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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

163rd MEETING

22 DECEMBER 2008

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/MIN/Comm.2(C LXIII)

COMMUNIQUE

**COMMUNIQUE OF THE 163RD MEETING OF
THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL**

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 163rd meeting held at ministerial level, on 22 December 2008, adopted the following decision on the situation in the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC):

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the situation in the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo [PSC/MIN/Comm.2(CLXIII)] and the statements by the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for DRC, Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of Nigeria, the representatives of the DRC, Kenya, in its capacity as the country chairing the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, and the Executive Secretariat of that organization ;
2. **Endorses** the conclusions of the Extraordinary Summit of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) on DRC held in Ezulwini, Kingdom of Swaziland, on 20 October 2008, and in Sandton, South Africa, on 9 November 2008, the declaration adopted by the Summit of the Great Lakes Region, held in Nairobi on 7 November 2008, and the decisions adopted by the ministerial meeting of the countries of the region held in Nairobi on 20 December 2008;
3. **Recalls** the communiqué of its 155th meeting held on 31 October 2008, as well as the press statement of the Chairperson of the Commission of 28 October 2008;
4. **Further recalls** that the continued presence of the ex-Far/Interahamwe in Eastern DRC undermines stability in the region and strains relations between the DRC and Rwanda;
5. **Recalls also** the Nairobi communiqué of 9 November 2007 between the Governments of the DRC and Rwanda, as well as the *Actes d'Engagement* adopted by the Conference on Peace, Security, Stability and Development in the Kivus, held at Goma, North Kivu, from 6 to 23 January 2008;
6. **Reiterates its deep concern** at the prevailing security and humanitarian situation in Eastern DRC, particularly in North Kivu, since the resumption, on 28 August 2008, of fighting between the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) and the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP) of dissident General Laurent Nkunda;
7. **Re-affirms its support** to the institutions established after the general elections of 2006, as well as its commitment to the respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the DRC and the authority of the Congolese Government over the entire national territory;
8. **Strongly condemns** the declaration made by the CNDP on 1st October 2008, calling for the overthrow of the Congolese Government and rejecting the AMANI programme, which is the consultation framework for the implementation of the *Actes d'Engagement* of Goma;

9. **Commends** the mobilisation of the international community to support the peace process in the DRC and to contribute towards the alleviation of the current humanitarian crisis, notably in the areas affected by fighting. Council **notes** that the increasing influx of refugees and the stress it has on the neighbouring countries and **calls** on the international community to assist in resettlement efforts of the refugees in the host countries ;

10. **Further condemns** the numerous atrocities committed against the civilian population, in particular women and children, and **deplores** the persistence of impunity in eastern DRC. In this respect, Council **calls on** the international community to take the necessary measures to bring to justice those suspected of committing human rights violations and abuses against the civilian population and all those involved in the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Congo;

11. **Welcomes** the appointment of Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo as Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the Great Lakes Region, and that of Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, as co-Facilitator of the Follow-up Mechanism established by the Nairobi Summit of 7 November 2008, and **expresses** appreciation for the remarkable work accomplished on the ground towards finding a lasting solution to the crisis;

12. **Expresses appreciation** for the launching, under the auspices of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Follow up Mechanism, of discussions between the Government and the CNDP, in Nairobi, on 8 December 2008, and **urges** the parties to conduct the dialogue in a frank and constructive manner in order to restore peace, security and stability in North Kivu, in scrupulous respect for the integrity and sovereignty of the country, as well as the Goma process;

13. **Welcomes** the joint operation undertaken by the DRC, Uganda and Sudan in the Garamba Park against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), whose presence in the North Eastern DRC is a serious threat to peace, security and stability throughout the region. Council **considers** that this initiative should inspire other actions against the negative forces in the region;

14. **Further expresses appreciation** for the significant progress made in the normalisation of relations between the DRC and Rwanda and, in this regard, **commends** the Agreement reached at Goma between the Foreign Ministers of the two countries, on 5 December 2008, and **calls** for the full implementation of the Nairobi communiqué of 9 November 2007, including the plan for the disarmament of the ex-FAR/Interahamwé and the neutralization of the threat that they constitute for the two countries, the intensification of dialogue between the border authorities of the two countries and the resumption of the activities of the Economic Community of the Countries of the Great Lakes (CEPGL);

15. **Underlines** the urgent necessity to consolidate and deepen the progress made in the implementation of the Nairobi and the Goma processes, and **urges again** the parties to these processes, the countries of the Region and the entire international community to continue to support them in order to restore lasting peace, security and stability in DRC, as well as to accelerate the integration and development process of the countries of the Region;

16. **Reiterates its support** to the United Nations Mission in the DRC (MONUC) for its efforts aimed at creating conditions for the respect of the unilateral cease-fire announced by the CNDP on 29 October 2008, and **welcomes** the adoption by the United Nations Security Council of the resolution 1843 (2008) of 20 November 2008, in which, among others, the Security Council authorized an increase of MONUC's strength. Council **encourages** the Security Council to seize the occasion of the renewal of the mandate of MONUC, towards the end of this month, to strengthen the said mandate, with a view to addressing more adequately the increasing demands on the ground, in particular the monitoring of the borders with a view to combating the illicit trafficking of arms and other products ;

17. **Welcomes** the efforts of the regional countries under the aegis of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and **further welcomes** the entry into force of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes region, on 21 June 2008. Council **requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to continue supporting the process of the International Conference, particularly by providing support to the Executive Secretariat to enable it to fully play its role in the implementation of the Pact;

18. **Welcomes** the initiatives taken by the Chairperson of the Commission, including through the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, and his Emissary, Mr. Ibrahima Fall, former UN Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, and **requests** him to intensify his efforts to support the various ongoing processes in the region;

19. **Further requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to take necessary measures to significantly enhance the AU contribution to the post-conflict reconstruction efforts in the DRC, including by quickly dispatching a multidisciplinary mission to assess the situation on the ground and make recommendations on the areas in which the AU Commission and Member States could provide an increased support to the reconstruction process and peace building efforts in the DRC;

20. **Decides** to remain seized of the matter.

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