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**MINUTES OF THE 142ND ORDINARY SESSION OF THE
GROUP OF AFRICAN AMBASSADORS IN BRUSSELS
ACP HOUSE – 27 JULY 2011**

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1. The Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels held its 142nd ordinary session on 27 July 2011 at ACP House, under the chairmanship of H. E. Mr Paul Badji, Ambassador of Senegal.

I. PARTICIPATION

2. The following Member States participated in the session:

Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroun, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Congo (DR) Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Zimbabwe.

II. INTRODUCTORY COMMUNICATION BY THE CHAIRMAN

3. After opening the session, the new Chairman of the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels, H. E. Mr Paul Badji, Ambassador of Senegal in Brussels said how particularly honoured he was to have earned his peers' confidence. He said to be all the more grateful as he became a member of the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels less than a year ago. He also seized the opportunity to congratulate the members of the outgoing Bureau for the work done during their term of office, and in particular the Chairman, H. E. Mr Hanno Burkhard RUMPF, the Ambassador of Namibia whom he had met in Germany where they both served as Ambassadors of their respective countries. He expressed his assurance of being able to rely both on the team spirit of the new Bureau members and on the solidarity of all the members of the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels in the fulfilment of his mandate. In conclusion, Ambassador Badji called on the Group to remain mobilised during the recess period to be able to carry on with the actions initiated, given that the current news on Africa are not particularly pleasant.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4. The following agenda was adopted:
 - 1) Adoption of the agenda
 - 2) Work programme of the new Bureau
 - 3) Update on some conflict situations in Africa (Libya, Sudan, Somalia, etc)
 - 4) Briefing on the conclusions of the 19th and 17th sessions of the AU Executive Council and Assembly of Heads of State and Government meetings in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea (26-28 June; 30 June-1st July 2011)

5) Information on the Conference on the financing of the Africa – EU Strategic Partnership to be held on 9 September 2011.

6) Any other business: communication by Uganda

IV. ADOPTION OF THE MINUTES OF THE 141ST SESSION

5. The following amendments were proposed:

- In Chapter III, paragraph 6, second indent on matters arising from the adoption of the minutes of the 140th session of the Group, the issue of the relations between the Groups of African Ambassadors in Addis Ababa and in Brussels should be reworded as follows: *“necessary provisions should be made to undertake a positive dialogue between the AU’s Permanent Representatives Committee in Addis Ababa and the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels with a view to seeking ways and means of strengthening their cooperation”*.
- In Chapter VII under any other business, H. E. Mr Anil Sooklal, Ambassador of South Africa informed the meeting that the free trade area about to be established by the COMESA and SADC countries represents a GDP of 1300 billion dollars rather than “around 1000 billion” as formulated in the minutes.

6. Under matters arising from the report, the participants had, once again, a broad exchange of views on the need to give a new momentum to the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels. The meeting expressed its regret about:

- **The irregular scheduling of meetings:** Article 11 paragraph 2 of the Rules of Procedure of the Group which provides that a plenary session be held every month is rarely respected;
- **The lack of follow-up of the decisions taken:** The most recent example is the way in which the working group established to examine ways of better involving the Group of African Ambassadors in the follow-up of Africa – EU and AU – EU cooperation seems to have been forgotten;
- **The recurrent absence or late arrival of Ambassadors at meetings:** The matter was the subject of a Communication addressed on 13 February 2009 to all the members of the Group by H. E. Ms Mamoruti Tiheli, Ambassador of Lesotho, during her chairmanship. An obvious improvement has been noted since then but is still insufficient. The same applies to the need to respect the schedule of meetings.

7. To conclude the exchange of views, the Chairman referred, among others, to the intervention of the Ambassador of South Africa, and stressed the need to rather focus on the future through the adoption of a methodology such as a work programme and an implementation schedule. He added that this is indeed the objective that “the draft roadmap of the Senegalese presidency of the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels” which is being submitted for consideration at this present session is aiming at.

8. Furthermore, as suggested by some delegations, the Secretariat was requested to submit a summary report on the meeting between H. E. Mr Jean Ping, Chairperson of the AU Commission and the Bureau of the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels, on the occasion of his visit last June. Indeed, the conclusions of the meeting could be useful to the work of the working group for an improved involvement of the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels in the follow-up of Africa – EU and AU – EU cooperation.

V. INFORMATION ON SOME CONFLICT SITUATIONS IN AFRICA (Libya, Sudan, Somalia, etc.)

9. The Secretariat, referring to the communiqués and other documents published by the Peace and Security Council (PSC), informed the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels of the developments on some conflicts involving the following Member States:
- **Libya:** the proposals of the 17th AU Summit held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, to the Libyan parties (Government of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and National Transition Council) for a framework agreement to foster a political solution to the crisis in the country. This has in fact been the roadmap proposed by the AU from the onset, with a view to restoring peace through an inclusive national dialogue. The decision adopted by the Summit to that effect was also distributed to participants. The proposals have been communicated to the AU's various partners, namely, the EU (the President of the Council and the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy), NATO, the UN Security Council, the League of Arab States, etc...
 - **Sudan/Darfur:** The Communiqués of the 286th session of the PSC and the report of the Chairperson of the Commission giving an update on the situation on the ground and on the developments in the Doha negotiations were distributed. It should be noted that significant progress has been made along the path to peace in this country.
 - **Somalia:** The communication was mainly on the catastrophic humanitarian situation affecting the country and its ramifications in some countries of the sub-region, in particular Kenya and Ethiopia. As announced in the medias, famine is very seriously affecting the populations, particularly in Somalia, and this has been amplified by the present persistent drought in most of East Africa. The communiqué distributed to participants was released by the AU's Special Emergency Assistance Fund after its meeting on 19 July 2011 at which 300.000 US dollars were allocated as aid to Somalia. The Fund is sustained by voluntary contributions from Member States but faces serious difficulties of replenishment. The opportunity was thus seized to appeal for contributions to Member States which have not yet done so.
 - **Côte d'Ivoire:** The Secretariat distributed an Information Note on the 3RD PSC mission to Côte d'Ivoire from 26 to 28 July 2011 to support the efforts made to restore peace in the country. The mission's objective is to assess the humanitarian situation and the ways and means used to ensure post-conflict reconstruction and national reconciliation. It was headed by the Chairman of the PSC for the month of July, H.E. Mr Ferdinand Montcho, Ambassador of Benin in Addis Ababa.

- **Madagascar:** The PSC addressed the situation in Madagascar at its 283rd session held on 6 and 12 July 2011. After hearing various communications by the parties concerned such as SADC, IOF and the UN, the PSC decided to convene a meeting of the International Contact Group on Madagascar at a later stage, to coordinate the action of the international community for the implementation of the roadmap to restore constitutional order in Madagascar.
- **Guinea:** The Secretariat distributed the Communiqué of the 287th meeting of the PSC condemning the attack of President Alpha Condé's residence on 19 July 2011. The PSC urged the people of Guinea and all the stakeholders to maintain their efforts to enhance democracy and promote national reconciliation. It called on them to act for dialogue and work hand in hand to create the necessary conditions for the preparation and organisation of peaceful legislative elections.

10. The Secretariat's presentation was followed by comments from the following delegations:

- **H. E. Mr Ahmed Tidiane Sacko**, Ambassador of Guinea expressed the wish to have Embassies of countries whose situations are raised under this now statutory agenda item of the plenary sessions of the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels be so informed, sufficiently in advance, to enable them to supplement with updated information or comments.
- **Mr Abdellatif FEZZANI**, Chargé d'affaires a.i of the Embassy of Tunisia suggested that positive situations on the continent should equally be highlighted in future to avoid focusing on conflict situations alone.

11. The Chairman took note of the comments. He however underlined the following:

- The list of countries mentioned under this agenda item is scrupulously based on the conflict situations examined by the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC). Hence, the added, the difficulty to draw up the list of countries concerned stems from the fact that a conflict situation may be examined by the PSC after the elaboration and distribution of the draft agenda;
- It would be more advisable to ask countries or regions experiencing positive developments in specific areas to take advantage of the plenary sessions to inform members of such developments, under the agenda item on any other business.

VI. BRIEFING ON THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE 19TH AND 17TH SESSIONS OF THE AU EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND ASSEMBLY HELD IN MALABO, EQUATORIAL GUINEA (26 – 28 June. 30 June 1ST JULY 2011)

12. The Secretariat informed the meeting of the smooth running of the 19th and 17th sessions of the AU Executive Council and Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, respectively from June 26th to 28th and from June 30th to July 1st. Following the tradition to attribute one theme to each

Summit, the 17th session of the Assembly was under the theme: “**Accelerating Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Development**”. The Prime Minister of Ethiopia, H. E. Mr Meles Zenawi and the Commissioner in charge of Human Resources, Science and Technology, Professor Jean-Pierre Ezzin introduced the theme. The introduction was followed by a debate moderated by a Senegalese journalist, Mr Assane Diop. Many Heads of State, as well as youth representing each of the five regions of the continent and the African civil society participated in the debate.

13. At the end of the debate, a Decision was adopted to stress, in substance, the need to identify ways and means of adopting policies to foster youth employment and accelerate the implementation of the 2009 - 2018 Decade’s Plan of Action on employment promotion and poverty reduction. It further committed Member States to mobilise themselves further to ensure the implementation of the Plan of Action of the 2009 – 2018 African Youth Decade adopted in May 2011 and focused specifically on ways and means of “accelerating youth empowerment for sustainable development”. Indeed, the Plan of Action is viewed as a framework for multisectoral and multidimensional participation of all concerned to achieve the objectives of the African Youth Charter adopted in 2006 and entered into force in 2009.
14. As underlined by the Chargé d’Affaires of the Embassy of Equatorial Guinea in Brussels, President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo seized the opportunity to offer to host in the Sipopo City of the African Union, the headquarters of the African Union Youth Volunteers Corps.
15. It should also be noted that the Secretariat distributed to participants a summary of the Decisions and Declarations adopted by the 17th session of the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

VII. INFORMATION ON THE CONFERENCE ON THE FINANCING OF THE AFRICA-EU STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TO BE HELD ON 9 SEPTEMBER 2011

16. The Secretariat informed the meeting of its initiative to organise a Conference on the financing of the Africa – EU Partnership. The tentative date for the meeting is 9 September which is the anniversary date of the establishment of the African Union. The opportunity could also be used to inaugurate the new building hosting the Permanent Mission of the African Union in Brussels.
17. The objective of the Conference is to inform the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels about the ongoing process both at the AU and EU levels, with a view to identifying ways and means of mobilising the necessary resources to finance the Joint Strategy. The opportunity could also be used to address, in general, the issue of cooperation between Africa and the EU. The conference will be facilitated by Dr René Kouassi, Director of the AUC Economic Affairs Department. Representatives of the EC and of the EEAS will also be invited to explain the EU’s view on the matter.
18. The meeting welcomed the initiative and considered it particularly important. Some delegations suggested that the African Group could make a contribution to the Conference through a presentation on one aspect of the issue. It would thus be an opportunity to demonstrate the need to involve the Group of African Ambassadors

more deeply in the follow-up of the Africa – EU cooperation and its corollary, AU – EU cooperation.

VIII. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

19. Under this item:

- **H. E. Mr Stephen KATENTA-APULI, Ambassador of Uganda**, informed the meeting that his country would submit the candidature of Mrs Julia SEBUTINDE for the position of judge at the International Court of Justice and requested the solidarity of all the Member States for a vote in her favour, when the time comes. He added that the candidature is supported by the African Union and if successful, Mrs SEBUTINDE would be the 3rd woman to be elected for that position.
- **H. E. Mrs Maria de Jesus Veiga Miranda MASCARENHAS, Ambassador of Cape Verde** informed the meeting about the presidential elections to be held in her country on 7 August 2011. She explained that the outgoing President who had two terms of office could no longer stand as candidate. Four other candidates are running for the position. If needed there will be a second round on the 21st of August 2011;
- **H. E. Mrs Inonge MBIKUSITA LEWANIKA**, Ambassador of Zambia, informed the meeting that the presidential, legislative and local elections will be held concomitantly on 20 September this year;
- **H. E. Mr Hanno Burkhard RUMPF**, Ambassador of Namibia, informed the meeting that oil deposits may have been discovered in Namibia but their importance has not yet been assessed. He underlined the fact that if confirmed, such a discovery would give a big boost for the Namibian economy.
- **The Chairman announced** that after the meeting, the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels would host a reception from 18h30 to 20h30 in the hall of ACP House, in honour of **H. E. Mr Abdou ABARRY, Ambassador of Niger**, who has reached the end of his mission in Brussels.

20. The meeting was adjourned at 18h30.

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