar visit is planned for non-African Defense Attaché, with the view to providing them with first hand information on the situation and the needs of AMISOM.

39. As Council is aware, AMISOM is tasked to provide, within capabilities and as appropriate, technical and other support for the disarmament and stabilization efforts. It is in this context that, in early October last year, following a request by the TFG, the Commission, together with the Nairobi-based Regional Centre for Small Arms in the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa (RECSA), convened a meeting to discuss issues of small arms in Somalia. The meeting, which included participants from the SPMU, UNDP Somalia Office and the TFG, recommended that an AU-led mission including relevant international organizations be undertaken to Mogadishu to: assess the extent to which action can be undertaken in the area of DDR in Somalia under current circumstances; discuss how to integrate small arms and DDR activities into the work of AMISOM; look at ways in which the capacity of the relevant Somali institutions could be strengthened; and assess the situation surrounding stockpile management of the weapons collected by AMISOM and identify ways to improve it. The mission will travel to Mogadishu as soon as the required preparations are finalized.

40. As part of the implementation of the Mission's mandate, the SPMU, thanks to financial support provided by the Italian Government, organized two coordinating and information sharing meetings with major United Nations and other humanitarian agencies in Nairobi and Addis Ababa, respectively from 11 to 16 November and 6 to 9 December 2007. The main objectives of the workshops were to identify areas of synergy and collaboration between AMISOM and other actors in Somalia, to support AMISOM planning capability, and to articulate coordinated responses to the current needs of Somalia through exchange of information. A number of recommendations were made, including the establishment of a working group bringing together all stakeholders, the review of AMISOM mandate to highlight protection and human rights issues, the institutionalization of joint AMISOM/UN visits to Somalia, and a strengthened political presence in Mogadishu to support more effectively the reconciliation process. A final meeting is expected to take place in the coming weeks to consolidate the recommendations made and pave the way for their implementation.

41. As indicated above, on 18 July 2007, Council extended the mandate of AMISOM for a further period of 6 months, a decision welcomed by the United Nations Security Council in its resolution 1772 (2007) of 20 August 2007. In that decision, Council reiterated its urgent call to the AU Member States and partners to provide the necessary financial, logistical and technical support to make it possible for AMISOM to rapidly attain its authorized strength and continue its operations. It also called on all Member States to contribute troops and other personnel required for AMISOM. Council stressed, once again, the need for the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia that will take over from AMISOM and support the long-term stabilization and post-conflict reconstruction of Somalia. Pending such a deployment, Council called on the United Nations to put in place a financial, logistical and technical support package for AMISOM, within the context of the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

42. As a follow-up to this decision, I wrote, on 4 August 2007, to the United Nations Secretary-General, echoing the call by Council for the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia and the provision, in the meantime, of support to AMISOM. While concurring with the position expressed by the Secretary-General in his 25 June 2007 report on the situation in Somalia that a UN operation would only succeed if deployed in support of a political process and not as a substitution for one, I expressed the hope that the United Nations would look at the situation in Somalia with the required flexibility, bearing in mind that the political and peacekeeping aspects are closely interrelated and mutually reinforcing. In this respect, I referred to the NRC, which was then ongoing, and to the duty of the international community to encourage the Somalis and provide further support in order to enhance the prospects of lasting peace and reconciliation. I stressed that failure by the international community to act swiftly in support of the ongoing process could undermine the modest progress already achieved in Somalia, with far-reaching regional implications and further suffering for the Somali people.

43. In response, the UN Secretary-General wrote to me on 24 September 2007. In his letter, he indicated that, in his view, the most immediate priority for the international community at this stage is to assist in bringing together all Somali groups under a credible and genuine peace process. He stated that it was crucial to ensure that the conditions set out in his 25 June report are in place before the possible deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation, adding that, in the view of the United Nations, the NRC had not been able to create such conditions and, therefore, would not justify a review of the UN position. At the same time, he expressed United Nations' readiness to explore with the AU how the UN may provide further assistance in strengthening and expanding the presence of AMISOM on the ground.

44. In his report of 7 November 2007 on the situation in Somalia, the Secretary-General reiterated his belief that, under the prevailing political and security situation, the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation cannot be considered a realistic and viable option. He proposed to look at additional security options, including the deployment of a robust multinational force or coalition of the willing. On its part, the Security Council, both in its resolution 1772 (2007) and presidential statement of 19 December 2007, urged the international community to provide support to AMISOM, and

requested the Secretary-General to consult with the AU on what further support might be provided to the Mission and to continue to develop the existing contingency plan for the possible deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation to succeed AMISOM. At the time of finalizing this report, a United Nations team was in Addis Ababa for consultation with the Commission as part of the assessment of AMISOM needs and the type of support it needs, as well as of the continuing process of developing the existing contingency plan.

VI. ARMS EMBARGO

45. As Council is aware, the United Nations Security Council, through resolution 733 (1992) of 23 January 1992, decided that all states shall, for the purposes of establishing peace and stability in Somalia, immediately implement a general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Somalia until it decides otherwise. Since then, there have been continued efforts to monitor the implementation of the arms embargo and ensure compliance with the Security Council resolution.

46. On 17 July 2007, the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council the report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia. In its report, the Monitoring Group stated that Somalia was “literally awash with arms”. The Monitoring Group indicated that “the sheer quantities, numbers and diversity of arms, especially in Central and Southern Somalia, are greater than at any time since the early 1990s”. The majority of arms, it was stated, “appear to have been brought into Somalia via clandestine roads and have found their way to a variety of key Somali actors”, while “other quantities of arms have also been clandestinely brought into Somalia for the various other key Somali actors...., one of the prime avenues being the arm dealers from the Bakaraaha arms market”, in Mogadishu.

47. The Monitoring Group made a number of recommendations aimed at enhancing compliance with the arms embargo. It, however, indicated that successful implementation of these recommendations would depend on the establishment of a viable Government in Somalia. The Group stressed the need for the TFG to “clearly establish its authority and accompanying governmental institutions before the continuous and vexing problems associated with widespread insecurity can be brought under control”. It identified, among others factors contributing to insecurity, the continued arms flows and powerful independent armed groups outside the control of the TFG, overall lack of regulatory control of the economy, and lack of control over Somalia’s borders and coastal waters.

48. In its resolution 1766 (2007) of 23 July 2007, the Security Council stressed the obligation of all Member States to comply fully with the measures imposed by resolution 733 (1992), and expressed its intention, in light of the report of the Monitoring Group, to consider specific action to improve implementation and compliance with the arms embargo. At the same time, the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of the Monitoring Group, requesting the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to re-establish the Group for a further six months. In its resolution 1772 (2007) of 20 August 2007, the Security Council emphasized the continued contribution made to Somalia’s peace and security by the arms embargo, demanded that all Member States,

in particular those of the region, fully comply with it, and reiterated its intension to consider urgently ways to strengthen its effectiveness, including through targeted measures.

49. On 14 December 2007, the coordinator of the Monitoring Group wrote to the Commission, seeking AMISOM's agreement for a visit to the arms storage facility put in place by the Mission in Mogadishu, in order to take the details of the arms seized or discovered, and launch investigations on the producers of those weapons and the delivery channels. At the time of finalizing this report, the Commission was considering how best it could facilitate the proposed visit by the Monitoring Group.

VII. OBSERVATIONS

50. Looking at the developments of the last six months, one cannot but recognize that the progress made towards lasting peace and reconciliation in Somalia remains extremely limited. More than fifteen years after the onset of the civil war and nearly four years following the conclusion of the IGAD-sponsored Reconciliation Conference in Kenya, Somalia continues to be plagued by persistent violence and insecurity, the absence of effective governance structures capable of performing their functions, including delivering basic social services, an acute humanitarian crisis, and economic collapse, all factors which have taken a heavy toll on the population. This situation has seriously undermined the relative peace that existed in other parts of the country, notably in the Sool region, and brought further instability to a region already faced with huge security challenges.

51. While the convening of the NRC in Mogadishu in July and August 2007 represented a landmark in the effort to promote an all-inclusive political process, the Congress is yet to yield the much-expected results in terms of bringing together the various Somali stakeholders onto the path of durable peace. Although, some steps were taken by the TFG to guarantee the credibility of the process, crucial stakeholders boycotted the Congress, with some resorting to violence and, in some instances, outright acts of terrorism, to achieve their political objectives and undermine all attempts at achieving a peaceful solution. Divisions and lack of harmony within the TFIs, particularly the TFG, with the rift between the President and the former Prime Minister, coupled with the weak human resource, financial and managerial capacity of the Somali institutions and other factors, aggravated the situation. As a result, there was no an immediate and effective follow-up to the recommendations of the NRC.

52. Twelve months after the initial decision authorizing the deployment of AMISOM, less than a quarter of the mandated strength is on the ground. In spite of the numerous appeals made by the AU, echoed by the UN Security Council in several resolutions and presidential statements, the financial and logistical support mobilized so far, which comes mainly from the AU partners, is far short of what is required to fully deploy the Mission, provide it with the required equipment and sustain its operations on the ground. In addition, to date, the pledges made by Member States to contribute troops for AMISOM represent only a little over half of the authorized strength. This state of affairs, not only deprives AMISOM of the much needed reinforcement and of critical components, notably the maritime one, but also make it more difficult for the Commission to engage the international community effectively for it to be more

forthcoming in its support and live up to its responsibilities towards Somalia and its people.

53. Another contributing factor to the limited results achieved so far is the lack of cohesion and unity of purpose within the region. As experience has time and again demonstrated, regional cohesion is a key ingredient in any attempt to bring about lasting peace and reconciliation in Somalia. Unless the TFG, which is the result of a regionally and internationally sponsored process, operates in a more conducive regional environment it would face huge challenges in fulfilling its responsibilities.

54. Finally, the support received from the larger international community remains inadequate. Much more is needed to build and enhance the capacity of the TFIs for them to effectively play the role expected of them; similar efforts are required to facilitate the full deployment of AMISOM and the implementation of its mandate; urgent action is needed to ensure the deployment of a United Nations operation that would take over from AMISOM and support the long-term reconstruction and stabilization of Somalia.

55. When, towards the end of 2006, the TFG returned to Mogadishu and regained control of large parts of the country, the international community as a whole agreed that this represented an unprecedented opportunity to restore structures of governance in the country, as well as to bring to a definite end the violence that Somalia witnessed for more than a decade and the untold suffering inflicted on its people. However, as stressed by Council in its press statement of 20 December 2007, it is today clear that both the Somali actors and the international community as a whole, have failed to take advantage of this window of opportunity and to mobilize the political will required to bring about lasting peace and reconciliation in Somalia.

56. While valuable time has been lost, turning around the situation and achieving lasting peace and reconciliation in Somalia remains within reach. However, this would require determined action by both the Somalis and the international community. In this respect, the following needs to be highlighted:

- (i) First and foremost, the TFG should urgently devise concrete ways to fully implement the outcome of the NRC, and adopt a broader inclusive approach that will appeal to all Somali stakeholders who reject violence, both within and outside Somalia, in line within the TFC. The AU is ready to assist in this respect, working closely with all relevant international actors.

The composition of the new cabinet and the repeated assurances given by the Prime Minister about reconciliation are encouraging signs; they need to be followed through and sustained. At the same time, the TFIs should strengthen their cohesion and unity of purpose.

- (ii) The international community, including AU Member States, should take the necessary steps to enhance the capacity of the TFIs to enable them fully assume their responsibilities, for all efforts to consolidate peace, promote reconciliation and facilitate reconstruction would fail if not sustained by the establishment of effective governance structures, including in the area of security, administration and justice, as well as the extension of TFG authority.

In the coming weeks, the Commission intends to consult with ECA and ADB, as well as with other relevant African institutions, with the view of dispatching, as early as possible, an assessment team that would identify the most critical needs of the TFG and make recommendations on how best to mobilize support both within and outside the continent.

- (iii) The deployment of AMISOM needs to be accelerated in order to effectively assist in the stabilization of the country and help create the necessary political space for all Somalis to contribute positively to the reconciliation process.

This requires that Member States respond positively and swiftly to the repeated appeals made to them over the past months to provide the troops and other personnel needed to reach AMISOM authorized strength. The Commission will devise ways of more effective engagement with Member States, including through sensitization missions to potential TCCs, and better explain how they could, within their respective capabilities, contribute to the requirements of the Mission.

The full deployment of AMISOM also requires that increased resources and logistical support be mobilized. Clearly, our partners have a key role to play in this regard, especially as the AU, in deploying in Somalia, is also acting on behalf of the larger international community. Renewed efforts should be made to this end.

At the same time, AU Member States should also make financial and logistical contributions towards the full deployment of AMISOM and the sustenance of its operations. It is a matter of deep concern to the Commission to note that very few Member States have, so far, provided support, even if symbolic, to the Mission. In this respect, and in view of the fact that no peace support operation can be efficiently managed based only on voluntary and, therefore, unpredictable contributions, Council may wish to look, once again, at this issue with a view to finding more appropriate solutions.

Furthermore, there is urgent need to enhance the management of AMISOM and ensure greater responsiveness of the relevant structures of the Commission to its needs, particularly as far as recruitment and procurement are concerned, as well as closer coordination among all Departments concerned.

In the meantime, I recommend that Council extend the mandate of AMISOM for another period of six months.

- (iv) More efforts are required to build consensus in the region in support of the ongoing process in Somalia. For all its shortcomings, the TFG is yet the best chance in years for moving forward peace and reconciliation in Somalia. The AU, working with its partners, in particular the United Nations, has a role to play in this respect.

More generally, the crisis in Somalia and its regional implications point to the need for a regional and coherent approach, if lasting peace and stability is to be achieved. The Commission will consult with relevant regional and international players to further reflect on the issue and on how best the support of the international community could be enlisted for such an undertaking.

- (v) The UN arms embargo imposed by resolution 733 (1992) needs, on basis of clear benchmarks, to be reviewed in such a way as to enable the TFG, which is internationally recognized, to build up and equip its security forces, which should be all-inclusive, while at the same time maintaining and strengthening its provisions against elements whose actions are bent on undermining peace and reconciliation in Somalia.

More generally, the United Nations Security Council should take measures against “those who seek to prevent or block the NRC or a peaceful political process, or those who threaten the TFIs or AMISOM by force, or take action that undermines stability in Somalia or the region”, in line with its intention as stated in resolution 1772(2007).

- (vi) The AU and the larger international community need to widen their perspectives and look more closely at developments taking place in other parts of Somalia. Concretely, urgent and concerted action should be taken to contain the conflict between Puntland and Somaliland, which, if allowed to continue, will spread violence and destabilize in areas that were previously peaceful, with far-reaching humanitarian and regional implications.
- (vii) While efforts are underway on the political and security aspects, humanitarian assistance to affected populations in Somalia should be stepped up. In this respect, building trust between the TFG and the humanitarian community, facilitating access to needy populations and improving security are key. The AU, in spite of its limitations, has a role to play both in terms of advocacy and mobilizing assistance from the continent and the larger international community.
- (viii) As Council has repeatedly emphasized, the long-term stabilization and reconstruction of Somalia requires resources and expertise that are far beyond the current capacities of the AU. Hence, the need for the United Nations Security Council, in line with its primary responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security, to urgently authorize the deployment of a UN operation that would take over from AMISOM. Council may wish to renew its call to the United Nations to that effect, while more sustained efforts should be made to mobilize the support needed within the international community.

57. It is my earnest hope that the present meeting of Council will undertake a thorough and objective assessment of the situation in Somalia and the efforts made so far, with a view to agreeing on a focused and determined course of action on the basis of which the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, at its forthcoming session at the end of this month, could generate further political will and resolve to act. Somalia is a test case of our determination to rid our continent of the scourge of conflicts and give

concrete meaning to our stated commitment to assist the Somali people. It is also a test of the commitment of the United Nations to fully assume its primary responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security.

58. More than ever before, swift and collective action is needed not only because of the unfolding humanitarian crisis and the suffering inflicted on the Somali people, but also in view of the security implications of the current situation. Failure to effectively address the crisis in Somalia will leave a legacy of unfulfilled promises towards the Somali people, damage the credibility of the international community, as well as further undermine the prospects of peace in the country and compound efforts to promote regional stability.

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