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**REPORT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL ON ITS
ACTIVITIES AND THE STATE OF PEACE
AND SECURITY IN AFRICA**

REPORT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL ON ITS ACTIVITIES AND THE STATE OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present Report of the PSC on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa is submitted to the Assembly of the AU pursuant to Article 7(q) of the PSC Protocol. The Report covers the period from the 24th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU, held from 30 to 31 January 2015, in Addis Ababa to mid-June 2015. It comprises three parts, dealing with the following issues: (a) signature and ratification of the PSC Protocol, membership of the PSC and rotating Chair of the PSC; (b) activities carried out by the PSC in the pursuit of its mandate from end of January 2015 to mid-June 2015; and (c) an overview of the state of peace and security on the continent from January 2015 to June 2015.

II. UPDATE ON SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION OF THE PSC PROTOCOL, MEMBERSHIP OF THE PSC AND ROTATION OF THE CHAIR OF THE PSC

2. Since the adoption of the PSC Protocol in December 2002, fifty-four (54) Member States have signed it, while forty-nine (49) have both signed and ratified the Protocol. The following Member States have signed the Protocol, but have not yet ratified it: Cape Verde, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Liberia, and South Sudan.

3. Regarding membership, the PSC comprises fifteen (15) members with equal rights, in line with Article 5 (1) of the Protocol, which are elected as follows: 10 members elected for a two-year term and five (5) for a three-year term. The current list of PSC members in the English alphabetical order is as follows: Algeria*, Burundi, Chad, Equatorial Guinea*, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Guinea, Libya, Mozambique*, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria*, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda*¹. It should be noted that the mandate of both categories, the three-year and two-year terms, will expire on 30 March 2016.

4. In conformity with Rule 23 of the Rules of Procedure of the PSC, the Chair of the PSC rotates among its members on a monthly basis following the English alphabetical order of their names. Thus, during the period under review, the Chair of the PSC rotated as follows:

-	Guinea	January 2015;
-	Libya	February 2015;
-	Namibia ²	March 2015;
-	Mozambique	April 2015;
-	Niger	May 2015;
-	Nigeria	June 2015;

¹ * Denotes PSC Members with a three-year term mandate

² Namibia and Mozambique, with the concurrence of the PSC, swapped their chairmanship of the PSC

III. MONTHLY ACTIVITIES OF THE PSC

A) PSC activities during the last part (29 to 31 January 2015) of the month of January 2015, under the Chair of Guinea³

5. It should also be noted that, in January 2015, after the submission of the PSC Report to the Assembly, the PSC met at the level of Heads of State and Government, at its 484th meeting held on 29 January 2015 in the margins of the 24th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU, held from 30 to 31 January 2015, in Addis Ababa. The PSC considered the situation in South Sudan, the issue of Boko Haram terrorist group and the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

- Situation in South Sudan

6. The PSC expressed deep concern at the prevailing situation in South Sudan, and noted with utmost disappointment the failure of the South Sudanese parties to meet the 22 November 2014 deadline set by the 28th Extraordinary Summit of the IGAD Heads of State and Government, to complete consultations on outstanding matters. The PSC reiterated its determination to impose sanctions against all parties that continue to undermine the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and obstruct the political process. The PSC recalled paragraph 8 of communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.1(CDXI).Rev.1, adopted at its 411th meeting, requesting the Chairperson of the Commission to establish a Commission of Inquiry to investigate human rights violations and other abuses committed during the armed conflict and make recommendations on the best way and means to ensure accountability, reconciliation and healing among all South Sudanese communities. The PSC noted the completion by the Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan of its work and commended its Chair, former President Olusegun Obasanjo, and its members for their hard work and commitment in the discharge of their mandate. The PSC decided to defer the consideration of the report of the Commission of Inquiry to a later date, and to take appropriate decisions.

- Boko Haram terrorist group

7. The PSC reiterated the AU's strong condemnation of the horrendous terrorist attacks committed by Boko Haram and reaffirmed that the activities of this group constitute a serious threat, not only to Nigeria and the region, but also to the entire continent. Accordingly, the PSC underlined the duty and obligation of Africa, as a whole, to extend all the necessary support to the LCBC Member States and Benin. The PSC commended the Member States of the LCBC and Benin for their sustained efforts to enhance effectiveness in the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group and noted with satisfaction the practical steps agreed upon by the Niamey meeting of 20 January 2015, notably the establishment of the Headquarters of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), and that of a secure communications network for the security forces operating in and around the Lake Chad Basin and decided, in support to the efforts of the LCBC Member States and Benin, and as

³ The activities under the chairmanship of Guinea, were covered in the last Report of the Activities of the PSC and the State of Peace and Security in Africa, submitted to the 24th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union.

requested by their Niamey ministerial meeting and recommended by the Chairperson of the Commission in paragraphs 19 to 22 of her report, to authorize the deployment of the MNJTF, for an initial period of twelve months renewable and for a strength that could go up to 7,500 military and other personnel.

- Ebola Outbreak in West Africa

8. The PSC commended the Chairperson of the Commission for her outstanding commitment in the fight against Ebola and the efforts being deployed in response to the epidemic in West Africa, including the deployment of the AU Support Mission for the Fight Against the epidemic in West Africa (ASEOWA), and the countries of the region, under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the other AU Member States, as well as the rest of the international community, for their sustained efforts and the steps taken to contain and eliminate the Ebola outbreak. The PSC expressed deep appreciation to the African private sector for responding generously to the appeal made by the Chairperson of the Commission and contributing to the Solidarity Fund against Ebola established by the AU, and to the brave ASEOWA volunteers and health professionals, deployed in the affected countries in West Africa, who put their life at great risk.

9. The PSC noted with satisfaction the improvement of the situation in the Ebola-affected countries of Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, as well as the declaration of the Republic of Mali as Ebola-free by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 19 January 2015. The PSC reiterated its deep concern over the negative impact of the Ebola epidemic on the socio-economic fabric of the affected countries. In this regard, the PSC stressed the need for particular attention to continue to be paid to the impact of the epidemic on post-conflict reconstruction and socio-economic development efforts in the affected countries and requested the Commission, in collaboration with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) and within the framework of the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI), to convene an African Solidarity Conference (ASC) to mobilize support for post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building activities in the affected countries. The PSC stressed the need to avoid any stigmatization, discrimination and isolation of both the people and the countries most affected and reiterated the request of the 16th Extraordinary Session of the AU Executive Council for the Commission to take all the necessary steps for the rapid establishment of an African Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ACDCP), pursuant to Assembly Decision AU/Dec.499(XXII).

B) PSC activities during the month of February 2015, under the Chair of Libya

10. Libya assumed the Chair of the PSC on 1 February 2015. During that month, Libya chaired four meetings of the PSC. During Libya's chairmanship, a Joint Field Mission to Mali of the AU PSC and European Union Political and Security Committee (EUPSC) was organized, from 11 to 13 February 2015. Namibia, at the request of Libya, co-led the joint mission.

a) 485th meeting:

11. At its 485th meeting held on 5 February 2015, the PSC considered and adopted its provisional programme of work for the month of February 2015 and made preparations for its joint field mission to Mali with the EU PSC.

b) 486th meeting:

12. At its 486th meeting held on 19 February 2015, the PSC reviewed the conduct of its joint field mission with EU PSC to Mali. The PSC adopted a communiqué calling on the Malian Government and people, as well as on the international actors present in Mali, to continue with their efforts to rebuild Mali, particularly with regard to the development and the strengthening of the Malian defence and security forces.

c) 487th meeting:

13. At its 487th meeting held on 20 February 2015, the PSC deliberated on the situation in Somalia and the operation of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The PSC welcomed the political progress and the security gains being made in Somalia, and urged the Somali stakeholders to consolidate these gains. The PSC strongly condemned the terrorist attacks in Somalia. It decided to undertake a field mission to Somalia at an appropriate time, to gather information and assess the situation on the ground.

d) 488th meeting:

14. At its 488th meeting held on 23 February 2015, the PSC deliberated on the situation in the Great Lakes Region. In the communiqué adopted on that occasion, the PSC stressed the crucial importance of the scrupulous and timely implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the DRC and the region, and urged all the signatory countries to honor their commitments under the Framework. The PSC expressed its deep concern over the refusal of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) to disarm and demobilize voluntarily by the deadline of 2 January 2015 as set by the ICGLR and SADC, with the support of the AU and the UN. The PSC stressed the need for the unconditional and full disarmament and demobilization of the FDLR and the other negative forces. The PSC called for an accelerated implementation process of the Nairobi Declarations of 12 December 2013 which concluded the Kampala Dialogue between the Government and the former rebellion of the M23.

- Joint Field Mission between the AU PSC and the EU PSC to Mali

15. From 10 to 14 February 2015, the AU PSC and the EU PSC, in line with the AU-EU partnership in the area of peace and security, as well as in article 17 of the PSC Protocol, conducted a joint field mission to Mali. The joint field visit provided an opportunity for both organs to gather first-hand information on the ground and to discuss the situation in Mali with President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, Prime Minister Modibo Keita and other relevant Ministers, as well as representatives of key political parties, parliamentarians and civil society organizations. The Mission also visited Gao, in northern Mali, where it held meetings with representatives of local

community, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the French operation Barkhane.

16. At the conclusion of the Mission, the AU PSC and the EU PSC adopted a joint press statement. They expressed deep concern about the persisting violence in northern Mali, stressing that the prevailing situation poses a serious threat to the security, stability, territorial integrity and development of the country and the wider Sahel region, and continues to cause human suffering on a massive scale. The Mission called on all parties to respect the cease-fire agreement of 23 May 2014 and the Declaration of Cessation of Hostilities of 24 July 2014.

- Consultative meeting between the PSC and the UN Panel on the Review of Peace Operations

17. On 10 February 2015, the PSC, while undertaking a joint field mission with EU PSC in Mali, held a consultative meeting with the UN Panel on the Review of Peace Operations via video-conference. During the consultative meeting, the PSC exchanged views with the Panel and the position of Africa on the review of UN peace operations. On 30 April 2015, the PSC adopted the Common African Position on the review of UN peace operations.

C) PSC activities during the month of March 2015, under the Chair of Namibia

18. Namibia assumed the Chair of the PSC on 1 March 2015. During that month, Namibia chaired eight meetings of the PSC. In the same month, the PSC also held its 9th annual joint consultative meeting with the UN Security Council.

a) 489th meeting:

19. The PSC, at its 489th meeting held on 3 March 2015, considered and adopted its provisional programme of work for the month of March 2014.

20. At the same meeting, the PSC considered the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the implementation of communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.2(CDLXXXIV) on the Boko Haram terrorist group and on other related international efforts. The PSC, having strongly condemned the atrocities perpetrated by the Boko Haram terrorist group, endorsed the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) of the MNJTF established to combat Boko Haram terrorist group. The PSC authorized an increase in the strength of the MNJTF from the initial figure of 7,500 to up to 10,000 military and other personnel, to be generated by the LCBC Member States and Benin. The PSC welcomed the decision of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) Extraordinary Summit of 16 February 2015 to provide financial and logistical support to Cameroon and Chad in the fight against Boko Haram. Furthermore, the PSC urged the UN Security Council to urgently adopt, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, a resolution endorsing the deployment of the MNJTF and enabling the provision of sustainable, flexible and predictable support to the MNJTF.

b) 490th meeting:

21. At its 490th meeting held on 5 March 2015, the PSC considered the situation in Burundi. The PSC welcomed the steps already taken for the conduct of the electoral process, and called on the Government of Burundi and all other stakeholders, including political parties and civil society organizations, to work together towards the successful holding of peaceful, inclusive, free, credible and transparent elections, with due respect to legality, including the Constitution of Burundi. The PSC called upon AU Member States, the UN and the larger international community to provide all necessary financial and logistical support to Burundi, towards the successful holding of the elections.

c) 491st meeting:

22. At its 491st meeting held on 9 March 2015, the PSC held an open session on the theme: “Vulnerability of Women and Children in Conflict Situations in Africa”. In addition to the debate on its theme, the meeting also commemorated the 15th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the 5th anniversary of the Decade for African Women (2010-2020), which was launched on 15 October 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya.

23. The PSC strongly condemned the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war, and emphasized the need to fight impunity in cases of sexual violence and rape in situations of conflict. The PSC further strongly condemned the recruitment and use of child soldiers by parties to armed conflicts in violation of their international obligations, and all other violations and abuses committed against children in situations of armed conflict. The PSC emphasized the responsibility of Member States to ensure the protection of women and children in situations where they are threatened or affected by violence, in line with relevant AU and international instruments.

d) 492nd and 493rd meeting:

24. At its 492nd meeting, held on 11 March 2015, the PSC prepared its 9th annual joint consultative meeting with the UN Security Council, scheduled for 12 March 2015. At its 493rd meeting, also held on 12 March 2015, the PSC finalized the preparations for the consultative meeting with the UN Security Council.

e) 494th meeting:

25. At its 494th meeting held on 24 March 2015, the PSC considered the situation in South Sudan, as well as the situation in Abyei.

- Briefing on the situation in South Sudan

26. The PSC noted with utmost disappointment the failure of the South Sudanese parties to reach agreement on the outstanding issues by the deadline of 5 March 2015, as set by IGAD, and appealed to them to live up to their commitments under the Agreement of Cessation of Hostilities of 23 January 2014 and to display the required political will and sense of responsibility to bring to an end the untold

suffering inflicted upon their people. The PSC welcomed the completion by the Commission of the consultations regarding the composition of the AU High-Level *ad hoc* Committee established pursuant to communiqué PSC/PR/COMM(CDLXXIV) adopted at its 474th meeting held on 5 December 2014, to strengthen Africa's support to the IGAD mediation in South Sudan. It urged the *ad hoc* Committee, to be composed of the Heads of State and Government of Algeria, Chad, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Africa, to meet as soon as possible to elaborate its terms of reference and determine its work plan in support of IGAD.

- On the situation in Abyei

27. The PSC expressed deep concern at the volatility of the security situation in the Area and strongly condemned all acts of violence committed in the Abyei Area. The PSC, having expressed concern over the lack of implementation of key provisions of the 20 June 2011 Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area, especially those relating to the establishment of the Abyei Area Administration, Council and Police Service, the PSC called on the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to urgently take the necessary steps for the establishment of the agreed structures. The PSC encouraged the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan to pursue their efforts to reach agreement on the final status of the Abyei Area, under the auspices of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP).

28. The PSC welcomed the completion of the work conducted by the Investigation Committee established in pursuance of communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.(CCCLXXIV) adopted at its 374th meeting held on 7 May 2013, to shed light on the killing of Chief Koul Deng Koul and UNISFA personnel. The PSC requested the Commission to engage the Parties on the findings and recommendations of the investigation, with a view to preventing the repeat of similar incidents, bearing in mind the need to promote stability and reconciliation in the Abyei Area.

f) 495th meeting:

29. At its 495th meeting, held on 26 March 2015, the PSC considered the situation in the CAR and the activities of the AU Mission in the CAR and for Central Africa (MISAC). The PSC welcomed the improvement in the security situation in the CAR, as well as the progress made in the political process initiated following the signing of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, on 23 July 2014. The PSC further welcomed the establishment of the Preparatory Committee of the Forum, and called for maximum inclusivity, noting the crucial role of the Forum in the promotion of national reconciliation. The PSC reiterated the need to respect the provisions of the Constitutional Charter of the Transition regarding the ineligibility of the leaders of the transition and/or political actors under sanctions imposed by the PSC and the UN Security Council.

g) 496th meeting:

30. At its 496th meeting held on 27 March 2015, the PSC considered the situation in Western Sahara, on the basis of the report submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission [PSC/PR/2(CDXCVI)] and the update provided by the Special Envoy of

the Chairperson of the Commission for Western Sahara, former President Joaquim Chissano. The PSC also reviewed the evolution of the Inter-Malian Peace Talks, on the basis of the report of the Chairperson of the Commission [PSC/PR/3. (CDXCVI)] and the update provided by the AU High Representative for Mali and the Sahel, former President Pierre Buyoya.

- Situation in Western Sahara

31. The PSC noted with deep concern that, four decades after the start of the conflict in Western Sahara and fifty years after the decision to decolonize Western Sahara, all efforts to find a solution had thus far failed to achieve the expected results. The PSC expressed the urgent need for renewed efforts to overcome the current impasse. The PSC decided to reactivate the *ad hoc* Committee of Heads of State and Government on the conflict in Western Sahara, established by the 15th Ordinary OAU Summit held in Khartoum, Sudan, from 18 to 22 July 1978, and to establish an International Contact Group for Western Sahara (ICG-WS). The PSC requested that the AU Special Envoy for Western Sahara be given the opportunity to address the UN Security Council during its meeting on Western Sahara, then scheduled to take place in April 2015. The PSC further decided to undertake regular reviews of the situation in Western Sahara, at least twice a year.

- On the situation in Mali/Sahel

32. The PSC welcomed the conclusion of the process launched in Algiers 16 July 2014, leading to the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement in Mali during the 5th phase of the Inter-Malian Peace Talks, which took place from 17 to 26 February 2015. The PSC reiterated the AU's deep appreciation to Algeria, *chef de file* of the Mediation, and to the other members of the Mediation Team. The PSC extended full support to the Agreement, regarding it is a balanced compromise that takes into account the legitimate concerns of all parties. The PSC expressed the AU's appreciation to the Government of Mali and the Movements of the Algiers Platform for having initialed the Agreement on 1 March 2015 in Algiers, and urged the Coordination of Movements of the Azawad (CMA) to initial it without delay, and to sign the Agreement emanating from the Algiers Process. The PSC further expressed its determination to take and implement, in due course, measures against all the groups and individuals whose actions impede the implementation of the Agreement, and to seek the support of the UN Security Council and the larger international community for such measures. The PSC appealed to the AU Member States and the other members of the international community to provide the necessary financial and technical support for the implementation of the Agreement.

- 9th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting with the UN Security Council

33. On 12 March 2015, the 9th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting between AUPSC and the UNSC was held in Addis Ababa. The meeting exchanged views on the situations in the CAR, Darfur, Great Lakes Region, Libya, Mali and the Sahel, Somalia and South Sudan, as well as on the issue of Boko Haram Terrorist Group. It also exchanged views on the review of the UN peace operations and enhancing AUPSC/UNSC cooperation in preventing conflicts and crises in Africa, as well as on

the issue of women, peace and security, within the framework of the AU-UN Partnership. A joint communiqué was adopted at the end of the meeting.

C) PSC activities during the month of April 2015, under the Chair of Mozambique

34. Mozambique assumed the Chairmanship of the PSC on 1 April 2015. During that month, Mozambique chaired seven meetings of the PSC. Also during the month of April 2015, the PSC Chair, on behalf of the PSC, undertook a solidarity mission to Kenya in the aftermath of the terrorist attack in Garissa:

a) 497th meeting:

35. At its 497th meeting held on 8 April 2015, the PSC considered and adopted its programme of work for the month of April 2015. The PSC also received a briefing on elections in Africa, as well as on the terrorist attack perpetrated in Garissa, on 2 April 2015.

- On elections in Africa

36. The PSC was briefed by the Commission on the elections that had taken place in the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Union of the Comoros, the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Republic of Zambia, as well as on the then-upcoming elections in Sudan, Togo and Burundi. The PSC congratulated the people and political leaders of Nigeria, Zambia, the Comoros and Lesotho for having conducted their respective elections peacefully and successfully. The PSC extended special congratulations to the people and political leadership of Nigeria for the exemplary manner in which they had conducted the 28 March 2015 election, and called upon the other AU Member States to emulate Nigeria's example. In the context of the AU's efforts in Sudan, and in view of its long standing engagement in that country, the PSC requested the Commission to dispatch an observer mission for the upcoming general elections. The PSC welcomed, with appreciation, the financial contribution made by Nigeria towards enhancing the capacity of the Commission to promote peaceful and credible elections on the African continent. The PSC called on the Government and people of Burundi to ensure that the upcoming elections are conducted in a credible manner and within a peaceful environment.

- Terrorist attack in Garissa

37. The PSC condemned, in the strongest terms possible, the terrorist attack against the Garissa University College, during which more than 148 innocent students and staff were killed, while many others were injured. The PSC stressed that this barbaric act against innocent civilians is tantamount to an attack on the African continent as a whole. The PSC reiterated the AU's full solidarity with the people and Government of Kenya, and agreed to dispatch a delegation to Kenya to convey its heartfelt condolences and to express its solidarity to the people and Government of Kenya.

b) 498th meeting:

38. At its 498th meeting held on 14 April 2015, the PSC had a meeting with the representatives of the members of the UN Security Council based in Addis Ababa, to exchange views on the situation in Western Sahara. The PSC Chairperson for the month of March 2015, Namibia, presented the African position on the situation based on the PSC Communiqué PSC/PR/COMM/1.(CDXCVI), on Western Sahara adopted at its 496th meeting held on 27 March 2015.

c) 499th meeting:

39. At its 499th meeting held on 23 April 2014, the PSC adopted a press statement in which it condemned the killing of 30 innocent Ethiopians by terrorists affiliated to the Islamic State (IS- Da'esh) in Libya, and conveyed its heartfelt condolences to the people and Government of Ethiopia, as well as to the families of the victims of this horrible act. The PSC reaffirmed AU's total rejection of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Furthermore, the PSC reiterated the imperative for renewed, vigorous and coordinated African and international efforts to address the situation in Libya. The PSC agreed to dispatch a delegation to express its full solidarity and that of the entire African continent to the people and Government of Ethiopia.

d) 500th meeting:

40. At its 500th meeting, held on 27 April 2015, the PSC was briefed on the issue of the Boko Haram terrorist group. The PSC also reviewed the situation in Libya on the basis of the report submitted by the Chairperson of the Commission [PSC/PR/3(D)] and the update provided by the AU Special Envoy for Libya, Dileita Mohamed Dileita:

- On the issue of the Boko Haram

41. The PSC commended the progress made on the ground in neutralizing the Boko Haram terrorist group, as well as of the countries of the region for their efforts and commitment. The PSC took note of the efforts made by the African members of the UN Security Council (A3), towards the adoption of a resolution endorsing the deployment of the MNJTF and authorizing the establishment of the required support mechanisms. It agreed to review this matter in due course, on the basis of the recommendations made by the A3. The PSC acknowledged the pledge by Nigeria to contribute funds to the fight against Boko Haram and encouraged the other Member States to support the efforts of the countries of the region. The PSC welcomed the contribution made by the United Kingdom, as well as the discussions between the AU and the EU for the provision of funding in support of the MNJTF, within the framework of the Africa Peace Facility (APF).

- On the situation in Libya

42. The PSC reiterated its deep concern at the collapse of state structures and the prevailing insecurity in Libya, and expressed concern over the worsening of the terrorism scourge in Libya. The PSC strongly condemned the terrorist groups

operating in Libya and their criminal activities, including the gruesome killing of African migrants of Egyptian and Ethiopian origin. The PSC called on the Libyan stakeholders to commit themselves to dialogue, and reiterated its support to the UN-led political dialogue, and urged all concerned Libyan stakeholders to extend the necessary cooperation to this process. The PSC also noted that the prevailing anarchy in Libya was facilitating the activities of the criminal networks involved in human trafficking towards Europe, leading to the loss of countless human lives during attempts to cross the Mediterranean Sea. In this regard, the PSC underlined the need for effective international, regional and national actions to address both the immediate and long-term aspects of the problem.

e) 501st meeting:

43. At its 501st meeting, held on 28 April 2015, the PSC was briefed on the situation in Burundi. The PSC expressed its grave concern about the incidents that had taken place in Burundi, deeply deplored the loss of human life, and strongly condemned all acts of violence. The PSC urged all Burundian stakeholders to exercise utmost restraint, to respect constitutionalism, and to overcome their differences with due respect to legality, and facilitate the organization of peaceful, free, fair and credible elections. The PSC urged all Burundian stakeholders to respect the decision of the Constitutional Court, once delivered. The PSC welcomed the intention of the Chairperson of the Commission to urgently dispatch a high-level mission to Burundi to identify other practical measures that could assist in defusing the current tension and contribute to the establishment of conditions conducive to the successful organization of the elections.

f) 502nd meeting:

44. At its 502nd meeting, held on 29 April 2015, the PSC received a briefing on the situation in Mali. The PSC also considered the report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the follow-up to communiqué PSC/PR/2.(CDLXIII) on structural conflict prevention adopted by the PSC at its 463rd meeting held on 27 October 2014:

- On the situation in Mali

45. The PSC reiterated its conviction that the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, initialed on 1 March 2015 by the Malian Government and the Movements of the Algiers Platform, was a balanced compromise taking into account the legitimate concerns of all the parties. The PSC reiterated its urgent appeal to the CMA to join the Agreement without further delay. The PSC took note with satisfaction of the decision to organize the formal signing ceremony of the Agreement in Bamako on 15 May 2015. The PSC reaffirmed its determination, in coordination with the international community, especially the UN Security Council, to take appropriate measures, including sanctions, against individuals and entities whose actions undermine regional and international efforts to restore peace and security in Mali. The PSC reiterated its serious concern at the security situation obtaining in Mali.

- On structural conflict prevention

46. The PSC underlined the need for a comprehensive and holistic approach to conflict prevention, which comprises both direct or operational measures before large-scale violence occurs and a strategic focus on the structural causes of conflict. The PSC commended the Commission for the elaboration of a Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework (CSCPF), as a tool to facilitate a Commission-wide and coordinated approach to structural prevention, as well as for the development of tools to facilitate the identification, at an early stage, of a country's structural vulnerability to conflict, and enable the elaboration of mitigation strategies. The PSC encouraged Member States to fully take advantage of these tools in their efforts towards the structural prevention of conflict and consolidation of peace and stability. It requested the Commission, in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities, to avail all the necessary assistance to Member States in this respect and to popularize these tools, as well as to develop the relevant implementation modalities.

g) 503rd Meeting:

47. At its 503rd meeting, held on 30 April 2015, the PSC considered the issue of the xenophobic attacks in South Africa, as well as the situations in Western Sahara and Burundi. The PSC also adopted the Common African Position on the review of UN Peace Operations :

- On xenophobic attacks in South Africa

48. The PSC received a briefing from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa to the AU on the recent xenophobic attacks against foreign migrants in South Africa and the measures taken by the South African authorities to address the situation. The PSC expressed its rejection of xenophobia in all its forms and manifestations and strong condemnation of those attacks carried out by isolated groups against innocent foreigners. The PSC acknowledged that the incidents that had taken place in South Africa are a reflection of larger social, economic and political challenges facing the continent. In this respect, the PSC underlined the need for a comprehensive approach to these challenges, taking into account the constraints of Member States, the imperative to respect the rights of migrants and ensure their humane treatment, as well as the overall objective of achieving freedom of movement across the continent, as one of the main components of the integration agenda of the Union.

- On the situation in Western Sahara

49. The PSC was briefed by the Commissioner for Peace and Security on the follow-up to communiqué PSC/PR/COMM/1.(CDXCVI) on the situation in Western Sahara. The PSC welcomed the steps taken by the Chairperson of the Commission to follow up on the implementation of the relevant provisions of the aforementioned communiqué, in particular the letter that she addressed to the UN Secretary-General on 30 March 2015, transmitting both the report submitted to the 503rd meeting of the PSC and the communiqué adopted on that occasion. The PSC deeply regretted the UN Security Council's refusal to accede to the AU's request that the AU Special

Envoy for the Western Sahara address it. The PSC stressed that this situation did not reflect the spirit of the AU-UN strategic partnership, in particular as it relates to cooperation between the Peace and Security Council of the AU and the UN Security Council, which must apply to all peace and security issues on the African continent, including Western Sahara.

- On the situation in Burundi

50. The PSC was briefed by the Commissioner for Peace and Security on the evolution of the situation in Burundi. It looked forward to the early dispatch to Burundi of a high-level mission by the Chairperson of the Commission, and urged the Government of Burundi and all other stakeholders to cooperate fully with the planned mission. At the meantime, the PSC requested the Commission to undertake urgent consultations with the Government of Burundi to agree on practical measures to de-escalate the situation and to create a climate conducive to dialogue and the search for a solution, including the deployment of human rights observers and other civilian elements.

- Common African Position on the Review of the UN Peace Operations

51. The PSC adopted the Common African Position on the UN review of peace operations, which was subsequently conveyed to the UN Secretary General for onward transmission to the Panel on the Review of UN Peace Operations, for consideration.

- PSC Delegation visit to the Kenya

52. In line with the press statement adopted at its 497th meeting, the PSC Chair for the month of April, the Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the AU, accompanied by the Permanent Representative of Tanzania to the AU, undertook a solidarity mission to Kenya, from 21 to 23 April 2015. The PSC delegation met with President Uhuru Kenyatta and Government officials, and visited the Dadaab refugee camp, as well as the Garissa University College. The Chair of the PSC conveyed the AU's condolences to the people and Government of Kenya. President of Kenya commended the PSC for its support and solidarity. The visit also provided an opportunity to discuss the best ways and means of enhancing the effectiveness of the efforts to prevent and combat terrorism.

D) PSC activities during the month of May 2015, under the Chair of Niger

53. Niger assumed the chairmanship of the PSC on 1 May 2015. During that month, Niger chaired eight meetings of the PSC. During this month, the PSC Chair on behalf of the PSC, participated in the Sixth Ordinary Session of the Pan African Parliament (PAP). The PSC also held a Retreat on issues and challenges in the promotion of peace, security and stability.

a) 504th meeting:

54. At its 504th meeting held on 4 May 2015, the PSC considered and adopted its programme of work for the month of May 2015.

b) 505th meeting:

55. At its 505th meeting held on 6 May 2015, the PSC was briefed by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on the humanitarian situation prevailing in the Lake Chad Basin Region because of the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group. At the same meeting, the PSC Chairperson for the month of April 2015 briefed the PSC on his mission to Kenya, as mandated by the PSC, to convey its condolences to the Government and people of Kenya in the aftermath of the terrorist attack in Garissa town.

c) 506th meeting:

56. At its 506th meeting, held on 13 May 2015, the PSC exchanged views with the UN Peace building Review Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) and deliberated the situation in the CAR, on the basis of the briefings provided by the Commission and the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the Commission for Women, Peace and Security:

- Exchange of views with the UN Peace building Review Advisory Group of Experts

57. The PSC and the UN Peace building Review Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) had an exchange of views on the review of the UN Peace building Architecture. During the discussion, the PSC, among others, stressed the need for the Peace Building Commission (PBC) to continue to work towards strengthening its partnership with the AU and the RECs, through regular consultations, to ensure complementarity, consistency, common approaches and the sharing of lessons learned.

- Situation in the Central African Republic:

58. The PSC welcomed the outcome of the Bangui National Forum, held from 4 to 11 May 2015. The PSC urged the CAR stakeholders to effectively implement the commitments made and stressed the need for the transitional authorities and the officials of the National Elections Authority to reach an agreement, with the international community, on a credible and final electoral timetable to allow the holding of the elections. The PSC reiterated its commitment to adhere strictly to the provisions of the Transitional Constitutional Charter and warned against, and rejected in advance, any attempt to question the provisions on the ineligibility of the leaders of the transition and of individuals targeted by sanctions imposed by the PSC and / or the UN Security Council.

d) 507th meeting:

59. At its 507th meeting held on 14 May 2015, the PSC deliberated on the situation in Burundi, in light of the coup attempt of 13 May 2015. The PSC reiterated the AU's strong condemnation of any attempt to seize power by force and, in this regard, endorsed the communiqué of the 13th Extraordinary Summit of the

EAC, held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, on 13 May 2015, as well as the press release issued on the same day by the Chairperson of the Commission, condemning the attempt to take power by force in Burundi. The PSC reiterated its support for the sustained efforts of the EAC and endorsed the measures adopted by the Dar-es-Salaam Extraordinary Summit, including the call for the postponement of the elections and the immediate cessation of violence, and looked forward to the follow-up steps provided for in the communiqué. The PSC reaffirmed that only dialogue and consensus, based on the respect for the Arusha Agreement and the Constitution of Burundi, would make it possible to find a lasting political solution that would ensure the preservation and consolidation of peace, as well as the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law. The PSC welcomed the determination of the region, as expressed in the Dar-es-Salaam communiqué, not to accept nor stand by, if violence did not stop or escalates in Burundi.

e) 508th meeting:

60. At its 508th meeting held on 18 May 2015, the PSC considered the situation in Somalia, and the implementation of the mandate of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA).

- On the situation in Somalia:

61. The PSC welcomed the steady progress made in the establishment of interim regional administrations in the recovered areas, as well as the operationalization of the Independent Constitutional Review and Implementation Commission and the Boundaries and Federation Commission, and the reconvening, on 27 April 2015, of the Federal Parliament to finalize key legislation for the national elections scheduled in 2016. The PSC took note of the findings and recommendations of the Commission's Investigation into allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) leveled against some AMISOM personnel, which undertook its work between November 2014 and February 2015, and urged for the scrupulous implementation of its recommendations. The PSC commended AMISOM for its outstanding contribution to the improvement of security in Somalia.

- On the implementation of the mandate of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army

62. The PSC welcomed the progress being made in the implementation of the mandate of the RCI-LRA and commended the troops of the Regional Task Force (RTF), the operational arm of the RCI-LRA, for the progress made towards the elimination of the LRA. The PSC expressed concern that, despite the progress being made, the LRA continues to operate in a number of areas in the CAR and the DRC. The PSC noted with satisfaction the continued support of the international partners and urged them to enhance their assistance. The PSC also urged the UN Security Council to take the necessary steps, including adjusting the mandates of the relevant UN peacekeeping missions, to facilitate the provision, within capabilities, of effective support to the RCI-LRA, in particular the RTF headquarters and contingents. The PSC decided to extend the mandate of the RCI-LRA for an additional period of 12 months.

f) 509th meeting:

63. At its 509th meeting held on 19 May 2015, the PSC held an open session on the theme: “Children in Armed Conflicts in Africa.” The PSC acknowledged that new trends in armed conflicts in Africa have resulted in new challenges to the protection of children. The PSC emphasized that it is the primary responsibility of Governments to ensure that children are protected and their rights and welfare promoted, and urged AU Member States that have not yet done so to ratify and implement fully the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and other international child protection, rights and welfare instruments.

g) 510th meeting:

64. At its 510th meeting held on 22 May 2015, the PSC considered the situation in South Sudan. The PSC expressed grave concern at the continuing deterioration of the situation in South Sudan, including the escalation of hostilities and the deepening of the serious humanitarian situation. The PSC called for urgent steps by the Sanctions Committee, established pursuant to UN Security Council resolution 2206 (2015), to designate individuals and entities subject to the measures provided for therein, and requested the UN Security Council to consider with urgency the immediate imposition of an arms embargo on the belligerents. The PSC reiterated the AU’s commitment to extend full support to the IGAD mediation efforts in South Sudan, notably through the early operationalization of the AU High-Level *ad hoc* Committee, established by the Peace and Security Council in December 2014, and other related measures. The PSC appealed to the Member States and the larger international community to provide the urgently-needed humanitarian assistance to alleviate the plight of the civilian population.

h) 511th meeting:

65. At its 511th meeting, held on 29 May 2015, the PSC deliberated on the following issues:

- The situation in Darfur

66. The PSC noted with concern the challenges facing the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) in the implementation of its mandate. The PSC requested the Commission, in cooperation with UNAMID, to prepare a comprehensive report on the activities of UNAMID and the exit strategy, to enable it deliberate and decide on the matter.

- Migration, stability and security in Africa

67. On the issue of migration, stability and security in Africa, the PSC agreed to convene another meeting on migration, bearing in mind the importance of the issue and make appropriate decision.

- Post-Ebola recovery in the affected countries

68. The PSC welcomed the progress made in the Ebola-affected countries, and extended particular congratulations to Liberia for being declared by the World Health Organizations (WHO) as Ebola-free country. The PSC also congratulated AU Member States, the Commission, the UN and other partners, for their contribution to the fight against Ebola. The PSC agreed to continue to monitor closely those countries recovering from Ebola and to contribute effectively to post-recovery activities, including providing support to the strengthening of health infrastructures. The PSC looked forward to the organization of the high-level International Conference on Africa's Fight Against Ebola under the theme: "*Africa Helping Africa in the Ebola Recovery and Reconstruction*", scheduled to take place in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 20 to 21 July 2015.

- Participation of the Chairperson of the PSC in the Sixth Ordinary Session of the 3rd of the Pan African Parliament:

69. Within the framework of interaction between the PSC and the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the PSC Chairperson for May 2015 was invited to make a presentation, on behalf of the PSC, on peace and security issues and challenges in the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa to the 6th ordinary session of the PAP held on 19 May 2015 in Midrand, South Africa. The presentation focused on the conflict situations in the Horn of Africa and the Sahelo-Saharan region, as well as on the challenges of poverty, transnational organized crime and terrorism. A call was made for the enhancement of cooperation between the PAP and the PSC. The crises in Burundi and the Central African Republic were cited to stress the importance of prevention and management of crises, as well as the consolidation of peace on the continent. In view of the various elections scheduled in 2015 and for 2016, the issues of governance and electoral processes were also discussed during the session.

- Retreat of the Peace and Security Council

70. The PSC held its 7th Retreat on Issues and Challenges in the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa, in Swakopmund, Namibia, from 21 to 23 May 2015. The Conclusions of the Retreat are contained in the Annex to this Report. In the main, the Conclusions related to enhancing collaboration between the PSC and RECs/RMs in conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa; enhancing conflict prevention; enhancing post- conflict reconstruction and peace building activities; reviewing working methods of the PSC; enhancing collaboration between the PSC and ECOSOCC; gender mainstreaming on peace and security in Africa; and updating and enriching the PSC Protocol taking account of the hindsight, lessons learned and experiences gathered in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa.

E. PSC activities during the month of June 2015, under the Chairmanship of Nigeria

71. Nigeria assumed the chairmanship of the PSC on 1 June 2015. During that month, Nigeria chaired four meetings. At the time, that this report was being

finalized for submission to the 25th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, there were still scheduled meetings to be conducted in the month.

a) 512th Meeting:

72. At its 512th meeting held on 2 June 2015, the PSC considered and adopted its programme of work for the month of June 2015. The PSC also discussed and agreed on the agenda of the PSC meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government scheduled for 13 June 2015, on the margins of the 25th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, Johannesburg, South Africa. The agenda items are situations in South Sudan and Burundi.

b) 513th Meeting

73. At its 513th meeting held on 3 June 2015, the PSC considered the situation in Mali. The PSC expressed grave concern at the continuing deterioration of the situation in Mali. The PSC reiterated its support to the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali signed in Bamako, on 15 May 2015. It called on the Coordination of the Movements of Azawad (CMA) to join the Agreement without any further delay. The PSC reiterated its determination to take measures, including sanctions, against all those undermining the implementation of the Agreement and the quest for peace in northern Mali. It called on the larger international community to extend the necessary support for the effective implementation of the Agreement.

c) 514th Meeting

74. At its 514th meeting held on 4 June 2015, the PSC made a preliminary review of the Report on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa due for submission to the 25th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union. The PSC also considered the Conclusions of its Retreat on issues and challenges in the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa, held in Swakopmund, Namibia, from 21 to 23 May 2015. As stated above, on the section on the activities of the PSC in May 2015, the Conclusions are annexed to this report.

75. On 8 June 2015, in Pretoria, South Africa, the PSC finalized the consideration of the Report on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa. The PSC also discussed the preparation for its Summit-level meeting scheduled to take place in Johannesburg, on 13 June 2015, on the margins of the 25th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union.

IV. STATE OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

76. The Commission and the PSC have made sustained efforts to consolidate the progress made and promote lasting peace, security and stability on the continent. While progress has been made in resolving some of the crises faced by the continent, many challenges remain.

a) **Comoros**

77. One of the main developments during the period under consideration was the organisation, from January to February 2015, of parliamentary (the Assembly of the Union and Advisors of the Autonomous Islands) and municipal elections. These elections were described as free and fair by the national and international observers, including those of the AU. However, difficulties subsequently arose with regard to the installation and operation of the newly-elected institutions. Thus the appointment of three Advisers, co-opted by the Council of Anjouan to represent the island in the Union Assembly, was invalidated by the Constitutional Court. The Assembly of the Union, which began its work in April 2015, elected its Chairman and its Bureau in the absence of the opposition Members of Parliament. Consequently, the latter do not recognise the legitimacy of either the Chairman of the Assembly or its Bureau, as a protest against the invalidation of the Anjouan Advisors. In this context, the JUWA party, the “*Rassemblement démocratique des Comores*” (Democratic Rally of the Comoros) (DRC) and “*Le Parti pour l’Entente Comorienne*” (the Party for the Comorian Agreement) (PEC), petitioned the Commission on 4 April 2015, to express their concern.

78. These difficulties arise in a context marked by the preparation of the forthcoming Presidential election in 2016. According to the Constitutional principle of a rotating Presidency, the next President of the Union of the Comoros should come from the island of Mayotte, as the other components the Union have already occupied the Presidency. As Mayotte is currently under French administration, the Presidency of the Union should return to the Autonomous Island of Ngazidja (Grande Comore), which was the first to benefit from the principle of the rotating Presidency. Some political actors have stated their views in favour of the abolition of the rotation. For its part, the Government wants to avoid calling into question the principles agreed upon for the resolution of the serious crisis that the Comoros had faced, in order to preserve the gains made in the area of national reconciliation.

79. The Assembly may urge the Comorian stakeholders to work together to consolidate the significant gains made towards reconciliation and stability in their country. Similarly, the Assembly may stress the need for increased economic and financial assistance to enable the islands to promote socio-economic development, it being understood that such assistance must be accompanied by continuous efforts by the Comorian authorities for good governance.

b) **Madagascar**

80. The period under consideration was marked by the organisation of national reconciliation meetings, under the auspices of the World Council of Christian Churches of Madagascar (FFKM). In this context, in March 2015 the FFKM organised preparatory consultations, which resulted in the organisation of the National Reconciliation meeting in May 2015. The meeting adopted many non-binding resolutions. The President of the Republic decided to ignore the resolutions calling into question the elected institutions, such as those relating to the dissolution of the National Assembly and the change of Government. He recommended, on the other hand, the repeal of the decree confining former President Marc Ravalomanana to house arrest. The Assembly would recall that, in December 2014, the Malagasy

authorities ordered the released of the political detainees and the transfer of former President Marc Ravalomanana, under house arrest in the province of Diego Suarez, to his private residence in Antananarivo under less stringent house arrest measures.

81. The period under consideration was also marked by the adoption of a series of laws aimed at deepening decentralisation and fixing the date of local municipal election for 31 July 2015. The establishment or restructuring of the main State institutions and consolidation of democracy also continued, through the adoption of different laws relating to the Senate, the High Council for the Defence of Democracy and the Rule of Law. However, the most significant development is the vote by the National Assembly on 26 May 2015, aimed at removing the President of the Republic from office. A complaint in that regard was submitted by the National Assembly to the High Constitutional Court (HCC) which has yet to decide on the action to be taken vis-à-vis the complaint.

82. The international community continued to support the ongoing political process in Madagascar. Within this framework, the local branch of the International Support Group for Madagascar (ISG-M) held its second meeting under the co-chairmanship of the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission and the Malagasy Minister of Foreign Affairs on 13 April 2015 in Antananarivo. This meeting made it possible to take stock of the state of implementation of the pending aspects of the Roadmap to end the crisis in Madagascar. At a meeting held on 27 May 2015, following the submission of the complaint aimed at impeaching the President of the Republic, the ISG-M, while expressing its respect for the sovereignty of the Malagasy State, reiterated its support to the institutions resulting from the democratic elections and appealed to the sense of responsibility of all the stakeholders to promote stability, peace and sustainable development in Madagascar. Furthermore, the AU Commission is pursuing its support to the Government as regards the security sector reform, following the mission undertaken in Madagascar, in October 2014, by the AU, jointly with other partner organisations.

83. The Assembly may wish to express its concern about the attempt to impeach the President of the Republic, and urge all the Malagasy stakeholders to persevere in their efforts to consolidate reconciliation and democracy in their country. The Assembly may also wish to encourage the Government of Madagascar to accelerate the reforms, particularly in the area of governance and reform of the security sector. Finally, the Assembly may wish to reiterate its appeal to the international community to continue to support the process of peace building and socio-economic recovery in Madagascar.

c) Somalia

84. The overall political developments in Somalia have remained encouraging during the period under review. Progress was made in the state formation process, constitutional review, and preparations for elections by 2016. Somali leaders have reiterated their determination to deliver Somalia's Vision 2016 without any extension of the term of the Federal Parliament or President in August and September 2016, respectively.

85. The State formation process, which is part of the new federal arrangements agreed to by the Somali stakeholders as enshrined in the provisional constitution adopted on 1st August 2012, is almost complete. Only two of the five interim regional administrations provided for in South Central Somalia (the Central Regions and the Hiraan and Middle Shabelle) are yet to be established. The process for the Central Regions was launched on 16 April 2015 in Adaado and is set to be completed by June 2015. The state formation process in Hiraan and Middle Shabelle is also underway. The status of Mogadishu, as the federal capital, will be addressed through national consultations during the constitutional review process. Looking ahead, the main priorities for the Federal Government and the other concerned stakeholders will be completing the formation of interim regional administrations and assemblies; advancing the constitutional review process, which will culminate in the adoption of a permanent constitution by referendum before the elections scheduled to take place in 2016; setting up the National Independent Electoral Commission (NIEC) and Boundaries and Federation Commission; and finalizing priority legislation on political parties, citizenship, and elections. In particular, the NIEC faces a compressed timeline to discharge its duties, and progress on the constitutional review process has not matched the progress on federalism.

86. On the security front, Al-Shabaab continues to pose a serious threat on the ground. A number of attacks were carried out during the period under review. On 20 February, Al Shabaab carried out an attack on the Central Hotel in Mogadishu that killed 28 people and injured many others. On 27 March, the group also carried out an attack on Maka al-Mukarama Hotel in which 14 people were killed. Another attack was carried out on 14 April against the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education, killing 8 people. On 20 April, four UNICEF staff members and two security guards were killed following an attack in front of the UN compound in Garoowe, Puntland. On 23 May, a Member of Parliament was killed in Mogadishu, while another was seriously injured. On 2 April 2015, Al Shabaab carried out a deadly attack against Garissa University, in Kenya. The situation is further complicated by the war in Yemen and the recent influx of Yemenis refugees into Djibouti, islands on the Red Sea and Puntland. Regarding more specifically Somalia, there are concerns that Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQIP) might use this opportunity to infiltrate the northern part of the country.

87. As part of the efforts to address the regional security challenges arising from Al Shabaab and the activities of other terrorist groups, and in follow-up to the PSC communiqué adopted at its Nairobi summit meeting of 2 September 2014 on terrorism and violent extremism in Africa, the Commission convened the first meeting of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services of the member states of EAC and IGAD, in Djibouti, from 28 February to 1 March 2015. The meeting agreed to a set of measures aimed at enhancing security cooperation in the region, including the need to intensify the interaction among the countries and institutions concerned, the establishment of a secure communication system among the intelligence and security services, and the enhancement of national operational capacities. It was also agreed to institutionalise this meeting through the launching of the Djibouti Process on the enhancement of security cooperation in the East Africa region. The Heads of Intelligence and Security Services will meet every three months. Their second meeting will take place in Kampala, Uganda.

88. As the Assembly is aware, in 2014, AMISOM and the Somali National Army (SNA) conducted two successful joint operations, recovering 22 towns and strategic sea ports from Al Shabaab. However, the group still controls a number of strategic towns in the Jubba Valley, Gedo, Middle Shabelle and Galgadud regions. While further operations are planned to recover remaining locations, it should be noted that both AMISOM and the SNA continue to face a number of logistical challenges. In addition, more efforts are required for the stabilization of the liberated areas.

89. From 14 to 25 April 2015, the Commission and the UN Secretariat undertook a joint mission to Somalia to assess whether the benchmarks had been met for a UN peacekeeping mission; to assess the impact of the surge of AMISOM troops authorized in UN Security Council resolution 2124 (2013), which increased the strength of the Mission's uniformed personnel from 17,731 to 22,126; and to provide recommendations on the next steps in the military campaign. Given that Al Shabaab continues to retain significant capability to conduct asymmetric warfare, the joint mission recommended that the UN Security Council maintain the current strength of AMISOM until the end of 2016. The joint mission underlined the need for renewed efforts towards the stabilization of the recovered areas. At the time of finalizing this report, the Commission was consulting with various stakeholders on the outcome of the benchmarking exercise, before submitting the recommendations made to the PSC and thereafter to the UN Security Council.

90. The humanitarian situation remains of concern. There are 3 million people in need of humanitarian and livelihood assistance. Humanitarian access remains a challenge in parts of southern and central Somalia due to insecurity and road blocks, resulting in additional operational and transportation cost for humanitarian agencies delivering food to affected populations, as well as increased food prices, as traders transfer the high cost of operating in insecure areas to the consumers. The most affected roads are Belet Weyne-Mogadishu and Mogadishu-Baidoa-Doolow. The *Gu* rainy season, which runs from April to June, started on time in most of parts of Somalia. Should the rains continue at the required level, they will allow for increased crop production, pasture growth and replenishment of water reservoirs, thereby improving food security for the concerned populations. The funding requirements for the Somalia Humanitarian Response Plan amount to US\$863 million. As of mid-May, only US\$111 million were received, 13% of the needs.

91. Against this background, the Assembly may wish to welcome the progress made in the political process and the implementation of Vision 2016. At the same time, the Somali stakeholders should be urged to stay on course and to demonstrate the required unity of purpose and action in order to address all outstanding issues and fulfil the aspirations of their people for peace, security and stability. The Assembly may also wish to pay tribute to AMISOM and the Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) for their commitment and the sacrifices made, as well as to IGAD, for its leadership and efforts in support of the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia. The Assembly may wish to reiterate the AU's appreciation to the UN, the EU, the United States, the United Kingdom and other bilateral and multilateral partners for their assistance, and urge for adequate logistical support for AMISOM and the SNA. The Assembly may wish to appeal for the provision of adequate financial, economic and humanitarian assistance to Somalia.

d) Eritrea and Ethiopia

92. During the period under review, no progress has been made in overcoming the challenges facing the peace process between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Against this background, and in line with the relevant provisions of decision Assembly/AU/Dec.559(XXIV), the Assembly may wish to underscore the need for renewed efforts to overcome the challenges at hand and to encourage the Commission and the PSC to take appropriate initiatives in this respect, in line with the relevant provisions of the PSC Protocol.

e) Djibouti and Eritrea

93. The Assembly will recall that, at its previous ordinary session, it was updated on the evolution of the relations between Djibouti and Eritrea, in the context of the follow-up to the visit undertaken by the Commissioner for Peace and Security to the two countries in April and May 2014. The Assembly may wish to reiterate the need for the effective implementation of the 6 June 2012 Agreement facilitated by the State of Qatar, and encourage the two countries to take the required steps for the effective normalization of their relation and the promotion good neighbourliness.

f) Horn of Africa

94. The Assembly of the Union has, over the past few years, repeatedly called for a regional and holistic approach to the challenges to peace, security and stability in the Horn of Africa, in support of IGAD. This approach would, among other things, involve the convening of a regional conference on peace, security, stability, cooperation and development. The Commission and the AUHIP, whose mandate was broadened by the PSC meeting held in New York, on 22 September 2013, to promote such an approach, are actively engaged in efforts to follow-up on the Assembly's decisions on the matter. The AUHIP is planning to provide an update on steps taken in this respect to the PSC in due course. In the meantime, the Assembly may wish to reiterate its support for the envisaged regional and holistic approach and to call upon all the countries of the region to extend the necessary support.

g) Sudan

95. During the period under review, the AU has continued to follow all aspects of the situation in Sudan, whether they relate to the National Dialogue, the developments in Darfur and those taking place in the Two Areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. Sustained efforts were deployed to help advance peace and promote lasting stability and security in the country.

96. The Assembly will recall that, in January 2014, President Omar Hassan al-Bashir announced the launching of a National Dialogue to settle the political, economic and social challenges facing Sudan. At its 456th meeting held on 12 September 2014, the PSC, recognizing the importance of the national dialogue process as an authentic, transparent, inclusive and fair process, initiated and owned by the people of Sudan to bring about lasting peace across the entire country, mandated the AUHIP, *inter-alia*, to convene a meeting of the Sudanese parties to

discuss relevant process issues. The meeting, to be held in Addis Ababa, was intended to ensure that the necessary confidence-building measures were taken, that the key steps of the national dialogue process were fully agreed upon and that the process was fair and would result in mutually agreed objectives.

97. The AUHIP dispatched a team to Sudan from 16 to 17 March 2015, to carry out consultations on the pre-National Dialogue meeting. The team canvassed the need for the meeting to take place before the end of March 2015. The AUHIP also carried out consultations with the representatives of the armed and non-armed opposition outside Sudan. All the Parties confirmed their readiness to participate in a pre-national dialogue. The National Congress Party (NCP), while indicating the constraints of the Government on account of the elections that were scheduled to take place in April 2015, reiterated its commitment to the National Dialogue and its willingness to participate in the preparatory meeting. The opposition parties expressed their keenness to sustain the momentum towards the holding of the national dialogue, building on the Berlin Declaration adopted following a meeting held in Germany, from 24 to 28 February 2015, at the invitation of the German Government. The AUHIP issued invitations to the Sudanese parties to attend the pre-national dialogue in Addis Ababa from 29 to 31 March 2015. In the absence of the NCP, which cited a number of constraints and concerns, including the fact that key representatives would be participating in arrangements for the national elections, and other procedural concerns, the AUHIP suspended the implementation of this initiative. However, the Panel held consultations with the other stakeholders who honored its invitation. The views expressed will be taken into account as the AUHIP plans its next steps.

98. Following a meeting it held in Khartoum on 9 May 2015, the National Dialogue Preparatory Committee, known as the G7+7, which was established in April 2014 in response to President al Bashir's call in January 2014, and which consists of parties allied with the Government and opposition parties, recommitted itself to an inclusive National Dialogue. It should be noted that some major opposition parties, such as the National Umma Party, that had been members of the G7+7 from its inception, have withdrawn from the Group. Nonetheless, this recommitment is an important development, as some of the remaining members of the G7+7 had suspended their participation in the meetings of this mechanism in January 2015. At the 9 May 2015 meeting, the G7+7 appointed two of its members to reach out to the armed movements regarding their participation in the Dialogue. Sudanese officials also made statements in May 2015, reaffirming the commitment of Government and the NCP to the National Dialogue, and indicating that it should commence soon after the swearing-in of the President-elect al- Bashir, on 2 June 2015.

99. Meanwhile, in line with an invitation to observe the general elections, the AU Commission dispatched a pre-election assessment mission, from 1 to 10 March 2015. The team met with various stakeholders and submitted a report with recommendations that reflected serious concerns and challenges facing the elections. Eventually, the PSC, at its 497th meeting held on 8 April 2015, decided that the AU should dispatch an Observer Mission to Sudan. The AU Elections Observer Mission (AUEOM), led by former President Olusegun Obasanjo, followed the elections, which took place from 13 to 15 April 2015. While noting the generally low turnout of voters, the Observer Mission was satisfied that voting went on peacefully.

The Mission advised that the elections should not be a barrier to moving the National Dialogue forward. On 27 April 2015, the National Elections Commission (NEC) officially announced the results declaring President al Bashir as the winner of the election by 94.05% of ballots cast.

100. In its communiqué of 12 September 2014, the PSC supported “the coordinated efforts to address national issues, as well as the situations in the Two Areas of Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan, and Darfur, within a common framework.” It was against this background that the AUHIP facilitated three rounds of negotiations between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM/N), between November and December 2014, on the basis of a draft Framework Agreement submitted by the Panel. As the Assembly is aware, the parties were unable to conclude the negotiations successfully, due to disagreement on issues of principle, forcing the AUHIP to suspend the talks on the Two Areas, on 8 December 2014. The AUHIP has since continued to engage all stakeholders with a view to gauging options for an early resumption of negotiations on the Two Areas. In the meantime, both the security and humanitarian situation continue to be of concern. There are an estimated 378,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Blue Nile and South and West Kordofan states. The number of people from these states who have sought refuge in Ethiopia and South Sudan is estimated at over 270,000.

101. In Darfur, the AUHIP, in full coordination and cooperation with UNAMID, launched talks between the Government and the Darfur armed movements, including the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM-MM), led by Minni Minawi, and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), led by Jibril Ibrahim. The Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM-AW), led by Abdul Wahid, refused to attend the negotiations. Regrettably, the parties failed to achieve agreement on the agenda for the talks and the AUHIP had to suspend the negotiations on 29 November 2014. It has not been possible to reconvene the negotiations during the period under review.

102. The humanitarian and security situation in Darfur remains challenging as a result of an upsurge in inter-communal violence, most recently between the Maalia and Rezeigat tribes in East Darfur, and the increase in hostilities between the GoS and the armed movements in several areas. The Government of Sudan, acknowledging the seriousness of the inter-communal violence, took urgent measures to stop the fighting, restore security and address the consequences of the fighting in all its aspects. According to figures provided by OCHA, since the beginning of 2015 and up to the end of April, 143,102 new displacements have been reported by humanitarian organizations and local authorities. This is in addition to the extant figure of 2.5 million IDPs in the many camps in the region, while over 360,000 people have sought refuge in Chad. The situation is compounded by proliferation of arms, banditry, weak local conflict resolution mechanisms and the absence of state institutions in many areas at the local level. It is important to note the efforts by Chad and Sudan to secure their common border and to acknowledge the contribution of the joint force established by the two countries and the significant progress made on the ground.

103. UNAMID continues to face challenges in terms of access. This is aggravated by continuing attacks on peacekeepers. On 23 and 24 April 2015, UNAMID troops

guarding a water point in Kass, South Darfur, were attacked by gunmen, resulting in the deaths of some armed elements (4 according to UNAMID and 7 according to the Government of Sudan) and injuries to several peacekeepers. This incident further strained Government of Sudan/UNAMID relations, with the Government claiming that the dead were unarmed civilians, a claim refuted by UNAMID, which had succeeded in seizing some of the weapons used by the attackers. In a press release issued on 27 April 2015, the Chairperson of the Commission strongly condemned the attacks on UNAMID, stressing that the operation is deployed solely to assist in stabilizing the Darfur area, and regretted the loss of lives recorded during those incidents. She stressed the need to pursue transparent and fair investigation into the incidents, in order to swiftly bring the perpetrators to justice. She welcomed the commitment of UNAMID to cooperate fully with the Government, using the agreed upon mechanism, to avoid the recurrence of such incidents. She reiterated the AU's full support to UNAMID, as well as its commitment to work with the Government of Sudan in the search for a lasting solution to the crisis in Darfur.

104. The Assembly will recall that, on 11 November 2014, the Government of Sudan wrote to the UN, seeking the development of an exit strategy for UNAMID. It is against this background that, in December 2014, a joint AU-UN strategic review assessment mission of UNAMID was conducted to determine the extent of the implementation of the three core priority areas which were identified by the December 2013 AU-UN assessment mission, namely: mediation between the Government of the Sudan and the non-signatory armed movements on the basis of the DDPD; protection of civilians, facilitation of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and safety and security of humanitarian personnel; and support to mediation of inter-communal conflict. In February 2015, a Joint Working Group (JWG) was established by the Government of Sudan, the AU and the UN, to map out a strategy for the smooth exit of UNAMID from Darfur. In March 2015, the JWG visited all the five regions of Darfur to assess the security and humanitarian situation, and held meetings in April and May 2015. Consultations are underway towards reaching a common position and finalizing the recommendations to be submitted to the PSC and the UN Security Council.

105. The Assembly may wish to express, once again, the AU's support to the national dialogue initiative and to call upon all Sudanese stakeholders to work in earnest for its successful implementation, notably by rising above narrow considerations for the higher interest of their country. In this respect, the Assembly may wish to emphasize the continued relevance of the framework provided by the PSC in the communiqué adopted at its 456th meeting. The Assembly may wish to call on the parties to the conflicts in Darfur and the Two Areas to demonstrate renewed commitment towards achieving a cessation of hostilities in these regions, in order to facilitate the political process. The Assembly may wish to reiterate its full support to the AUHIP, commend its members for their untiring efforts and commitment and urge the Sudanese stakeholders to extend full cooperation to the Panel. The Assembly may also wish to acknowledge the efforts being deployed by Chad, as part of the reconciliation process in Darfur. Finally, the Assembly may wish to remind the parties of their obligations to enable full access to needy populations and facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations, as well as to appeal to the international community to extend the necessary humanitarian assistance. This is all the more urgent as only 28% of the total funding requirements (USD 1.04 billion) to

assist the most vulnerable people in Sudan, including IDPs, refugees and asylum seekers in Sudan and other food insecure non-displaced people, has been mobilized as of mid-May 2015.

h) South Sudan

106. The period under review elapsed without any tangible progress in the search for a solution to the devastating conflict tearing South Sudan apart. Of utmost concern is the continued fighting between the warring parties, namely the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement In Opposition (SPLM/IO). According to the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (MVM) established in February 2014 to monitor violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement of January 2014, a total of 39 incidents were reported as of the last update of 30 April 2015, resulting in 43 violations, 20 of which were committed by the GoSS and 23 by the SPLM/IO. In mid-May 2015, the situation witnessed a further escalation, with military operations in Unity and Upper Nile States. In Malakal, armed groups engaged in fighting next to the UNMISS sites for protection of civilians. There were reports of targeted rape and killing of civilians, including children.

107. As a result, the humanitarian situation has further worsened. As of 30 April 2015, 1.52 million people were internally displaced, while 546,220 have sought refuge in neighboring countries. Nearly 118,000 people sought shelter inside the protection sites of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Nearly, 300,000 people were affected by the upsurge in the conflict in the first days of May 2015. Moreover, active hostilities and insecurity continue to disrupt humanitarian response activities and restrict road and air access. The funding requirements for South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan amount to 1.8 billion dollars. To-date, only a limited percentage of the funding requested has been received.

108. There has been no progress in the IGAD-led political talks during the period under review. On 1 February 2015, President Salva Kiir Mayardit and the leader of the SPLM/IO, Dr. Riek Machar, agreed to resolve all outstanding issues, including power-sharing, by no later than 5 March 2015, and to establish a Transitional Government of National Unity (TGoNU) by 9 July 2015. On 23 February 2015, Phase Three of the IGAD-led talks resumed in Addis Ababa, after the negotiating parties completed the necessary consultations with their respective constituencies. President Salva Kiir and Dr. Riek Machar held direct negotiations from 3 to 6 March 2015 to discuss critical issues, notably the structure and sharing of responsibilities and functions of the Executive of the TGoNU; the reconstituting of the National Assembly; transitional security arrangements and status of forces during the transition period; and scope and level of institutional reforms. No agreement was reached, and the talks were suspended indefinitely for further consultations. At the time of the suspension of the talks, the Chair of IGAD, Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn of Ethiopia, addressed the people of South Sudan, expressing regret at the lack of progress in the talks and promising to reinvigorate and reform the IGAD mediation efforts, including consultations with the IGAD Heads of State and Government and other African and international partners on the way forward. A new date has yet to be announced for the resumption of the talks.

109. Since the breakdown of the talks, the IGAD Chairperson has been consulting with the leaders of the region on a proposal to expand the mediation to include representations from the AU, the UN, the Troika (United States, the United Kingdom and Norway), the EU, and China, in order to assist and strengthen the ongoing process. The IGAD mediation team, on its part, continues to work on a single draft agreement that will be used as the basis for future negotiations.

110. The Assembly would recall that, at its 474th meeting held on 4 December 2014, the PSC decided to enhance and scale up Africa's support to IGAD and its mediation efforts in South Sudan, including consultations with the leaders of the region towards the establishment of an AU High-Level *ad hoc* Committee of Heads of State and Government, comprising one representative from each of the five regions of the continent, which will strengthen Africa's support to IGAD and assist the South Sudanese parties and stakeholders to achieve durable peace in their country. At its 494th meeting held on 24 March 2015, the PSC welcomed the completion by the Commission of the consultations regarding the composition of the AU High-Level *ad hoc* Committee, to strengthen Africa's support to the IGAD mediation. The PSC urged the *ad hoc* Committee, to be composed of the Heads of State and Government of Algeria, Chad, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Africa, to meet as soon as possible to elaborate its terms of reference and determine its work plan in support of IGAD. The PSC requested the Commission to extend all the necessary support to the *ad hoc* Committee, to enable the AU to play its full role in the search for a lasting solution to the conflict in South Sudan. At the time of finalizing this report, the Commission was taking steps to convene the inaugural meeting of the High-Level *ad hoc* Committee, with the participation of the IGAD Member States, on the margins of the 25th ordinary session of the Assembly of the Union, in Johannesburg.

111. Both the PSC and the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government have repeatedly expressed their readiness to implement targeted sanctions and other measures against any party that continues to undermine the search of a solution to the conflict and fails to honour its commitment. It is against this background that the UN Security Council, on 3 March 2015, adopted resolution 2206 (2015), establishing a sanctions regime, through travel ban and asset freeze, against individuals and entities responsible for or complicit in, or having engaged in, directly or indirectly, actions or policies that threaten the peace, security or stability of South Sudan. The UN Security Council decided to establish a Sanctions Committee tasked to monitor the implementation of the measures contemplated in the resolution and to designate individuals and entities subject to these measures.

112. At its 411th meeting held in Banjul, The Gambia, on 30 December 2013, the PSC requested the Chairperson of the Commission to establish a Commission of Inquiry to investigate human rights violations and other abuses committed during the armed conflict in South Sudan and make recommendations on the best ways and means to ensure accountability, reconciliation and healing among all South Sudanese communities. The report of the Commission, as completed, was submitted to the PSC at its 484th meeting held on 29 January 2015. The PSC, while commending the Chair of the Commission of Inquiry, former President Olusegun Obasanjo, and its members for their hard work and commitment in the discharge of their mandate, decided to defer the consideration of the report of the Commission of

Inquiry to a later date, and to take appropriate decisions in line with the objectives set out in the Banjul communiqué.

113. The Assembly may wish to reiterate AU's deep concern at the prevailing situation and at the lack of political will from the Parties to bring the violence to an end and meet the aspirations of their people to peace and security. The Assembly may wish to condemn strongly the continued violations of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and abuses targeting the civilian population. The Assembly may wish to demand that the parties genuinely commit themselves to the political process and extend the necessary cooperation to the efforts being made in this respect. The Assembly may wish to reiterate its deep appreciation to IGAD and its Chair, as well as to the other Heads of State and Government, for their continued commitment and tireless efforts. The Assembly may wish to encourage the AU High-Level *ad hoc* Committee to take all necessary steps in the fulfillment of its mandate to support and enhance the IGAD mediation efforts. The Assembly may wish to express appreciation to the international partners for their support and urge them to continue to assist the ongoing regional and continental efforts. The Assembly may also wish to reiterate its full support to the IGAD Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, as well as to UNMISS, and demand that the parties extend full cooperation to these mechanisms. Finally, the Assembly may wish to appeal for the mobilization of the required resources to meet the humanitarian needs in South Sudan.

i) Relations between Sudan and South Sudan

114. As the Assembly is aware, in September 2012, under the facilitation of the AUHIP, Sudan and South Sudan signed a Cooperation Agreement based on the overriding imperative of building two viable States. The Agreement covers several areas, including border issues, security arrangements, Abyei and financial and oil-related issues. While progress has been made in the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement, a number of challenges remain.

115. As part of the implementation of the "Agreement on Border Issues", the Joint Border Commission (JBC), following its first meeting, in Addis Ababa, on 21 November 2014, met under the auspices of the AU Border Programme and the AUHIP, from 7 to 8 February and 16 to 18 March 2015, in Juba, South Sudan, and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, respectively, to discuss options for expediting the demarcation of the already agreed parts of the boundary between Sudan and South Sudan. These meetings resulted in the signing, on 18 March 2015, of an Agreement on the establishment of an escrow account to meet the costs of the demarcation of the boundary between the two States. The JBC also adopted the final list of the members of the Joint Technical Team (JTT), consisting of equal numbers of surveyors, cartographers and other relevant experts from each State, as proposed by the JBC session of February 2015. The meeting also considered and adopted the terms of reference of the Joint Demarcation Committee (JDC), to manage and supervise the boundary demarcation exercise. It was agreed to reconvene the next meetings of JBC and the JDC from 24 to 27 June, and 29 June to 2 July 2015, respectively.

116. However, subsequent to these meetings, the Sudanese Government wrote to the AUHIP to raise challenges encountered in the process of addressing the border

issues. Key amongst these challenges was Sudan's contention that South Sudan had completely reversed its position, claiming that only 18% of the border, and no longer 80%, was not in dispute. This new position, according to Sudan, has rendered the non-binding opinion to be prepared by the AU Team of Experts (AUTE) on the five disputed areas identified by the two parties, completely irrelevant. The Sudanese side also raised other issues relating to the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the AUTE, and made proposals on the way forward, which have since been communicated to the South Sudanese side for comment, so that the matter of the AUTE can be resolved without undue delay. It should be recalled that the AUTE was appointed by the Commission and endorsed by the PSC in August 2012 to provide a non-binding opinion on the status of the five disputed areas to facilitate the negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan. However, the AUTE has not been able to complete its task, due to the failure of the parties to make their final submissions.

117. The Assembly would recall that, in their June 2011 Agreement on Border Security and the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM), the Government of Sudan and the Government of Southern Sudan committed themselves to create a Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ). In their 30 July 2011 Agreement, the Government of Sudan and the Government of South Sudan elaborated on the establishment of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) with an area of responsibility corresponding to the SDBZ. In resolution 2024 (2011) of 14 December 2011, the Security Council mandated the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) to support the JBVMM. The parties continue to disagree on the centerline and grid coordinates of the SDBZ, creating serious additional challenges for the conduct of the JBVMM operations. In January and March 2015 respectively, Sudan and South Sudan requested the holding, under the auspices of the AUHIP, of a meeting of the JPSM, which has not convened since November 2014. This would provide an opportunity to address the disagreement on the SDBZ centerline and other related issues, particularly in view of the accusations that the parties continue to trade over the harboring and support of each other's rebels. In April 2015, matters escalated when the Government of Sudan accused South Sudan of supporting the Darfur rebels.

118. Regarding Abyei, one of the main developments relates to the meeting of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) in Addis Ababa on 29 and 30 March 2015, under the auspices of the AU Facilitator, after almost a lapse of two years. The parties agreed to convene a traditional leaders' dialogue, as well as to facilitate humanitarian and recovery programmes in the Abyei Area. The AU Facilitator seized the opportunity to inform the participants on the outcome of the 494th PSC meeting held on 24 March 2015. At that meeting, the PSC noted the completion of the work conducted by the Investigation Committee established to shed light on the killing of Chief Koul Deng Koul and of a UNISFA personnel, and requested the Commission to engage the Parties on the findings and recommendations of the investigation, with a view to preventing the repeat of similar incidents, bearing in mind the need to promote stability and reconciliation in the Abyei Area.

119. The period under review did not witness progress in the implementation of the key provisions of the 20 June 2011 Agreement between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area, especially those relating to the

establishment of the Abyei Area Administration and Police Service, which is expected to take over policing functions throughout the Abyei Area. The resulting vacuum, in terms of public administration and the rule of law, is seriously affecting security and stability in the Area and posing additional challenges to the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). The final status of the Area remains unresolved. The Presidents of Sudan and South Sudan, who agreed in November 2012 that they would henceforth handle directly the matter of Abyei, are yet to meet this year to deal with the issue.

120. On the ground, the situation remains volatile, marked by the occurrence of several security incidents over the past months, including killings, abductions and raiding of livestock in various villages, raising tension between local communities. UNISFA has continued to carry out its stabilization mandate in Abyei, including through engagement with local community leaders, facilitation of peaceful migration throughout the Area, deterrence and other related activities. On 26 February 2015, the UN Security Council, in resolution 2205 (2015), extended the mandate of UNISFA until 15 July 2015, encouraged the Force to continue to take measures as necessary to ensure security in the Abyei Area, and demanded that the Parties extend full cooperation to it in the discharge of its mandate.

121. On 2 March 2015, the State Ministers of Petroleum of Sudan and South Sudan met in Juba to discuss matters relating to oil production. They also seized the opportunity to exchange views on the Joint Approach agreed upon by the two countries with the support of the AUHIP, in order to mobilize international support in the following areas: transitional financial assistance for Sudan, development support for South Sudan, comprehensive debt relief and lifting of economic sanctions imposed on Sudan. It should be recalled that the parties had agreed to establish a Tripartite Committee, comprised of two representatives each from Sudan and South Sudan and a representative from the AUHIP, to work out the modalities for the implementation of the Joint Approach. The Committee convened its inaugural meeting in December 2013.

122. The Assembly may wish to encourage the two countries to expedite their efforts towards the full implementation of all components of the September 2012 Cooperation Agreement. The Assembly may also wish to appeal to them to take the necessary steps to address the issue of Abyei, both through the effective implementation of the Temporary Arrangements and renewed efforts to resolve the issue of the Final Status of the Area. The Assembly may also wish to call on the international community to extend the necessary support to the Joint Approach. Finally, the Assembly may wish to commend the AUHIP for its tireless efforts, and encourage it to continue availing its support to The Sudan and South Sudan.

j) Burundi

123. The situation in Burundi is characterized by high tension between the Government, on the one hand, the political opposition and the civil society on the other, concerning the general elections scheduled as from June 2015. The fundamental issue of disagreement is whether President Pierre Nkurunziza has the right or not to run for the Presidential election in June. The provisions of the Arusha Agreement and the Constitution, the latter derived from Articles 96 and 302 of the

former, which limit the President to two terms, are interpreted differently by the two sides: while the ruling party considers that the first election of President Nkurunziza, in 2005, was by indirect election and must not be taken into account, the opponents believe that the President's current mandate is his second and therefore should be his last. In addition to this controversy, there are information according to which the Youth League of the ruling party, the Imbonerakure, is intimidate opponents. While the Government strongly denied the information about the distribution of weapons to these young people, a number of national and international actors continue to express their concern.

124. It is in this context that the AU has taken a number of initiatives to help the Burundian stakeholders to engage in constructive dialogue, resolve differences and create conditions for the organization of free, fair, credible and peaceful elections, in the spirit of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. From 26 to 27 March 2015, the Chairperson of the Commission visited Bujumbura, where she held talks with President Pierre Nkurunziza and members of his Government, as well as with other stakeholders in the electoral process. In all her meetings, the Chairperson of the Commission stressed the need for dialogue to overcome the difficulties of the moment and called for the preservation of hard-won peace in Burundi. The Commissioner for Political Affairs also visited Burundi from 8 to 10 March 2015, to discuss with the authorities and other stakeholders the modalities for AU support to the electoral process. Previously, in June 2014, the Commissioner for Peace and Security had visited Burundi to inquire about the situation and expressing the AU's commitment to continue supporting the Burundian actors in their quest for a consensual solution to the challenges they faced.

125. On 25 April 2015, the National Council for the Defense of Democracy - Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), the ruling party, nominated the incumbent President Pierre Nkurunziza as its candidate in the Presidential election scheduled for 26 June 2015. Immediately following the ruling party's announcement, on Sunday, 26 April 2015, at the instigation of some civil society organizations and opposition parties, street demonstrations began in some areas of Bujumbura. This led to increased tension in the streets, marked by acts of violence, the excessive use of force by members of the National Police, arrests, issuance of arrest warrants against the leaders of the civil society and opposition parties, and the closure of several independent radio stations, including the *Radio Publique Africaine* (RPA). Several deaths were recorded, while many others were injured. There was also substantial damage to property. The situation of insecurity and fear, combined with the lack of information as a result of the closing down of private broadcasting stations, has forced more than 110,000 Burundians to flee into neighboring states, into Tanzania (more of 76,000), Rwanda (over 26,000) and the DRC (over 9,000). The refugees face a new threat today: the cholera epidemic that has broken out in the refugee camps in Tanzania. The epidemic has already caused 31 dead so far and 2,400 refugees are affected. The current crisis has also exacerbated the plight of the most vulnerable segments of the population.

126. Seized of the matter on 28 April 2015 by a group of Senators "for the purpose of an interpretation of Articles 96 and 302 of the Constitution", the Constitutional Court delivered a judgment affirming the conformity with the Constitution of the President Nkurunziza's candidacy for another term. This decision of the

Constitutional Court did not put an end to the protests and violence that continued to paralyze the Burundian capital.

127. Sustained international efforts have been exerted to help resolve the crisis. Both the PSC and the Chairperson of the Commission have issued several statements on the matter, stressing the need for dialogue and consensus in order to find a lasting solution to the crisis that will preserve the gains through the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement of August 2000 and establish the conditions for the organisation of free, fair and credible elections. Thus, on 9 May 2015, the Chairperson of the Commission dispatched a high-level mission of the Panel of the Wise, led by Mr. Edem Kodjo, former Secretary General of the OAU, and also including Professor Ibrahima Fall, former Foreign Minister of Senegal. During its time in Burundi, the mission, in addition to consultations with the Burundian stakeholders, associated itself with the mediation initiative launched on 5 May 2015 by the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region, Said Djinnit, to reach a political consensus on all issues related to the electoral process. The representatives of the East African Community (EAC) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) subsequently joined the Group of Facilitators of the political dialogue.

128. On 13 May 2015, and following the visit to Bujumbura of an EAC Ministerial delegation on 6 May 2015, the EAC convened an Extraordinary Summit in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, to find a solution to the security and political crisis in Burundi. The Chairperson of the Commission and the Commissioner for Peace and Security participated in the Summit. Taking advantage of the departure of President Nkurunziza to Tanzania to attend the Summit, a group of soldiers attempted to overthrow him. Quickly foiled this attempted coup d'état further compounded the situation. In addition to condemning the attempted coup, the EAC Summit called for the postponement of elections for a period not exceeding the constitutional mandate of the current authorities, and a cessation of the violence, in order to establish conditions conducive to the organization of free, fair and credible elections. The Chairperson of the Commission and the PSC, as well as other members of the international community, also condemned the attempted coup d'état.

129. Subsequently, the political dialogue resumed on 20 May 2015, under the facilitation of the UN, the AU, the EAC and the ICGLR. However it was interrupted again following the murder, on 23 May 2015, of opposition politician Zedi Feruzi, the Chairman of the Union for Progress and Development (UPD) party. The Government of Burundi strongly condemned this assassination and requested the relevant judicial structures to urgently open an inquiry to identify the perpetrators of this crime and their motivations. This act was condemned by the entire international community. The Chairperson of the Commission, issued a press statement on 24 May 2015 to condemn this assassination. Through the efforts of the UN Special Envoy, the dialogue resumed in Bujumbura, on 28 May 2015, but was subsequently suspended because of differences between the parties on issues related to political rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution. On 31 May 2015, the EAC held another Summit on the situation in Burundi, in which the Chairperson of the Commission participated. The Summit welcomed the restoration of constitutional order in Burundi following the attempted coup d'état of 13 May 2015, and expressed its concern about the persistent political stalemate in Burundi. The Summit appealed for the

postponement of the elections for a period of at least one and a half months, during which period the EAC, through its current Chairman, would hold consultations with all the Burundian stakeholders on the way forward. The Summit appealed to all parties to eschew violence, asked for the urgent disarmament of all the youth groups affiliated to the political parties, and encouraged the Burundian Government to establish conditions conducive to the return of the refugees. The Summit appealed to the AU, the UN and other partners to cooperate with the EAC in order to attain these objectives. In the meantime, the ECCAS Summit held in Ndjamena on 25 May 2015 also condemned the attempted coup and supported regional and international initiatives aimed at resolving the crisis. The Summit appointed former President of Chad Goukouni Weddaye, as Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, in particular Burundi.

130. For its part, the Government, after deciding to postpone the parliamentary elections for 10 days, based on the recommendation of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), stated that all arrangements would be made for the organization of the elections on the new date of 5 June 2015. Following the EAC Summit of 31 May 2015, the relevant Burundian institutions, including the Electoral Commission, the Senate and the National Assembly, as well as the Government, have initiated a process for another postponement of the elections. A new electoral timetable will be announced soon. Furthermore, a number of political parties have expressed their willingness to resume dialogue with the Government towards creating conditions for the holding of free, transparent, inclusive and peaceful elections.

131. At the time of finalizing this Report and pursuant to the relevant decisions of the PSC, the Commission was taking the necessary steps to strengthen the AU office in Bujumbura, to enable it to better monitor the evolution of the situation and provide the necessary support to dialogue between the Burundian stakeholders. Measures are also being taken for the deployment of human rights observers and other civilian personnel to monitor the state of human rights on the ground, report the violations of human rights and International Humanitarian Law, and take actions to prevent and resolve conflicts locally.

132. The Assembly may wish to express its deep concern about the situation obtaining in Burundi, which embodies the danger of large-scale violence that could permanently undermine peace and security in that country and seriously affect regional security and stability. The Assembly may wish to strongly condemn all acts of violence in Burundi and the attempted coup d'état of 13 May 2015. The Assembly may wish to stress that only dialogue and consensus, in accordance with the Arusha Agreement and the Constitution of Burundi, will make it possible to find a lasting solution to the crisis, and appeal to the Burundian actors to lend their full cooperation to the efforts made, to this end, by the EAC, the ICGLR, the AU and the UN, with the support of the rest of the international community. In this respect, the Assembly may wish to lend full support to the communiqués adopted by the EAC at its extraordinary summits of 13 and 31 May 2015. The Assembly may wish to reaffirm the need for the scrupulous observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Assembly may wish to express its appreciation to the countries hosting Burundian refugees for their hospitality and appeal for the mobilization of the necessary support to help them.

k) Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes Region

133. The Implementation of the commitments contained in the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Great Lakes, despite some encouraging developments, continues to face persistent challenges. These include the outstanding issues relating to the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations of December 2013 on the Kampala Dialogue between the DRC and the M23, as well as the slow progress in the neutralization of armed groups in eastern DRC and confidence-building in the region.

134. The continued presence of armed groups in the eastern DRC and the overall security situation in the area present serious challenges. Several incidents have occurred in recent weeks, involving attacks against civilians and UN forces. On 5 May 2015, two MONUSCO peacekeepers were killed in an ambush, which came a day after a helicopter carrying the Mission's Force Commander was shot at in the same region. On 12 May 2015, five civilians were killed in a new attack blamed on the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) near Beni, in northern Kivu.

135. The ICGLR Extraordinary Summit, held in Luanda, Angola, on 18 May 2015, provided an opportunity to review the overall situation in the Great Lakes Region and, in particular, the efforts to neutralize the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and the other negative forces operating in eastern DRC. The Summit encouraged the Government of the DRC to continue the military offensive, which was announced in January and launched in February 2015, with special emphasis on neutralising their command structures. As cooperation and partnership between MONUSCO and the DRC Armed Forces (FARDC) are essential in the fight against the FDLR and other armed groups, the ICGLR encouraged the Government of the DRC to work closely with MONUSCO in order to sustain pressure on the FDLR and all other negative forces and armed groups operating in Eastern DRC. Negotiations are continuing between the Government of the DRC and the UN to resume joint military operations against the FDLR. It should be noted that, on 14 May 2015, the Government of the DRC and MONUSCO initiated the joint evaluation required by UN Security Council resolution 2211 (2015) and agreed upon in the Strategic Dialogue between the Government of the DRC and MONUSCO on the Mission's exit strategy. Joint evaluation teams have been deployed to the East of the DRC. The DRC has called for a permanent solution to be found for FDLR surrenders present in north and south Kivu, as well as in the Kisangani area.

136. Regarding the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations, the Governments of the DRC and Rwanda held consultations in Kigali from 20 to 24 April 2015, to discuss modalities for the repatriation of former M23 members from Rwanda and the removal of their military equipment from that country. It was agreed that both countries and the UN would provide military experts to process jointly the willing ex-combatants and their weapons. Further consultations are required between the two delegations to develop a detailed operational plan for the repatriation process. As far as Uganda is concerned, 198 of the 1,400 combatants who had crossed into Uganda had been repatriated to-date. The Governments of the DRC and Uganda have requested that for those unwilling to be repatriated, a third country option be considered as soon as possible to remove any source of suspicion between the

countries and relieve the strain on resources caused by the presence of ex M23 combatants in the neighboring countries. At its 18 May Summit, the ICGLR directed that mechanisms be established, comprising the DRC, Uganda, Rwanda, the AU, the ICGLR and the UN, to expedite the repatriation of the ex-M23 combatants, within a period of three months.

137. Economic cooperation and social development are key in building confidence and stability. The Private Sector Investment Conference is now scheduled to take place in February 2016. It will highlight the vast potential for responsible investment, development and prosperity in the Great Lakes region, and encourage investment in the region that targets jobs creation for women and youth, as well as the strengthening of regional trans-border economic linkages. From 29 to 30 April 2015, a regional consultation, attended by civil society actors from seven Great Lakes countries, took place in Entebbe, Uganda. The objective was to strengthen civil society's commitment to the PSC Framework, and build confidence across borders. The Women's Platform also held its inaugural meeting in Goma from 13 to 15 May 2015.

138. Following the 5th meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism (ROM) held in Addis Ababa on 31 January 2015, the UN and AU been considering ways in which to revitalize the implementation of the PSC Framework and its governance structures, namely the ROM and the Technical Support Committee (TSC). To this end, the AU and UN, in their capacity as co-chairs of the ROM, are planning to engage with the other Guarantors of the PSC Framework on the best way forward.

139. The Assembly may wish to reiterate its support to the PSC Framework and to underline the need for renewed commitment and effort to ensure its effective implementation. In this respect, the Assembly may wish to stress once again the imperative of neutralizing the FDLR and all other negative forces and armed groups. The Assembly may wish also to stress the importance of creating economic opportunities for youth and women, whilst, in parallel, ensuring that those who have committed atrocities are brought to justice. The Assembly may wish to express support for the on-going efforts by the AU and the UN to revitalize the implementation of the PSC Framework and its governance structures. The Assembly may wish to encourage the DRC Government to fully implement the Nairobi Declarations that concluded the Kampala Dialogue.

I) Central African Republic

140. The major event during the period under consideration was the convening in Bangui, from 4 to 11 May 2015, of the National Reconciliation Forum, a crucial stage in the stabilization process in the CAR and the completion of the Transition launched on 18 August 2013. At its 7th meeting, held in Brazzaville, on 16 March 2015, the International Contact Group on the CAR (ICG-CAR), which is co-chaired by the AU Commission and the Republic of the Congo, had taken note of the establishment of a preparatory committee, urging it to promote, as far as possible, inclusive participation. Pursuant to the Conclusions of that meeting, the Coordination Group for the preparation and monitoring of meetings of the ICG-CAR (G8-CAR), chaired by the Special Representative of the AU and including the UN, the ECCAS, the World Bank, the EU, the United States of America, France, and the Republic of the

Congo, worked closely with the Central African stakeholders to ensure the successful organization of the Forum, particularly through the support to grassroots popular consultations, in the 16 prefectures of the country between January and March 2015

141. The Bangui Forum mobilized over 500 participants and delegates, representing political parties, the political and military groups, women, youth, the 16 prefectures of the country, religious groups, the diaspora, trade unions, employers, and all the socio-professional groups of the country. The opening ceremony of the Forum was attended by President Denis Sassou Nguesso, International Mediator in the Central African crisis, and the Prime Minister of Chad, Special Representative of President Idriss Deby Itno, in his capacity as the current Chairman of ECCAS. Several representatives of the international community, including the AU, participated in the Forum. The important support provided by the G8-CAR to the preparation and organization of the meeting should be noted. Professor Abdoulaye Bathily, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and Deputy Mediator, chaired the proceedings.

142. The Forum took place both in plenary sessions and in working groups with the following themes: 'Peace and Security,' 'Governance,' 'Justice and Reconciliation' and 'socio-economic development.' The participants adopted a Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction, as well as an 'Agreement on the Principles of Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Repatriation (DDRR) and Integration in the uniformed services of the CAR', signed by the Government of the Transition and the armed groups. Furthermore, in accordance with Article 102 of the Constitutional Charter of the Transition, the participants agreed to request the Conference of Heads of State and Government of ECCAS for an extension of the duration of the Transition to allow for the preparation and organization of elections under the best conditions; these elections are originally scheduled to take place before 15 August 2015. It should be noted that the 7th meeting of the ICG-CAR had asked the authorities of the Transition, as well as the National Electoral Authority (ANE), to take the urgent and necessary measures to speed up the electoral process and facilitate the organization of elections within the agreed timeline. Similarly, an appeal was made for the mobilization of additional financial resources for the electoral process. At the time of finalizing this Report, the budget estimates for the elections amounted to US \$ 43,483,745; the contributions received amounted to US \$10,606,868.

143. Other recommendations were made by the Forum. They focus on the moralisation of the political life and the contents of the new Constitution being drafted; the lifting of the arms embargo to enable a redeployment of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) throughout the whole territory; the fair and transparent exploitation of the mineral and natural resources of the country; the establishment of a Justice, Truth, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission, and the formalization and registration of the two major Muslim festivals in the national calendar of holidays. In her closing remarks, the Head of State of the Transition, Catherine Samba-Panza, committed herself to set up the implementation and monitoring mechanism of the recommendations and resolutions that delegates wanted to be binding.

144. The Forum was organized was convened against the background of an alarming security and humanitarian situation, as noted by the 7th meeting of the ICG-CAR. The armed groups continued to be active in several regions of the country and to commit acts of violence. The implementation of the Agreement on DDRR, signed at the end of the Bangui Forum, should improve security on the ground. The number of displaced persons, at the national level, has increased from 438,538 in January to 436,256 in May 2015. A tentative movement of returnees is recorded in the west of the country, in the prefectures of Ouham, Ouham Pende and Bangui. But the overall situation remains very worrisome. Half the population, that is 2.7 million people, is in need of humanitarian assistance. Access for humanitarian actors in the provinces is still hampered by armed groups that still control many areas of the country. The Bangui Forum recommended the immediate disarmament of armed groups, free movement of persons, the removal of barriers and observance of the humanitarian law.

145. The economic and financial situation has slightly improved. This is due to the gradual restoration of security in Bangui, as well as the securing of the corridor linking Bangui to the Cameroonian border. At its 7th meeting, the ICG-CAR called upon the authorities of the Transition to implement the reforms of the public finance diligently, and to reactivate the permanent framework for dialogue between the public and private sectors. The ICG-CAR urged the international partners to provide additional budgetary support to bridge the current deficit, which stands at 60 billion CFA francs.

146. The efforts to coordinate the members of the international community in support of the Transition in the CAR have continued. At its Brazzaville meeting of 16 March, the ICG-CAR, having welcomed the commitment of the CAR authorities to the transition, urged them to persevere in their efforts to promote good governance and national reconciliation, without sacrificing the search for the truth about past crimes and the fight against impunity. The meeting stressed the respect of the Constitutional Charter of the Transition, including the question of ineligibility of political actors affected by the sanctions imposed by the PSC and the Security Council as well as the authorities of the Transition. The issue of DDR and the security sector reform were also discussed.

147. The Commission continued its support to the Transition process. In addition to supporting the organization of the Forum and meetings of the ICG-CAR, it has undertaken many activities. In this regard, we should note the organization, together with the General Secretariat of ECCAS, in Bangui, from 12 to 13 May 2015, of a meeting of Central African women to develop a Roadmap taking into account the gender dimension in implementing the recommendations of Bangui Forum. Furthermore, the Commission is pursuing the implementation of the project to support the prevention and response to sexual violence in the CAR, led in the field, since November 2014, by an African NGO '*Médecins d'Afrique* (MDA)' and intended to provide support to 1,000 victims of sexual violence, mostly women and children, in the districts of Paoua, Kaga-Bandoro and Bangui. The project has rehabilitated two health centres in Paoua and Kaga Bandoro and provided emergency medical equipment and medical kits, as well as psychological support to victims of violence. Finally, the Commission is finalizing the necessary arrangements for the

disbursement of a financial contribution of US\$ 500,000 in support of the electoral process.

148. With the organization of the Bangui National Forum, an important stage was crossed in the process of the Transition and the stabilization of the situation in the CAR. It is important that all CAR stakeholders resolutely endeavor to implement the Forum's recommendations. The Assembly may wish to welcome this positive development and encourage the Central African actors to persevere in their efforts. It is also important that the Assembly reaffirm the need to accelerate the electoral process and respect the provisions of the Constitutional Charter of the Transition, particularly those relating to the ineligibility of those in charge of the Transition and the individuals hit by international sanctions. The Assembly may wish to reiterate its appreciation to the countries of the region and ECCAS, as well as to the bilateral and international partners for their support to the CAR and urge them to continue to show solidarity with this country. Finally, the Assembly may wish to encourage the Commission, especially through the MISAC, to continue to support the ongoing process in the CAR.

(m) Lord's Resistance Army

149. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) still poses a significant threat to regional peace and stability, as it continues to raid, loot, kill, abduct and displace civilians in the remote south-eastern parts of the CAR and north-eastern DRC. Its activities stretch to the remote areas in the tri-border of CAR, South Sudan and the Sudan, where Joseph Kony, the leader of the group and other senior commanders have reportedly established a safe haven. The activities of the LRA in the DRC are concentrated in areas west of Garamba National Park, extending to the CAR border, where the various splinter groups poach elephants for ivory, and raid villages to loot essential supplies and abduct civilians as booty. The group continues to perpetrate sexual enslavement of women and girls, and still forces abductees, including children, to commit crimes and provide forced labor to sustain LRA commanders.

150. In order to sustain the current momentum against the LRA, the AU Special Envoy for LRA Issues, Lieutenant General Jackson Kiprono Tuwei, undertook a field visit to the Regional Task Force (RTF) Sector Headquarters in Yambio, South Sudan, on 26 March 2015, where he oversaw the handover of the RTF command, and undertook other activities aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the counter-LRA operations. He also visited the RTF sectors in Nzara (South Sudan), Obo (CAR) and Dungu (DRC), on 27 March 2015, to assess the ongoing efforts against the LRA. Within the framework of the AU-UN collaboration on the LRA, the Special Envoy and the UN Special Representative for Central Africa, Professor Abdoulaye Bathily, undertook a joint visit to Uganda from 20 to 22 April 2015, to consult with the relevant authorities and other stakeholders on the implementation of the mandate of the Regional Cooperation Initiative against the LRA (RCI-LRA). Efforts have also been made towards the international community to sustain its support to the RCI-LRA.

151. Meanwhile, on the military front, all the contingents of the RTF, except that from the CAR, are conducting offensive operations against the LRA in the CAR and the DRC, with support of the US Special Forces. The coordinated, simultaneous

operations, which commenced in April 2015 along the CAR-DRC and the DRC–South Sudan borders, have heightened pressure on the LRA, as they are targeted at the leadership of the group. The operations also focus on protection of civilians and facilitation of the delivery of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations in the affected areas. The LRA has been greatly weakened and has been forced into a survival posture, resulting in relative reduction in its violence against civilians and a more favorable environment for humanitarian organizations to safely deliver assistance to vulnerable populations in the affected areas. With the recent confirmation of the identity of Okot Odhiambo, former second-in-command of the LRA, through DNA tests carried out on his remains which were exhumed from the CAR, Joseph Kony now remains the only surviving indicted LRA top leader. He is resilient, and attempting to reorganize the LRA command structure.

152. Despite the tremendous progress made, the LRA could exploit these challenges to continue to survive and expand its operations in the CAR and DRC. The existence of ungoverned space in remote parts of these countries could provide Kony with the opportunity to reorganize and resume large-scale attacks against civilians, as seen in the Haut Uele District of the DRC, and parts of south-eastern CAR. It could also attract opportunistic alliance with like-minded extremist groups.

153. Against this background, the Assembly may wish to welcome the progress made in the elimination of the LRA, encourage the member countries of the RCI-LRA to continue to demonstrate the same commitment in pursuit of the set objectives and call for enhanced support to the RTF contingents. The Assembly may also wish to underline the importance of expediting efforts geared towards the rehabilitation of the affected areas and populations.

n) **Boko Haram**

154. The last ordinary session of the Assembly of the Union took place against the backdrop of the communiqué adopted by the 484th meeting of the PSC, held on 29 January 2015 at the level of Heads of State and Government, on the threat posed by the Boko Haram terrorist group. In that communiqué, the PSC authorized the deployment of the MNJTF established by the Member States of the LCBC and Benin to eliminate Boko Haram, for an initial period of twelve months and for a strength that could go up to 7,500 military and other personnel.

155. The period under review was marked by sustained efforts to operationalize the MNJTF. In follow-up to the conclusions of the Niamey ministerial meeting of 20 January 2015, which brought together the LCBC Member States and Benin, and the PSC communiqué of 29 January 2015, the Commission convened a meeting of experts to finalize the concept of operation (CONOPS) for the MNJTF and other related documents. The meeting took place in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 5 to 7 February 2015, bringing together experts from the LCBC Member States and Benin, the AU, relevant Regional Mechanisms and partners. The experts developed and adopted the MNJTF CONOPS. The Area of Operation (AoO) for the MNJTF encompasses various regions in the affected countries, within which the MNJTF contingents shall operate freely. An Area of Interest (AoI), larger than the AoO, was also defined. The Mission Support Concept is premised on the provision of integrated services to the MNJTF by the LCBC Member States and Benin.

Furthermore, the Commission and the LCBC will establish a strategic cell responsible for the coordination and management of additional support to the MNJTF. A number of structures have been agreed upon with respect to command, control and coordination. It was agreed to establish the MNJTF operational Headquarters in N'Djamena, Chad – it was inaugurated on 25 May 2015. The MNJTF operates under a central command and control structure of the LCBC Member States and Benin under the authority of a Force Commander. A follow-up planning meeting was held in Ndjamena from 23 to 27 February 2015, to develop the operational level CONOPS. From 20 to 24 May 2015, experts from the LCBC Member States and Benin, the AU and partners met in Ndjamena, to finalize additional operational documents for the MNJTF. In the meantime, at its meeting of 3 March 2015, the PSC endorsed the strategic CONOPS. It also authorized an increase in the strength of the MNJTF from the initial figure of 7,500 to up to 10,000 military and other personnel.

156. During the period under review, significant progress has been made towards the neutralization of the Boko Haram terrorist group. The countries of the region recovered a number of locations previously occupied by the Boko Haram terrorist group and rescued hundreds of civilians, including women and children, who were abducted by the group. However, the Boko Haram terrorist group continued to carry out attacks targeting both civilians and the defense and security forces in Nigeria, as well as in the neighboring countries. At the end of April 2015, Boko Haram attacked a Nigerian contingent deployed on the Island of Karamga, on Lake Chad, killing a number of soldiers and wounding many others.

157. On 16 February 2015, an Extraordinary Session of the ECCAS Peace and Security Council (COPAX) was held in Yaoundé to adopt a Regional Strategy to combat the Boko Haram terrorist group. The AU participated in the meeting. The Summit decided to provide Cameroon and Chad with emergency aid including financial resources amounting to 50 billion CFA francs. It also expressed the commitment of the ECCAS to cooperate fully and at all levels with ECOWAS, including the convening of a Summit meeting between the two organizations, to adopt a common strategy to fight against Boko Haram. It should also be noted that Nigeria has pledged to contribute 100 million dollars within the ECOWAS framework to contribute to the fight against Boko Haram.

158. In communiqué of 3 March 2015, the PSC urged the UN Security Council, following the endorsement of the MNJTF Strategic CONOPS, to urgently adopt a resolution, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which would endorse the deployment of the MNJTF and enable the provision of sustainable, flexible and predictable support to it. A number of follow-up steps were taken in this respect by both the Commission and the African members of the UN Security Council (A3). Eventually, it was agreed to put the process on hold, with further review by the PSC on the basis of the recommendations made by the PSC. In response to the PSC's appeal, the United Kingdom has made available a contribution of 8 million dollars in support of the MNJTF. The Commission initiated discussions with the EU towards the provision of funding amounting 50 million Euros in support of the MNJTF, within the framework of the Africa Peace Facility (APF). Furthermore, and as part of its support to the affected countries, the Commissioner for Peace and Security, jointly with the UN Special Representatives for Central and West Africa, undertook a visit in

the region from 26 to 29 May 2015. He seized the opportunity, jointly with the LCBC Executive Secretary, to launch the Headquarters of the MNJTF.

159. The Assembly may wish to reiterate the AU's strong condemnation of the atrocities committed by the Boko Haram terrorist group and its solidarity with the affected countries, their Governments and people. The Assembly may wish to commend the LCBC Member States and Benin for their commitment to a coordinated and regional approach towards neutralizing the Boko Haram terrorist group, and to welcome, in this respect, the adoption of the MNJTF CONOPS and other subsequent efforts. The Assembly may wish to encourage them to pursue their efforts towards the full operationalization of the MNJTF. The Assembly may wish to express appreciation to ECCAS and Nigeria for their financial contribution to the fight against Boko Haram, as well as to the EU and the United Kingdom for their invaluable support, and to call for further support to the ongoing efforts. The Assembly may wish to stress the need to complement to the much-needed military and security operations with sustained efforts towards the improvement of livelihoods, education and job creation, as well as the protection of human rights, in order to effectively address the threat posed by Boko Haram.

o) Côte d'Ivoire

160. The political situation in Côte d'Ivoire continues its progress towards lasting normalization. The dialogue between the government and the opposition, which had faced difficulties relating to the detention of some personalities of the previous Government for their trial and judgment, resumed in view of the forthcoming Presidential election in October 2015. In anticipation of the election, the Government decided, in April 2015, to set up a financing mechanism for political parties. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) groups the representatives of the economically active forces and as such, there is a broad consensus. The security situation has improved significantly. This development made it possible for the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) to reduce its strength in view of a gradual withdrawal. The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme has made significant progress. More than 46,000 former combatants, or 62% of the enumerated elements, have been reintegrated into the socio-economic life. The process should be completed in June 2015. Encouraging progress has been made in the area of the Security Sector Reform. Significant progress continues to be recorded on the road to national reconciliation. Finally, the Ivorian economy continues to grow strongly.

161. The Assembly may wish to welcome the continued positive evolution of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and encourage the Ivorian authorities and other stakeholders to persevere in their efforts. More specifically, the Assembly may wish to underscore the importance of the elections in October 2015 and the need for all the Ivorian stakeholders to work for their successful organization.

p) Liberia

162. The situation in Liberia has been dominated by the efforts to contain, prevent and recover from the deadly Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) that threatened to seriously undermine the progress made towards post-conflict reconstruction and recovery.

The efforts made enabled Liberia to be declared EVD free on 9 May 2015. The AU, through its counter Ebola Support Mission (ASEOWA), deployed in September 2014, contributed significantly to this achievement. In all, the AU contributed 822 AU volunteer health workers from various African countries, including the DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. The ASEOWA trained 2,227 international and local medical personnel in the art of handling the Ebola Virus. In neighboring Sierra Leone and Guinea, conditions have similarly improved and the two countries would hopefully soon follow suit in the eradication of the deadly virus.

163. Post-Ebola recovery efforts are continuing in Liberia in a bid to revamp the economy and get all sectors, especially the health sector, back on track. Peace building and state building efforts have also resumed as international partners have begun post-Ebola development assistance to the Government of Liberia. Some international airlines such as Air Ivoire and Kenyan Airways have also resumed or started business and others are expected to follow suit soon. Since March 2015, the Government has put in place an Economic Stabilization and Recovery Programme (ESRP), which is a post-Ebola economic, social and health recovery strategy, also geared towards the implementation of its stalled medium-to-long term Agenda for Transformation (AfT) development programme. It has also re-engaged its national reconciliation efforts and constitution review process.

164. Furthermore, the draw-down process of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), which will be completed in July 2016, is on course. By that date, all military personnel would be completely withdrawn, leaving behind the police component and the administrative staff, numbering a total of 3,750, until such a time that Liberia would be deemed completely stable, subject to the United Nations Security Council's approval. The UNMIL and the Government of Liberia have put in place plans and joint programmes to facilitate a successful transition. The support of international partners in this regard would, however, be helpful in ensuring a peaceful transition, and maintaining a stable political, economic and social atmosphere towards the 2017 general elections.

165. The Assembly may wish to welcome the elimination of the EVD in Liberia, and commend the national authorities and their partners, including the AU and other international actors, for the support provided. The Assembly may wish to call on the international community to provide enhanced support to Liberia to enable it consolidate the gains made and fully recover from the Ebola epidemic. Finally, the Assembly may wish to call on the Liberian stakeholders to spare no efforts in creating conditions conducive to the successful holding of the 2017 general elections.

q) Guinea

166. The situation in Guinea is marked by the controversy between the Government and the opposition on the timetable for the presidential and local elections. In this regard, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had indicated that if conditions were met, it could organize the local elections. But considering the difficulties it faced, the INEC preferred to postpone the local elections to 2016. The opposition, arguing that the current municipal councilors were close to the government, expressed its concern that they would influence the

conduct of the Presidential election if it were to be held before the local elections. The Government refutes that argument, highlighting the fact that the opposition had won all five communes of the capital, Conakry, in the Parliamentary elections with the same local councilors and that it was important to organize the presidential election in time to avoid a constitutional void.

167. This disagreement led to demonstrations by the opposition and clashes with the security forces, which resulted in several deaths among the opposition and wounded among both the demonstrators and the police force. In addition, since April 2015, the opposition has been boycotting the sessions of the National Assembly. On 8 May 2015, President Alpha Condé met with the National Coordinator of the ruling party, Mrs. Nantou Cherif, then on 20 May 2015 the leader of the opposition, Mr. Cellou Dalein Diallo. Following those two meetings, President Condé promised to examine the claims of the opposition. In a letter to his Prime Minister on 25 May 2015, he instructed him organise a dialogue with the opposition, under the auspices of the Minister of Justice, in order to find a solution to the current crisis and organize the election in a peaceful climate.

168. The socio-economic recovery efforts were negatively affected by the Ebola epidemic. Alongside other international actors, the AU contributed to the fight against this epidemic, through the deployment of its Support Mission against Ebola, whose 82 items are currently in Guinea. At the time of finalizing this Report, the cases of contamination had very significantly decreased.

169. The Assembly may wish to encourage the Guinean stakeholders to agree quickly on the way forward in order to consolidate the achievements made thanks to the Agreement of 3 July 2013 and to facilitate the successful organization of the future elections. In addition, the Assembly may wish to make an appeal to the international community to continue its support to Guinea to enable the country effectively cope with the consequences of the Ebola epidemic.

r) Guinea-Bissau

170. One of the major events of the period under consideration was the convening of the Donors' Round Table, on 25 March 2015, in Brussels. More than 70 delegations representing several countries and regional and international institutions, including the AU, participated. The pledges made by the bilateral and multilateral partners, on the basis of 200 projects submitted by the Guinea Bissau authorities, reached a billion and a half Euros for the period 2015-2020. The priority now is to accelerate the disbursement of the pledged funds. In this regard, an institutional architecture is being established at the State level to monitor the launch and execution of these projects and thus reassure international partners about the absorptive capacity of the country.

171. In parallel, many measures were taken to strengthen the economic management. Thus the Government has taken measures to ensure the security of the natural resources of the country, and suspended all timber exploitation for the next 5 years. Furthermore, the Government seized the opportunity of the launch, on 17 April 2015, of the sale of the cashew nut crop for 2015, to announce that one kilogramme of cashew nuts would be sold at 300 CFA Francs, instead of the price of

the 250 CFA Francs as in 2014. It should be pointed out that tax revenue for the State increased by 60% in the first quarter of 2015. This increase is a significant lifeline for the Government and will enable it to cope with numerous deadlines.

172. At the same time, the Government showed its determination to initiate and implement the Defence and Security Sector Reform (DSSR). Thus, after its adoption by the Government, the draft decree establishing the Special Pension Fund was signed by the President of the Republic on 27 April 2015. The demobilisation process should start in June 2015. It is planned that 2,191 elements of the Defense and Security Forces, including 25 Generals, will be demobilised in the next 5 years. The first group will consist of 500 elements, including the former Chief of Staff of the Guinea Bissau Armed Forces, General António Indjai. The technical team of ECOWAS, in charge of DSSR, is finalising the calculation of the amounts to be paid to the personnel to be demobilised. In the meantime, a Joint Assessment Mission of the Defense and Security Sector Reform, led by the AU and including representatives of ECOWAS, the EU, the UN, the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), visited Bissau from 2 to 12 March 2015, where it held consultations with the government officials, political parties and civil society.

173. The Assembly may wish to welcome the progress that continues to be registered in Guinea Bissau and urge the Government and other stakeholders in Guinea Bissau to persevere in their efforts, with particular emphasis on economic management and of the Security Sector Reform. The Assembly may wish to welcome the success of the Donors' Round Table and appeal to all partners concerned to honour, as soon as possible, their promises to help.

s) Burkina Faso

174. The situation in Burkina Faso has remained generally stable, marked by continuing efforts aimed to successfully complete the Transition process that began with the resignation of President Blaise Compaoré, following the popular demonstrations of 30 and 31 October 2014. On 11 February 2015, the President of the Transition appointed the chairpersons and members of the sub-Committees of the National Reconciliation and Constitutional, Political and Institutional Reforms Commission, as provided for under Article 18 of the Charter of the Transition, adopted on 16 November 2014. These appointments marked the completion of the establishment of the institutions provided by the Transition, namely the President of the Transitional, the Government and the National Transitional Council (NTC).

175. On 27 January 2015, following consultations with the Government, the political parties and the other stakeholders concerned, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) announced the detailed schedule of elections that will mark the end of the Transition. The Presidential and Parliamentary elections will be held on 11 October 2015, while the local elections will take place in January 2016. On 3 March 2015, the President of the Transition launched the revision of voters' lists. The overall budget for the organization of elections was estimated at 54 billion CFA francs. The Government of Burkina Faso, despite a difficult economic and financial situation, pledged to contribute 25 billion CFA Frs. Some States and Organizations already pledged their contributions. In order to ensure a regular monitoring of the electoral process, the Government of the Transition set up a

Steering Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister and a Technical Follow up Committee of the operational activities. Finally, with regard to the vote of the diaspora of Burkina Faso, the authorities of the Transition are determined to continue their efforts to enable them participate fully in the democratic life of their country, especially by initiating the necessary measures for their participation in the 2020 elections.

176. The new Electoral Code, adopted on 7 April 2015 by a large majority by the NTC and promulgated on 10 April by the President of the Transition, has raised some tension in Burkina Faso. The text, based on the provisions of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, makes those persons who supported the attempts to change the constitution to alter the principle of political alternation, ineligible, thus excluding supporters of former President Blaise Compaore from the elections in October 2015. Following the adoption of the new law, the parties of the former majority suspended their participation in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, arguing that there can be no national reconciliation in a context of exclusion. It is in this context that civil society, the political parties of the former opposition and other actors of the Transition organised a march in Ouagadougou in support of the new electoral law.

177. Previously, the civil society had also mobilised popular protests against the actions of the Presidential Security Regiment (RSP), whose elements had, on 4 February 2015, prevented the holding of the weekly meeting of the Council of Ministers, as a result of a dispute with Prime Minister Isaac Zida, himself from the RSP, demanding his resignation. The officials from that regiment had challenged some appointments in the higher military posts, including the personal Chief of Staff of the President of the Republic. The civil society organizations had demonstrated to call for the dissolution of the RSP and the complete unification of the Burkinabe armed forces. Following a meeting with the top military leaders and the action of the traditional and religious leaders, calm was restored. The President of the Transition seized the opportunity of the crisis to hold consultations with the different military officials.

178. Pursuant to the PSC communiqué of 18 November 2014, the AU, together with ECOWAS and the UN, pursued its efforts within the International Follow up and Support Group of the Transition in Burkina Faso (IFSGT-BF). The Group, which brings together the neighbours of Burkina Faso and other African countries as well as bilateral and multilateral partners, held its second meeting in Ouagadougou on 30 March 2015. On that occasion, the participants noted with satisfaction the progress which continued to be made in the implementation of the Transition process. They stressed the need for the international community to provide the necessary financial, technical and logistical support for the smooth conduct of the electoral process and the organization of elections within the agreed timeframe. While expressing hope for additional international support, the participants stressed the particular responsibility of AU Member States and the need for them to contribute financially to the elections, within the spirit of Pan-Africanism. Furthermore, the AU, ECOWAS and the United Nations agreed to fully activate the representation of the IFSG-BF locally, which must meet at least once every two weeks in order to ensure closer follow up of the Conclusions of the IFSGT-BF and a better interaction with the Burkinabe stakeholders. At the time of finalising this Report, the AU, ECOWAS and the United

Nations were planning a joint visit to Burkina Faso. In addition, the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the Commission, Mr. Edem Kodjo, a member of the AU Panel of the Wise, continued consultations with the stakeholders in Burkina Faso as well as with the countries of the region and partners.

179. The ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State and Government, at its 47th Ordinary Session held in Accra, on 19 May 2015, reviewed the situation in Burkina Faso. The Conference reaffirmed the importance of the principle of inclusiveness which should guide the Transition process and the preparation of the elections.

180. With regard to the economic situation, the efforts made by the Government of the Transition, within the framework of the emergency socio-economic programme despite an unfavorable economic climate, should be noted with satisfaction. At its second meeting, the IFSG-BF reiterated the imperative for long-term economic and financial support to alleviate the socio-economic difficulties faced by Burkina Faso. They recalled the crucial importance of improving the living conditions of the people, especially the youths and women, in the efforts aimed at promoting lasting peace, security and stability in Burkina Faso.

181. The Assembly may wish to welcome the progress that continues to be made in the execution of the Transition in Burkina Faso, in particular the completion of the establishment of the institutions of the Transition, the announcement of the detailed calendar of the elections and the launching of the revision of Voters' lists. The Assembly may wish to encourage the Burkinabe stakeholders to continue their efforts, in the scrupulous respect of the Constitution, the Transitional Charter and the Electoral Code. The Assembly may wish to make an urgent appeal to the international community to provide all the necessary support to the organization of the elections within the agreed timeline, and underscore the duty, in this regard, of the Member States, under the principle of African solidarity. The Assembly may wish also to echo the call made by the IFSGT-BF for the mobilization of adequate support for Burkina Faso to enable it cope with the difficult socio-economic conditions faced by the country.

t) Mali

182. The period under consideration was marked by the conclusion of the Inclusive Inter-Malian Peace Talks of the Algiers Peace Process, launched in July 2014 under the leadership of the International Mediation, comprising four countries of the region (Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Niger and Chad), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the AU, the UN, the European Union (EU) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), with Algeria as the leader. After the fifth and final phase of the Talks, held from 17 to 26 February 2015, the Mediation submitted the document entitled "Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali from the Algiers Process" for the Malian parties to initial, pending the signing ceremony scheduled in Mali.

183. On 1 March 2015, the Government of Mali, the Movements of the Algiers Platform and the members of the Mediation Team initialed the Agreement, while the Movements of the Coordination of Movements of Azawad (CMA) abstained from doing so, demanding more time to consult their base. Following a visit to Kidal on 17

March, the Mediation Team, after listening to the members of the CMA, noted that the negotiation phase was over and called upon the Movements of the Coordination to join the Agreement. On 14 May 2015, the CMA initialed the Agreement in Algiers, on the eve of the signing ceremony in Bamako on 15 May 2015. The signing ceremony of the Agreement was held in the presence of many Heads of State and Government, including President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, current Chairman of the AU. The Government of Mali, the Movements of the Algiers Platform and some components of the CMA signed the Agreement.

184. The Agreement aims at establishing the conditions for a just and lasting peace, contributing to regional stability and international security. It is based on a number of fundamental principles and commitments: respect for national unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the State of Mali, and its Republican form and its secular nature. As regards the political and institutional arrangements, in particular the status of the northern regions of Mali, the Agreement provides for the establishment of an institutional architecture enabling people of the different regions of the country, particularly those of the North, to manage their own business, based on the principle of free administration and ensuring greater representation of these populations in the national institutions. To enable the local communities to assume the new competencies devolved to them, the government undertakes, among other measures, to establish a mechanism to transfer 30% of budget revenues of the State to these communities by 2018. As regards Defense and Security, the Agreement proposes a comprehensive reform, based on the principles of unity, inclusiveness and significant representation of all the Malian people, the unity of the Armed and Security Forces and the gradual redeployment of the thus-reconstituted forces. Concerning development, the Agreement provides for the development of a specific development strategy for the regions of the North.

185. Learning lesson from the failure of previous agreements, the Agreement includes a chapter dedicated to guarantees and support at international level. It is thus planned to set up an Agreement Monitoring Committee (CSA), chaired by Algeria and comprising the Government of Mali, the signatory Movements and the Mediation Team. In order to assess objectively the Agreement, take stock of the honoring of the commitments made by the Parties and pinpoint responsibility in the event of a deadlock, it was agreed that the CSA would appoint an independent Observer. The latter will publish, every four months, a comprehensive report taking stock of the implementation of commitments, identifying the possible bottlenecks, determining responsibilities and making recommendations on measures to be taken.

186. In a press statement issued the day after the ceremony and following the communiqué of the 496th meeting of the PSC held on 27 March 2015, the Chairperson of the Commission reiterated the AU's full support to the Agreement, as a balanced document that into account the different aspects of the recurrent crises in northern Mali and the legitimate concerns of the parties. She urged the other components of the CMA to choose peace and reconciliation, and to join the Agreement without further delay. She urged the international community to give its full support to the implementation of the Agreement, including by providing the necessary resources for this purpose and taking appropriate measures against all those whose actions impede the process of restoring peace and promoting reconciliation.

187. If significant progress has been made on the political front, the security situation has been marked by the multiplication of armed and terrorist attacks against the Malian army and the international forces, particularly against the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and by clashes between armed groups in northern Mali. The first half of the year saw an increase in terrorist armed attacks towards the Centre (Mopti region) and South of the country, as evidenced by the attack claimed by the terrorist group Al Murabitun against a restaurant in Bamako, which killed five people and injured several others during the night of 6 to 7 March 2015. On 18 May 2015, only three days after the signing of the Agreement, three Malian soldiers were killed in an ambush by armed groups in the region of Timbuktu, while tension was high between various armed groups in the Gao region during the month of May for the control of the town of Menaka. The worsening of the security situation had a negative impact on the humanitarian situation. The humanitarian organizations face serious constraints of access as well as act of violence targeting their staff, their goods as well as infrastructure. Between February and April 2015, at least 15 humanitarian organizations had to temporarily suspend their activities and /or relocate some or all their staff.

188. Within the framework of its action in the Sahel, the Commission, including through the AU Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL), continued its efforts to implement the AU Strategy for the Sahel Region, adopted by the PSC on 11 August 2014. In this regard, on 9 March 2015 the MISAHEL hosted, in Bamako, the 5th meeting of the Technical Secretariat of the Ministerial Coordination Platform (MCP) of the Sahel Strategies and, on the following day, initiated and co-organized the inaugural meeting of the Thematic Groups of the MCP. The Commission pursued its activities under the Nouakchott Process on the Enhancement of the Security Cooperation and the Operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan Region, and convened the Seventh meeting of the Heads of the Intelligence and Security Services of the Region, in Algiers, on 14 and 15 April. Furthermore, the Commission is continuing its efforts to implement the Declaration adopted by the Summit of the Member countries of the Nouakchott Process, held on 18 December 2014, in the Mauritanian capital. In this context, particular emphasis was placed on the organization of the meeting of the Ministers of Defense and Security of the countries of the region to finalize the generic Concepts of Operation for the joint patrols and mixed units, identification of other enhanced cooperation modalities and the operationalization of the Secretariat of the Process in Niamey.

189. The Assembly may wish to express its full support for the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and the commitment of the AU, in its capacity as Guarantor of the Agreement, to assume all its responsibilities and to effectively support the diligent implementation of the agreed commitments. It may also wish to appeal to the international community to support the implementation process of the Agreement, particularly by providing the necessary financial resources. The Assembly may wish to congratulate President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta and his Government, the Movements of the Algiers Platform and the components of the CMA that signed the Agreement, on their commitment to peace and reconciliation, as well as the wellbeing of the Malian people. It may wish to express its appreciation to Algeria, in particular President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and his government, to the

countries of the region and other members of the Mediation Team for the sacrifices and efforts that led to the conclusion of this Agreement. The Assembly may wish to make an urgent appeal to the CMA to act in the best interests of the people it claims to represent and Mali and to resolutely choose peace and reconciliation by signing the Agreement without delay. The Assembly may wish to reaffirm the determination of the AU to take measures, including sanctions, as demanded by the situation, against all groups or individuals whose actions constitute an obstacle to the implementation of the Agreement and urge the Security Council to demonstrate a similar determination. The Assembly may also wish to renew its support for the MINUSMA, pay tribute to all troop and police contributing countries for the sacrifices made, including the loss of soldiers, as well as to other international forces for their contribution to the stabilization of Mali. The Assembly may wish to express the commitment of the AU to contribute to the strengthening of MINUSMA, particularly within the Nouakchott Process, and reiterate the strong condemnation by the AU of the activities of the terrorist and criminal groups operating in northern Mali.

u) Western Sahara

190. In decision Assembly/AU/Dec.559(XXIV), the Assembly of the Union reiterated the UN Security Council's calls to the parties to the conflict in Western Sahara, namely the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO, to continue negotiations without pre-conditions and in good faith, with a view to achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the UN Charter and international legality. The Assembly also expressed full support for the efforts of the UN Personal Envoy, Christopher Ross, and welcomed the steps taken by the Chairperson of the Commission to follow up on the relevant decisions of the Executive Council, including the appointment of a Special Envoy.

191. As the Assembly is aware, following his appointment in June 2014, the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the Commission, former President Joaquim Chissano, undertook a series of consultations with the relevant international stakeholders. He visited London, Paris, Madrid, Washington and New York, from 11 to 17 June 2014, to consult with the relevant British, French, Spanish, US and UN officials; and Moscow and Beijing, from 6 to 10 September 2014 and from 19 to 22 January 2015 respectively, to confer with Russian and Chinese officials. During these interactions, the Special Envoy's interlocutors expressed frustration at the lack of progress in the search for a solution to the conflict, and the need for renewed international engagement, in particular from the Security Council and on the basis of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, to overcome the current impasse. They pledged support for the efforts being undertaken by the Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General. At the same time, they recognized the positive role that the AU could play in the search for a solution and encouragement for a more active involvement of the continent in the related international efforts. Some of them expressed their willingness to support any creative idea the AU may have to help move the process forward, within the framework set by the UN. Issues relating to the situation of human rights and the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Territory were also discussed.

192. On 6 February 2015, the Chairperson of the Commission received a delegation from the Moroccan Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM), led by its Deputy President, Mr. Ilyas El Omari, who is also Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco. On that occasion, the Chairperson of the Commission stressed the need to find a lasting solution to the conflict that would be acceptable to both Parties on the basis of international legality, and reiterated the AU's readiness and availability to assist in overcoming the current stalemate.

193. On its part, the PSC, at its 496th meeting held on 27 March 2015, appealed for an enhanced and coordinated international action towards the early organization of a referendum on the self-determination for the people of Western Sahara. The PSC also decided to reactivate the *ad hoc* Committee of Heads of State and Government on the conflict in Western Sahara, established by the 15th Ordinary Session of the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Khartoum, in July 1978, and to establish an International Contact Group for Western Sahara (ICG-WS). The report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the situation in Western Sahara and the communiqué adopted by the PSC on that occasion were forwarded to the UN Secretary-General, with a request that they be circulated as documents of the Security Council. The transmittal letter from the Chairperson of the Commission also conveyed the PSC's request that the AU Special Envoy for Western Sahara be given the opportunity to address the Security Council during its deliberations on the issue.

194. During the period under review, and following the telephone conversation between the UN Secretary-General and the King of Morocco, on 22 January 2015, the Personal Envoy undertook two sets of consultations in the region, in almost a year, to re-establish contact with the parties, as well as with the neighboring countries of Algeria and Mauritania, and clarify the way forward on the basis of his new approach, as articulated in the UN Secretary-General report on the situation concerning Western Sahara of 10 April 2014. He visited Algiers, Algeria, Nouakchott, Mauritania, Rabat, Morocco and Rabouni, Sahrawi refugee camps in Algeria, from 11 to 23 February and 22 to 29 March 2015.

195. In his consultations, the Personal Envoy highlighted the importance of negotiating without pre-conditions and in good faith, and urged the parties to move beyond their respective proposals by seeking innovative approaches that could help to achieve progress towards a mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, emphasizing the dangers of the situation in the Sahel-Saharan region. While Morocco reiterated its position that its autonomy proposal presented in April 2007 should serve as a basis for the negotiations, the Frente POLISARIO expressed unhappiness at the way the UN was managing the peace process, notably the unilateral assurances provided by the Secretary-General to Morocco and the fact that they were not treated on an equal basis. With regard to the next steps, it was felt that a return to face-to-face discussion between the parties was premature, and that the Personal Envoy should continue his bilateral consultations and shuttle diplomacy for the foreseeable future. On a related matter, the newly-appointed Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for MINURSO, Mrs Kim Bolduc, who was not able to take up her post in Laayoune for several months, was finally allowed by Morocco to do so on 5 February 2015.

196. On 28 April 2015, the UN Security Council, for its part, having considered the report submitted by the UN Secretary General, adopted resolution 2218(2015), renewing the mandate of MINURSO for another year, until 30 April 2016. It called upon the parties to enter into a more intensive and substantive phase of negotiations “without preconditions and in good faith, with a view to achieving a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations.” The resolution addressed the issue of human rights only in its preamble, in which it encouraged the parties to work with the international community to develop and implement independent and credible measures to ensure full respect for human rights. It should be noted that the PSC request for the AU Special Envoy to address the Security Council before the adoption of the resolution was not granted. At its 503th meeting, held on 30 April 2015, the PSC deeply regretted this situation, adding that it does not reflect the spirit of the AU-UN strategic partnership, in particular between the PSC and the UN Security Council, which must apply to all peace and security issues on the African continent, including Western Sahara.

197. In the meantime, the situation on the ground remains relatively calm. According to the UN, the ceasefire continues to hold. Tensions between the parties and periodic incidents and demonstrations continue to be recorded. In the occupied territory, the growing frustration of young Saharawi is becoming a matter of serious concern. They are denied freedom of expression and find no hope with the prevailing socio-economic situation. In the refugee camps, the rising frustration over the lack of progress in the search for a solution could lead to violent responses.

198. The Assembly may wish to note with deep concern that four decades after the onset of the conflict of Western Sahara, all efforts aimed at finding a solution have so far failed to achieve the expected results. As a result, the people of the Territory have not been able to exercise their right of self-determination, in line with relevant UN resolutions, although Western Sahara has been on the list of non-self-governing territories since 1963. The Assembly may wish to underline the urgent need for renewed international efforts to overcome the current impasse and facilitate an early resolution of the conflict. Bearing in mind the advisory opinion given by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 16 October 1975, which, *inter alia*, concluded that it had not found any tie of territorial sovereignty between Western Sahara and either Morocco or Mauritania that might affect the application of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) in the decolonization of Western Sahara and, in particular, of the principle of self-determination through the free and genuine expression of the will of the people of the Territory, the Assembly may wish to call on the UN General Assembly, in view of its responsibilities towards ensuring the completion of the decolonization process, and in line with the principle on the rejection of the acquisition of territories by force, to determine a date for the referendum for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. In this respect, the UN General Assembly shall protect the territorial integrity of Western Sahara as non-self-governing territory and prevent any act which may undermine it. In this respect, it is important to stress that the General Assembly has the duty to protect the territorial integrity of Western Sahara as a non-self-governing territory and to prevent any act that may undermine it. The Assembly may wish to underline the need for a firm stand

to overcome the current impasse and, accordingly, urge the Security Council to assume fully its responsibilities and take the steps required to ensure progress in the search for a solution to the conflict in Western Sahara, as well as effectively address the issues linked to the respect for human rights and the illegal exploitation of the Territory's natural resources. The Assembly may also wish to encourage the Chairperson of the Commission to pursue her efforts, including interactions with the UN and the Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General and continued support to her Special Envoy, as well as expediting the consultations for the early operationalization of the *ad hoc* Committee of Heads of State and the International Contact Group as provided for in the PSC communiqué of 27 March 2015. Finally, the Assembly may wish to call on all Member States to avail the necessary capacity-building support to the people of Western Sahara to help them address the many challenges facing them and alleviate the suffering arising from the harsh environment in which the Sahrawi people have been obliged to live in.

v) Tunisia

199. The last session of the Assembly of the Union was held in a context marked by the completion of the Transition in Tunisia. The Assembly will recall that, following the historic adoption, in January 2014, of the new Constitution of the country, the Tunisians elected, on 26 October 2014, the 217 members of the Assembly of the People's Representatives (ARP). On 21 December 2014 and after the second round of the Presidential election, they elected Mr. Beji Caid Essebsi, the candidate of Nida Tounes, President of the Republic. His opponent, Mr Moncef Marzouki, conceded defeat and congratulated the President-elect. It was in that context that the Assembly of the Union welcomed the completion of the Transition in Tunisia, congratulated all the Tunisian actors on their efforts and maturity, stressed the exemplary nature of the Tunisian Transition and made an appeal to the international community to provide the necessary economic and financial support for the consolidation of democracy in Tunisia.

200. The period under consideration witnessed further progress. On 5 February 2015, the coalition government formed by Prime Minister Habib Essid, appointed to the post on 5 January 2015, obtained the vote of confidence in the Parliament and took office the next day. At the same time, the security situation faced persistent challenges, particularly with regard to terrorist attacks. On 18 March 2015, Tunisia was hit by a terrorist attack at the Bardo Museum in Tunis, causing several deaths and injuries. In a Communiqué issued on the same day, the Chairperson of the Commission strongly condemned that heinous and cowardly act and presented the deepest condolences of the AU to the victims and to the people and the Government of Tunisia. She urged the people and leaders of Tunisia to persevere in their task of consolidating democracy and promoting tolerance. The measures subsequently taken led to improvements in the security situation. According to the figures from the Tunisian Ministry of the Interior in early May 2015, more than 800 individuals involved in acts of terrorism acts were arrested during the period from 6 February to 30 April 2015.

201. With the recovery of political stability and the progress made at the security level, the economic outlook is encouraging. The Tunisian government launched a package of structural reforms to promote faster growth, which is expected to be 3%

for 2015, and the creation of jobs. On 11 May 2015, the Board of Directors of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved an extension for seven months until 31 December 2015, of the Confirmation Agreement with Tunisia, agreed in June 2013 and whose amount is US \$ 1.75 billion. This extension will give the Tunisian authorities more time to implement the measures required to honor their future commitments – concerning especially the banking and budgetary reforms - which will contribute to reducing the vulnerabilities in the economy and promote stronger and more interdependent growth.

202. The Assembly may wish to reiterate the full solidarity of the AU with Tunisia and its full support to the efforts made to fight against the scourge of terrorism as well as urge the Tunisian socio-political stakeholders to continue to strive to consolidate the remarkable gains made over recent years, as well as the economic recovery of the country. The Assembly may wish to reiterate its appeal to the international community to mobilize increased socio-economic support for Tunisia.

w) Libya

203. During the period under review, the security situation in Libya continued to be of utmost concern, with the unabated escalation of violence in various parts of the country. The fighting largely involved the Libyan National Army (LNA), which operates under the authority of the internationally-recognized Government, based in Tobruk, in the eastern part of the country, and other forces that are part of Operation Dignity (launched under the command of General Khalifa Haftar in May 2014) and forces loyal to the illegal Government established in Tripoli, including those of the city of Misrata, which belong to the Libya Dawn Coalition. A number of independent militias and terrorist groups active in the cities of Benghazi, Sirte, Derna and the surrounding areas, were also involved in the fighting. The repeated appeals of the international community to the Libyan parties to cease these armed confrontations and seek political solution to the crisis were not heeded.

204. The current situation is also characterized by the use of violence against civilians and civilian institutions, including the use of Grad missiles, as well as cluster munitions which have been banned internationally since 2008, and aerial bombing and other attacks targeting public infrastructure and facilities. Political and human rights activists have continued to be targeted, through killings or abductions. On 14 February 2015, the head the Libyan Human Rights Commission was abducted by unidentified gunmen in Tripoli. On 23 February 2015, a known political activist was murdered in Tripoli. On a more encouraging note, on 26 March 2015, Operation Sun Rise (Alshuruq), which is tied to the General National Congress (GNC), and the Petroleum Facilities Guards, aligned with Operation Dignity, agreed to a UN-mediated ceasefire in the Sidra Oil Crescent area. As part of this agreement, Operation Alshuruq pulled out from the Oil Crescent area. In May 2015, Libyan-led efforts involving the Red Crescent, local councils and elders, resulted in an exchange of prisoners and the release of hostages in the Western part of the country. Armed clashes in this part of the country have recently decreased.

205. Increasing terrorist activities involving Al-Qaeda-linked terrorist groups and individuals, the increasing presence of the Islamic State (IS), also known as Da'esh, and the declarations of allegiance to the IS by terrorist groups operating in Libya

have also become of a particular concern in Libya. Recent terrorist attacks included the car bombing in al-Qubba, eastern Libya, on 20 February 2015, and the bombings that targeted various Embassies in Tripoli, in February and April 2015, as well as attacks elsewhere in the country. The period under review also witnessed the gruesome beheading of African migrant workers in Libya. On 15 February 2015, the IS released a video depicting the beheading of 21 Coptic Christians from Egypt. On 19 April 2015, the IS released another video depicting the beheading and summary execution of 30 Ethiopian Orthodox Christians. The prevailing situation in Libya and the proliferation of weapons and ammunition emanating from its military depots pose a serious threat to regional peace and security. Terrorist groups operating in Mali continue to benefit from the flow of arms and fighters originating from Libya. For example, the terrorist attack of 18 March 2015 at the Bardo Museum, in Tunis, was perpetrated by elements trained in Libya.

206. In reaction to the worsening terrorist threat in Libya, on 27 March 2015 the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2214(2015), to enhance the capacity of the Libyan Government to deal with the situation. More specifically, the resolution called upon the Sanctions Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) of 26 February 2011, to consider requests for the transfer or supply of arms and related materials to the Libyan Government for use by its official Armed Forces to combat the IS and its supporters, and called upon the international community, within the framework of the relevant provisions of this resolution, to extend the necessary assistance to Libya.

207. The continued fighting in Libya has led to a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation. There are approximately 557,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs), of whom at least, 360,000 have been displaced as a result of the fighting that began in July 2014. Hundreds of thousands Libyans have fled to neighbouring countries. Furthermore, Libya continues to host some 37,000 refugees and asylum seekers of different nationalities, many of whom are living in precarious conditions and are subjected to serious abuses and other human rights violations. The collapse of state authority and the resulting anarchy have led to an increasing flow of African migrants, involving criminal networks. Thousands of people have lost their lives while trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea. Since the beginning of the year, over 1,700 people have died while trying to cross to Europe from Libya. The Libyan economy continues to deteriorate, as the country now produces only around 436,000 barrels of crude oil per day, compared to about 1.6 million barrels produced in mid-2011. In March 2015, the internationally recognized Government established a new National Oil Company (NOC) and, in early April 2015, passed a decision allowing the newly created company to open accounts abroad, as well as to review and conclude new contracts. This decision has been strongly criticised by the Tripoli based Government. It should be noted that, until now, oil sales and revenues have gone through the Libyan Central Bank and the NOC based in Tripoli. Both institutions have strived to remain neutral in the current political crisis. The Central Bank pays civil servants salaries and provides consumer subsidies throughout Libya, helping, to some extent, to mitigate the humanitarian impact of the crisis.

208. The UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) continued its facilitation efforts to engage the Libyan stakeholders in political dialogue with the objective of ending the armed violence and achieving a political solution to the crisis. In this context, the

Special Representative for Libya convened a series of meetings in Ghadames, Libya; Geneva, Switzerland; and Skirat, Morocco. In addition to the main political track, parallel consultations involving other Libyan stakeholders were held in Algiers, Brussels and Tunis between March and April 2015. On 27 April 2015, the UN Special Representative circulated an updated text of the draft proposal which was expected to form the basis of a comprehensive political agreement that will bring an end to the conflict in Libya. The draft provides a vision of the institutional architecture and security arrangements that will underpin the remainder of the transitional period. At the time of finalizing this report, the GNC, on 28 April 2015, stated its complete rejection of the draft proposal as “it does not provide an objective, comprehensive, balanced solution.” On its part, the House of Representatives has accepted the draft proposal in principle, making minor amendments. On 28 May 2015, the Conference of Libya’s tribes and cities, hosted by the Egyptian Government in Cairo, concluded its deliberations. The Conference adopted a communiqué addressing a number of issues of concern, including support to the House of Representatives and the National Army, condemnation of terrorism and the establishment of the Libyan tribes Council.

209. A number of political developments have also taken place during this period, in both Tobruk and Tripoli. In early March 2015, the House of Representatives appointed General Khalifa Haftar as the Commander of the Libyan National Army. This decision was criticized by the rival Government based in Tripoli, whose Prime Minister, Omar al-Hassi, was removed from his position by the GNC, on 31 March 2015, and replaced, on a temporary basis, by his Deputy Khalifa al-Ghawi.

210. During the period under review, the AU continued its efforts in support of the early resolution of the conflict facing Libya. In this connection, the Commission convened the 3rd meeting of the International Contact Group for Libya (ICG-L), in Niamey, Niger, on 1 April 2015. The meeting expressed deep concern at the prevailing situation, strongly condemned all acts of violence and urged the Libyan parties to seek a political solution to the crisis. The meeting also underlined the central role of the ICG-L in ensuring a coordinated international engagement in the search for a lasting solution to the crisis. On his part, the AU Special Envoy for Libya, former Prime Minister of Djibouti Dileita Mohamed Dileita, has continued to be involved in the search for a solution. In March 2015, during visits undertaken in Tunis, Istanbul and Amman, he held consultations with both Libyan and international stakeholders. All his interlocutors welcomed his efforts and urged the AU to step up its role. In particular, the Libyan parties who met the Special Envoy expressed pessimism on the outcome of the political process and call for an end to foreign interference in Libya’s internal affairs, as this would only deepen divisions among the Libyan people and undermine the peace process.

211. As the Assembly is aware, the countries of the region have taken a number of initiatives to address the prevailing situation in Libya. The Ministerial Committee of Libya’s neighbors is planning to convene its 6th meeting on 5 June 2015, in Ndjamena, Chad, as a follow-up to the 5th meeting, which took place in Khartoum, Sudan, on 4 December 2014. Furthermore, on 8 April 2015, the Foreign Ministers of Algeria and Egypt, the countries chairing the two sub-committees of the Ministerial Committee, held a coordination meeting with their Italian counterparts to review the situation on the ground and efforts to facilitate political dialogue among the Libyan

stakeholders. Another tripartite meeting is scheduled to take place in Cairo, on 7 June 2015.

212. In conclusion, the Assembly may wish to reiterate the AU's concern at the prevailing situation, which is marked by continued fighting, leading to the worsening of the humanitarian situation destruction of infrastructure and further political polarization, as well as by the growing presence of terrorist groups, including the IS. The Assembly may wish also to express its concern at the serious consequences that the current situation poses to regional security and stability. The Assembly may wish to condemn strongly all acts of violence in Libya, in particular the attacks against innocent civilians, including foreign nationals, particularly African migrants, as well as the terrorist acts committed in Libya. The Assembly may wish to express its support to the legitimate Libyan Government in the fight against IS. The Assembly may wish to underline, once again, the AU's conviction that only political dialogue will bring about lasting peace in Libya, and call on the armed belligerents to commit to an immediate and unconditional cessation of hostilities and to demonstrate the required flexibility and leadership to bring an end to the current crisis. The Assembly may wish to stress the AU's commitment to do whatever it can to contribute to the search for a solution, in collaboration with the neighboring countries, the UN and other international stakeholders. The Assembly may wish to commend the ICG-L and the neighboring countries for their efforts and to underline the centrality of their role in ensuring a coordinated international engagement in Libya.

V. THEMATIC ISSUES

a) Maritime Security and Safety

213. The Assembly will recall that, at its 23rd Ordinary Session, held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea from 26 to 27 June 2014, it adopted a decision on Maritime Piracy in which, inter alia, it took note of and welcomed the proposal of the Republic of Togo to organize a Conference on Maritime Piracy and Other Criminal Acts at Sea, and its offer to host the Conference. In this regard, the Assembly requested the Commission to hold consultations with the Government of the Republic of Togo, in cooperation with technical partners, to consider the practical modalities of organizing this Conference and to submit a report to it at its 24th Session in January 2015.

214. Pursuant to that decision, from 24 to 25 March 2015, the Commission also held, in Addis Ababa, a consultative meeting with the Togolese Government on the preparation of the proposed Conference, to be held in Lomé in November 2015. At the 8th Ordinary meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defense, Security and Safety (STCDSS), held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, on 15 May 2015, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Togo made a presentation on the state of preparation of the proposed Conference. The meeting encouraged the Member States to participate in the Conference. In the meantime, the Commission held a Ministerial meeting on Maritime Security and Safety, in Victoria, Seychelles, from 8 to 9 February 2015. The participants welcomed the proposed organization of the Lomé Conference on Maritime Security and Development in Africa and urged all the countries and the international organizations concerned to actively participate in this Summit.

215. In light of the foregoing, the Assembly may welcome the measures taken for the organization of the Lomé Conference. The Assembly may also consider changing the Conference into an Extraordinary Summit in order to give more visibility to this initiative, as recommended by the 8th meeting of the STCDSS.

b) Terrorism and follow-up to PSC communiqué of 2 September 2014

216. Terrorism continues to be one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. Over the past decade, the threat of terrorism in Africa has grown significantly. Regions that previously did not perceive the seriousness of the threat, or that were considered to be immune from terrorism, are now being targeted by terrorists. During the same period, the threat of terrorism has spread from North and East Africa to Western and Central Africa covering the Sahel, which expands from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. While commendable progress has been made in tackling the threat of terrorism at the international and continental levels, there is a growing realization that the threat the continent is currently facing is complex. This is particularly true in the Sahel region, where drug and arms trafficking, human smuggling, kidnapping-for-ransom, illicit proliferation of arms and money laundering - all of which are variants of transnational organized crime – have become intimately intertwined with terrorist groups' activities and sources of financing.

217. It is against this background that the PSC met at Summit level in Nairobi on 2 September 2014. In the communiqué adopted on that occasion, the PSC noted with concern that, despite the progress made in developing a comprehensive normative and operational counter-terrorism framework, serious gaps continue to exist in terms of implementation and follow-up, thus undermining the effectiveness of Africa's response to the threat of terrorism and violent extremism. Accordingly, the PSC stressed the urgency for an action-oriented approach to give concrete expression to the commitment made by the Member States to combat terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations. A separate report is being submitted by the Commission on the issue of terrorism and follow-up to the Nairobi communiqué.

c) Review of UN Operations

218. In 2014, the UN Secretary-General appointed a high-level panel to undertake a Review of UN Peace Operations. The review of the Panel, chaired by former President of East Timor, Jose Ramos Horta, is to be finalized by June 2015 and submitted to the General Assembly in September 2015. Thereafter, a Report of the Secretary-General will be prepared by the UN Secretariat, taking into account the findings of the Panel review. It is expected that the findings of the review will set the agenda for UN peacekeeping in the coming years. The Assembly would recall that at its 24th Ordinary Session, it requested the Commission to cooperate with the Panel in the conduct of its work, and to prepare an African Common Position to be submitted to the Panel.

219. The Panel's methodology included consultations with stakeholders, including Member States, Regional Organizations and civil society. The Panel also formally

called for written submissions. As part of its consultations the Panel visited Addis Ababa from 9 to 14 February 2015, where it held extensive discussions with the AU Commission, including with the Chairperson of the Commission, with the PSC, as well as with African civil society organizations and think tanks.

220. On 30 April 2015, the PSC adopted the African Common Position on the UN Review of Peace Operations and transmitted it to the Secretary General of the UN for onward transmission to the Panel. The Common Position is comprehensive, addressing a number of issues that the PSC believes are critical if peace operations are to properly address the security challenges facing the continent and the world, and offering a number of concrete proposals for action.

221. The conflict dynamics that UN and African peace operations have to deal with continue to change rapidly and have become more complex and asymmetrical. In many contemporary conflict zones, terrorists, criminal gangs, traffickers and armed groups or militias deliberately choose to use violence targeted against civilian populations, aid workers and, increasingly, peacekeepers, to achieve their aims. Conflicts today are also more regional in character, not contained within the boundaries of the particular states where they originated, requiring a more regional approach with the challenge of balancing the interests of the various states affected by the conflict. The growth of modern communication technology has profoundly influenced the ways in which armed groups operate. While it is true that the root causes of conflict are found in local concerns and grievances, in particular poverty, exclusion and marginalization of particular groups within the society, the growth of the internet has allowed such local grievances to mix with international concerns, ideologies, ambitions and tactics, creating networks of fighters, who move from one conflict to another, to devastating effect. Moreover, through the development of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), the AU and the RECs/RMs have become significant actors in international peace support operations. The AU and the RECs/RMs today are an important resource for the UN in the maintenance of international peace and security.

222. Article 52(1), Chapter VIII, of the UN Charter provides for the “existence of regional arrangements or agencies for dealing with such matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security as are appropriate for regional action, provided that such arrangements or agencies and their activities are consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations,” while reserving for the UN Security Council the right to authorize enforcement action. Article 53(1) states that “no enforcement action shall be taken under regional arrangements or by regional agencies without the authorization of the Security Council...” The challenge for the AU and the UN is how to apply the spirit of Chapter VIII without prejudice to the role of the UN Security Council, on one hand, and without undermining or otherwise curtailing the efforts of the AU to develop its own capacity to provide adequate responses to the peace and security challenges in Africa, on the other.

223. The strategic relationship between the AU and the UN, based on the primacy of the UN Security Council and the need to forge partnerships with regional arrangements, in the context of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter. AU interventions must be understood in this context and as part of collective security arrangements as provided for in the Charter. More specifically, partnership between the two

organizations must be on the basis of: consultative decision-making; division of labor on the basis of comparative advantage in the full cycle of conflict prevention, management and resolution; and equitable burden sharing.

224. The African Common Position includes many concrete proposals on ways in which to deepen and strengthen the cooperation between the AU and the UN in the area of peace operations. Most important among these recommendations are those relating to financing of African-led, UN Security Council-endorsed peace operations. The financing of African-led peace operations in a flexible, predictable and sustainable manner remains one of the most important strategic challenges facing the AU and UN. African peace operations represent local responses to global problems and effective African peace operations thus represent a significant contribution to the global common good. Moreover, Africa has become the largest single contributor to UN peace operations, contributing approximately 45% of the UN's uniformed peacekeepers. Thus African capacities have become a critical resource for the success of the UN's own missions, and failure to adequately support them has deleterious effects for the UN.

225. The following recommendations were proffered to address this key challenge:

- i) the international community, through the UN, has a duty to support AU operations. There are a number of models under which such support can be channeled. The AU, UN and key partners such as the EU and other major donors should assess these models and make recommendations regarding how they can be improved and adapted in the future. At the same time, the AU is committed to increase the proportion of the cost of AU peace operations covered by the AU and its Member States. It has launched an initiative to increase African funding to AU and its peace operations. In addition, AU Member States make significant contributions to peace operations by contributing troops and equipment, and, most importantly, the lives of its peacekeepers;
- ii) the AU would also like to note that experience to date has shown that Trust Funds are neither reliable, predictable nor easily accessible, especially for high-tempo operations where troops on the ground are faced with well-resourced, determined and highly networked armed groups, the very types of operations that the AU has tended to deploy into, and which are not suited to UN peacekeeping doctrine;
- iii) the AU's preferred model is the use of UN assessed contributions to support AU-led peace operations, premised on the conviction that the UN Security Council retains the primacy for the maintenance of international peace and security and that, in undertaking peace operations in the continent, the AU is responding to an international obligation and acting on behalf of the UN; and
- iv) in addressing the funding issue, the two organizations should address also the doctrinal issues relating to interventions in situations where there is "no peace to keep." Such doctrinal differences between the AU and UN in deciding whether or not to deploy peace operations will have

an impact on the use of UN assessed contributions.

226. The Assembly may wish to welcome the elaboration of a common African position on the review of the UN Peace Operations. The Assembly may wish to reiterate the need for continued efforts to build an innovative and forward looking partnership between the AU and the UN in the area of peace and security. In this respect, the Assembly may wish to urge all Member States to promote the common African position during the deliberations of the relevant UN organs on the report and recommendations of the High-Level Panel.

d) Governance and Structural Prevention of Conflicts

227. The costs of managing conflict (whether in deploying peacekeeping operations, providing humanitarian relief, engaging in lengthy peace-making efforts or undertaking post-conflict reconstruction) are high. This lends further credence to the long-standing adage that ‘prevention is better than cure’. Recognising that the human, financial and material costs of prevention are far less compared to the devastating consequences of armed violence, the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have, over the last two decades, developed policies and instruments aimed at preventing violent conflict on the continent, both operationally and structurally.

228. Conflict and violence develop in environments characterized by structural factors: history of past social violence, unstable neighbourhoods, deep-seated poverty, in conjunction with societal conditions such as discrimination and economic deprivation/decline, political repression, ethnic polarisation, and various environmental and resource degradation problems that may contribute to political instability and conflict. These situations have been described in different terms and attributed to a variety of underlying reasons. In public and political debate, both in Africa and abroad, reference is often indiscriminately made to attributes such as “fragility”, “instability”, “state collapse”, “state inversion”, “state decline”, “state decay”, “state failure”, “weak states”, “quasi states”, “degrees of statelessness”.

229. The Report of the High-Level Panel on Fragile States titled “Ending Conflict and Building Peace in Africa: A Call to Action”, which was presented to and endorsed by the 22nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 26 to 27 June 2014, discussed in-depth the issue of fragility. The Report “sees fragility not as a category of states, but as a risk inherent in the development process itself”, adding that, “in the coming period, it will appear across Africa in different places and forms, at national or local level – including in countries not currently classified as fragile”. The Report notes that fragility in Africa is linked to rapid urbanization, youth unemployment, inequality and social exclusion, new natural resource finds, climate change, state building and peace building processes, which have the potential to put unbearable strain on national institutions, creating a risk of violence.

230. Against this backdrop, conflict prevention activities should, in addition to direct prevention, which consists of actions designed to address the proximate or immediate causes of conflict, include a structural, strategic dimension to address the root causes of conflict. In this regard, it is worth noting that, over the years, the AU

has adopted several normative instruments designed to facilitate the structural prevention of conflicts. These instruments relate to human rights; governance and the fight against corruption; democratisation processes; disarmament; terrorism; and the prevention and reduction of interstate conflicts. They represent a consolidated framework of commonly accepted norms and principles, whose observance would significantly reduce the risk of conflict and violence and consolidate peace where it has been achieved.

231. The PSC has, on several occasions, emphasized the need for renewed efforts towards the structural prevention of conflicts. In the Declaration on the State of Peace and Security in Africa, adopted at its 275th meeting, held on 26 April 2011, the PSC noted that neglect by Governments of the political and socio-economic needs of the population, in particular the youth, create conditions favourable to the outbreak of crises and conflicts. At its 360th meeting held on 22 March 2013, the PSC stressed the need to address the root causes of conflicts in a systematic and holistic manner, and the imperative for all Member States, in line with their commitments under relevant AU instruments, to work towards ever-higher standards in the areas of human rights, democracy, good governance and conflict prevention. At its 463rd meeting held on 27 October 2014, the PSC reiterated its conviction that situations of marginalization, abuses of human rights, refusal to accept electoral defeat, manipulation of constitutions, mismanagement and unequal distribution of resources, lack of socio-economic opportunities, unemployment, as well as corruption, among other factors, are potent triggers of violent conflicts in Africa. Accordingly, the PSC stressed the imperative of good governance, as well as the need to build strong, responsive and accountable state institutions at the local and national levels that deliver essential services, and ensure inclusive political processes, rule of law and public security. The PSC expressed full support to the recommendations contained in the report of the High-Level Panel on Fragile States and requested the Commission, to actively work towards the implementation of these recommendations.

232. As a follow-up to these pronouncements by the PSC, the Commission has developed a tool to facilitate the identification of a country's structural vulnerability to conflict at an early stage. This assessment will allow Member States to identify potential structural causes of conflict – such as the exclusion of identity groups and other forms of discrimination and/or economic deprivation, enduring societal stress or various long-term forms of environmental and resource degradation, with severe governance implications, as opposed to proximate and more immediate factors. The conclusions deriving from the assessment will serve as a basis for elaborating an appropriate mitigation strategy. At its 502nd meeting held on 29 April 2015, the PSC encouraged Member States to fully take advantage of these tools in their efforts towards the structural prevention of conflict and consolidation of peace and stability. It requested the Commission, in collaboration with the RECs, to avail all the necessary assistance to Member States in this respect and to popularize these tools.

233. The Assembly may wish to reiterate its earlier pronouncements on the need for renewed efforts towards conflict prevention, through the implementation of the relevant AU instruments, as well as the need to enhance the capacity of the Peace and Security Department in the area of early warning and mediation and that of the AU Panel of the Wise. The Assembly may also wish to encourage Member States to

make effective use of the tools developed by the Commission to help assess vulnerability to conflict at an early stage and take the necessary mitigation measures.

VI. CONCLUSION

234. Africa continues to face serious challenges in the field of peace and security. The persistence of conflicts and crises hamper the socio-economic development efforts, cause tragic humanitarian consequences and contribute to project a negative image of the continent. One of the most worrying elements relate to the setbacks registered in countries that had overcome the crises they had faced and were in a post-conflict phase. More generally speaking, the challenges faced by Africa in the field of governance constitute one of the main causes of instability on the continent.

235. In this context, we cannot stress enough the need for more sustained efforts to resolve the current crises and put an end to the tragedies they cause. More specifically, the parties to these situations need to rise above narrow considerations to uphold the interest of their respective countries and that of the people they claim to represent. At the level of prevention, special emphasis should be on the effective implementation of the various AU instruments on democracy, elections and human rights. Furthermore, it is important that Member States, facing potential crises, facilitate the efforts of the Commission and the PSC in the field of prevention, in conformity with their obligations under the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the PSC.

**Assembly/AU/7(XXV)
Annex**

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION ON THE
THREAT OF TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AFRICA
AND ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNIQUÉ
PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV)**

AFRICAN UNION

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Assembly/AU/7(XXV)
Annex 1

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**REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION ON THE THREAT OF
TERRORISM AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN AFRICA AND ON THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNIQUÉ PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV)**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report is submitted in pursuance of communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV) on terrorism and violent extremism, adopted by Council at its 455th meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 2 September 2014. The report provides an overview of the terrorist threat on the continent, as well as an update on the implementation status of Council's Nairobi communiqué. It concludes with observations on the way forward.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE TERRORIST THREAT ON THE CONTINENT

2. Terrorism remains one of the major security challenges facing the continent and a serious threat to international peace and stability. It has become more pervasive and deadly. The threat of terrorism has assumed greater proportions, with attacks spreading to a larger geographical area and with increased frequency. Terrorist groups have developed new and sophisticated tactics, recruitment and funding methods.

3. In my report to the Council at its Nairobi Summit [PSC/AHG/2(CDLV)], I indicated that terrorist threats on the continent could be divided into the five following categories: (i) terrorist attacks on African interests; (ii) terrorist attacks on Western and other foreign interests; (iii) use of African territories as safe havens; (iv) use of Africa as a terrorist breeding ground and source of recruitment and financing; and (v) Africa as a transit point for terrorists and fund raising tied to other illicit activities. Two new elements have emerged: namely (i) Africa as a rallying point for international Jihadists; and (ii) Africa as confrontation ground between Al-Qaida and the Islamic State (IS), for supremacy and leadership of the violent Jihad movement.

4. Though West Africa, the Sahel and East Africa continue to be the most affected by terrorism, North Africa has become a very attractive hotbed for terrorists. Libya, Tunisia and Egypt, in particular, have to cope with a large presence of terrorist groups and a sharp increase in terrorist incidents. The proliferation of arms and ammunitions, as well as the presence of myriad armed groups with proven military training and expertise are, to a considerable extent, responsible for the prevailing situation in the region.

5. The configuration of some of these groups has witnessed changes over the past months, in particular following the establishment of the IS, on 29 June 2014. This created a rift within Al-Qaida followers and affiliates, as well as within the wider jihadi community, whose members had to choose between Al-Qaida Central and the IS. In Africa, IS has been competing with Ansar Sharia formations, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), al Mourabitoun, the Movement for Unicity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and other long-established terrorist groups over territory and population, for influence, extremist indoctrination and terrorist recruitment.

6. In this context, *Jund al-Khilafa Fil-Djazair* (Soldiers of the Caliphate in Algeria), an AQIM dissident group, pledged allegiance to the IS on 14 September 2014; *Majlis Shura Shabab al-Islam* (Advisory Council for the Islamic Youth), active in Libya, on 3 October 2014; *Ansar Beit al-Maqdis* (ABM) in Egypt, on 10 November 2014; and Boko Haram (*Jamā'a tAhlis-Sunnah lid-Da'wahwal-Jihād*), in Nigeria, on 7 March 2015. Boko Haram, thereafter, changed its name to "*Islamic State's West African Province* (ISWAP)". In response to these pledges of allegiance, IS welcomed the expansion of the Caliphate to West Africa and called on jihadists to migrate to this new conquered territory to wage Jihad.

7. Terrorists are tactically selective and propaganda-driven in their choice of targets. They attack state symbols, military barracks, soldiers and convoys, in order to discredit the State and its institutions. They attack prisons to release detained terrorists and recruit others as new members. They increasingly target critical and strategic multinational economic infrastructures to hamper financial revenue stream. They resort to massive hostage-taking and kidnappings to cause panic, capture media attention and use their victims, as bargaining chips to make specific demands. They destroy cultural heritage, disrupt educational system and use extremist ideological narrative to radicalize, recruit and incite young vulnerable people to violence. They provide economic support to local populations and marry into local tribes as part of their expansion and entrenchment strategy in the Sahel. Civilians are increasingly being targeted by terrorists. The rationale behind this is two-fold: firstly, it is easier and less risky to attack civilian than "hard" military targets and, secondly, the spread of terror among the civilian population gives the impression that terrorists are stronger and the legitimate security forces of the country cannot protect them.

8. As terrorists expand their zones of operations and enlist new recruits, they require increased financial and material resources to be able to operate, maintain and control territories, provide elementary services and meet the basic needs of the populations in areas under their control. This requires them to have greater and tighter links with transnational organized crime, notably drug, human trafficking and people smuggling, money laundering, illicit trafficking in firearms and other illicit goods mercenarism, illegal exploitation and trade of oil and mineral resources, looting and selling of antiquities, kidnap-for-ransom and other high rewarding crimes.

9. In North Africa and the Sahel, continued security operations against groups such as AQIM has limited their operational capacity, which was further weakened by internal strife and repeated dissensions resulting from the emergence of IS, which has opened fronts in a number of countries of North Africa. It is particularly active in Libya, where it controls some cities and has carried out gruesome attacks against African migrant workers and other terrorist attacks against civilians. AQIM has lost the supremacy and the leadership of Jihad in the Maghreb and the Sahel. However, this group is reorganizing. Furthermore, there is a resurgence, in the region, of jihadist activities in the region, mainly carried out by elements of Ansar dine, Al-Mourabitoun and MUJAO. All these groups primarily target the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the Malian Armed Forces, to restrain their mobility and disrupt their logistical chain.

10. In the Lake Chad basin region, Boko Haram activities continue to affect North-Eastern Nigeria and parts of the neighboring countries. Attacks carried out by this terrorist group have resulted in thousands of deaths and caused more than one hundred and fifty thousand (150,000) people to flee into neighboring Cameroon, Niger and Chad. Furthermore, an estimated 650,000 people from that zone have been internally displaced due to the brutality and terror activities of the group. Boko Haram has undeniably been weakened by the action of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) established by the member countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and Benin. However, the group still retains some capacity, as shown by the recent attacks it carried out.

11. In East Africa, several Member States continue to face security threats from terrorist groups. In the Horn of Africa, Al Shabaab has been forced out of most of its strongholds in Somalia, thanks to the operations conducted by the Somali National Army (SNA) and the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM); its top leadership has been decimated by drone strikes and internal strife; it has lost control of major financial hubs and has seen its popularity erode because of its ultra-hardline policies. Moreover, Al Shabaab is still grappling with difficulties resulting from the elimination of Ahmed Godane in 2014, the difficult transition under the leadership of Ahmad Omar (Abu Ubeidah) and the conflicting goals between the advocates of the global jihad and those of the local jihad. Despite these challenges, Al Shabaab has proved to be very adaptive and resilient, as demonstrated by the attacks it continues to carry out both within and outside Somalia, in particular Kenya, with the cowardly terrorist attack against the Garissa University College, in early April 2015.

12. Other groups are also active in East Africa, including the Allied Democratic Forces of Uganda (ADF) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). It should be noted that the LRA, which is also active in the parts of the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), has been seriously degraded thanks to the operations conducted by the Regional Task Force (RTF) of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA (RCI-LRA). Many of its commanders have been either killed, captured or have surrendered, and the number of its fighters has dwindled. However, the LRA continues to carry out attacks on civilians and resorts to looting and illicit trade, particularly ivory poaching for survival.

13. The issue of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and the impact of the IS on Africa are a matter of great concern, as more Africans join the ranks of the IS or pledge allegiance to it. According to data collected from analysis by various research institutions and a recent UN report, the number of foreign terrorist fighters has increased by 71% between mid-2014 and March 2015 to a total of 25,000, originating from about 100 countries, of which about 6,000 are Africans.

III. STEPS TAKEN IN IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNIQUÉ PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV)

14. On 19 September 2014, the Commission addressed a note verbale to all Member States to formally forward the communiqué adopted at the PSC Nairobi Summit and highlight the key provisions requiring follow-up. The Commission seized

the opportunity to reaffirm its full commitment and readiness to provide the necessary assistance to Member States in this respect.

15. In order to facilitate the implementation of the communiqué adopted by the PSC at its Nairobi meeting, on 4 December 2014, the Commission convened a consultative workshop to develop a detailed implementation plan. This workshop brought together the relevant AU structures, in particular the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) and the AU Mission for Mali and Sahel (MISAHEL), as well as the United Nations and other international partners. The implementation plan identifies key intervention areas, including criminal justice response, border management, addressing conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, countering violent extremism, radicalization and terrorist recruitment, countering money laundering and the financing of terrorism, as well as coordination, collaboration and cooperation.

16. In March 2015, and given the scope of the activities to be undertaken, the Commission established an advisory team that would support the Department and the ACSRT in the implementation process of the Nairobi communiqué. The team convened its inaugural meeting in Addis Ababa, from 11 to 12 May 2015. Its members have since undertaken visits to Algiers and Bamako, for consultations with the ACSRT and MISAHEL. The team has developed a work plan, focusing on countering violent extremism.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE RELEVANT PROVISIONS OF COMMUNIQUÉ PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV)

17. In its communiqué PSC/AHG/COMM.(CDLV), the PSC expressed concern that, despite the progress made in developing a comprehensive normative and operational counter-terrorism framework, serious gaps continue to exist in terms of implementation and follow-up, thus undermining the effectiveness of Africa's response to the threat of terrorism and violent extremism. Accordingly, the PSC stressed the urgency for an action-oriented approach to give concrete expression to the commitment made by the Member States to combat terrorism and violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations. A number of practical steps were identified. The following paragraphs provide an update on the steps taken.

a) Signature and ratification of relevant African and international counter-terrorism instruments

18. At its Nairobi Summit, the PSC reiterated its call to the Member States that have not yet done so to urgently take the necessary steps to become party to the 1999 OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and its 2004 additional Protocol, as well as to the relevant international instruments adopted under the auspices of the United Nations. The PSC also stressed the need for the urgent signature and ratification of the AU Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation (Niamey Convention) of July 2013, which contains provisions on cooperation in the area of security, including combating terrorism and transnational organized crime. As of June 2015, 50 Member States have signed the 1999 Convention and 41 have ratified it, while 45 Member States have signed the Protocol and 16 have ratified it.

So far, 5 Member States have signed the Niamey Convention, one of which has also ratified it.

b) Submission of annual reports to the PSC

19. The PSC requested Member States to submit, in line with the provision of the 2004 Protocol, annual reports to it on measures taken to combat and prevent terrorism and to notify it of all terrorist activities in their territories as soon as they occur. While the Protocol entered into force on 26 February 2014, no Member State has to date submitted the required reports.

c) Appointment of Focal Points for the ACSRT

20. The PSC called on Member States that have not yet done so to appoint, by the end of 2014, national Focal Points for the purpose of liaison and coordination with the ACSRT, bearing in mind the need to designate in such positions suitable individuals with the required clearance level to access information and decision-makers in the intelligence and security services. Five (5) Member States are still to appoint their national Focal Points.

d) Financial contributions and provision of expertise by Member States

21. The PSC called upon Member States to make financial contributions to facilitate the implementation of the AU counter-terrorism framework and to second technical expertise to the ACSRT. There is need to reiterate this call to Member States to extend the required support.

e) Operationalization of the PSC Committee on Counter-terrorism

22. The PSC expressed its determination to ensure the effective functioning of its Committee on Counter-Terrorism, established in pursuance of communiqué PSC/PR/COMM.(CCXLVIX) adopted at its 249th meeting held in Addis Ababa on 22 November 2010. Steps are being taken by the PSC to adopt generic terms of reference for all its sub-committees, including the Committee on Counter-Terrorism, as well as the programme of work of this Committee, whose members were designated at its 447th meeting held on 24 July 2014.

f) Elaboration of an African Arrest Warrant

23. The PSC requested the Commission to elaborate an African arrest warrant for persons charged with or convicted of terrorist acts, including the convening of a meeting of governmental experts on the matter by the first quarter of 2015. The Advisory team put in place by the Commission has been tasked to undertake the preliminary work required.

g) Holding of regional sensitization workshops

24. The PSC requested the holding of regional sensitization workshops on the relevant African and international instruments, in collaboration with the Regional

Economic Communities (RECs) and relevant partners. Steps are being taken to this effect. In the meantime, and in view of salience of the issue, the Commission convened a workshop on countering the threat posed by Foreign Terrorist Fighters for the countries of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), from 22 to 23 April 2015, in Addis Ababa. The workshop stressed the need for renewed efforts by Member States towards addressing this problem, in particular through sharing of information and intelligence.

h) Implementation of the Nouakchott Process

25. The PSC called upon the Member States participating in the Nouakchott Process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and the Operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan region, to expedite the implementation of the various steps agreed upon during the meetings of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services and Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries of the region. In this respect, the Commission, in cooperation with Mauritania, facilitated the holding of the Nouakchott Process Summit in the Mauritanian capital, on 18 December 2014, under the auspices of President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, then Chairman of the Union. Representatives of the UN and the European Union (EU) participated in the Summit. In the Declaration adopted on that occasion, the Summit welcomed the results already achieved in the implementation of the Process. Furthermore, the Summit requested the Commission, in close cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and with the support of international partners, to take the necessary measures, including the organisation of a meeting of the Chiefs of Defence Staff and Ministers of Defence and Security, to finalise the generic Concept of Operations for mixed units and joint border patrols. Finally, the Summit expressed its readiness, in consultation with the UN, to contribute to the strengthening of MINUSMA. Two meetings of the Heads of Intelligence were held subsequently: the first one in Dakar, Senegal, from 13 to 14 November 2014; and the second one in Algiers, Algeria, from 15 to 16 April 2015.

i) Implementation of the RCI-LRA

26. Efforts to enhance the implementation of the RCI-LRA, particularly the effectiveness of its operational arm, the Regional Task Force (RTF), have continued. In March 2015, the new AU Special Envoy for the LRA Issue, appointed in July 2014, in replacement of Ambassador Francisco Madeira, who was assuming that responsibility concurrently with that of Director of the ACSRT and Special Representative of Counter-Terrorism Cooperation, Lieutenant-General Jackson Kiprono Tuwei of Kenya, visited the RTF Headquarters in Yambio, South Sudan, as well as the RTF sectors in Nzara (South Sudan), Obo (CAR) and Dungu (DRC), to assess the operations against the LRA. Collaboration with the United Nations, in particular through the UN Special Representative for Central Africa, Professor Abdoulaye Bathily, as well as with other partners, is also continuing. On 18 May 2015, the PSC renewed the mandate of the ICR-LRA for 12 additional months. It also requested the Commission to take immediate practical steps to finalize the assessment of the rehabilitation needs of the areas affected by activities of the LRA.

j) Support to and facilitation of other regional cooperation initiative against terrorism

27. The PSC requested the Commission to support and facilitate regional cooperation initiatives and mechanisms, to address specific transnational threats, building on the experiences of the RCI-LRA and the Nouakchott Process. In this respect, the following steps were taken:

(i) Fight against Boko Haram

28. Following the Nairobi PSC Summit, the Commission undertook a number of follow-up activities, including participation in the ministerial meeting of the member countries of the LCBC and Benin held in Niamey, Niger, on 20 January 2015. These efforts culminated in the adoption by the 484th meeting of the PSC of a communiqué authorizing the deployment of the MNJTF for an initial period of twelve months and for a strength that could go up to 7,500 military and other personnel. From 5 to 7 February 2015, the Commission convened a meeting of experts that developed the Concept of Operation (CONOPS) for the MNJTF and other related documents, in Yaoundé, Cameroon. A follow-up planning meeting was held in Ndjamená from 23 to 27 February 2015, to develop the operational-level CONOPS. From 20 to 24 May 2015, experts from the LCBC Member States and Benin, the AU and partners met in Ndjamená, to finalize additional operational documents for the MNJTF. In the meantime, at its meeting of 3 March 2015, the PSC endorsed the strategic CONOPS. It also authorized an increase in the strength of the MNJTF from the initial figure of 7,500 to up to 10,000 military and other personnel. The operational headquarters of the MNJTF, based in Ndjamená, was inaugurated on 25 May 2015. Furthermore, the Commission has initiated discussions with the EU for the provision of funding amounting 50 million Euros in support of the MNJTF, within the framework of the Africa Peace Facility (APF). It has also secured a grant of 8 million dollars from the United Kingdom. Finally, and as part of the AU's support to the affected countries, the Commissioner for Peace and Security, jointly with the UN Special Representatives for Central and West Africa, undertook a visit to the region from 26 to 29 May 2015.

(ii) Djibouti Process

29. The Commission convened the first meeting of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services of the Member States of the East African Community (EAC) and IGAD, in Djibouti, from 28 February to 1 March 2015. The meeting agreed on a set of measures to enhance security cooperation in the region, including enhanced interaction among the countries and institutions concerned, the establishment of a secure communication system among the intelligence and security services and the enhancement of national operational capacities. It was also agreed to institutionalise this meeting through the launching of the Djibouti Process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation in the East Africa region. The Heads of Intelligence and Security Services will meet every three months. Their second meeting will take place in Kampala, Uganda.

k) Assessment of the implementation status of the 2002 Plan of Action

30. The PSC requested the Commission to assess the implementation status of the 2002 Plan of Action (PoA) and identify the steps required to address the challenges encountered. The results of the assessment will be submitted to a high-level inter-governmental meeting on the prevention and combating of terrorism. It should be recalled that the PoA was adopted by the first AU High-Level Inter-Governmental Meeting on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa, held in Algiers, from 11 to 14 September 2002. The Advisory Team is planning to undertake consultations with the ACSRT in the coming weeks, in order to initiate this process.

l) Convening of a high-level meeting on the financing of terrorism

31. The PSC requested the Commission to work towards the holding of a high-level meeting of Member States on the issue of financing of terrorism, with a view to identifying practical measures to address this problem more effectively. The Commission, through the ACSRT, is working with Algeria, which offered to host the meeting, in order to make all the necessary preparations. A draft concept paper and program are being prepared and shall be circulated once finalized. The meeting is scheduled to take place by the end of 2015.

m) Operationalization of AFRIPOL

32. The PSC expressed support for the full and early operationalization of the African Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), in line with decision EX.CL/Dec.820(XXV), adopted by the 25th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 20 to 20 June 2014, and the conclusions of the 1st meeting of the AFRIPOL *ad hoc* Committee, which took place in Addis Ababa, on 2 July 2014. As a follow-up, the Commission facilitated the convening of meetings of the AFRIPOL *ad hoc* Committee in Kampala, Uganda, on 2 October 2014; in Algiers, Algeria, from 18 to 19 March 2015; and in Addis Ababa, on 2 June 2015. The Committee has developed documents on the structure, staffing and funding options, as well as a 3-year action plan and the draft Statutes of AFRIPOL. These documents will be submitted to the meeting of African Police Chiefs to be held in October 2015, for consideration, before transmission to the relevant AU policy organs.

n) Development of a Concept Note on the establishment of a Special Fund for Counter-terrorism

33. The PSC requested the Commission to develop a concept note on the possible establishment of a special fund dedicated to supporting counter-terrorism efforts on the continent. The Commission is working with the Advisory Team to develop the said concept note.

V. RADICALIZATION

34. Terrorist groups exploit and capitalize on social deprivation and grievances, unresolved conflicts, personal or community identity claims, religion, history, marginalization, exclusion and a host of other factors, to produce an ideological narrative that creates an enabling environment for recruitment and radicalization, where the commission of terrorist acts becomes appealing as an instrument of political activism. Consistent reports indicate that indigenous networks are engaged in recruitment, radicalization and resource mobilization on behalf of a number of terrorist groups. Against this background, the PSC, at its Nairobi meeting, emphasized the need to address all conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism, including prolonged unresolved conflicts, lack of rule of law and violations of human rights, discrimination, political exclusion, socio-economic marginalization and poor governance, stressing however that none of these conditions can excuse or justify acts of terrorism. The PSC stressed the importance of comprehensive counter-terrorism strategies empowering civil society organizations.

35. In follow-up, the Advisory Team established by the Commission has developed initial elements of a strategy to address the issue of radicalization and violent extremism. This work is to be finalized in the coming weeks. In the meantime, the ACSRT has convened a number of workshops on the issue, with a view to assisting Member States address the challenges facing them in this area. MISAHEL is also involved in the efforts to combat radicalization.

VI. PARTNERSHIPS

36. The PSC requested the Commission to convene an annual consultative forum with the relevant international partners, to harmonize their respective strategies and facilitate and promote action-oriented collaboration and coordination, as well as to mobilize further support for African-led counter-terrorism efforts. The Commission is working towards the convening of this Forum later this year. In the meantime, steps are being taken to enhance the relationship with the relevant multilateral and bilateral partners. In this respect, the Commission has been able to mobilize additional support from partners, including training for African experts.

VII. OBSERVATIONS

37. Terrorism and terrorist attacks continue to be one of the most serious threats to peace and security in Africa. The continent has and continues to pay a heavy toll for these outrageous and criminal acts, which have resulted in mass casualties, destruction of infrastructure, loss of livelihoods and displacements. Terrorist groups are becoming increasingly bold in their activities and attacks. Boundaries between political, religious and ideological extremism and crime are blurring, while terrorist groups operate increasingly as a network.

38. Over the past two decades, the relevant AU policy organs have adopted a number of instruments to facilitate and promote a coordinated and effective action against terrorism, notably the 1999 Algiers Convention and its 2004 Supplementary

Protocol, as well as the 2002 PoA. Mention should also be made of the establishment of the ACSRT. These instruments provide an adequate basis for enhanced cooperation among Member States. From an operational perspective, the Commission remains actively engaged in efforts to address the scourge of terrorism. Steps have been taken to mobilize Member States towards the full and effective implementation of the AU normative counter-terrorism framework.

39. Despite the steps taken at national, regional and continental levels, the terrorist threat remains as present as ever, and Africa continues to display significant vulnerabilities. Effectively preventing and combating terrorism requires renewed determination from Member States. A number of practical steps were identified in the Nairobi PSC communiqué. Their effective implementation will go a long way in helping the continent address the threat posed by terrorism and violent extremism.

40. As the continent step up its efforts to meet the challenges at hand, particular attention should be paid to the issue of radicalization. Countering this threat lies at the heart of the efforts to address conditions that are conducive to the spread of terrorism. As indicated in my report to the Nairobi PSC Summit, it is a long-term process that requires the development of sound national policies and programmes. Equally important is the need to bear in mind that no sustainable results can be achieved in the prevention and combatting of terrorism if the efforts undertaken are not based on the scrupulous adherence to human rights and international humanitarian law instruments. The PSC pronouncements on this matter remain as relevant as ever.

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE RETREAT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY
COUNCIL ON ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN THE PROMOTION OF
PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY IN AFRICA, 21-23 MAY 2015, IN
SWAKOPMUND, NAMIBIA.**

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



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RETREAT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
SWAKOPMUND, NAMIBIA
21-23 MAY 2015

PSC/Retreat/7

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE RETREAT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL ON ISSUES AND
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CONCLUSIONS OF THE RETREAT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL ON ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN THE PROMOTION OF PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY IN AFRICA, 21-23 MAY 2015, IN SWAKOPMUND, NAMIBIA.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) held its seventh Retreat on Issues and Challenges in the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa, from 21 to 23 May 2015, in Swakopmund, Namibia. The Retreat came as an additional important step by the PSC in its efforts to deliver and maintain peace, security and stability to Africa and its people within the perspective of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). After extensive deliberations, the Retreat reached the following conclusions:

II. CONCLUSIONS

A. ENHANCING COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE PSC AND RECs/RMs IN CONFLICT PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION:

2. The PSC puts in place the following format to enable the RECs/RMs to provide information and substantive inputs required for PSC decision making on conflict and crisis situations (excluding meetings on specific thematic issues which fall under another type of PSC open sessions to which RECs/RMs are invited among other invitees), as well as on post-conflict issues, within the context of conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa:

- i) RECs/RMs will be invited to PSC meetings considering crisis and conflict situations, as well as to those on post-conflict issues;
- ii) The PSC will convene quarterly consultative meetings with the RECs/RMs to enhance strategic coherence in addressing peace and security issues;
- iii) RECs/RMs will be invited by the PSC to informal consultations well ahead of formal PSC meetings, to enable the PSC interact with a REC(s) concerned with a given situation with a view to gathering more information and relevant inputs on the situation obtaining on the ground. In this way, the RECs would weigh in the benefit of their advantage of proximity to and broader knowledge of the affected crisis/conflict zone. In this regard, RECs/RMs will provide documents to the PSC to inform such consultations;
- iv) RECs/RMs will provide updates to the PSC on their concrete contributions in the implementation of PSC decisions on crisis and conflict situations, as well as on post-conflict issues;

- v) RECs/RMs will be requested by the PSC to provide inputs during the early stage of preparation for the PSC annual consultative meetings with similar organs;
- vi) RECs/RMs will be requested by the PSC to provide inputs at the early stage of the elaboration of the Report of the Peace and Security Council on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa.

3. With regard to proceedings of PSC meetings on crisis and conflict situations, as well as on post-conflict issues, (excluding meetings on specific thematic issues) and with a view to enabling the RECs/RMs to participate more effectively. In this context, the PSC puts in place the following format:

- a) Closed session to start a meeting and adopt agenda;
- b) Open session during which invitees make their statements:
 - i) In line with the conclusions of the previous PSC Retreats on working methods, the PSC shall determine the list of invitees to its meetings;
 - ii) First stage of open session in which non-African invitees of the PSC, and invited CSOs make their statements/provide views to the PSC on the issue(s) under consideration. Clarifications are sought by the PSC and the RECs/RMs from the non-African invitees and CSOs. Afterwards, those non-African invitees and CSOs leave the meeting;
 - iii) Second stage of open session during which the invited AU Member States make their statements and provide their views on an issue under consideration. Clarifications are sought by the PSC and the RECs/RMs from the invited Member States concerned by the situation under consideration. After, that invited Member State/s leave/s the meeting;
 - iv) Third stage of the open session during which the invited REC(s)/RM(s) make substantive inputs, including possible involvement of their technical focal points in collating inputs together with the PSC Secretariat, to enrich PSC decision-making on the issue(s) under consideration. Clarifications are sought by the PSC from RECs/RMs concerned by the situation under consideration. Thereafter, the RECs/RMs leave the meeting;
- v) Closed session of the PSC during which deliberations take place and decision(s) are taken;

B. ENHANCING CONFLICT PREVENTION

4. Early warning has not been followed by timely and effective action in some cases. Indeed, some of the crises that ravage parts of Africa are of a preventable nature, that is if the AU, RECs/RMs and the affected AU Member States take early preventive measures. In this context, the AU needs to put in place a legal framework for mandating the Regional Standby Forces to engage in preventive deployment, containment of crises and intervention in active conflict situations wherever in Africa.

- i) The following measures are to be taken:
 - By failing to acknowledge or respond to early warnings of looming crisis, the AU early preventive actions are hindered in a given country;
 - Dealing with the problem of denial and not cooperating when there are clear signs of a brewing crisis;
 - Addressing the roots causes of emerging crises at their early stage;
 - Encouraging Member States to cooperate when there are early warning signs of looming crises;
 - The AUC Department of Political Affairs should attend all PSC meetings and provide regular briefings, including those focusing on early warning aspects, to the PSC;
 - The RECs/RMs should provide the PSC with updates, including those focusing on early warning aspects of a looming crisis and conflict situation;
 - The Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA) should regularly brief the PSC, including providing it with early warning information;
 - Enhancing post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts to avoid relapses back into the cycle of violence;
- ii) Encouraging Member States to enhance their cooperation and collaboration with the Continental Early Warning Systems (CEWS);
- iii) Encouraging the RECs/RMs to take appropriate conflict prevention measures, including provision of regular updates to the PSC;
- iv) Promoting practical measures to enhance implementation of AU decisions on reconciliation within the context of the Madiba Nelson Mandela Decade of Reconciliation, including the measures and recommendations contained in the

Communiqué PSC/MIN/COMM.(CCCLXXXIII) of the PSC Meeting, held at Ministerial level, in Algiers, Algeria on 29 June 2013;

- v) Promoting practical measures to enhance implementation of AU decisions, instruments and policies on combating terrorism in all its forms, including dismantling its linkages with narcotic trafficking, illicit arms trafficking, human trafficking, money laundering, piracy and other transnational crimes, within a larger international context. In this regard, efforts should be deployed to further strengthen cooperation and coordination at national, regional, continental and global levels. Efforts should also be re-doubled to facilitate the sharing of intelligence and the outcome of studies and analyses undertaken within the context of the fight against this scourge, under the aegis of the African Centre for Study and Research on Terrorism.
- vi) Aligning the vulnerability assessment tool developed by the Commission with other indicators, including the African Gender Development Index and the African Social Development Index which measure social exclusion.
- vii) Ensuring regular interaction between the PSC and the Panel of the Wise.

C. ENHANCING POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AND PEACEBUILDING ACTIVITIES

5. The following measures are to be taken:
 - i) AU Commission should intensify its efforts in the area of PCRD, including submission of a report as decided by Council, on the status of the AU PCRD Architecture, including on the issues relating to the PSC Committee on Post-Conflict Reconstruction for Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, during the second half of 2015.
 - ii) AU Commission should take measures towards the re-activation and sustenance of the AU Ministerial Committee on Post-Conflict Reconstruction of the Sudan and South Sudan, as well as the strengthening of other AU mechanisms dedicated to post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa, as part of the efforts to enhance peacebuilding, rehabilitate livelihoods and avoid relapse into the cycle of violence.
 - iii) Encouraging RECs/RMs to provide periodic updates on their respective PCRD activities.

D. WORKING METHODS OF THE PSC:

6. The PSC has developed a range of working methods since 2007. In this respect, and as the PSC continually reviews its working methods, there is need to consolidate into a single volume its existing working methods. Furthermore, there is need to put in place additional working methods to cover newly identified areas of need:

a) Swapping of the month of chairing the PSC

7. On the issue of swapping the month of chairing the PSC and to ensure the orderly organization of work, the PSC should put in place a modality whereby those PSC members intending to swap should inform the PSC Secretariat of their intention in writing one month in advance, except in circumstances of force majeure. The Secretariat will then bring it to the attention of the PSC.

b) Modalities for regulating informal interactions of the PSC

8. The following measure is to be taken:

Informal interactions between the PSC and other non-African stakeholders on peace and security issues will be considered and decided by Council as appropriate, as long as the intended consultations enhance the work of the PSC in discharging its mandate.

c) Regular briefing by the PSC Chairperson to the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC)

9. The practice of monthly briefings by the PSC Chairperson to the PRC on the activities of the PSC should be sustained. In this respect, the PSC Secretariat should coordinate with other relevant service providers within the AU Commission to facilitate such monthly briefings.

d) Collaboration between the PSC and other Organs of the African Union

10. The PSC should hold regular meetings with the following other AU organs and the Panel of the Wise, in dealing with prevention, management and resolution of peace and security issues, including information on their respective programmes and degree of African ownership. In this context, a roster of these meetings will be established with regard to the following other AU Organs:

- i) Pan-African Parliament;
- ii) African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights; and
- iii) African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

e) Enhancing Operationalization of PSC Subsidiary Bodies

11. The PSC Sub-Committees should be fully operationalized and capacitated to enable them to more effectively undertake their respective mandates in line with their generic terms of reference (to be drafted by the PSC Secretariat).

f) Preparation and presentation of the Report of the Peace and Security Council on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa

12. In its previous Retreats, namely the Yaoundé and Djibouti retreats, the PSC decided on a new format for the elaboration and presentation to the Assembly of the Union of its Report on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa as follows:

- i) The Chairperson of the PSC for the month of the AU Summit will introduce the PSC Report to the Assembly of the Union;
- ii) The AU Commissioner for Peace and Security will make its detailed presentation to the Assembly of the Union and provide responses to issues and questions that Member States may raise;
- iii) In elaborating its Report, the PSC will request inputs from the RECs/RMs, and other relevant stakeholders.

g) Format of the outcomes of PSC meetings/sessions

- i) Communiqué to carry/convey a decision of a formal PSC meeting on a given issue, where a written report of the Chairperson of the Commission has been presented to the Council;
- ii) Press Statement to convey an outcome of a PSC meeting, where a written report of the Chairperson of the Commission was not presented;
- iii) Annual joint consultative meetings of the PSC with the United Nations Security Council and other similar organs should continue to adopt Joint Communiqués;
- iv) Joint field missions of the PSC and similar organs to conflict and post conflict areas in Africa should adopt a Joint Statement;
- v) Joint Retreats of the PSC with similar organs should adopt Conclusions.

h) Enhancing support for the African Members (A3) of the UN Security Council

13. In line with the conclusions of the High-Level Seminars on assisting incoming African Members of the UN Security Council in Preparing to address Peace and Security Issues in

Africa, held in Algiers and Oran, in Algeria, in December 2013 and December 2014 respectively, the PSC should further enhance the capacity of the African Members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). In this regard, the following measures are to be taken:

- i) assignment of crisis/conflict and post-conflict files to A3 members, who should also be co-penholders and penholders on these issues within the UNSC, and capacity building for A3 officers responsible for drafting working documents on African peace and security issues meant for UNSC consideration (whenever possible, this should be done in tandem with capacity building for PSC experts);
- ii) Encouraging the A3 to make inputs into the monthly provisional programme of work of the PSC, including deploying efforts towards alignment of the monthly calendars of the PSC and the UN Security Council;
- iii) Involving the A3 in preparation for PSC/UNSC annual joint consultative meetings and other joint activities;
- iv) Including the A3 in the induction sessions for newly elected and re-elected members of the PSC;
- v) Establishing regular channels of communication including video tele-conferences (VTC) between the PSC and the A3, through their respective Chairpersons.

E. ENHANCING COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE PSC AND ECOSOCC:

14. ECOSOCC is the AU Organ responsible for facilitating interaction between the AU and CSOs, and more specifically between the PSC and CSOs working in the area of peace and security in Africa. In this context, the PSC, in consultation with ECOSOCC, should launch and sustain its annual consultation with CSOs on the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa.

F. GENDER MAINSTREAMING ON PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

15. The AU Commission, in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders, should facilitate implementation of the following outcomes of the meeting devoted to the Review of Implementation of Commitments under UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Development and African efforts in this context, held on 22 May 2015, on the margins of the PSC Retreat, in Swakopmund, Namibia:

- i) Institutionalizing an annual open session of the PSC on implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325;

- ii) Facilitating inclusion of women in peace processes;
- iii) Linking together the African Governance Architecture and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) from conflict prevention, management and resolution of conflict to post-conflict reconstruction thereon providing opportunities for consolidation and inclusion of women's and girls' concerns as part of rebuilding gender sensitive institutions and frameworks;
- iv) Appointing women as AU and RECs Special envoys, chief mediators, special representatives and heads of field missions;
- v) Mainstreaming gender in the terms of reference of AU human rights observers, special envoys, chief mediators, special representatives and heads of field missions;
- vi) Including monitoring of gender based violations in the terms of reference of AU human rights monitoring missions;
- vii) Ensuring that the terms of reference of all AU PSC fact-finding missions include specific provisions relating to the gender dimension and the plight of women;
- viii) Encouraging AU Member states to implement the zero tolerance policy on sexual exploitation, code of conduct; the gender training manual for peacekeepers and whistle blowing policy.

G. UPDATING AND ENRICHING THE PSC PROTOCOL

16. With its comparative advantage of knowledge on peace and security issues in Africa, the PSC should launch a study on the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture, including on the work of the PSC, with a view to identifying gaps and challenges in this context. In this respect, the PSC requests the AU Commission, specifically, the PSC Secretariat and the PSC Committee of Experts to undertake the study. The report and recommendations of the study should be submitted to the PSC for its consideration with a view to facilitating the process of updating and enriching the PSC Protocol.

H. VOTE OF THANKS

17. The PSC adopted a Vote of Thanks delivered by H.E. Fatoumata Sidibe Kaba, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Guinea to the African Union, addressed to the Government and the people of Republic of Namibia, for hosting the PSC Retreat and for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to its members, RECs/RMs, other invited guests and to the participants from the AU Commission.

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