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UNION AFRICAINE
UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Telephone +251115- 517700 Fax: +251115- 517844
Website: www.africa-union.org

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**REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF REFUGEES, RETURNEES
AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN AFRICA
JANUARY – JULY 2007**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Report on the Situation of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Africa presents the latest developments on forced population displacement in the Continent since the last report to Council in January 2007. It gives an analytic regional breakdown of forced displacement resulting mainly from conflicts and natural or man-made disasters, as well as the contributions made by Member States in responding to such crises. The Report also covers programmes and activities undertaken by the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and IDPs and the AU Commission in implementing the various Decisions of the Executive Council, especially the most recent ones: Decision EX.CL/Dec.284 (IX) adopted in Banjul, The Gambia in July 2006; Decision EX.CL/Dec.289 (IX) on the Ministerial Conference on Refugee, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Africa that was organised in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in early June 2006; and Decision EX.CL/Dec.319 (X) adopted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January 2007.

2. It further gives an update on the preparations for the 2008 Special Summit of Heads of State and Government on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa. The implementation of programmes and activities were carried out in collaboration with AU Partners and other relevant organizations.

II. REVIEW OF THE GENERAL SITUATION OF REFUGEES, RETURNEES AND INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

3. The state of Africa's refugees, returnees and IDPs has shown no significant improvements since the last reporting period. Some of the growing trends and concerns that emerged in the compilation of this report include the increasing complexities of mixed migration flows towards more developed areas within the Continent and outside, the impact of natural disasters on already vulnerable populations, and the difficulties facing humanitarian aid workers in delivering assistance and protection to affected populations.

4. Repatriation exercises have been taking place around the Continent, significant among which were the end of the UNHCR voluntary repatriation of Angolan refugees in March 2007 and the Liberian refugees in June 2007. It is worth commending those Member States that helped share the burden of hosting these refugees as well as those thousands more across the Continent, awaiting the opportunity to return to their homes in safety and dignity. The challenges of hosting refugees have grown more difficult for some States, given their scarce resources for their own nationals, and has gotten more complex with the increased migration of other Africans who have left their homes in search of better economic opportunities and social services.

5. Another area of concern for the AU Commission is the growing frequency and intensity of disasters on the Continent. During the first half of 2007, heavy rains in Burundi, Mozambique and Madagascar led to serious flooding that forced hundreds to leave behind their homes and livelihoods. Meanwhile, most countries have yet to recover from the humanitarian crises brought about by disasters in 2006. As an act of solidarity, the African Union made financial contributions to some affected Member States. However, the resources available to respond rapidly and adequately to these situations are becoming more challenging as aid organizations struggle to meet the growing needs on the Continent. As part of its operations in Africa for 2007, the WFP expects to provide food assistance to some 1.4 million refugees, 4 million IDPs, and 1.3 million returnees. However the Organization is already facing shortfalls and ration cuts in some of its operations such as in Tanzania, Uganda and Burundi. It is important for Member States to put in place reliable disaster preparedness and response mechanisms at the national and regional levels.

6. It is also necessary to bring to light the increasing dangers faced by humanitarian aid workers and peacekeepers in the field. The African Union has on many occasions voiced its concerns on the repeated assaults on humanitarian aid workers and peacekeepers that are protecting vulnerable populations. In particular, the security situation in Darfur and Somalia has grown more precarious over the last few months with increasing attacks against troops from the African Union Mission in The Sudan (AMIS) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), thus affecting the delivery of aid to the affected populations.

7. In consideration of this report and in the search for durable solutions to the situation of refugees, returnees and IDPs in Africa, especially in their return, resettlement, reintegration and rehabilitation, it is of utmost importance that Member States and the international community reflect on the urgency and critical nature of the situation and continue to give their support, both financial and material to assist the forcibly displaced populations estimated to be over 20 million. The Table annexed to this Report gives a comparative analysis of the major concentration of the forced displacement population of the five regions of the African Union Member States during the period January 2006 to January 2007.

III. REGIONAL ANALYSIS

Northern Region

8. **Algeria** is host to about 165,000 Sahrawi refugees in five camps. The refugees are the largest group of forcibly displaced persons in the northern region and are relentlessly dependent on external food assistance. Such assistance has mostly been provided by the Government of Algeria and the UN agencies, namely WFP and UNHCR. From January to April 2007, WFP provided general rations to 125,000 of the most vulnerable refugees in the camps in the west of Algeria.

Western Region

9. In the last five years, the Western Region has seen a decrease in the number of conflicts and new occurrences of forced displacement. This situation has prompted the voluntary repatriation of thousands of refugees and IDPs to their homes in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Cote d'Ivoire, and UNHCR hopes to conclude its voluntary repatriation programme of Liberian refugees from the region by the end of June 2007. At the same time, some refugees are reluctant to return because of inaccessibility to basic public services and unreliable infrastructure.

10. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons together with the African Union Commission undertook a field assessment mission to Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, from 18 to 29 May 2007 to evaluate the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons. The delegation was led by the Chairperson of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Ambassador of Gabon to Ethiopia. Other members of the delegation included the Ambassador of Mali to Ethiopia, and an official of the Division of Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees and Displaced Persons in the Department of Political Affairs. The delegation met with Government Officials, Representatives of the African Union Offices, UNHCR, other UN and Humanitarian Agencies and exchanged views on the humanitarian situation in the two countries. The mission compiled useful information, which gives a true picture of the humanitarian situation on the ground and contributes to the accurate reporting to Member States.

11. In **Côte d'Ivoire**, the mission reported that the signing of the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement in March 2007 and the establishment of a new Government constitute a positive political development, which could encourage Ivorian refugees and IDPs to return home. However it was observed that the country is still coping with a humanitarian crisis induced by the lack of access to food and other basic health care services that became acute during the years of conflict. According to the WFP, the northern and western parts of the country are the most vulnerable to food insecurity, especially among those internally displaced and refugee populations. Côte d'Ivoire has an estimated 709,000 internally displaced persons, mostly in the urban areas of Abidjan, Grand Bassam, Yamoussoukro, and also in the western and south-western parts of the country while others are integrated into the local communities particularly in the north of the country. Additionally, the country plays host to over 24,000 refugees from the sub-region, 21,600 of whom are Liberian refugees.

12. The mission of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees observed that after the major crisis affecting **Guinea** since January 2007, the security situation in the country has become calm. In spite of this, Guinea continues to host some 28,000 refugees from the region, out of which 18,000 live in camps and 8,850 in Conakry. Approximately 12,000 Liberians and 3,000 Ivorian refugees are living in the camps in the Forest region of Guinea. More than 48,000 Liberian refugees have already been repatriated to their country with the assistance of UNHCR. Although many refugees are still expecting to be resettled in a third country as the preferable durable solution, the Government and UNHCR are putting in place a strategy to integrate locally, refugees who are not willing

to return to their countries of origin, including through facilitation of naturalization. In the meantime, food assistance from the WFP in Guinea is targeted exclusively towards vulnerable groups of refugees as well as about 140,000 beneficiaries from the host communities.

13. In **Ghana**, the number of refugees has seen a slight decrease from 54,000 to about 44,700 since the last reporting period. This is mostly due to the voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees, who still continue to be the largest group of refugees within the country, with a population of 36,150 living in Buduburam camp in the Gomoa District. The remaining refugees comprise of 7,800 Togolese living in the Volta Region, and other refugees from The Sudan, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Rwanda living in and around Accra and Kumasi.

14. In the case of **Liberia**, one year after democratic elections, the situation in the country has been very stable. However, Liberians still grapple with the after-effects of 15 years of conflict, including lack of infrastructural and institutional development, as well as inadequate social and health care services. These are the conditions to which some 326,990 Liberian IDPs, and 350,000 Liberian refugees have returned since the end of the war. Assistance has been given to the returnees in the form of basic social services, agricultural rehabilitation, including financial resettlement packages. Despite the grave humanitarian situation in the country, Liberia is also hosting more than 15,000 refugees from neighboring countries.

Central Region

15. The persistently deteriorating humanitarian situation in The Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR) continues to occupy the agenda of the African Union. Due to the crisis in The Sudan, countries in the sub-region especially Chad, the Central African Republic (CAR) and Cameroon are continuously experiencing new waves of thousands of displacement. Heightened tensions in these countries, especially in Darfur remain linked to the increased activities of armed elements, mostly from Chadian and Sudanese rebel groups. There is ongoing forced displacement, and security incidents in and around IDP camps. It is therefore very difficult to deliver humanitarian assistance in the three countries, in spite of the ever-increasing numbers of refugees and IDPs. There is, however, hope that the tripartite agreement signed among the three countries will help towards finding solutions to forced displacement in the sub-region.

16. In **Burundi**, thousands of refugees continue to return home. So far, about 318,000 Burundian refugees have been repatriated home since the process started in 2002, with an estimated 80,000 more projected to join them during the course of 2007. At the same time, over 100,000 IDPs in Burundi are awaiting durable solutions to their situation of displacement. While some have integrated into their host communities, many more were not able to return or properly integrate into areas of settlement due to inadequate resources and lack of economic prospects.

17. This situation has been further complicated by many years of drought, followed by heavy rainfalls at the end of 2006 to early 2007. According to aid agencies on the

ground, many homes were destroyed, including about 80 percent of the November 2006 harvest and much of January 2007's harvest, which left the country on the margins of a serious food crisis and an estimated 2 million Burundians at risk of suffering from malnutrition and contracting various communicable diseases such as cholera. Consequently, the African Union contributed US \$50,000 to the Government of Burundi to assist the flood victims.

18. Concerning **Central African Republic (CAR)**, there is mass movement of people in and out of the country. According to UNHCR, estimates of over 200,000 people fled to southern Chad because of attacks on their villages in the northern part of the country, while thousands more have found refuge in Cameroon and the Darfur region of The Sudan. At the same time, many others have become internally displaced around the border areas between the two countries. In March 2007, UN agencies and non-governmental organizations visiting the town of Birao, in the northeastern part of the country found that about 14,000 people who were living in the village had fled due to intense fighting. Thousands of people were scattered in different areas of CAR and the humanitarian agencies were finding it difficult to assist them. In the meantime the voluntary repatriation of Burundian, Congolese from the DRC, Rwandan and southern Sudanese refugees continues.

19. During the reporting period, **Chad** was hosting 233,000 refugees from the Darfur region of The Sudan living in 12 refugee camps, with 48,000 from the Central African Republic. The country is also facing a big problem of internal displacement as more than 140,000 people in the eastern part are displaced. In March 2007 alone, Habile site received about 9,000 IDPs. Furthermore, over 2,000 Chadian refugees and Sudanese returnees relocated to Darfur during the months of December 2006 and January 2007. The internal security situation is seriously affecting the refugees, IDPs, the local host communities as well as the humanitarian workers, particularly in the eastern region. Tensions have been reported between the victims of forced displacement and the local communities who found it difficult to share their meager resources, while at the same time the aid agencies found it almost impossible to deliver the much needed aid to the affected population in such difficult circumstances.

20. In the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**, the UNHCR reported that more than 64,000 Congolese fled their homes in April 2007 as a result of renewed fighting in the North Kivu province. Meanwhile, the eastern part of the country continued to suffer the greatest food insecurities in the country, particularly among the displaced, returnees and other vulnerable groups. While some refugees have been voluntarily repatriated to their homes in the DRC, an estimated 340,000 Congolese are still outside the country, mostly in Tanzania, Zambia, Rwanda, and the Republic of Congo. On 3 May 2007, the UNHCR launched a three-year voluntary repatriation process to return Congolese refugees back from Zambia. The exercise, which will be carried out in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), expects to repatriate about 20,000 of the 61,000 Congolese refugees in Zambia. Similar exercises are also taking place in Tanzania where the first 494 Congolese refugees from the Katanga province repatriated home in mid-April 2007, and an estimated 48,000 more expected to voluntarily return to their homes in the DRC during the course of 2007. Agreements with the UNHCR and

the countries of asylum have been signed which as a result will enable thousands of refugees to return. The number of internally displaced Congolese currently stands at about 1.1 million.

21. **Gabon** continues to host 13,800 refugees and asylum seekers from the sub-region, most of them from the DRC. The Government has announced its plans to work with the UNHCR to issue some 8,500 of these refugees with identity cards starting in 2007 that will give them entitlement to residence permits and allow them to work in the country.

22. Concerning the **Republic of Congo**, the country continues to give asylum to about 55,600 refugees, the majority of whom are from Angola, DRC and Rwanda. At the same time, the country hosts close to 4,000 IDPs while over 5, 400 Congolese have returned home mainly from the region.

Eastern Region

23. Forced displacement in the Eastern Region has continued to affect thousands of people, particularly in Somalia, The Sudan, and Uganda. On the other hand, continued repatriation of Sudanese to the southern part of The Sudan is taking place, and there is a ray of hope for almost 1.6 million internally displaced persons in the north of Uganda to return to their villages. The repatriation of refugees and IDPs is made possible mainly due to the implementation of the peace agreements signed by the various parties to the conflicts in the region.

24. However, thousands of returnees are opting for lives of uncertainty as most of the areas of return lack basic necessities such as roads, schools, health services, food and shelter. Furthermore, the region has experienced severe famine and drought over the past couple of years, thus leaving thousands of people entirely dependent on humanitarian assistance.

25. In **Ethiopia**, it should be recalled that some years back, the country was host to about one million refugees and in the past three years the number of refugees has decreased to about 100,000, half of whom are Sudanese, followed by Eritreans and Somalis. This reduction in the number of refugees is attributed to the continued repatriation of Sudanese refugees to South Sudan and to some extent the Somali refugees returning to north-western Somalia, which has resulted in the closure of some of the refugee camps in the country. While repatriation operations were going on, heavy fighting in Southern Somalia, especially in Mogadishu, caused an influx of about 50,000 more Somali refugees in 2007, the majority being women, children and the elderly.

26. For the past several years, **Kenya** has continued to provide asylum to over 200,000 refugees, of which 65 percent are Somalis, 33 percent Sudanese, while the remaining percentage comprise of Ethiopians, Eritreans, Ugandans and Congolese from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Since October 2006, the country continued to receive new arrivals of over 30,000 refugees fleeing from conflict and drought in Somalia. At the same time, thousands of southern Sudanese also arrived in Kakuma

camp despite the signing of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which put an end to the conflict in the South. This was due to lack of food, basic services and to some extent insecurity in some of the areas of return.

27. The new arrivals have substantially increased the refugee population in Kenya. The WFP reported that malnutrition rates remained high in the camps in spite of the Organization's food assistance to 94 percent of the refugees. Anemia levels among children under the age of five in these camps were over 80 percent, prompting UN agencies to appeal to donors to provide full packages of food and non-food items to the refugees.

28. Concerning **Rwanda**, the refugee population in the country has not changed much. The number is believed to be about 47,000 out of which 42,000 are Congolese from the DRC, with 2,000 Burundians who are found in five refugee camps around the country, this combined with a small number of various other nationalities in urban areas. At the same time, thousands of Rwandan refugees have been returning to their homes. It is estimated that about 10,000 return on a yearly basis, mainly from the DRC. Since May 2006 almost 15,000 have returned from Tanzania and almost 17,000 were expected from neighbouring countries. The return was a result of the tripartite agreement between Rwanda, Kenya and South Africa, and the UNHCR.

29. When the Transitional Federal Government of **Somalia** (TFG) was set up in June 2005, Member States had high hopes for peace and stability in the country. However, intense fighting between the TFG and the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) since December 2006, which was the worst in more than 15 years, has made the situation in the country more volatile. The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the United Nations and aid agencies have warned of deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the country, as it was estimated that more than 1 million people were in need of assistance including about 400,000 IDPs. During this period, over 365,000 people fled Somalia to neighboring countries including 100,000 from Mogadishu where the fighting was most intense. The unpredictable situation in Somalia constrained the delivery of humanitarian aid and emergency operations especially in the central and southern parts of the country, thus making it very difficult for the humanitarian agencies to operate in many areas.

30. The humanitarian situation during the reporting period, was further worsened by the serious effects of large-scale flooding in some parts of the southern region, displacing almost half a million people when about 1.8 million were already in dire need of humanitarian assistance and protection. Thousands of flood victims were living in areas, which were inaccessible to humanitarian agencies.

31. In the case of The **Sudan**, following the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005, over 100,000 refugees have returned to the southern part of the country mainly from Central African Republic, DRC, Ethiopia, Egypt, Kenya and Uganda. Additionally, about 850,000 IDPs also returned to Southern Sudan. The refugees and IDPs returned to a life of uncertainty as the funds, which were pledged by the international community have not yet materialized to cater for the infrastructure and other basic services. There

is a fear that the situation could have a negative impact on the remaining refugees and IDPs who have yet to be repatriated and trigger their return to exile.

32. The Darfur region has continued to be of great concern to the African Union and the international community as a whole. Humanitarian agencies reported that the violence spreading throughout Darfur including to major towns and cities, and across the border to Chad and Central African Republic has become more persistent, and attacks against civilians, aid agencies, and the AU Mission in The Sudan (AMIS) were occurring on a regular basis. As a result, more people have become internally displaced. In January 2007 alone, more than 25,000 people reportedly became internally displaced. Though the WFP and its NGO partners continue to provide food to more than 2 million people in Darfur, it is not enough as relief workers were finding it difficult to reach 4 million others who were in need of critical humanitarian assistance. Many aid agencies reduced their operations and some have completely stopped giving aid due to the security situation. The Sudan has the largest number of relief workers totaling 13,000.

33. In April 2007, seven AMIS soldiers were killed in Darfur, prompting the AU Commission Chairperson to publicly condemn the attacks and stress that they were in violation of the different ceasefire agreements and international humanitarian law. Concern was further expressed over the lack of cooperation from the various factions with AMIS and the humanitarian agencies that are working under extremely difficult and insecure conditions, and the possibility for a catastrophic and tragic breakdown of the security and humanitarian situation in Darfur. More than 200,000 people have been killed and 4 million are dependent on aid. Currently, the country has over 5 million IDPs.

34. **Tanzania's** refugee population in February 2007 was estimated to be less than 300,000 living in camps in the north-western region, according to the UNHCR. The refugees are mainly from the DRC and Burundi. In February 2007, three camps were closed due to repatriation operations, mainly of Burundian refugees. About 494 Congolese refugees from DRC returned to Katanga province in the DRC in April 2007. It should be noted that for the first time Tanzania is hosting almost half the number of refugees after having given asylum to over 600,000 refugees for more than a decade. However, there are more than 200,000 refugees who have settled spontaneously within the local communities, according to the Government's information.

35. The number of internally displaced persons in **Uganda** has sharply decreased. For several years the IDP population was between 1.6 to 1.8 million, but currently it is approximated at about 1.2 million in the northern region and living in over 260 camps. The decrease in number is attributed to the on-going peace talks between the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) that began in 2006. The IDPs are not entirely dependent on WFP rations as they are able to produce some of the food they need by going back and forth to their fields even though they live in camps.

Southern Region

36. The Southern Region hosts the largest group of asylum seekers estimated at 99,260 in the Continent and about 213,790 refugees. Some countries in the region are

becoming more restrictive towards allowing access across their borders, due to the increase in mixed migration flows. During the reporting period, some parts of the region also experienced severe weather conditions, causing some internal displacement. In spite of the burden created by mass influxes of displaced persons from across the Continent, the region has remained relentlessly hospitable, with Governments and humanitarian agencies working together to ensure that they have fully functioning, government administered refugee status determination and registration systems that are in accordance with international standards.

37. **South Africa** is home to some 90,000 asylum seekers in addition to about 42,000 refugees, as was reported in January 2007, mostly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia and Zimbabwe.

38. In **Angola**, UNHCR closed its organized assisted repatriation programme in March 2007 following the return of some 410,000 Angolan refugees, most of them from Zambia and the DRC. Others were in Namibia, the Republic of Congo, Botswana and South Africa. Meanwhile, as a durable solution, the UNHCR with the support of the Government of Angola will integrate some 11,000 long-staying Congolese refugees into Angolan society.

39. Despite the end of the voluntary repatriation of Angolan refugees from **Zambia**, the country continues to host about 42,000 refugees from Angola, in addition to about 158,710 more from Burundi, DRC, and Rwanda. For Congolese refugees based in camps in the northern part of the country, lack of access to farmland means that they are in constant need of food assistance, which is being provided by the WFP.

40. In **Mozambique**, heavy rains in January 2007 led to the flooding of the Zambezi, Chire and Rivubue Rivers and the subsequent internal displacement of about 120,000 people, with an estimated 285,000 in need of urgent food and medical supplies. In February 2007, a tropical cyclone, Favio also hit the country, thus further aggravating the situation created by the previous flooding. The central part of Mozambique, which was most affected has the largest number of orphaned and vulnerable children. The African Union has responded to the humanitarian situation by contributing the sum of US \$50,000 to help meet the needs of the flood victims in Mozambique.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

41. The African Union Commission, the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, in collaboration with AU Partners, especially the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Program (WFP), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA) and some relevant aid agencies continued to implement the Decisions adopted in previous meetings of the Executive Council and Summit, and in particular the recent Decisions EX/CL/Dec.289(IX) adopted in Banjul, The Gambia in July 2006 and EX/CL/Dec.319(X) adopted in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January 2007.

42. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons held its 3rd Ordinary Session in April 2007 and its Bureau met several times in different meetings. They considered among other things, the Progress Report on the Situation of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: January – March 2007; the Programme of Work of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: March to December 2007; and the Preparations of the Special Summit of Heads of State and Government on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons scheduled to take place in 2008.

43. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees met on 10 April 2007 and recommended to submit the following documents to the PRC for consideration:

- Draft Report that emanated from the meeting of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons that was held on 10 April 2007;
- The Concept Paper on Access to Post-Primary Education for Victims of Forced Displacement in Africa; and
- The Rules of Procedure and the Terms of Reference of the AU Coordinating Committee on Assistance and Protection to Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (CCAR).

44. After considering the proposals of the AU Commission on the preparations for convening the AU Special Summit of Heads of State and Government on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa scheduled to take place in 2008, the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, and its Bureau requested the Commission to proceed with the necessary preparations for the Special Summit. Since then the Task Force, composed of the Bureau of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, the five regional representations and AU Partners/Members of the CCAR met twice in May 2007 and discussed the way forward on the preparations for the Special Summit, in particular the venue, dates, topics and participation.

45. In accordance with the Programme of Work of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, which was adopted in April 2007, the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees together with the Commission undertook a field assessment mission to Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire in May 2007. The objectives of the mission were to assess the humanitarian situation in the two countries and exchange views with the Governments' authorities, Missions of the AU and UN, and some humanitarian agencies in the field.

46. On the issue of disaster management, the African Union made financial contributions of US\$50,000 each to victims of floods and drought in Burundi and Mozambique.

47. Furthermore, in order to enhance the partnership of the AU Partners, in particular the UNCHR, WFP, ICRC, IOM and AHA, the Commission decided to convene meetings with the partners and engage in joint activities. They included:

- The AU/Partners' meeting for the implementation of joint specific activities for the period March to July 2007, held on 1st March 2007.
- The AU Consultative Meeting on the Draft AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons that took place from 10-11 May 2007. The meeting discussed in-depth, the Draft Convention and also followed up on the progress, which had been made so far by the Commission in the process of developing the Draft Convention in line with the various AU Executive Council Decisions.
- Meetings of the Task Force in the preparations for the AU Special Summit of Heads of State and Government on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa scheduled to take place in 2008. The AU Partners were also invited to participate in the meetings of the Task Force in May 2007.
- Meetings of Ambassadors with the ICRC, which mainly concentrated on finding ways and means of implementing the recommendations adopted at the 9th Joint AU/ICRC Brainstorming Day in November 2006 viz urging Member States to adhere to all relevant instruments of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), adoption of the necessary legislative measures for national implementation as well as other measures such as integration of IHL in training of armed forces and public officials, and inclusion of IHL in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).
- The Red Cross Round Table on Migration that was held in Oslo in April 2007. The Commission focused on the African Union perspective on partnerships between States and Non-State Actors in dealing with the Humanitarian Aspect of International Migration. The outcome of the meeting will bring added value in search for solutions and mechanisms aimed at addressing the negative consequences of migration movements worldwide and contribute to the efforts of humanitarian organizations to alleviate the plight of migrants who are in need of protection and assistance.

48. The Commission together with the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees and the UNHCR has been commemorating World/Africa Refugee Day, which falls on the 20th of June every year. The theme for this year's commemoration is, "Refugee Children and Sports". Joint activities by the AU/UNHCR and PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees were organized in the refugee camps in Ethiopia, and the African Union donated of US\$10,000 through the UNHCR to assist refugee girls in one of the camps. Commemorative activities were also organized at the AU Headquarters and Member States urged to celebrate the occasion focusing on this year's theme.

V. CHALLENGES AND THE WAY FORWARD

49. There are numerous challenges facing Member States, which have to be addressed in close cooperation and collaboration with the international community in order to find durable solutions to the problem of forced displacement on the Continent.

50. Due to the seriousness of the problem of forced displacement, the Conference of Ministers of Member States of the African Union on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons which was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in June 2006, deliberated at length on the protection and assistance of victims of forced displacement, namely refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons. Consequently, in July 2006, in Banjul, The Gambia, the Executive Council adopted Decision, EX.CL/Dec.289 (IX) that called for the holding of the Special Summit of Heads of State and Government on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in 2008 in consultation with key partners.

51. In the coming years, the challenges and the way forward are to earnestly tackle the problem of forced displacement in accordance with the theme that will be adopted for the Special Summit of Heads of State and Government on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in 2008, "Addressing the Challenge of Forced Displacement in Africa". The challenge therefore, will be for African leaders to recommit themselves to the basic principles of protecting and assisting in the elimination of the phenomenon of large scale forced population displacement caused by conflicts, and natural and man-made disasters. The challenges to be addressed in finding durable solutions for victims of forced displacement would include:

- Preventing forced displacement;
- Effective protection for victims of forced displacement;
- Meeting the specific needs of displaced women and children;
- Rebuilding affected communities emerging from conflicts and natural or man-made disasters to enable sustainable reintegration of returning refugees and internally displaced persons; and
- Forging partnerships in addressing forced displacement in Africa.

52. Furthermore, Member States will also be faced with the challenge of adopting the AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa at the Special Summit, which will go a long way in solving the problem of IDPs on the Continent.

53. In conclusion, the concrete outcomes and commitments from the Special Summit on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in the form of a Solemn Declaration will guide and assist all the stakeholders in the search for durable solutions to the problem of forced displacement in Africa.

**MAJOR CONCENTRATION OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT: A COMPARATIVE
PRESENTATION OF POPULATION STATISTICS BY REGION IN AFRICA,
JANUARY 2006 - JANUARY 2007**

I. NORTHERN REGION

Algeria	January 2006	January 2007	North Africa Region	Total
Refugees	94,101	94,000	refugees 2006	94,101
returnees	1	0	refugees 2007	94,000
asylum -seekers	306	900	returnees 2006	1
IDPs	0	0	returnees 2007	0
			asylum-seekers2006	306
			asylum-seekers2007	900
			IDPs 2006	0
			IDPs 2007	0

II. WESTERN REGION

Cote D'Ivoire	January 2006	January 2007	Western Region	Total
Refugees	36,000	23,300	refugees 2006	228,730
returnees	0	0	refugees 2007	190,920
asylum -seekers	1,500	750	returnees 2006	359,100
IDPs	0	709,380	returnees 2007	143,780
Ghana	January 2006	January 2007	asylum-seekers2006	8,330
Refugees	55,760	53,540	asylum-seekers2007	5,950
returnees	0	0	IDPs 2006	223,000
asylum -seekers	6,800	4,890	IDPs 2007	709,380
IDPs	0	0		
Sierra Leone	January 2006	January 2007		
Refugees	51,200	38,530		
returnees	271,000	50		
asylum -seekers	0	30		
IDPs	0	0		
Guinea	January 2006	January 2007		
Refugees	70,810	59,330		
returnees	0	0		
asylum -seekers	0	260		
IDPs	0	0		
Liberia	January 2006	January 2007		
Refugees	14,960	16,220		
returnees	88,100	143,730		
asylum -seekers	30	20		
IDPs	223,000	0		

Source: UNHCR planning figures

III. CENTRAL REGION

Chad	January 2006	January 2007	Central Region	Total
Refugees	265,500	305,510	refugees 2006	658,881
returnees	1,400	0	refugees 2007	586,380
asylum -seekers	5,300	300	returnees 2006	215,320
IDPs	0	63,000	returnees 2007	133,400
The Democratic Republic of the Congo	January 2006	January 2007	asylum-seekers2006	30,949
Refugees	193,520	156,690	asylum-seekers2007	47,400
returnees	63,500	73,000	IDPs 2006	-
asylum -seekers	150	100	IDPs 2007	1,929,500
IDPs	0	1,600,000		
Burundi	January 2006	January 2007		
Refugees	48,630	13,080		
returnees	150,000	55,000		
asylum -seekers	11,900	32,500		
IDPs	50,000	116,000		
Gabon	January 2006	January 2007		
Refugees	8,545	8,100		
returnees	0	0		
asylum -seekers	4,843	4,200		
IDPs	0	0		
Republic of the Congo	January 2006	January 2007		
Refugees	66,075	55,600		
returnees	346	5,400		
asylum -seekers	3,486	4,300		
IDPs	0	3,500		
Cameroon	January 2006	January 2007		
Refugees	52,042	35,100		
returnees	0	0		
asylum -seekers	6,766	4,100		
IDPs	0	0		
Central African Republic	January 2006	January 2007		
Refugees	24,569	12,300		
returnees	74	0		
asylum -seekers	1,960	1,900		
IDPs	0	147,000		

IV. EASTERN REGION				
Somalia	January 2006	January 2007	Eastern Region	Total
Refugees	1,145	1,240	refugees 2006	1,364,121
Returnees	15,500	10,000	refugees 2007	1,293,400
asylum –seekers	0	330	returnees 2006	90,354
IDPs	400,000	400,000	returnees 2007	547,850
Ethiopia	January 2006	January 2007	asylum-seekers2006	7,531
Refugees	116,380	99,080	asylum-seekers2007	16,080
Returnees	0	0	IDPs 2006	1,067,000
asylum –seekers	3,150	300	IDPs 2007	5,977,000
IDPs	0	0		
Kenya	January 2006	January 2007		
Refugees	243,320	116,070		
Returnees	0	0		
asylum –seekers	0	11,400		
IDPs	0	0		
Uganda	January 2006	January 2007		
Refugees	269,700	261,580		
Returnees	100	500,050		
asylum –seekers	0	0		
IDPs	0	1,100,000		
Tanzania	January 2006	January 2007		
Refugees	683,370	566,120		
Returnees	0	0		
asylum –seekers	80	50		
IDPs	0	0		
Rwanda	January 2006	January 2007		
Refugees	45,206	49,200		
Returnees	9,854	5,800		
asylum –seekers	4,301	4,000		
IDPs	0	0		
Sudan	January 2006	January 2007		
Refugees	5,000	200,110		
Returnees	65,000	32,000		
asylum –seekers	0	0		
IDPs	667,000	4,477,000		

V. SOUTHERN REGION

Angola	January 2006	January 2007	Southern Region	Total
Refugees	13,910	12,980	refugees 2006	189,360
returnees	361,940	10,000	refugees 2007	213,790
asylum -seekers	900	2,560	returnees 2006	361,940
IDPs	0	0	returnees 2007	10,000
South Africa	January 2006	January 2007	asylum-seekers2006	99,260
Refugees	37,000	42,100	asylum-seekers2007	92,560
returnees	0	0	IDPs 2006	0
asylum -seekers	98,000	90,000	IDPs 2007	0
IDPs	0	0		
Zambia	January 2006	January 2007		
Refugees	138,450	158,710		
returnees	0	0		
asylum -seekers	360	0		
IDPs	0	0		

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