

AFRICAN UNION
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REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION
FOR THE PERIOD JULY TO DECEMBER 2007

INTRODUCTION

In my Report of July 2007 and ahead of the Special and historic Summit devoted to the Grand Debate on “Union Government”, I had expressed the conviction that Africa, armed with its immense human and natural resources, could win the war against under-development and poverty, and position itself at a vantage point in 21st Century globalisation. However, this achievement will not be possible unless Africa is united and integrated, and sticks together as it harnesses its vast resources. In taking stock of the five (5) years of existence of the African Union, the 10th Session of the Assembly will have to address two issues of primordial importance: namely, your assessment of the work of the High-Level Panel set up to audit the African Union and the conclusions of the Ministerial Committee on Union Government. These two platforms brought together the Continent’s eminent personalities who endeavoured to reconcile the possible with the desirable, and thus propel us to create better conditions to enable us make significant progress on our journey to African integration, a dream long-nurtured by all the great Pan-Africanists of the last century, from George Padmore to Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah.

This Report provides an account of the efforts deployed by the Commission during the past six months, a period characterised by intense consultations for implementation of the Accra Declaration of July 2007. The Commission, in this regard, extended all necessary support to the Panel and to the Ministerial Committee, and placed itself in readiness for scrupulous evaluation of its performance in the spirit of total openness, constructive self-criticism and self-assessment. This assistance enabled the two aforementioned committees to come up with conclusions, which if properly implemented, could clearly pave the way for renewed impulse to the integration process and consolidation of African solidarity through harmonious development of an institutional architecture more suited to the needs both of the moment and of the future. I have no doubt that our leaders, in their wisdom, would draw appropriate lessons from these reflections and create for Africa, the conditions necessary to ensure its sustainable development and promote the dignity of Africans in the concert of nations, in a world in full bloom of competition.

In this connection, the choice of the theme of this Summit - “Industrial Development of Africa” - comes just at the right time to remind us of the great challenge facing Africa in terms of the absolute need for us to process our vast natural resources, be it agricultural, mineral and energy resources, into finished and semi-finished goods as an effective way of putting an end to exploitation. This, we dare say, will put a stop to the looting of our resources which is compounded by the degradation of our environment in a blatantly unequal and unjust global trade system which keeps our hardworking populations in a state of perpetual under-development and abject poverty, and reduces us to mendicity and dependence on the outside world. This theme is a welcome complement to that of the January 2007 Summit which was “Science and Technology in the Service of Development” which, together with the latter, projects us into a promising future for generations to come. However, we Africans are fully aware of all these challenges and our speeches in this direction have been rich and abundant. Our major problem often resides in our failure to translate these speeches into concrete action, thereby casting doubts on our credibility not only vis-à-vis our own peoples but also in the eyes of our external partners. We have indeed produced and have continued to produce, on the occasion of each Assembly of the Union, lots of Treaties, Charters, Conventions, Resolutions

and Decisions which, in most cases, have never seen any modicum of implementation. It has now become necessary to pause and evaluate, in a responsible and serious manner, the implementation of all our previous decisions before taking fresh ones and afford ourselves adequate resources and reasonable timeframe for progressive materialization of these instruments, as each of them may require.

With regard to Treaties in particular, and if our development and integration were to depend on the share number of these instruments, it must be said that Africa has the most impressive arsenal of these legal tools in relation to any other Continent. May we, on this score, recall the numerous Charters and Treaties covering areas as varied as refugees protection (1969); conservation of nature and the environment (1969); promotion of human and peoples' rights, children and women (1981, 1990 and 2003); combating terrorism (1999); combating corruption (2003); democracy and good governance (2007) to mention but a few. However, how speedily and promptly have we been implementing these precious instruments once they are solemnly adopted and signed by our Member States? This is a critical question which challenges our States. I would like, in this regard, to make a special appeal to Member States to take all appropriate steps to sign, ratify and implement, within the shortest possible time frame, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance adopted in January 2007. It has, indeed, become intolerably worrisome that elections that have been increasingly organized regularly and properly in the Continent and have, thereby, laid the foundation for democracy in the service of the people, have for the most part degenerated into violence and devastation in a scenario of power struggle, leading to loss of lives and massive destruction of property. Clear-cut rules need to be put in place to govern elections to enable the people to democratically appropriate the process in conditions of peace and normalcy, without some politicians having to incite them to violence or to suffer as a result of violence. Democracy and governance should, as a matter of fact, be placed at the service of peace, national concord and human rights by all the components of our societies, rather than the other way round. The Charter should be a consensual instrument for management of such processes and should be incorporated into the Peer Review Mechanism. It was for this reason that, in recent months, special emphasis was laid on awareness-raising campaign through regional seminars and other platforms, to enlist ratification of this vital tool.

The Commission has continued to deploy efforts in the area of conflict prevention and resolution despite resource constraints. May I point out, in this connection, that the period under review was marked by remarkable progress in the establishment of the Continental Peace and Security Architecture, including the Panel of the Wise, measures to operationalize the Continental Early Warning System, the African Standby Force (ASF) and the finalization of the Draft Cooperation Agreement with regional conflict management mechanisms. I take this opportunity to once again appeal to the ten (10) Member States that are yet to ratify the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) to do so as expeditiously as possible and thereby join in the efforts invested by the Continent to enhance the actions of this Council.

With respect to infrastructure and energy, the Commission continued with its efforts to secure adoption of an Integrated Continental Transport, Energy, Telecommunications and ICT Master Plan for Africa. On this score, may I mention the outcomes of the Seminar on Biocarbons jointly organized in July 2007 by the

Commission, UNIDO and Brazil - biocarbons which constitute a possible option to reduce dependence on petroleum products and cut down on the energy bill that is becoming increasingly burdensome for African economies. The Commission will exert even more effort to conduct these studies in conjunction with our partners in this area, with a view to fine-tuning these options. Also noteworthy in this field is the tremendous progress achieved in the Pan-African on-line Tele-Education and Tele-Medicine Services Network Project which will be progressively delivered in Member States through 53 VSAT Stations to be installed in 53 hospitals and national universities, respectively, fruit of our cooperation with India. I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Continent, to express our gratitude to India for this facility. As regards the e-Governance project, I am pleased at the current operational state of this tool which, in due course, will ensure full connectivity between the Commission Headquarters, the Regional Offices and the Representational Offices, other Organs of the Union, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Member States, thereby improving the all-important day-to-day communication between all these stakeholders of the African Union.

With regard to the Commission's activities in the field of rural economy and agriculture, sustained efforts have been deployed to implement the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Policy (CAADP) and the Sirte Declaration on Agriculture and Water, by taking on board issues of climate change, rational management of land, water control systems, food security and environmental protection.

Concerning the economic and commercial sector, I would like to mention the Second Conference of African Integration Ministers whose report has been submitted for consideration by our Leaders. The issue of rationalization of the RECs also requires your attention so that, based on the principle of subsidiary, the Union may, in conjunction with the regions, take appropriate measures to ensure that integration picks up the momentum needed to project Africa into a prime position in the globalisation process, as I indicated earlier on. The Second Africa-European Union Summit which took place in Lisbon from 8 to 9 December 2007 was massively attended by African and European Leaders. The Summit adopted two vital documents, namely: the Joint Strategy and the Plan of Action which covered all the issues relating to the Partnership between the two regions. It underscored the differences of approach on the question of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) which needed further discussion to devise solutions in the interest of the Continent. May I further mention the Extraordinary Conference of African Ministers of Industry held in South Africa in September 2007. The conclusions of that meeting have been similarly presented for your consideration, especially critical issues like formulation of industrialization strategy for Africa which could also inspire the debate on the theme of this Summit.

With regard to social affairs, science and technology, the key developments during the period under review include the Sixth Session of the African Population Commission held in South Africa in July 2007; COMEDAF III held also in South Africa in August; the Second Pan-African Forum on Children in Cairo in November and the Conference of Ministers for Drug Control which took place in Addis Ababa in December 2007. All these fora submitted recommendations that require in-depth consideration by our Leaders to come up with common African positions on these various issues.

With respect to Administration and Finance, the Report of the Commission provides an overview of the financial situation of the Union, with income entries showing delays in the payment of contributions by Member States, and poor budget implementation mainly as a consequence of this problem of delayed payment of contributions.

With regard to partnerships, there is an increasing number of partners interested in the activities of the Union and many powers are keen to enter into fruitful relation with it. To date, 50 non-African countries and 5 new international organisations have presented their letters of accreditation to the Commission. It is important to note that, following the example of the United States of America, the European Union very recently decided to appoint an Ambassador with exclusive accreditation to the African Union. This is proof of our Union's increasing visibility in the international arena. It should therefore avail itself of adequate means to speak as one and act in the interest of all Member States, in commonly identified areas of interest, so as to meaningfully and effectively engage these global stakeholders in projects that are of interest to our Continent. I would like, on this score, to reiterate that these partnerships, given their importance to our continent, must see our Commission as a strong organ, endowed with substantial powers and means; otherwise, the partnerships may not view the Commission as a credible institution capable of engaging them in integration projects so direly needed by the Continent to survive the ongoing globalisation.

In this connection, I cannot but make special mention of the strategic partnerships currently being forged with emerging countries such as China, India, Brazil and Turkey, to mention but a few. This encourages us in our belief that Africa has considerable advantages and that the rest of the world has become aware of the unique place it occupies in the building of a peaceful, stable and united world, able to face up to the major challenges of the 21st Century. Our main challenge at the moment is to position ourselves firmly in this global dynamics and come rapidly out of our long marginalization brought upon us by the vicissitudes of our recent history.

Alpha Oumar Konaré

A. LEGAL MATTERS

A.I. DEPOSITARY FUNCTIONS

1. Since the submission of the last report in July 2007, some Member States have made considerable efforts to sign and ratify OAU/AU Treaties especially the five (5) Maputo Treaties, the Protocol to the Convention on Terrorism adopted in July 2004, the African Union Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact adopted in January 2005, the African Youth Charter adopted in July 2006 and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance adopted in January 2007. During the reporting period, twenty (20) new signatures were appended and thirty-one (31) additional instruments of ratification were deposited. However, even though some Member States have made efforts to sign and ratify or accede to OAU/AU Treaties, a lot remains to be done. It is therefore strongly recommended that Treaties adopted under the aegis of the OAU/AU, which, by definition, address issues of specific concern to Africa, should be given utmost priority.

A.II. ACCREDITATION OF NON-AFRICAN STATES TO THE AFRICAN UNION

2. In accordance with Part II, Section II (3) of the *Criteria for Granting Observer Status and for a system of Accreditation within the African Union* (the Criteria), adopted by the Executive Council in July 2005, the Commission has continued to receive and consider requests for accreditation from various non-African States, bearing in mind the supreme interests of the Union. Since the last reporting period, letters of accreditation from eight (8) non-African States and one (1) international organization were accepted in addition to those that were accredited earlier in line with the provisions of Part II, Section II (3) of the Criteria for the granting of AU Observer Status and a System of Accreditation within the AU. The names of the representatives accredited since the last report and their respective States/organizations are listed in the table below:

No.	Name & Title	Country
1	H.E. Mrs. Pernille Dahler Kardel Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Denmark to Ethiopia	Denmark
2	H.E. Mr. Jens-Petter Kjemprud Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Norway to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	Norway
3	H.E. Mr. Michael-Efstratios C. Daratzikis Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Hellenic Republic to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	Greece

4	H.E. Mr. Gabor Sagi Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Permanent Representative of the Republic of Hungary to the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa	Hungary
5	H.E. Mr. Drazen Margeta Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Croatia to the Arab Republic of Egypt, resident in Cairo	Croatia
6	H.E. Mr. Simeon Darpatov Charge d’Affaires en titre of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia	Bulgaria
7	H.E. Mr. Rodrigo Gaete Ambassador of Chile Resident in Kenya	Chile
8	H.E. Mr. Guillaume Nseke Ambassador, Permanent Representative of OIF in Addis Ababa	OIF

3. The total number of non-African States and international organizations accredited to the Union is now fifty-five (55).

A.III. REGISTRATION AND PROTECTION OF NAMES, ABBREVIATIONS, AND EMBLEMS OF THE AU AND NEPAD WITH THE WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION (WIPO)

4. It will be recalled that in January 2007, the Commission had informed Member States that it had taken all the necessary measures so as to ensure that the AU paraphernalia (logo, emblem, flag, abbreviations, etc.) were registered with the World Intellectual Property (WIPO) and protected in conformity with the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (Paris Convention). Council will further recall that after obtaining such protection, the Commission had appealed to all Member States to ensure that they enact appropriate national legislations for the protection of the Intellectual Property Rights of the African Union, in their various countries. However, to date, the Commission has not received any information as to the measures taken by Member States, at national level. Indeed, on the contrary, the Commission continues to receive reports of attempts at defrauding members of the public particularly business entities by wrongly using the AU and NEPAD paraphernalia. The Commission, therefore, would like to reiterate the earlier appeal to Member States to inform it as soon as possible of actions taken and in doing so, to

bring to its attention problems and challenges faced, if any, in carrying out this activity.

A.IV. HARMONIZATION AND RATIFICATION PROCEDURES OF TREATIES

5. Council will also recall that by Decision (EX.CL/Dec. 128 (V)), the Commission was requested to conduct a study on the procedures for ratification of OAU/AU Treaties in Member States as well as how to harmonise them with a view to speeding up the ratification process. In this regard, the Commission is in the process of finalizing the study. By Note Verbales reference BC/OLC/66.5-1/11/Vol.IV and BC/OLC/24.18/5/Vol.I dated 6 October 2006 and 3 May 2007, respectively, the Commission has requested Member States to submit to it the procedures for ratification of Treaties in their countries. However, only nineteen (19) of the fifty-three (53) Member States responded and this has delayed the finalisation and submission of the study. Consequently, the Commission has had to decide to finalise the study with the available documentation and to submit the same for consideration by the AU Conference for Ministers of Justice and Attorney Generals scheduled for 10 to 14 March 2008. Member States which have not yet submitted the required information are therefore urged to do so expeditiously for incorporation in the study.

A.V. MERGER OF THE AFRICAN COURT ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS AND THE COURT OF JUSTICE OF THE AFRICAN UNION

6. It will be recalled that the Protocol on the Merger of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Court of Justice of the African Union was finalized by a meeting of the Permanent Representatives' Committee (PRC) and Legal Experts from Member States which was held at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 16 to 19 May 2006. Thereafter, the draft Protocol was submitted for consideration by the Ninth Ordinary Session of Council held in Banjul, the Gambia in July 2006. At that session, Council requested the Commission to convene a meeting of Ministers of Justice and Attorney Generals to consider the Draft Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights. As already indicated above, the Commission intends to convene a meeting of Ministers of Justice and Attorney Generals in March 2008 to consider this document and to submit a report thereof for consideration by the policy organs of the Union in July 2008.

A.VI. ELECTRONIC VOTING SYSTEM

7. As Council is aware, a number of elections are scheduled to be carried out during this session: election of the Members of the Commission and election of the Members of the Peace and Security Council. The traditional system of voting, which has been in use during the life of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) as well as under the Union, has proved cumbersome and time consuming. The Office of the Legal Counsel was therefore instructed to carry out in collaboration with other relevant services of the Commission, a study on the possibility of the Union using an electronic voting system that would still have the necessary features of transparency and fairness both in fact and in perception. The Commission has identified suitable voting systems as well as some funding from the African Capacity Building

Foundation (ACBF) for this purpose. The only difficulty that is still being encountered is that there are no electronic voting systems that could be found that would allow Member States to vote in various AU languages. It is the expectation of the Commission that if Member States agree to establish this new system aimed at greatly reducing the amount of time taken up by Council and the Assembly in elections, the Commission could have the same ready for the elections of the Advisory Board on Corruption and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in July 2008.

A.VII. ELECTIONS FOR ADVISORY BOARD ON CORRUPTION

8. Following the entry into force of the AU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption adopted in Maputo in July 2003, and its subsequent ratification by a sufficient number of States to constitute the treaty organ provided therein, it became necessary to put in place the Advisory Board on Corruption provided for in Article 22 of the Convention. The AU Commission drew the attention of Member States to elections to take place in January 2008, and requested vide Note Verbal OLC/BC24.12/8/VOL.III dated 8 November 2007 to submit suitable candidatures. As at 20 December 2007, only five Member States had submitted candidatures. Accordingly, since the Board is composed of 11 members, it is necessary to postpone the elections to July 2008. It should be noted that although it is not expressly provided for in the Convention, in conformity with AU principles of geographical and gender distribution, no two nationals of any State Party can be members of the Board.

B. WOMEN, GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

9. The Commission has pursued its efforts in spearheading the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment within the Commission and other organs of the African Union (AU) as well as Regional Economic Communities, the NEPAD and among Member States, through mainstreaming gender issues in all its programs.

B.I. THE SOLEMN DECLARATION ON GENDER EQUALITY IN AFRICA (SDGEA)

10. In the implementation of AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA, several appeals were made to Member States to submit their reports for consideration by the January 2008 Summit. Unfortunately, since the last Summit, only six Member States namely: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali and Rwanda have submitted their reports. To date, a total of 15 Member States have submitted their baseline reports on implementation of SDGEA, namely: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Tunisia. A synthesis of the reports for 6 Member States is being submitted for consideration, in consonance with the requirements of the SDGEA.

11. It is in this connection that the lobbying and advocacy activities are carried out by the Commission for the effective implementation of SDGEA. In this regard, a conference on the Role of Parliaments in the Popularization and Implementation of the SDGEA was organized at AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa from 10 to 12 October 2007. The main objective of the Conference was to identify strategies that could be put in place to popularize and implement the SDGEA through national Parliaments and the Pan African Parliament, with an objective to make the SDGEA content mainstreamed into the work and programs of National Parliaments, the Pan African Parliament and Regional Parliaments.

12. The Commission, in collaboration with “Gender is my Agenda” Campaign Network of women’s groups and organizations created under the coordination of Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS) to monitor the SDGEA, organized, from 23 to 24 June 2007, the 10th Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the African Union (AU) on the margins of the 9th AU Summit in July 2007 in Accra, Ghana. The Pre-Summit also discussed the theme of the 9th AU Summit, “Grand Debate on the Union Government” and recommended the inclusion of the gender parity principle in the new Constitutive Act of the Union Government and in all the Organs, Structures and Programs of the African Union Government, RECs and National Governments.

B.II. ENGENDERING THE MACRO-ECONOMIC FRAMEWORKS

13. The Commission, in collaboration with UN-IDEP, organized the 2nd AU Course on Gender Responsive Economic Policy-Making in Africa from 3 to 14 December 2007 at the AU Headquarters. The training course was attended by 27 participants representing their Government Ministries such as Finance, Economic Planning, Social Development and Central Bureau of Statistics for 2 weeks. The course was attended by participants from Burkina Faso, Burundi, Congo, Cote d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Guinea Bissau, Madagascar, Rwanda, Chad, Togo, Tunisia and the Diaspora.

14. The main objective of this training course was to reinforce the capacities of the persons in charge of the African economic policies, budget planners, development experts and policy pleas for gender approach, to enable them to conceive and elaborate economic policies and programs sensitive to gender.

B.III. STRENGTHENING WOMEN VOICES IN PEACE PROCESS

15. As part of the African Union’s efforts in strengthening women’s voices in peace processes, especially in countries in conflict and emerging from conflict and following the requests from Côte d’Ivoire women’s associations and authorities, the Commission, together with Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), undertook from 18 to 21 November 2007 a Preliminary Peace and Solidarity mission in Cote d’Ivoire.

16. The objective of the preliminary mission was to analyse the situation in Cote d’Ivoire in order to prepare for the visit of the High-Level Peace Mission scheduled for the beginning of 2008 and which will be made of eminent personalities nominated by the Chairperson of the Commission.

17. The goal of the substantive mission is to contribute and to support the women's participation in the conflict resolution and the democratisation process for sustainable peace in Cote d'Ivoire by fostering, strengthening and promoting the role of women in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts on the continent. During the pre-mission, the delegation met several authorities, Women's associations and UN Agencies in Cote d'Ivoire.

18. The Commission is also in process of developing an AU Gender Training Manual for AU Peacekeeping Operations in order to train them in Human Rights, focusing on gender-based violence, in order to be able to investigate and report on violence against women's rights and to provide effective protection.

19. From 6 to 7 December 2007, the Commission organized in Kigali, Rwanda, a Workshop on the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Female Ex-Child Soldiers/Captives in the Great Lakes Region. The purpose of the Workshop was to assess the situation of female ex-child soldiers and combatants in four co-countries in the Great Lakes Region, namely Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. Some countries such as Cote d'Ivoire and the Sudan were also invited to participate in the meeting and to share experiences in the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of Female ex-Child Soldiers. The workshop aimed at assessing the situation of female ex-child soldiers and combatants and developing policy recommendations on the subject in question, and in other thematic issues such as HIV and Violence Against Women and Children, with the ultimate aim of eventually contributing to the peace and security of the Great Lakes Region.

B.IV. ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF GENDER DIRECTORATE

20. The Commission has continued to build the capacity of the Women, Gender and Development Directorate, in particular with the recruitment of a new Director in December 2007. This appointment brings the number of female Directors to six out of the total of 12 filled up position for Directors, which represents parity in accordance with the Parity Principle provided in Article 4(L) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

C. INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITIES

C.I. ACTIVITIES

21. The role of the Office of Internal Audit (OIA) is to provide assurance and advisory services to the management of the AU Commission. The Office also supports top management in the effective discharge of their responsibilities by furnishing them with analyses, appraisal, counsel and recommendations on the activities reviewed.

22. Since the Accra Summit in July 2007, the audit activities undertaken by the Office of Internal Audit include the review of:

	DETAILS	STATUS
1.	Payroll and Staff benefit - HQ	Final Report issued
2.	Budgeting and Forecasting - HQ	Final Report issued
3.	AU Brussels Office	Final Report issued
4.	AU Military Mission in Sudan (AMIS)	Final Report issued
5.	Liaison Office for the Great Lakes Office – Nairobi	Final Report issued
6.	Recruitment - HQ	Draft Report
7.	AU Military Mission in Somalia (AMISOM)	Draft Report
8.	Accounts Payable and Receivable - HQ	Draft Report
9.	AU Geneva Office	Draft Report
10.	AU Cairo Office	Draft Report
11.	AU Washington DC Office	Field Work completed
12.	AU Lagos Office	Field Work in Progress
13.	AU Yaounde Office	Field Work in Progress
14.	AU Burkina Faso Office	Field Work in Progress
15.	Personal records – HQ	Field Work in Progress
16.	Contributions and General Fund - HQ	Field Work in Progress
17.	Peace Fund, Special Fund, Contributions and Donations – HQ	Field Work in Progress
18.	Transport and Related Expenses - HQ	Field Work in Progress
19.	Procurement of Goods and Services -HQ	Field Work in Progress
20.	Directorate of Conference Services	Field Work in Progress

23. During September 2007, the OIA presented the under listed 15 Internal Audit Reports and the Internal Audit Charter for consideration by the PRC Sub Committee on Administrative, Budgetary and Financial Matters in line with Article 70(h) of the AUC Revised Financial Rules and Regulations:

No	Report
1.	AU Southern African Regional Office (AU-SARO) – Lilongwe for the year ended 31 December 2006
2.	AU Representational Office in Washington for the thirteen months Period from August 2005 to September 2006
3.	AU Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations in New York for the nine months period ended 31 August 2006
4.	Medical Services, Stock and Fixed Assets for the eighteen months period from January 2005 to June 2006
5.	Scientific, Technical and Research Commission for the nine months period from January 2006 up to September 2006
6.	Center for Linguistic & Historical Studies by Oral tradition – CELTHO- Niamey for the seventeen months period from 1 April 2005 to August 31, 2005
7.	Regional Program for the Development of the Fouta Djallon Highlands – Conakry for the seventeen months period from 1 April 2005 to 31 August 2006

No	Report
8.	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights – ACHPR – Banjul for the nine months period from January to September 2006
9.	Inter-African Phytosanitary Council Yaounde for the twelve months period from 1st January to 31 st December 2005
10.	The verification of Advance Recoverable from Mr. Joseph Salani, Cashier in the African Union Mission in Sudan
11.	Inter-African Bureau for Animal resources (AU/IBAR) for the twelve months ended 31 December 2005
12.	Contributions and General Fund for the twenty three months from 1 January 2004 up to 20 November 2005
13.	Budget Execution and expenditure Control at Headquarters for the year ended 31 December 2005
14.	Cash and Cash management at the headquarters for the year ended 31 December 2005
15.	African Union Mission in Sudan for eighteen months from 1 June 2004 to 31 December 2005

24. Furthermore, in accordance with the Strategic Plan of the Commission for the Year 2004-2007, the OIA completed the preparation of an Internal Audit Charter and Audit Manual through the consulting firm Deloitte & Touche.

25. On 29th October 2007, the OIA in collaboration with Deloitte & Touche organized a workshop on "Risk Management and the role of Internal Audit" to AUC senior management. The objective of the workshop was to raise awareness of AUC senior management on the risk management process.

C.II. IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

26. The OIA assists management in the achievement of the vision, missions and objectives of the Commission by promoting efficient and effective internal control systems. In addition, the Office evaluates the adequacy and effectiveness of the Commission's risk management system. In short, the Office is playing a proactive and decision support role in the building of an efficient, transparent and accountable Commission.

27. The Office of Internal Audit was unable to attain its objectives and to provide the necessary value-adding services, due to a shortage of manpower. It is, however, expected to overcome this problem with the recruitment of three new internal audit staff (1 Senior Auditor and 2 Auditors) that have reported to duty in September /October 2007. In addition, two Auditors were recruited in October 2007 under Process Facility (PF) project.

D. AFRICAN CITIZENS AND DIASPORA

28. In the period under review, the Commission has continued to focus upon and consolidate its agenda for effective civil society and Diaspora participation in Union affairs in the following critical areas: a) institutionalization of ECOSOCC through effective support and facilitation of elections into the Permanent Assembly of ECOSOCC; b) harnessing civil society contribution and inputs into AU-EU Joint Strategy and Declaration in the run up to the Lisbon Summit of 8-9 December 2007; c) consolidation of the AU Diaspora Initiative through preparations for the African Diaspora Summit; and d) development of the programme for an African Volunteers Corps (AUVV).

D.I. INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF ECOSOCC

29. Within the last six months, the Commission has continued to provide support for the process of preparations and conduct of elections into the Permanent ECOSOCC Assembly. The Commission provided support to the Credential Committee of ECOSOCC which received and vetted the qualification of candidates for election and the process of publication and media outreach to facilitate the mobilization of the African civil society community to participate in the elections. As a result, a total of 238 applications were received from 44 Member States of the Union and this set the pace for the 3rd meeting of the Interim Standing Committee in Mont Febe Hotel, Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 5 to 6 September 2007. The meeting of the Interim Standing Committee reviewed the outcome of the work of the Credentials Committee and found it to be an appropriate foundation for actual elections.

30. Accordingly, the Committee developed a work programme and calendar and timetable for elections into the Permanent ECOSOCC Assembly that was envisaged to be completed by 10 December 2007. It also assigned responsibilities to both the Credentials Committee and the Commission on measures that should be taken to ensure proper implementation of this programme, including the preparation of election guidelines.

31. Elections began with the continental elections held at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa on 31 October 2007 and this was followed by elections in Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Cameroon and Kenya. Regional elections for the East African sub-region were also conducted on 8 December 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya.

32. The elections which were conducted with the active support of the leadership of the Commission, the PRC and Member States of the Union were carried out in a congenial atmosphere and the results were generally acknowledged as free and fair. Quality campaign presentations were made by various candidates as part of the process and it appears as if the choice of electoral colleges were matured and reasoned. Members of the new Assembly embrace a wide variety and range of African Civil Society Organizations in relative proportions, including trade union federations, representatives of the Employers Associations, professional groups such as the Pan-African Lawyers Union, gender based group such as PAWO, FEMNET

and FAS and the broad range of NGOs, including associations catering to the disabled, aging and vulnerable groups, orphans and widow.

33. However, the time limit set for the completion of elections on 31 December 2007 appeared difficult to attain. The work programme developed by the Interim Standing Committee anticipated rapid state responses and their effective prioritization of the ECOSOCC agenda over and above other competing and legitimate claims. However, the selection of competent national authorities to conduct the elections have been delayed in several circumstances. Similarly, logistic arrangements to conduct actual elections in all Member States have proved to be more complicated than envisaged. However, the process is on track and preparations for elections in the majority of the Member States of the Union have virtually been completed.

34. It is therefore anticipated that the ECOSOCC Standing Committee would require two and half months more to complete this process. Accordingly, the Executive Council is urged to accept two measures that will facilitate the completion of the process as follows:

- i) Grant a final extension of the term of the present interim ECOSOCC till March 15, 2007 to enable completion of the process of elections.
- ii) To request the launching of ECOSOCC in April 2008 so that this organ would assume its proper position within the framework of the Union.

D.II. JOINT STRATEGY ON THE RUN-DOWN TO THE LISBON SUMMIT

35. In the run-down to the Lisbon Summit of 8-9 December 2007, the Commission has continued to facilitate effective and enhanced participation of African civil societies in the determination of the Declaration on AU-EU Partnership signed in Lisbon on 9 December 2001. In this regard, emphasis was placed on the need to fully reflect the inputs and interests of civil society in the programme and plan of action contained in the Declaration and to define a central role for it in the implementation and follow-up process.

36. As a follow up to the initial AU-CSO consultation on the Joint Strategy of March 2007, the Commission sponsored a follow-up consultation in Accra, Ghana from 19 to 21 October 2007 in order to provide effective inputs for the AU-EU Troika and Ministerial meetings that were held in Accra the following week. The meeting which was attended by a wide range of CSOs from across the continent provided inputs for this process that were taken on board by the preparatory meetings of the AU-EU Troika and Ministers. It should be observed that civil society input and role are well defined in the Lisbon Declaration and its Programme and Plan of Action. The challenge for civil society now is to take full advantage of their defined roles and opportunities to contribute significantly towards the implementation process.

D.III. PREPARATIONS FOR THE AFRICAN DIASPORA SUMMIT

37. The Commission has also devoted considerable efforts towards the consolidation of the African Diaspora Initiative. The basic thrust of this effort was concentrated on preparations for the African Diaspora Summit to be held in South Africa in early May 2008.

38. In accordance with Decision EX.CL 269 (VIII), the Commission and the Government of South Africa agreed on an approach that would be based on a global consultative dialogue to build momentum for an African Diaspora Summit that would embrace a Programme and Plan of Action to further consolidate the development of the Diaspora Initiative. A work programme based on a three-tier system was designed to assist this implementation process. The first included a series of regional consultative conferences to be held in Africa and the various regions of the world in which African Diaspora population are concentrated in large numbers. This would be followed by a Ministerial Conference to refine and produce the outcomes into a Draft Programme and Plan of Action. This Programme and Plan of Action would be submitted in the third and final phase to a Summit of Heads of States and Government which will be preceded by a second Pre-Summit Ministerial meeting to consolidate the programme and plan of action for consideration/adoption by the Heads of State and Government. At various levels, provision was made to accommodate representatives of the Diaspora in the processes of dialogue, consultations and programme development.

39. Accordingly, Regional Consultative Conferences (RCCs) were convened and facilitated by the Government of South Africa in concert with the Commission. The process began with national consultations in South Africa in early April 2005 and was followed by Regional Consultative Conferences (RCCs) in Brasilia, Brazil, on 16 April 2007, London, UK, from 23-25 April 2007, New York, USA, from 22-23 June 2007, Barbados, in the Caribbean from 27-28 August 2007, Paris, France, from 12-13 September 2007 and the regional consultative Conference for Africa held at the AU Headquarters from 15 to 16 October 2007 to review and consolidate the various outcomes in preparation for Senior Officials and Ministerial Conference held in Johannesburg, South Africa from 14-15 November 2007 and 16-18 November 2007 respectively.

40. The decision to convene the RCCs was based on the realization that effective Partnership between Africa and its Diaspora calls for greater understanding, close cooperation, common vision and mutual design of goals, objectives and strategies for the re-unification and/or rejuvenation of the global African family. The various fora therefore, enabled Africans worldwide to come together for the first time in order to develop consensus on how to travel on the road ahead, address their commonality and establish result oriented programmes that would give effect to hope, opportunity and purpose.

41. The RCCs were very successful and provided the necessary ingredients for the Programme and Plan of Action reviewed by the Seniors Officials and subsequently adopted by the Ministers in Johannesburg in mid-October 2007. The Programme and Plan of Action remains work in progress but a substantial agreement has already been brokered in all major areas to which the totality of African populations worldwide have subscribed. The value and impact of RCCs have also

stressed the need for these consultations to remain as an enduring process to facilitate sustain AU Diaspora networks in the various regions of the world and harness their energies to the work of the Union. As part of this process, follow-up consultations are envisaged at some time in the near future in the Middle-East, Gulf States, Oceania and Asia.

42. The Commission wishes to thank the Government and People of South Africa, particularly President Thabo Mbeki and Foreign Minister Dr. Zuma for active engagement and close cooperation in enabling this process. South Africa's efforts underscore the fact that the implementation of the Diaspora Initiative requires a common framework, an active collaboration between Member States and the Commission as well as the strengthening of the Commission through resource support and capacity building.

D.IV. DEVELOPMENT OF AN AFRICAN VOLUNTEER CORPS

43. The Constitutive Act of the Union stipulates that popular participation remains a cardinal objective in the relationship between the people and their continental organ. This was further amplified in the Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan of the Commission and its Priority Plan of Action adopted by the Assembly in 2004, regarding the need to create an African Volunteer Corps that would involve the people of Africa more closely with the projects and programmes of the Union to achieve its goals and objectives. This is imperative because over time the African continent has been a recipient of volunteers from all over the world and had developed the underserved image of a continent that is perpetually dependent on external initiatives. Accordingly, the Commission is exerting efforts aimed at the creation of the Africa Volunteers Corps in cooperation with all Member States. The programme is conceived as a Citizens initiative that will tap into the volunteering spirit of the African people and the abundant resources with which the continent is endowed.

44. With the support of UNDP grant, the Commission has developed proposals for the development of this corps through 2 successive technical experts meetings held in Nigeria and Senegal in August and November 2007 respectively. The meetings drew on the resources of participants in the UN and other international volunteer programmes and the technical aid corps experts and resources of Member States of the Union. Comments were received from various Departments of the Commission as part of the process of the finalization of the proposal and its framework document. Thereafter, a process of consultation with the PRC and the Experts from Member States will be undertaken in preparation for its consideration by relevant policy organs.

**E. STRATEGIC POLICY PLANNING, MONITORING, EVALUATION
AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION (SPPME)**

45. The Commission has been involved in a series of activities, notably, the work of the Ad Hoc Ministerial Committee on the Scale of Assessment; proposals on alternative modalities of financing the African Union; and on discussions aimed at enhancing the Partnership between the AU and International Partners.

E.I. POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH

46. The Commission has undertaken the following two studies/proposals during the period under review:

- (i) *a study on opportunities for Africa's Oil Producers: Challenges for using resources productively*

47. This planned study would analyze the manner to take advantage of the current opportunities of high oil revenues and debt relief, and their consequences of supporting increased government spending, to make significant progress towards the MDGs. This study once completed will be submitted to the competent organs for consideration.

- (ii) *a study on Growth, Poverty Reduction and the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*

48. The introduction of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) in 1999 and the adoption of the Millennium Declaration in 2000 marked important milestones in attracting the attention of policy makers on the tragically plight of the poor. Reducing poverty requires the improvement of the quality of social services. This study is therefore aimed at reviewing the situation in the Member States and would in particular address the three core issues:

- (i) *How to combine social investment with directly productive investments;*
(ii) *How to achieve high and sustainable growth for the poor;*
(iii) *How to increase Official Development Assistance (ODA).*

49. Furthermore, the Commission has been analyzing documents submitted to it with a view to proffering advice on issues of great interest for the African Union. In this regard, the Commission examined various issues such as the reaction of the AU to the proposals of G8; the ways of enhancing Cooperation between the AU and its major partner institutions such as UN and its agencies, ADB, EU, CSOs, etc..

50. In addition to the analysis and comments provided on the above topics, the Commission prepared a number of documents for consideration by relevant organs, including contributions to the workshop organized by the civil society on "Vision and Mission of the AU", November 2007, the ECA meeting on "Poverty, Income Distribution & Labor Market in Sub-Saharan Africa", October 2007, the Report initiated jointly by Oxfam, AFRODAD (Réseau Africain sur la Dette et le

Développement), and AfriMAP (African Monitoring and Advocacy Project), July 2007 as well as the Report of the 26th Meeting of Experts on the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, AUC-ECA, July 2007.

51. There is a need to increase the capacity of the Commission in terms of policy analysis with the injection of new competencies so as to carry out all required research in the relevant fields of common interest to the continent.

E.II. KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

E.II.1. Knowledge Management Portal

52. The Commission has entered the second phase of the institutional transformation designed to make the Pan-African Institution function more efficiently and to increase personnel productivity in a more congenial working environment. This second phase highlighted the need for discussions in view of harmonizing all projects with “information technology” (IT) components. Consultations between the departments concerned led to the conclusion that the knowledge management portal should provide access to other IT projects developed as part of the institutional transformation. Software has been developed for the portal and is now in use. It has a user-friendly general menu. It supports all languages used at the AUC and has a storage capacity of over 10 million documents. Beyond that capacity, provision has been made for automatic archival storage on an “archive” server.

53. The ultimate goal of the portal is to save time and enhance AUC personnel productivity. In fact, some studies have shown that knowledge workers spent 25% of their time looking for information they needed and 40% of them failed in their search. The portal will permit the personnel to quickly access information available within the AUC, no matter their author or location.

E.II.2. Library and Archives

54. Apart from collecting and preserving the cultural memory of the AUC and the African Continent, this unit will be responsible for facilitating access to it and its availability by means of the most modern tools and methods. Despite the recent increase in the staff of this unit, inadequate office space hinders the attainment of set objectives of the plan. The unit will greatly benefit from the imminent construction of new offices. The modernization of the unit continues on the basis of harmonious and rational management of a mix of electronic and documentary resources.

E.III. PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

55. The Commission has undertaken various activities in this area including the following:

- a) The final version from the Planning Manual is now under active preparation before its finalisation.

- b) The brainstorming process for the 2008-2011 AU Strategic Plan has already commenced and progressing according to the Roadmap, as approved by AUC Chairperson.
- c) The preparation for the 2008 Program Budget commenced in earnest early 2007 in collaboration with AUC departments, AU organs and AU regional offices and is being submitted for consideration and adoption by the competent organs.
- d) The 2008 Draft Program Budget Implementation Plan has been finalised and circulated to all Departments prior to distribution to Member States and partners.

56. Preparations for the planned Results Based Management project for AUC are ongoing. This project has the following objectives:

- To build capacity of the AUC staff including the strengthening of their monitoring and evaluation skills.
- To improve management effectiveness and accountability in achieving expected results in organizations.
- To promote common understanding of the planning and monitoring process at the various management levels.

57. The development of AMERT System is ongoing. In its quest to improve on monitoring and evaluation, the Commission embarked on a process to develop a multi user computerized Monitoring and Evaluation tool (AMERT) that will assist with not only the monitoring and reporting on implementation of AUC Strategic Framework but also monitoring and reporting on all AU decisions, declarations, policies and programmes. The development of a computerized Project/Programme Monitoring and Evaluation system is currently at an advanced stage. The system's first demonstration took place in April 2007 in AUC and in November 2007 at PAP and further demonstrations are ongoing.

58. The Commission has also contributed to various Workshops/Seminars and trainings, including: the Workshop on "Financial monitoring and evaluation in the public sector" held in South Africa in August 2007, the Workshop on "Budgeting and programming and project preparation in the public sector" held in South Africa in October 2007, the organization of a workshop on " budget formulation" in August 2008. The Pan African Parliament also participated at this workshop, in addition to the AU Departments and Regional Offices. The main objective of the workshop was to sensitize Departments on the AUC budget formulation process. Further, a workshop on Internal project monitoring was organized by the EC from 20th to 22nd November 2007 in Addis Ababa with a view to improving the quality of EC funded projects in line with aid effectiveness principles. A trainer was also provided by the Commission on the process facility to acquaint AUC staff, regional offices and AU organs to the new and improved ways of fund handling process starting from quality project preparation, detailed work planning, procurements, accounting and reporting.

59. Among the major problems and constraints which hampered the smooth functioning of the Commission in this area, were: the delay in the installation of Planning and Monitoring Procedures across AUC Departments, the inadequate staffing as well as the non-utilization of the developed Monitoring and Evaluation system by Departments, regional offices and AU organs. In order to overcome these

shortcomings, two consultancies have been engaged to spearhead the process of implementation. Similarly, three planner experts out of four reported for duty under the Process Facility recruitment. Many field visits took place to AUC departments, regional offices and AU organs to assist them in the integration to the new systems being developed.

60. In addition, a Monitoring and Evaluation Manual has been prepared to assist, along with the Planning Manual, AU Departments in their programme management, based on the Strategic Plan. Further, a Budget Manual and Procedures is being developed to be distributed to AUC Departments/Units to assist them in budget preparation.

E.IV. RESOURCE MOBILISATION

61. During the period under review, the activities of the Commission in the area of Resource Mobilisation focussed on following up on commitments made by Partners for the implementation of the AU's priority activities for 2007 as reflected in the approved programme budget. At the same time, the Commission continued to engage International Partners on ways and means of improving cooperation arrangements as well as the effectiveness in the delivery of development assistance, with the ultimate objective of increasingly moving towards pooled funds with a view to reducing transaction costs on the part of the Commission.

62. In this context, several key activities were undertaken as follows:

- The monthly dialogue meetings with International Partners established under the new Partnership framework were continued. The dialogue focused on exploring common support mechanisms to introduce predictability and flexibility of resource flows for the implementation of the AU Strategic Plan. As approved by the PRC, Member States actively participated in these meetings through the Chairperson's of the Advisory Sub-Committee on Administrative, Budgetary and Financial Matters, the Advisory Sub-Committee on Contributions, and the Advisory Sub-Committee on Multilateral Cooperation.
- Structured meetings involving focal points from all AUC Departments/Directorates/Units were organized to review the implementation of the Euro 55 million EC Support Programme and to prepare the Annual Work Plan for 2008. The first half yearly review meeting was held in July 2007. The Second Annual Work Plan was completed and is costed at US\$15,790,000.00. This amount has been included in the Commission's 2008 budget and will finance various activities in all the four Axis of the Strategic Plan.
- The tools and templates developed in the context of the Process Facility were finalized, and staff recruitment, review of procurement operations, office accommodation, procurement of hard and software initiated are at an advanced stage of finalization. Training of Regional Offices and other AU Organs on the use of the new tools and templates was also initiated.

- A Joint Financing Agreement aimed at pooling Partners funds for financing the Process Facility, IMIS and the VSAT programmes (the key components of the Institutional Transformation Programme), was finalized and signed. The pooled fund arrangement will bring with it benefits in the form of reduced transaction costs as well as predictable and flexible funding.
- Regular financial and narrative reports were prepared and submitted to International Partners in fulfillment of obligations emanating from ongoing financing agreements.
- Pledges made by International Partners were followed up, and in this context, a Grant Agreement was signed in September 2007 with the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) amounting to US\$5 million over a period of 4 years.

63. The greatest challenge has been the slow absorptive capacity of the Commission, in the sense that Partners funds allocated for the implementation of activities in the approved 2007 Budget were not fully utilized. This was mainly due to capacity constraints in most of the Commission's Departments (in terms of staffing), and some complicated procurement procedures imposed by some Partners. A related challenge has been difficulties in producing quality and timely narrative and financial reports on Partner funded programmes.

64. The approval by the Commission for the recruitment of short-term experts under the auspices of the Process Facility and the Euro 55 million EC Support Programme will go a long way towards arresting the capacity problem. Completion of the ongoing exercise of revising the AU Procurement Manual to align it with internationally accepted standards will also allow its use for Partners funds and address the inherent delays that come with following Partners procedures.

65. The intake of Departmental Planners as well as the use of the tools and templates developed in the context of the Process Facility will also go a long way towards strengthening the Commission's capacity to develop and implement robust programmes and provide timely and quality progress reports.

66. In general, the ongoing administrative and financial management systems reforms under the auspices of the Institutional Transformation Project have played a great role in enhancing the credibility of the Commission and it is expected that this will result in increased resource inflows for the AU's priority programmes.

67. The Commission will continue holding regular consultations with International Partners with a view to consolidating the emerging new Partnership. The ultimate objective is to streamline, simplify and harmonise Partners procedures, as well as to receive direct budget, thus reducing transaction costs and introducing some predictability and flexibility of resource flows and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of development assistance towards the achievement of the broader goals of continental integration and poverty reduction. Every effort will also be made to address any weaknesses that may be unveiled by the ongoing institutional assessment exercise.

F. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

68. During the period under review, the Commission continued to focus efforts on popularizing activities of the Union.

F.I. IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

69. The implementation of the 2008-2011 Communication Strategy was one of the priority areas of the Commission's programme of action. A communication strategy document for the 2008 - 2011 period was jointly designed by the Commission and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This new communication, information and advocacy strategy, which are still being examined, will, upon validation, translate into sectoral media plans for improving the Commission's communication system.

F.II. MEDIA COVERAGE OF COMMISSION'S ACTIVITIES

70. The Commission ensured widespread dissemination of information on its activities through press releases to all African and international media using a regularly updated journalists data base, with particular focus on media specializing in African issues or covering Africa and the entire world [print media (news agencies and newspapers), audiovisual press (Radio and Television), electronic press (E-media)].

71. Several specific and thematic media plans were developed and used at Summits organized by the Union as well as those jointly organized with its partners, notably the Ninth Assembly of the AU in Accra, Ghana in July 2007; the Africa/South America Summit in Washington in July 2007 and the Africa-EU Summit in Lisbon. Commission activities also included media coverage of major Ministerial Conferences, notably the Pan African Forum on Children held in Cairo and meetings of the *Ad Hoc* Ministerial Committee on the Union Government.

F.III. CONTENT PRINTING AND PUBLICATION ACTIVITIES

72. The Commission continued to ensure the publishing of briefing documents with the Commission's label, notably the AUC NEWSLETTER, which is produced and distributed electronically. This 12-paged on-line publication is a monthly which gives an account of salient activities organized by the Commission. Similarly, the regular publication of the "Letter from the Chairperson of the AUC" makes it an appropriate tool for communication between the Chairperson of the Commission and African leaders.

73. A book which takes stock of the five years of the Union (2002 – 2007) will soon be published in conjunction with NEPAD services. This publication will give an overview of programmes and achievements of the various Union organs and structures.

74. A 2008 diary, which contains a presentation of the 53 Members States of the Union, is on the Commission's programme of activities.

F.IV. THE WEB SITE

75. The AU's Web Site, in spite of technical and human resource inadequacies, registered satisfactory results in terms of information provision. It remains the Union's window to the outside world. At major events organized by AU structures, specific web pages were designed and posted on the Union's Site to inform African and other Net users about the Union's activities.

F.V. AUDIOVISUAL ACTIVITIES AND PHOTOS

76. The audiovisual and photography service covered the Commission's activities by means of photos, video and sound recordings, as well as CD-ROMs. In addition to archiving the recordings, copies of cassettes or CDs and photos were forwarded to some requesting States.

F.V.1. Establishment of a Pan-African Radio and Television Channel

77. The Commission finalized the technical specifications of the study, which was the subject of Executive Council's decision at the Banjul Summit. The Selection Committee retained two experts from a total of 15 candidates. The two experts selected will soon begin their study, which will be submitted to the meeting of High Officials preceding the Conference of Ministers of Information and Communication, as recommended by the latter at its meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 14 and 15 June 2006 and as endorsed by the Executive Council in Banjul, The Gambia, in July 2006.

F.V.2. Organizing a competition for a new flag for the AU

78. The Commission launched, as from February 2007, activities in respect of the organization of a competition for the selection of a new flag for the African Union, pursuant to decision Assembly/AU/Dec.151 (VIII) taken at the Eighth Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Addis Ababa, on 29 and 30 January 2007. As at 30 April 2007, the deadline for submission of entries, a total of 117 entries from 74 African citizens had been received by the Commission. In accordance with the abovementioned Decision, the proposal submitted by the Leader of the Great Libyan Arab Jamahiriya should also be considered by the Selection Committee. In that regard, the Commission has since set up a Committee composed of Experts from Member States. The Committee will meet in March 2008 to consider the various entries.

G. ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

79. During the period under review, the Commission implemented the following activities in the administration and human resource development areas.

G.I. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

G.I.1. Structural and administrative matters

80. Under this item, the Commission carried out the implementation of the Post Maputo Structure Part A & B; the recruitment and placement of staff members; the definition of a revised quota system for management; the implementation of the decision on the Harmonization of the Remuneration Policy for the Commission and the adoption of a revised salary scale for staff of the professional category in July 2007. It carried out the study on the review of the Social Security Scheme and introduced the Business Travel Insurance as well as the Cash and Fidelity Insurance while improving the coverage of staff members (aggregate limit, sum insured, staff on short term, etc). It assisted in the operationalization of the AUC Offices in Washington and Algiers (ACRST). It also prepared, in cooperation with the relevant Departments/Units, documents relating to further adjustments to the Maputo Structures (Part C) for consideration by the Sub-Committee on Structure. It launched the "Pay for performance" Pilot Project as well as the Induction/Orientation guide for newly recruited staff the Orientation together with a Guide for new appointees/comers. It has also finalized the Training Needs Assessment and the revised Training Policy. As a practical measure, a two (2) days Orientation Training for new staff recruited since August 2007 was organized. Furthermore, an AU Performance Appraisal form/Result Based tool has been developed and is being implemented as from October 2007.

81. The revised African Union Draft Staff Regulations and Rules has now been finalized and is being submitted to competent organs for consideration.

G.I.2. Other Human Resources Management Related Activities

(i) Staff Welfare issues

82. The Commission implemented the decision of Education Allowance for locally recruited staff. It developed and implemented new Guidelines on Education Allowance. It also assisted in the improvement of the AU Cafeteria services.

(ii) Medical coverage for staff

83. The Commission has improved the medical facilities, in particular the modernization of the Medical Center. It has organized a Seminar on the Medical Assistance Plan and is actively pursuing the study on the Medical coverage.

(iii) Training and Staff Development

84. The Commission is in the process of establishing a Training Centre and Training Fund for the African Union. During the period under review, some staff members attended short-term workshops, training and Seminars in different fields of knowledge.

G.I.3. Update on Recruitment for Process Facility and EU 55 Million Support Programme

85. The following has been processed under the two programmes:

a) Recruitment for Process Facility

- (i) Total Number of Positions Budgeted for: 26
- (ii) Total Number of Positions Initially Approved: 17
- (iii) Number of employment offers/contracts sent out and accepted: 16
- (iv) Number that has declined the offer: 1; the HR Expert, the offer will be made to the next best candidate on the reserve list within the month of December 2007.
- (v) Number of staff who have assumed duties so far: 12
- (vi) Number of staff who have not yet assumed duty: 4

b) EU Euro 55 Million Support Programme

- (i) Total Number of Positions Budgeted for and Approved: 26
- (ii) Number of offers sent out: 20
- (iii) Number that has declined the offer: 1
- (iv) Number of staff who have assumed duty so far: 13
- (v) Number of positions re-advertised for failure to obtain suitable candidates: 6
- (vi) Number of staff who have not yet assumed duty: 6. These will report between December 2007 and January 31, 2008.

G.II. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

G.II.1. Upgrading of AU Network Infrastructure

86. The Commission carried out the necessary testing, upgrading and migration of its Server's Operating System from NT4 server to Windows 2000 Advance Server.

G.II.2. Implementation VSAT/Earth-station connectivity Project

87. Under the e-Governance Project, the Commission completed the procurement and installation of the Hub equipment, Video Conferencing (VC) equipment and Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) for all 25 sites. Testing, commissioning of the installation and integration of other sites with the main HUB/Earth-station are on going. In the same vein, the Commission has acquired VSAT Licenses for all VSAT Africa Sites.

G.II.3. Implementation of an Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) 2007

88. The Integrated Management Information Systems Project encompasses necessary modules for the Financial, Accounting and Human Resources Management. It is divided into two lots namely Lot 1 – Software and Systems components and Lot 2 – Hardware components.

- Lot 1 (Software):

89. The Lot has been tendered, evaluated by a Tender Board Evaluation Sub-Committee composed of PBFA & Admin & HRD Staff + External experts. On the basis of the recommendations of the Tender Board, the Commission is in the process of contract negotiation and award to the best bidder.

- Lot 2 (hardware):

90. The Bids were successfully evaluated by the Tender Board and the Contract was signed accordingly. The delivery of equipment and installation started mid December 2007. Training of Technical Staff of MIS Division of the Hardware installation, maintenance and operation of the equipment is on-going.

(i) Bulk Purchase of hardware, applications and spare-parts 2007

91. This project includes procurement of ICT equipment for AUC Headquarters as well as its Regional/Representation Offices. The Tender Board did award the Contract for the supply and installation of ICT equipment for the Headquarters to one local company. The delivery of equipment started in November 2007. The procurement of ICT Equipment for AUC Regional/Representational Offices is also under process.

(ii) Procurement and implementation of a translation system for Conference Services Directorate and a Medical System for the Medical Services Directorate – 2007-2008

92. The draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for medical system for the Medical Services Directorate and the Translation System for Conference Services Directorate have been prepared and are being processed for tendering with the aim to modernize both systems.

(iii) ICT Help Desk Routine Support

93. The Commission has been providing on-line technical support to the AUC Regional / Representational Offices on Hardware, Software, and Network. Technical assistance was also extended to Member States Embassies represented in Addis Ababa mainly on their connectivity to the AUC Network. The AUC Network infrastructure has also undergone expansion due to the increase in AUC Structure as well as the setting up of new offices. Embassies of Member States are encouraged to make full use of these facilities that would improve the daily communication with the Commission, including the transmission of documentation.

G.III. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

G.III.1. Procurement and Travel

94. With the assistance of GTZ, a new Procurement Manual has been completed. The Manual outlines in detail both policies and procedures applicable to procurement in the Commission; in line with internationally accepted principles and best practice. Further, computers and accessories were acquired for about 28 officers who are serving in various Departments under the Process Facility.

95. Two new buildings (B&B and Zelalem) have been rented within the vicinity of the AUC to accommodate not only Process Facility staff, but other Project staff as well as other departments of the AUC that are scheduled to move out of the AUC premises. Necessary Network installation is under process to ensure that the two buildings are connected to the AUC Network as well as facilities provider under VSAT Project of MIS Division.

96. Moreover, training of staff both at the AU Headquarters and Regional Offices is currently going on, to familiarize them with the various AUC manuals on the fund handling process.

97. Under the EU Support Programme (55 million Euros), the AUC has also benefited from the purchase of office equipment for staff recruited under the programme. The procurement process of this equipment is under way. The cost of the equipment is USD.120,000.00.

98. Under the Canada fund, the following items have been procured:

- a) For the Printing Unit, an amount of USD600,000.00 is kept aside to procure printing equipment and the contracts are being finalized. The fund is open up till 31 December 2007 and the funds have already been committed.
- b) For the Medical equipment for the AUC Medical Centre, major improvements and modernization of the facilities at the Medical Centre are being undertaken. The modernization involves purchase of equipment estimated at USD700,000.00. The Tenders have been floated and a contract was to be signed before December 31, 2007.
- c) Under the Norway and Sweden Funds, the VSAT project was financed. The procurement of equipment for the 25 remote sites has been completed. The overall cost of the project is estimated at USD 5 million.

G.III.2. Building, Equipment & Transport Services (BETS)

99. The Commission prepared the Memorandum of Understanding which was signed with the People's Republic of China for the construction of Conference Center and Offices Complex on the 12 Hectares of plot adjacent to the existing premises.

Construction is scheduled for 2008. The Commission also finalized the Contract which was signed with the City Government of Addis Ababa for the acquisition of 20 Hectares of land.

100. Different maintenance works, modification and alteration of office space were undertaken by the Commission with the view to improving the existing facilities. The Office spaces were modified and repartitioned to accommodate new staff members. However, there is a need for additional office space in view of the new staff expected in the short term. The renovation of AUC Cafeteria, and façade maintenance works for Building- A and Conference/Offices buildings were also undertaken during the period under review.

G.III.3. Security Services Unit

101. The Commission has been facing some constraints and challenges in the form of gaps in policy, procedures and written guidelines in the area of security and safety. In order to overcome shortcomings in the existing system and to improve its capacity in this area, the following activities were undertaken:

- a. The following documents were prepared to guide the Security Unit operations and were implemented: Standing Operational Procedure (SOP), Guard Order, Fire Safety Manual and Personal Security Measures.
- b. The skills of Security Guards were enhanced through technical training on various security issues and technologies. The organizational set-up was also reviewed through the introduction of a Security Warden System and Security Networks and close working relationships with the Security Services Organs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, ECA and different Embassies in Addis Ababa. Further, Monthly Security Updates have been issued on a regular basis.

102. Moreover, the following plans were prepared for approval and implementation: an Integrated Physical Security Plan, a Fire Hazard Protection Plan, a Contingency and Evacuation Plan, Physical Security Plans for all important meetings and Conferences.

103. The Commission is still facing some constraints in the security area such as shortage of human resource and the absence of a safety unit, and an efficient electronics security system. There is a need to conduct regular training of security staff so as to enhance their capacity. It is also necessary to improve and coordinate the security and safety of AUC offices abroad.

H. PROGRAMMING, BUDGETING, FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING

H.I. BUDGET EXECUTION

104. It will be recalled that the Assembly in its January 2007 session held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (Assembly/Au/Dec.154) has approved a total budget of US\$

132,988,152 for the year 2007 out of which US\$.83,301,152 was allotted for the operational budget while US\$.49,687,000 was earmarked for several programmes.

105. The Budget Execution of operational and programme budget for the eleven months ending November 30,2007 was as follows:

Budget Category	Appropriation	Expenditure and Obligation as at November 30,2007	Percentage of Budget Execution
Operational Budget of the Commission	64,872,380	46,008,756	71%
Other Organs	18,428,771	10,279,817	56%
Sub Total Operational Budget	83,301,151	56,288,573	68%
Programme Budget	49,687,000	15,458,904	31%
Grand Total	132,988,152	71,747,477	54%

106. During the eleven months of operation of the current fiscal year (January 1 to November 30, 2007), 53.95% of the total budget or US\$ 71,747,477 was executed. Out of the total appropriation US\$56,288,573(68%) and US\$15,458,904 (31%%) was spent on operating and program budget respectively.

107. The detailed budget execution by departments is annexed herewith.

H.II. COLLECTION

108. The source of funding of AU's budget approved for the year 2007 was from Member States and international partners. In this regard, US\$ 63,772,669.03 was received from Member States up to 30th November 2007 out of the total assessed contributions of US\$ 96,711,152. On the other hand, AU's international partners contributed US\$ 11,067,466.69 (30%) out of the total amount of US\$ 36.3 million pledged to finance programmes approved for the year. In addition, International partners contributed a total of US\$ 160,804,578.75 towards the Peace Fund during the period January 1-November 30, 2007.

H.III. PROGRESS ON THE IMIS PROJECT

H.III.1. Project background

109. As part of the second phase of the ITP project, the Commission has embarked on the transformation of the functions of the Finance and Administration Directorates in order to make them more efficient and effective, through the implementation of the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS). The first phase of the Implementation started with the IMIS design activities, which included business process reengineering activities and resulted into the preparation of the IMIS Bidding Documents – the IMIS Request for proposal Document.

H.III.2. Bidding process

110. A bid was launched for lots 1 and 2, via tender ref: AUC-IFMIS-05-06, inviting companies to respond to the tender offer on 15 May 2006.

Lot 1 (Application Software)

111. After series steps of the evaluation process, the Tender Board has awarded the Tender to the successful bidder on 23 Nov. 2007.

Lot 2 (hard ware and system software)

112. The evaluation of IMIS Lot 2 was finalized on 20th April 2007. Based on the report of the ad-hoc technical evaluation team the Tender Board awarded the contract to the successful bidder, Agresso AB. The contract for IMIS Lot 2 was signed with Agresso AB on 10th August 2007.

113. The following are the important milestones as per the revised implementation plan:

Lot 1

• Contract negotiation	5/2/08	-	7/2/08
• Contract award	10/2/08	-	15/2/08
• Project Planning	1/3/08	-	31/3/08
• Application Implementation	1/4/08	-	31/12/08
• Go Live	1/12/08	-	31/12/08
• Operational Acceptance	1/1/09	-	31/3/09
• Final Acceptance	1/4/09	-	30/6/09
• Project Evaluation & Closure	1/7/09	-	31/7/09
• Three Year Support	1/7/09	-	30/6/12

Lot 2

• Implementation	6/8/07	-	30/4/08
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H.IV. BUDGET EXECUTION REPORT BY DEPARTMENTS/SERVICES

30-Nov-07				
Departments	Budget 2007	Expenditure and Obligation Jan - Nov 30	Balance as of November 30,2007	Percentage of Budget Execution as at November 30, 2007
Policy Making Organs	1,015,795	969,573	46,222	95.45%
The Board of External Auditors	147,725	128,744.93	18,980.07	87.15%
Office of The Chairperson				

30-Nov-07				
Departments	Budget 2007	Expenditure and Obligation Jan - Nov 30	Balance as of November 30,2007	Percentage of Budget Execution as at November 30, 2007
Operational Budget	1,288,879	1,410,409.69	-121,530.69	109.43%
Programme Budget	4,742,000	1,245,162.54	3,496,837.46	26.26%
Women Gender and Development Division				
Operational Budget	420,928	247,443.62	173,484.38	58.79%
Programme Budget	1,040,000	309,992.30	730,007.70	29.81%
Strategic Planning				
Operational Budget	1,380,893	1,297,803.02	83,089.98	93.98%
Programme Budget	870,000	477,041.32	392,958.68	54.83%
Office of the Legal Council				
Operational Budget	558,251	392,079.25	166,171.75	70.23%
Programme Budget	976,000	27,287.07	948,712.93	2.80%
Office of the Internal Auditor				
Operational Budget	427,864	338,931.38	88,932.62	79.21%
Programme Budget	232,000	138,776.83	93,223.17	59.82%
New Partnership for African Development				
Operational Budget	206,119	3,784.22	202,334.78	1.84%
Civil Society in Diaspora				
Operational Budget	582,036	437,238.96	144,797.04	75.12%
Programme Budget	1,088,000	816,778.91	271,221.09	75.07%
Information and Communication				
Operational Budget	560,023	235,471.95	324,551.05	42.05%
Programme Budget	260,000	220,623.19	39,376.81	84.86%
Protocol Services				
Operational Budget	585,791	536,957.98	48,833.02	91.66%

30-Nov-07				
Departments	Budget 2007	Expenditure and Obligation Jan - Nov 30	Balance as of November 30,2007	Percentage of Budget Execution as at November 30, 2007
Programme Budget	70,000	52,707.24	17,292.76	75.30%
Special Units				
Operational Budget	421,693	336,421.50	85,271.50	79.78%
Bureau of the Deputy Chairperson				
Operational Budget	690,883	508,943.26	181,939.74	73.67%
Directorate of Administration				
Operational Budget	166,779	137,177.02	29,601.98	82.25%
Programme Budget	3,350,000	305,180.59	3,044,819.41	9.11%
Human Resources Services Division				
Operational Budget	5,048,302	4,697,954.38	350,347.62	93.06%
Medical Center				
Operational Budget	2,355,887	2,093,966.94	261,920.06	88.88%
Programme Budget	1,125,000	138,224.91	986,775.09	12.29%
Management Information Services				
Operational Budget	506,013	454,384.47	51,628.53	89.80%
Programme Budget	900,000	572,338.77	327,661.23	63.59%
Building Equipment and Transportation Services				
Operational Budget	1,681,916	1,302,763.03	379,152.97	77.46%
Administrative Services				
Operational Budget	107,455	111,956.97	-4,501.97	104.19%
Security Services Unit				
Operational Budget	510,468	530,151.50	-19,683.50	103.86%
Registry Services				
Operational Budget	1,146,016	923,089.29	222,926.71	80.55%

30-Nov-07				
Departments	Budget 2007	Expenditure and Obligation Jan - Nov 30	Balance as of November 30,2007	Percentage of Budget Execution as at November 30, 2007
Procurement and Travel Services Unit				
Operational Budget	1,064,520	414,001.23	650,518.77	38.89%
Stores Unit				
Operational Budget	116,674	111,956.97	4,717.03	95.96%
Programming Budgeting Financial Management and Accounting Directorate				
Operational Budget	176,777	78,293.05	98,483.95	44.29%
Programme Budget	3,643,000	2,534,714.94	1,108,285.06	69.58%
Pre Auditing				
Operational Budget	134,550	79,482.21	55,067.79	59.07%
Programming and Budgeting Division				
Operational Budget	248,828	195,889.61	52,938.39	78.72%
Financial Management				
Operational Budget	441,405	452,904.44	-11,499.44	102.61%
Accounting Division				
Operational Budget	331,196	426,725.53	-95,529.53	128.84%
Directorate of Conference				
Operational Budget	371,452	175,221.27	196,230.73	47.17%
Programme Budget	660,000	92,412.79	567,587.21	14.00%
Conference Services				
Operational Budget	4,865,548	2,774,577.34	2,090,970.66	57.02%
Publishing and Reproduction Unit				
Operational Budget	726,021	345,314.84	380,706.16	47.56%
Peace and Security- Office of the Commissioner				
Operational Budget	338,098	284,578.00	53,520.00	84.17%

30-Nov-07				
Departments	Budget 2007	Expenditure and Obligation Jan - Nov 30	Balance as of November 30,2007	Percentage of Budget Execution as at November 30, 2007
Programme Budget	9,119,000	28,195.74	9,090,804.26	0.31%
Directorate of Peace and Security				
Operational Budget	223,288	357,543.01	-134,255.01	160.13%
Conflict Management Division				
Operational Budget	1,451,519	640,116.05	811,402.95	44.10%
Peace Support Operation Division				
Operational Budget	658,844	424,335.04	234,508.96	64.41%
Defence and Security Division				
Operational Budget	222,542	82,819.26	139,722.74	37.22%
Project Management Team				
Operational Budget	154,959	13,322.47	141,636.53	8.60%
Peace Security Council Secretariat				
Operational Budget	168,000	9,854.39	158,145.61	5.87%
Department of Political Affairs-Office of the Commissioner				
Operational Budget	349,709	391,009.61	-41,300.61	111.81%
Programme Budget	3,318,000	2,608,003.50	709,996.50	78.60%
Directorate of Political Affairs				
Operational Budget	163,454	269,298.33	-105,844.33	164.75%
Democracy, Governance, Human Rights and Election Division				
Operational Budget	1,713,811	1,551,582.30	162,228.70	90.53%
Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees and Displaced Persons				

30-Nov-07				
Departments	Budget 2007	Expenditure and Obligation Jan - Nov 30	Balance as of November 30,2007	Percentage of Budget Execution as at November 30, 2007
Operational Budget	329,884	121,656.60	208,227.40	36.88%
Infrastructure and Energy - Office of the Commissioner				
Operational Budget	537,646	483,109.65	54,536.35	89.86%
Programme Budget	5,311,000	1,031,939.69	4,279,060.31	19.43%
Directorate of Infrustructure and Energy				
Operational Budget	150,355	164,957.67	-14,602.67	109.71%
Energy Division				
Operational Budget	212,207	119,464.56	92,742.44	56.30%
Transport and Tourism Division				
Operational Budget	215,756	175,642.25	40,113.75	81.41%
Telecom and Post Division				
Operational Budget	207,540	149,451.07	58,088.93	72.01%
Department of Social Affairs- Office of the Commissioner				
Operational Budget	571,512	413,140.85	158,371.15	72.29%
Programme Budget	3,000,000	855,895.03	2,144,104.97	28.53%
Directorate of Social Affairs				
Operational Budget	227,827	117,168.36	110,658.64	51.43%
Health Nutrition, Population HIV/ AIDs				
Operational Budget	314,311	291,746.53	22,564.47	92.82%
Labour, Employment and Migration Division				
Operational Budget	237,701	235,699.26	2,001.74	99.16%
Social Welfare Division				
Operational Budget	310,141	167,006.87	143,134.13	53.85%
Department of Human Resources Science and Technology - Office of the				

30-Nov-07				
Departments	Budget 2007	Expenditure and Obligation Jan - Nov 30	Balance as of November 30,2007	Percentage of Budget Execution as at November 30, 2007
Commissioner				
Operational Budget	692,336	397,029.47	295,306.53	57.35%
Programme Budget	4,668,000	1,241,576.53	3,426,423.47	26.60%
Directorate - Human Resources, Science and Technology				
Operational Budget	165,325	108,332.88	56,992.12	65.53%
Human Resources and Youth Division				
Operational Budget	145,563	86,077.19	59,485.81	59.13%
Science and Technology Division				
Operational Budget	216,485	290,048.89	-73,563.89	133.98%
Education Division				
Operational Budget	96,887	95,159.87	1,727.13	98.22%
Department of Trade and Industry - Office of the Commissioner				
Operational Budget	315,208	311,073.67	4,134.33	98.69%
Programme Budget	720,000	265,049.82	454,950.18	36.81%
Directorate of Trade and Industry				
Operational Budget	142,978	136,600.40	6,377.60	95.54%
Trade Custom and Immigration				
Operational Budget	356,013	165,722.19	190,290.81	46.55%
Industry Division				
Operational Budget	213,165	96,732.01	116,432.99	45.38%
Customs Cooperation Division				
Operational Budget	302,183	94,631.50	207,551.50	31.32%
Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture-Office of the Commissioner				

30-Nov-07				
Departments	Budget 2007	Expenditure and Obligation Jan - Nov 30	Balance as of November 30,2007	Percentage of Budget Execution as at November 30, 2007
Operational Budget	405,923	338,514.14	67,408.86	83.39%
Programme Budget	2,300,000	1,730,424.01	569,575.99	75.24%
Directorate of Rural Economy and Food Security				
Operational Budget	140,741	194,910.08	-54,169.08	138.49%
Rural Economy, Natural Resources and Environment Division				
Operational Budget	338,910	289,127.87	49,782.13	85.31%
Agriculture and Food security Division				
Operational Budget	310,030	249,825.31	60,204.69	80.58%
Rural Economy Division				
Operational Budget	93,663	125,435.83	-31,772.83	133.92%
PATTEC				
Operational Budget	142,666	127,018.81	15,647.19	89.03%
Department of Economic Affairs-Office of the Commissioner				
Operational Budget	384,551	369,045.82	15,505.18	95.97%
Programme Budget	2,295,000	766,578.07	1,528,421.93	33.40%
Directorate of Economic Affairs				
Operational Budget	245,634	167,675.12	77,958.88	68.26%
Economic Integration and Regional Cooperation Division				
Operational Budget	278,151	262,611.48	15,539.52	94.41%
Economic Policies, Research and Statistics				
Operational Budget	415,296	284,928.05	130,367.95	68.61%
Private Sector Development; Investment and Resource Mobilization Division				

30-Nov-07				
Departments	Budget 2007	Expenditure and Obligation Jan - Nov 30	Balance as of November 30,2007	Percentage of Budget Execution as at November 30, 2007
Operational Budget	267,694	172,486.48	95,207.52	64.43%
Subtotal (operational and Programmes)				
Operational Budget	42,715,193	32,976,102	9,739,091	77.20%
Programme Budget	49,687,000	15,458,904	34,228,096	31.11%
Subvention and Grants				
Refugees and IDPs	1,030,425	75,940.86	954,484.14	7.37%
Subvention/Grants	500,000	457,492.43	42,507.57	91.50%
Assistance to Member States	200,000	0.00	200,000.00	0.00%
Special Emergency Funds	1,000,000	0.00	1,000,000.00	0.00%
Peace Funds	2,939,584	207,636.57	2,731,947.43	7.06%
	5,670,009	741,070	4,928,939	
Other Organs				
Pan African Parliament	12,626,271	7,390,532.91	5,235,738.09	58.53%
African Court on Human and Peoples Rights	4,747,500	2,322,095.54	2,425,404.46	48.91%
Ecosoc	1,055,000	567,188.88	487,811.12	53.76%
	18,428,771	10,279,817.33	8,148,953.67	55.78%
Regional Offices				
Algiers	2,109,785	763,009.32	1,346,775.68	36.17%
New York	1,554,273	1,612,698.65	-58,425.65	103.76%
Brussels	1,458,017	1,403,567.78	54,449.22	96.27%
Washington DC	957,234	1,128,650.20	-171,416.20	117.91%
Geneva	1,893,847	1,985,370.17	-91,523.17	104.83%
Banjul	1,699,407	870,973.77	828,433.23	51.25%
Cairo	579,516	629,607.32	-50,091.32	108.64%
Niamey	701,968	450,163.50	251,804.50	64.13%
Lagos	1,052,241	244,564.76	807,676.24	23.24%

30-Nov-07				
Departments	Budget 2007	Expenditure and Obligation Jan - Nov 30	Balance as of November 30,2007	Percentage of Budget Execution as at November 30, 2007
Kenya	1,138,870	1,163,148.13	-24,278.13	102.13%
Conakry	468,462	186,258.45	282,203.55	39.76%
Ouagadougou	795,760	574,057.01	221,702.99	72.14%
Yaounde	824,995	624,671.60	200,323.40	75.72%
PANVAC	810,640	302,573.18	508,066.82	37.33%
Lilongwe	442,163	352,269.57	89,893.43	79.67%
	16,487,178	12,291,583	4,195,595	74.55%
Total	132,988,151	71,747,477	61,240,674	53.95%
Summary				
Total Operational Budget	83,301,151	56,288,573	27,012,578	67.57%
Total Programme Budget	49,687,000	15,458,904	34,228,096	31.11%
	132,988,151	71,747,477	61,240,674	53.95%

I. PEACE AND SECURITY

114. Since the last session of Council, the Commission has pursued efforts to put in place the various components of the continental peace and security architecture, as stipulated in the Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC). Similarly, initiatives to implement the AU Border Programme were taken. These were based on the Executive Council's decision in Accra to endorse the Declaration adopted by the Conference of African Ministers in charge of border issues, held in Addis Ababa in June 2007, with the two-fold purpose of promoting structural prevention of conflicts and strengthening integration dynamics on the Continent.

115. The Commission also gave its attention to situations of conflict and those of countries engaged in reconstruction and peace building processes. It continued to support peace efforts on the Continent through the deployment, under generally difficult conditions, of peace support operations, to be involved in mediation processes, and the provision of support, though symbolic at present, to post-conflict reconstruction and development initiatives.

116. Mobilizing the international community to support the Continent's efforts remained one of the Commission's priorities. Action in that regard mainly concerned the replenishment of the African Peace Facility (APF), set up by the European Union (EU) at AU's request, and follow-up of the January 2007 Assembly decision on the

funding, through United Nations assessed contributions, of peace support operations conducted by the AU or under its authority, with the consent of the Security Council.

I.I. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONTINENTAL PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

117. During the period under review, noticeable progress was made towards establishing the continental peace and security architecture. The paragraphs which follow discuss the signing and ratification of the Protocol relating to the establishment of the PSC, the official installation of the Panel of the Wise, efforts to operationalize the Continental Early Warning System and the African Standby Force, as well as the finalization of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation between the AU and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

118. At the time of finalizing this report, 51 Member States had signed the PSC Protocol, while 43 had both signed and ratified it. Côte d'Ivoire ratified the Protocol on 24 August 2007 and deposited its instrument of ratification on 3 October 2007. Two Member States are yet to sign and ratify the Protocol: Cape Verde and Eritrea. The following Member States have signed the Protocol, but have not yet ratified it: Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritania, Seychelles and Somalia. These countries are urged to take without any further delay all the steps required to become parties to the Protocol.

I.I.1. Panel of the Wise

119. The Protocol relating to the establishment of the PSC provides for the establishment of a Panel of the Wise to support the efforts of the PSC and those of the Chairperson of the Commission, particularly in the area of conflict prevention. The Council will recall that, on the basis of a proposal by the Commission, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, at its session held in Addis Ababa in January 2007, had appointed members of the Panel. The Assembly requested the Commission to take all necessary steps to rapidly set up the Panel, including finalizing the Modalities for its functioning and drawing up a programme of work. In that connection, the document on the Modalities for the functioning of the Panel was approved by the PSC on 12 November 2007, as the Commission was preparing a draft programme of work for 2008.

120. The Panel of the Wise was formally installed on 18 December 2007 in Addis Ababa, in the presence of representatives of Member States and other members of the diplomatic corps in Ethiopia, as well as the United Nations. This ceremony was followed by the inaugural meeting of the Panel, which was devoted to consideration of its programme of work for 2008. The Panel agreed to hold its next meeting in Addis Ababa in mid-February 2008. Meanwhile, the Commission will endeavour to mobilize the necessary human and financial resources for the Panel to effectively fulfil its mandate.

I.I.2. Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)

121. The Commission has pursued its efforts aimed at operationalizing the CEWS in line with the decision of the 10th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, held in Addis Ababa, in January 2007, which endorsed the Framework for the Operationalization of the CEWS and requested “the Commission to take all the necessary steps for the timely and full implementation of the CEWS by 2009”.

122. In order to enhance the data collection and information gathering capacity of the AU Situation Room, which is a key component of the CEWS, steps are underway to develop a software, the Africa News Brief, which will facilitate automatic information gathering from a variety of sources in real time and in all AU languages. To support the development of the new software, an assessment of the IT infrastructure has been done. The Commission is in the process of acquiring the necessary equipment that will make the new data and information gathering system for the CEWS fully operational in 2008. The Commission is also working on a draft CEWS Methodology Handbook on Strategic Conflict Assessment (SCA), to assist analysts within the Conflict Management Division (CMD) to monitor and analyze potential conflict situations in Africa. The Handbook will be finalized during a meeting with the Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in mid-February 2008, and is intended to be a common methodology for use by both the AU and the Regional Mechanisms.

I.I.3 African Standby Force (ASF)

123. At Accra, the Commission informed Council that preparations were underway for a meeting of African Ministers of Defence and Security to validate the basic instruments of the ASF prepared at workshops organized by the Commission in association with the regions between January and April 2006. The workshops examined issues relating to doctrine; standing operational procedures; command, control, communication and information systems; training and evaluation, as well as logistics. Initiatives were further taken in respect of other aspects, including the civil component of the ASF.

124. Since then, the Commission has pursued its efforts so that the envisaged Ministerial meeting to be preceded by that of Chiefs-of-Staff and Heads of Security Services, can be held as soon as possible. In this respect, it should be noted that the basic instruments prepared by the aforementioned workshops have now been finalized. The delay recorded in the finalization of the said instruments is attributable to their volume and complexity as well as the translation thereof into all the working languages of the AU.

125. Following initial consultations in March 2007 in Addis Ababa and a tour of the five regional brigades, the ASF Task Force on Logistic Depots submitting its recommendations at a meeting held in Addis Ababa in July 2007. The recommendations concern, among others, the criteria to be used in establishing and locating logistic depots, consideration of proposals from regions, the potential duties and organization of depots, the detailed list with precise figures of material and equipment needed by both the AU and regions, and the schedule for the establishment of logistic depots.

126. The experience of recent years has shown the necessity for the AU to be able, within the scope of the ASF, to react rapidly and to effectively intervene with the required urgency in situations of conflict. The meeting of African Ministers of Defence and Security will discuss this issue. Accordingly, a preparatory workshop on the proposed Rapid Deployment Force was organized in Addis Ababa in July 2007. A training meeting for the ASF, bringing together participants from the regions, the United Nations, and partners from the G8+ was further organized in Addis Ababa in October 2007. At the meeting, all the stakeholders concerned adopted a training plan for the ASF for the period October 2007 to June 2010. Lastly, the initial draft on the evaluation of the ASF was prepared during the same period, and should be finalized in early 2008. It should serve as a guide to RECs/Regions in evaluating the operational availability of ASF brigades.

127. For its part, the PSC organized a briefing on the ASF on 21 November 2007, bringing together all the regional brigades. After commending the efforts made by the Commission and the regional brigades, the PSC urged the Commission to speed up the preparation of the documents to be submitted to the meeting of Ministers of Defence and Security.

128. Lastly, I would like to bring to the knowledge of the Council that the Government of the United States of America informed the Commission of its willingness to put at its disposal an integrated command, control and communication system which would, among other things, enable the various regional brigades to be interlinked with the AU Headquarters and to enhance AU capacity to conduct multidimensional peace support operations within the framework of the ASF. In response, the Commission thanked the American Government, pointing out that all offers of support regarding the ASF communication system could only be considered once the specific needs of the Force have been identified and the necessary decisions taken by relevant authorities of the AU.

I.I.4 Protocol cooperation agreement between the AU and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution

129. Article 16 of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the PSC deals with the relationship between the AU and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution which are part of the overall security architecture of the Union, which has the primary responsibility for promoting peace, security and stability in Africa. In this respect, the Protocol provides that the PSC and the Chairperson of the Commission shall harmonize and coordinate the activities of Regional Mechanisms. To facilitate such coordination, the Protocol stipulates that “a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation shall be concluded between the Commission and the Regional Mechanisms”.

130. In this regard, a meeting of experts from Regional Mechanisms and the AU was organized by the Commission in Kampala, Uganda, from 31 August to 2 September 2007, to consider and finalize the draft Protocol Agreement which will govern cooperation between them. The document finalized in Kampala spells out the objectives sought and principles of implementation of the Protocol. The document further lists the areas of cooperation between the AU and the Regional Mechanisms, which include the establishment of an operational continental architecture for peace

and security, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction, border management, capacity building and resource mobilization. As concerns cooperation modalities, the draft Protocol makes provision for regular exchange of information, periodic meetings, the opening of liaison offices and joint field activities. Finally, the draft Protocol further includes provisions on relations with the United Nations and other international stakeholders.

131. The draft Protocol should be formally adopted during the Retreat bringing together the Regional Mechanisms and the AU in early January 2008 in Algiers. The Retreat will also offer the opportunity to assess efforts made to date to establish the continental architecture for peace and security and to come to terms on the best ways and means of strengthening relations between the AU and the Regional Mechanisms.

I.II STRUCTURAL CONFLICT PREVENTION - IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AU BORDER PROGRAMME

132. At its Accra Session, the Executive Council took a Decision endorsing the Declaration on the AU Border Programme (AUBP) and its implementation modalities as adopted by the Conference of African Ministers in charge of Border Issues held in Addis Ababa on 7 June 2007. Council requested the Commission and Member States to take all the necessary steps to ensure the implementation of the Declaration and to regularly report to the AU policy organs. Council will recall that the Declaration hinges on three points: the delimitation and demarcation of African borders that have not yet been subject to this exercise; development of cross-border cooperation, especially local initiatives; and capacity building and resource mobilization.

133. For the monitoring of the Decision, the Commission organized a meeting of experts, on 1 to 2 December 2007 in Djibouti, with participants from the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), African river basin organizations, the Sahel and West African Club, the Secretariat and other agencies of the United Nations, as well as other AU partners and specialized organs. At the meeting, a matrix for the implementation of the AUBP was drawn up, prioritising activities to be carried out and partnerships to be built.

134. The Commission will, in the months ahead strive to implement the priority actions identified. Measures are also being taken to provide the Commission with the human resources and expertise needed to ensure the proper monitoring of the AUBP.

I.III CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS

I.III.1 COMOROS

135. At its last Session in Accra, Council was informed of developments in the Comorian Island of Anjouan and of efforts made by the Commission and countries of the region to solve the crisis arising from the refusal by the illegal authorities of Anjouan to organize fresh presidential elections in the Island under the required

conditions of security and transparency, and more generally, to comply with the fundamental instruments governing the running of the Union. Council, among others, urged countries of the region to pursue and scale up their efforts to enable the PSC to meet as soon as possible in order to take the appropriate decision concerning the Comoros.

136. Following consultations on the margins of the Executive Council Session, countries of the region agreed to meet in Pretoria, South Africa, on 8 and 9 July 2007. The Ministerial Committee met as scheduled, and adopted a number of recommendations making provision for a two-phase approach: firstly, free, fair and transparent elections will be held in Anjouan to elect the President of the Island; then the necessary steps will be taken to find lasting solutions to the inadequacies of current institutional arrangements, including the sharing of power between the Union and the Autonomous Islands. The Committee commissioned my Special Envoy for the Comoros, Francesco Madeira, to officially forward its conclusions to the authorities of the Union of the Comoros and those of the Autonomous Island of Anjouan. The Special Envoy duly undertook a mission to the Comoros from 23 to 27 July 2007 with the purpose of assessing the situation in the Islands and formally receiving the responses of the parties concerned. While the Union Government accepted the proposals made by countries of the region to end the crisis, the authorities of the Anjouan Island rejected them.

137. At its 87th Meeting held in Addis Ababa on 13 August 2007, the PSC deplored the fact that the Anjouan authorities did not give the expected favourable reception to the efforts made to end the crisis. The PSC requested the Commission to work in close collaboration with countries of the region to come up with concrete proposals, considering every option, including individual and targeted sanctions to be imposed on the de facto authorities of Anjouan.

138. Subsequently, a meeting of high-ranking officials from countries of the region and MAES troop-contributing countries was held in Addis Ababa on 4 September 2007. The meeting came up with recommendations which were considered by the Ministerial Committee of countries of the region in Pretoria on 18 September 2007. The Committee submitted proposals on how to end the crisis to the Union Government and the illegal authorities of Anjouan. In concrete terms, the Committee proposed that a presidential election should be organized in Anjouan as soon as possible to elect the president of the Autonomous Island of Anjouan so that the situation in the Island can be brought to normal, given that during the election, security will be provided by the AU alone. The Committee agreed that immediately following the conduct of the poll in Anjouan, measures will be taken to find appropriate solutions to the issue of power sharing between the Union and the Autonomous Islands as well as to that of governance. Whereas the Union Government accepted these proposals, the illegal authorities of Anjouan once more rejected them.

139. Based on the consultations, and upon discussion among its members, the Ministerial Committee came up with recommendations for the PSC. They notably provide for individual and other sanctions to be imposed on all persons obstructing the reconciliation process in the Comoros (ban on travel, freezing of funds, other financial assets and economic resources, restriction on air and maritime links to and from Anjouan). Similarly, the Committee recommended that the mandate of the

African Union Electoral and Security Assistance Mission to the Comoros (MAES) should be reviewed to support the implementation of these sanctions.

140. At its 95th Meeting held on 10 October 2007 in Addis Ababa, the PSC endorsed the recommendations of the Ministerial Committee. More specifically, the PSC decided to impose the proposed sanctions, for an initial period of 45 days, on the illegal authorities of Anjouan and any other person obstructing the reconciliation process in Anjouan. The PSC further decided to review the mandate of MAES, reiterating the necessity to strengthen it, and that a follow-up mechanism should be established in Moroni, under AU management. It also underscored the importance of international community support to boost the measures taken.

141. The Commission took a number of measures in furtherance of the implementation of this decision. Accordingly, the list of individuals and entities under sanctions, as established by the Comorian Government, was transmitted to AU Member States and partners; the follow-up mechanism was put in place and has since been holding regular meetings to assess progress in the implementation of the sanctions; a number of steps were taken to strengthen the MAES. It should moreover be stated that the drive to mobilize the international community has yielded some successes, as attested by the support given by the Indian Ocean Commission, the International Organization of the Francophonie, the League of Arab States, the European Union and the United States towards the implementation of the sanctions decided by the AU.

142. Generally, the Government of the Union of the Comoros and the Comorian people welcomed the PSC decision. For their part, the illegal authorities of Anjouan reacted defiantly, considering the meeting of 10 October 2007 as a “non event “. They continue to demand the holding of an inter-Comorian Round Table as a pre-condition for any new elections to be organized in Anjouan. They also declared certain measures, such as banning a number of top ranking Anjouan personalities, including the President of the Union, from visiting the Island, and others, opposed to them, from leaving Anjouan. Similarly, they took reprisal measures against members of the families of the personalities concerned.

143. Although the sanctions imposed by the AU have not yet yielded the expected results, mainly because of the limited resources available to the Commission to carry out the required follow-up, they have resulted in the further isolation of the illegal authorities of Anjouan and increased the pressure on them to submit to the demands of the AU and of the international community in general. It is on these grounds that at its 102nd Meeting held in 26 November 2007, the PSC decided to extend the sanctions for an additional period of 60 days, and urged AU partners to continue upholding the sanctions; it called on the United Nations Security Council in particular to support the AU efforts. The PSC requested Member States to give the Commission the necessary logistic and other support to facilitate more effective follow-up of the implementation of the sanctions, and reiterated the need to strengthen the MAES whose mandate was extended.

144. At the same time, the PSC reaffirmed the AU’s commitment to explore all avenues that can lead to a peaceful, negotiated solution based on the framework laid down by countries of the region at the meetings held in Cape Town and Pretoria in June and July 2007 respectively. The PSC requested countries of the region to meet

once more and submit any recommendations deemed appropriate. Upon consultation with South Africa, coordinator of the regional efforts on the Comoros, it was agreed that the meeting should be held on the fringe of the current Session of the Executive Council.

145. The Commission wishes to once more reiterate the need to do everything possible to restore the authority of the Comorian Government in Anjouan and to organize the election for the President of the Island, under the required conditions of transparency, thus paving the way for seeking effective solutions to the problems of governance confronting the Islands. Any further delay in solving the crisis, arising from the attitude of the illegal authorities of Anjouan could seriously jeopardize the unity of the Islands and set back the progress recorded in recent years thanks to the efforts made by the AU with the backing of the international community.

146. The Commission wishes to convey its gratitude to countries of the region and MAES troop-contributing countries for their continued commitment in view of the settlement of the Comorian crisis. It appeals to all Member States which can afford it to lend the necessary material and financial support to the MAES. It commends the assistance coming from our international community partners, and requests them to further rally behind the efforts being made by the AU.

I.III.2. Somalia

147. Last July, in Accra, the Commission updated Council on the developments in Somalia. It emphasized that Somalia was at a crossroad and that a real opportunity existed to open a new chapter in the history of that country, urging the international community to take advantage of the situation to bring to a definite end to the conflict that has afflicted Somalia and its people for more than a decade. In this respect, Council was informed of the steps taken by the Commission, in pursuance of the PSC decision of January 2007, including the deployment of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The efforts initiated by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to sustain the reconciliation process through the convening of a National Reconciliation Congress (NRC) were also noted.

148. The period under review witnessed the convening of the NRC, in Mogadishu, from 15 July to 30 August 2007. Over 2,600 participants took part in the Congress, which was organized by a National Governance and Reconciliation Committee chaired by former President Ali Mahdi Mohamed. However, some of the actors who could have contributed significantly to the NRC decided to stay away; this included a section of the Hawiye clan in Mogadishu, as well as opposition groups based abroad.

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

outside Parliament. Subsequently, a delegation of Somali leaders including notably President Abdullahi Yusuf, Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi and former President Ali Mahdi visited Saudi Arabia in mid-September 2007, where they signed an agreement on the implementation of the outcomes of the NRC.

150. On their part, the various opposition groups met in Asmara from 6 to 13 September 2007, where they held a parallel Congress, attended, among others, by representatives of the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), the 'Free Parliamentarians' led by the former Speaker of the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP), Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, members of the Somali diaspora and some clan leaders. The meeting agreed on the formation of an Alliance for the Liberation and Reconstitution of Somalia, with the stated aim of liberating Somalia from "Ethiopian occupation" and launching a political process that would involve all Somali stakeholders and rebuild the Somali State. The Alliance predicated talks with the TFG on an Ethiopian withdrawal from Somalia.

151. The period under consideration also witnessed heightened tension within the TFG, with a deepening rift between President Yusuf and Prime Minister Gedi over issues of transparency and accountability, as well as diverging interpretations of the TFC regarding the term in office of the Prime Minister and the implications thereof. This tension was eventually overcome with the resignation of Prime Minister Ali Gedi on 29 October 2007. He was replaced by Nur Hassan Houssien, a former Head of the ICRC in Somalia. The Prime Minister is currently in the process of forming a cabinet.

152. Since his appointment, the new Prime Minister has repeatedly stressed that reconciliation would be at the heart of his activities during his tenure in office. In this respect, it is worth noting the assurances he gave to my new Special Representative for Somalia, Nicolas Bwakira, as well as to the participants to the meeting convened by the United States' Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, in Addis Ababa, on 5 December 2007, to discuss developments pertaining to peace and security in the region.

153. In the meantime, the International Contact Group (ICG) on Somalia met in Rome on 10 September 2007. The AU participated in the meeting, which welcomed the commitments of the NRC, as well as those of President Abdullahi Yusuf at the closing session of the Congress to "pave a new political path that will win the confidence of the Somali people" and to continue the dialogue process. The ICG called upon the TFIs to implement in good faith the recommendations of the NRC, including the urgent drawing up of a Roadmap for the remainder of the transitional period.

154. While the TFG and Ethiopian forces have continued to make sustained efforts to improve security in Mogadishu, the situation in the capital remains precarious, with an average of 5 to 6 incidents per day. Most of the incidents reported during the period under consideration involved the use of grenade attacks, roadside bombs, mortar attacks and small arms fire against the TFG and Ethiopian forces, as well as clashes between the security forces and the insurgents. The attacks by the insurgents increased significantly immediately after the NRC, in October 2007, but abated thereafter, thanks notably to the operations undertaken by the Ethiopian forces in November 2007. Inter-clan incidents were also reported in other regions of

Somalia. These clashes, which are common at this time of the year, are mostly related to control of water sources, grazing lands and revenue collection.

155. Somalia is one of the highest-risk areas for piracy in the world. According to available statistics, during the first nine months of 2007, 36 pirate attacks or attempted attacks were recorded in the waters around the Horn of Africa and Arabian Peninsula. Over the past years, the AU has regularly been approached by a number of countries whose citizens were taken hostage or kidnapped in Somali waters. This situation, amongst others, threatens the delivery of humanitarian assistance, especially since approximately 80% of the assistance to Somalia by the World Food Programme is shipped by sea. Against this background, the Commission welcomes the steps taken by France to protect humanitarian supplies to Somalia and the consultations undertaken with the AU in this respect in order to facilitate coordination with AMISOM.

156. The prevailing security situation in Mogadishu, in particular, and Somalia, in general, has led to the worsening of the humanitarian situation in the country, including an increase in the number of the internally displaced persons. Furthermore, the ability of aid agencies to deliver assistance is severely hampered by a number of factors, notably difficulties related to access to needy population and restrictions placed on their movements.

157. During the period under review, no significant progress was made in strengthening AMISOM, owing to the continued financial and logistical constraints facing the Commission. To date, out of the 8,000 troops authorized by the PSC, only 2 Ugandan battalions are on the ground, in Mogadishu. However, at the time of finalizing this report, steps were underway to deploy the first of the two battalions pledged by Burundi. No timetable has yet been set for the deployment of the remaining Burundian battalion and the contingents pledged by Ghana and Nigeria. Also, no new contributions of troops were recorded.

158. Consequently, AMISOM has not been able to expand its activities. The Mission continues to provide VIP escort and conduct confidence patrols within its immediate area of operations, as well as provide limited humanitarian assistance to the civilian population. The Commission would like, once again, to express appreciation to the Ugandan troops for their efforts, in spite of the very challenging conditions in which they are working. This appreciation also goes to the Ugandan Government for its continued commitment. The Commission would like to seize this opportunity to express gratitude to all the countries and institutions that have made contributions in support of AMISOM.

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

called on the United Nations to put in place a financial, logistical and technical support package for AMISOM, within the context of the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

160. As a follow-up to the PSC decision, I wrote, on 4 August 2007, to the United Nations Secretary-General, echoing the call by the PSC for the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia and the provision of support to AMISOM. I stressed that failure by the international community to act swiftly in support of the ongoing process could undermine the modest progress already achieved in Somalia, with far reaching regional implications and further suffering for the Somali people.

161. In response, the UN Secretary-General, in his letter of 24 September 2007, indicated that, in his view, the most immediate priority for the international community at this stage is to assist in bringing together all Somali groups under a credible and genuine peace process. He stated that it was crucial to ensure that conducive conditions are created before a possible deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation. In the meantime, he expressed United Nations' readiness to explore with the AU how the UN may provide further assistance in strengthening and expanding the presence of AMISOM on the ground.

162. In his report of 7 November 2007 on the situation in Somalia, the Secretary-General reiterated his belief that, under the prevailing political and security situation, the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation cannot be considered a realistic and viable option. He proposed to look at additional security options, including the deployment of a robust multinational force or coalition of the willing. On its part, the Security Council, both in its resolution 1772 (2007) and presidential statement of 19 December 2007, urged the international community to provide support to AMISOM, and requested the Secretary-General to consult with AU on what further support might be provided to the Mission and to continue to develop the existing contingency plan for the possible deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation to succeed AMISOM.

163. Clearly, in spite of the efforts made over the last year, there is still a long way to go to restore lasting peace and reconciliation in Somalia. During its 104th meeting held on 20 December 2007, the PSC stressed that the situation in Somalia represents one of the most serious peace and security challenges facing the continent. It noted that both Somalis and the international community as a whole have not been able to seize the window of opportunity that arose in December last year when the TFG regained control of Mogadishu and other parts of the country. The PSC agreed on the need for all stakeholders, both within Somalia and at the level of the international community, to explore new avenues in order to effectively address the situation and to muster the required political will and resources to bring to a definite end the more than decade long conflict that has afflicted Somalia and its people.

164. It is the earnest hope of the Commission that the present sessions of Council and the Assembly will undertake a thorough and objective assessment of the situation in Somalia and the efforts made so far, with a view to agreeing on a focused and determined course of action. Somalia is a test case of our determination to rid our continent of the scourge conflicts, as well as of the commitment of the United

Nations to fully assume its primary responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security. Failure to effectively address the situation in Somalia will have far reaching consequences, not only for that country but also for the region and beyond.

I.III.3 Peace Process between Eritrea and Ethiopia

165. During the period under review, no progress has been made in the peace process between Eritrea and Ethiopia, as the demarcation has remained paralyzed, amidst continued tension in the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ). Furthermore, the Military Coordination Commission (MCC), which is the only formal mechanism through which the parties can discuss pressing military and security issues, could not meet since July 2006, while the operations of the United Nations Mission in Eritrea-Ethiopia (UNMEE) continue to be seriously hampered by the restrictions imposed on it.

166. The situation in the TSZ established pursuant to the Algiers Agreement of June 2000 remains tense. According to UNMEE, Eritrea continues to maintain military presence and heavy military equipment, including tanks, in the TSZ, and has deployed additional military personnel and equipment into the zone during the period under consideration, while the troops and heavy equipment deployed in October 2006 by Ethiopia in areas adjacent to the TSZ have remained in position. Furthermore, UNMEE's ability to monitor the TSZ continues to be hampered by the numerous restrictions imposed on its operations by Eritrea. On 30 July 2007, the Security Council adopted resolution 1767(2007) through which it, inter alia, extended the mandate of UNMEE for a period of six months, until 31 January 2008, reiterated its demands that Eritrea immediately withdraw its troops and heavy military equipment from the TSZ, and called on Ethiopia to reduce the number of additional military forces recently introduced in certain areas adjacent to the TSZ. The Security Council demanded that the parties provide UNMEE with the necessary access, assistance, support and protection required for the performance of its duties, including its mandated tasks with regard to demarcation, and reiterated its demand that Eritrea reverse, without further delay or preconditions, all restrictions on UNMEE's movement and operations.

167. The MCC has not convened since its last meeting held in Nairobi in July 2006. As Council is aware, Ethiopia requests that the integrity of the TSZ be restored before resuming its participation in the MCC meetings. Eritrea, on the other hand, has informed UNMEE of its readiness to participate in the MCC meetings provided Ethiopia also expresses willingness to do so. Be that as it may, the parties have yet to respond officially to the invitation sent to them in June 2007 by UNMEE to attend an MCC meeting. In its resolution 1767(2007), the Security Council reiterated its call to both parties to fully cooperate with UNMEE with a view to urgently reactivating the work of the MCC.

168. On 6 and 7 September 2007, at The Hague, the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) met with the parties. However, no progress was made in overcoming the difficulties impeding the implementation of the April 2002 Delimitation Decision. Against this background, the EEBC reminded the parties of its statement of 27 November 2006, in which it gave them one year to settle their differences, after which, if no agreement is reached on how to proceed with the demarcation, "the

boundary will automatically stand as demarcated by the boundary points listed in the Annex hereto and the mandate of the Commission could then be regarded as fulfilled.” Accordingly, the EEBC officially terminated its activities at the end of November 2007, though, according to its statement of 12 September 2007, it “remains willing to resume pillar emplacement on the ground if both parties request and enable it to do so, give the necessary assurances of free access to the border zone and security for the Commission’s personnel, and meet their financial obligations”.

169. On 22 September 2007, the Ethiopian Foreign Minister wrote to his Eritrean counterpart, stressing that Eritrea, by introducing troops and heavy equipment in the TSZ, had committed a material breach of the Algiers Agreements. The Minister further stated that this situation could compel his country to consider resorting to legal and peaceful options under international law, including terminating the Algiers Agreements or suspending its participation in these instruments. The Minister also reiterated his country’s opposition to the decision of the EEBC to demarcate the border through map coordinates as contained in its statement of November 2006.

170. In response to this letter, the Eritrean Foreign Minister wrote to the Witnesses of the Algiers Agreements and to the President of the Security Council, accusing Ethiopia of repeated violations of the Algiers Agreements and of refusing to cooperate with the EEBC. He called on the Security Council to enforce the Delimitation Decision.

171. On 13 November 2007, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement in which it urged Ethiopia and Eritrea to take concrete steps to implement immediately and without preconditions the Delimitation Decision and to comply fully with the Algiers Agreements and its earlier resolutions and statements, including on the issue of demarcation. The Security Council called upon the parties to refrain from using force and to settle their disagreements by peaceful means, to normalize their relations, to promote stability between them and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace in the region. Finally, the Security Council confirmed the parties’ primary responsibility to resolve the border issue and their other differences, and expressed its readiness to endorse their commitments with respect to demarcation and normalization.

172. In conclusion, the Commission wishes to reiterate its deep concern at the continued stalemate in the Ethio-Eritrea peace process and at its implications for peace, security and stability in the region as a whole. Once again, the need for more sustained and coordinated efforts to help the parties overcome the current stalemate in the demarcation process and normalize their relations should be emphasized. As in the past, the AU stands ready to assist Eritrea and Ethiopia in such endeavour.

I.III.4. Burundi

173. In the last Report for the period January-June 2007, the Commission among other things highlighted the political and socio-economic problems facing Burundi in its efforts to strengthen peace and reconstruct the country. Some progress was recorded in the second half of the year, particularly in the relations between the Government and the Opposition. However, implementation of the Comprehensive

Ceasefire Agreement between the Government and Agathon Rwasa's wing of Palipehutu-FNL remained deadlocked.

174. The political crisis which paralysed the National Assembly and the Government for months on end died down, thanks to the dialogue initiated in August 2007 by the President of the Republic between the main Opposition parties - FRODEBU and UPRONA - and concluded to the satisfaction of all concerned. Thus, on 14 November 2007, the country set up a Government made up of the three main political parties - CNDD-FDD, FRODEBU and UPRONA - in accordance with the Constitution of Burundi.

175. The Palipehutu-FNL issue, which had been dogging the country for many years, remained unresolved. In this regard, it should be recalled that last July, the day after the 17 June 2007 meeting between President Pierre Nkurunziza and Agathon Rwasa in Dar-es-Salaam, a meeting which generated a lot of hope, and while the PSC was, at its meeting of 20 July 2007, urging the parties to honour their commitments so as to speed up implementation of the Agreement, Palipehutu-FNL delegates in the implementation structures unexpectedly decided to leave Bujumbura on 21 July 2007. The unceasing efforts of the Facilitation and the AU Mission in Burundi (AMIB), in collaboration with the United Nations, to get the parties to bring the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement implementation process to completion, have since remained unsuccessful.

176. In fact, the process became even more complicated. Armed men claiming to have dissociated themselves from Mr. Rwasa progressively moved into various locations around the capital. Called in by the Government to help, the Facilitator, after consultation with the Regional Initiative, was instructed to handle this particular issue from a purely humanitarian angle. The idea was to take care of these dissidents so as to dispel the danger that they could constitute for the neighbouring populations, pending resumption of the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement implementation process. These men have now assembled in two camps, Randa and Buramata, situated in the Bubanza province, North-West of the capital. The first camp is being guarded by the AU Special Forces in cooperation with government forces, while the second is under the sole responsibility of the Burundian authorities.

177. The appearance of these dissidents generated a number of questions: there was doubt as to whether those concerned were really from the Palipehutu-FNL and what would happen if they were to be given help. Indeed, called upon to extend their support to the process, the international partners initially expressed reservations. However, following consultations in this regard, their position is expected to soften somehow especially as the issue at stake is that of protecting the people already disoriented by the worsening insecurity situation.

178. At the socio-economic level, there was no end to the rise in the cost of living. This situation resulted in protest movements as evidenced mainly by strike actions in the public sector. Negotiations between the Government and the trade unions are yet to bear any fruit. It is worth recalling that, having been in the grips of international financial institutions, the Government did not really have any room for manoeuvre.

179. Lastly, the progress made in the area of transitional justice needs to be mentioned. Indeed, the Government set up a tripartite Steering Committee

(Government, UN and Civil Society) to consult with the people on establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Committee and a special tribunal.

I.III.5. Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

180. During the period under consideration, the political situation in the DRC continued to stabilise. In spite of the numerous problems facing them, the institutions resulting from the elections were functioning more or less normally, thus contributing to the progressive consolidation of State authority in all the provinces of the country. At the same time, there was newfound trust and confidence on the part of neighbouring countries and a revival of bilateral relations and regional cooperation. However, the hopes raised by this positive turn of events were dampened by the serious security and humanitarian situation in North Kivu.

181. The overall cordial relations between the Government and the Parliament paved the way for adoption of crucial laws, including those relating to decentralisation, the new Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and the 2007 budget. Draft laws on the status of the opposition, funding of political parties, the 2008 budget, local elections, as well as other reforms concerning the justice sector were under discussion. The Parliament also declared itself in favour of the ratification of the Security, Stability and Development Pact of the Great Lakes Region signed in Nairobi on 15 December 2006, as part of the process of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. It further established Commissions enabling it to take on its function of controlling government activity.

182. As mentioned above, the functioning of the various Congolese institutions was made all the more difficult by inadequate resources, the outdated state of basic services and by the bottlenecks arising from the way and manner the crisis exit process was being conducted. The concern, *inter alia*, to improve Government performance, foster cohesion among its members, more effectively backstop ongoing reforms, encourage and facilitate synergy with the other institutions, led the Head of State and the Prime Minister to review the government structure and to slash its staff complement from 56 to 48.

183. The positive development of the political situation observed in the country was followed by marked improvement in the regional climate. Thus, at the invitation of his Congolese counterpart, the Rwandan Foreign Minister undertook a working visit to Kinshasa, from 2 to 4 September 2007. The two delegations discussed issues of common interest, particularly the security situation in the East of the DRC, and agreed on the need to set up a consultation, monitoring and evaluation mechanism for management of their mutual commitments.

184. Additionally, following the incidents that occurred on Lake Albert, through which runs the border between the DRC and Uganda, the Foreign Ministers of the two countries prepared a meeting between their two Heads of State. Thus, at the invitation of President Jakaya Kikwete, Presidents Joseph Kabila and Yoweri Museveni met in Ngurdoto, in Tanzania. In a joint Communiqué issued at the end of the meeting, the two Heads of State reaffirmed their commitment to the ideals and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the Constitutive Act of the African Union and in the Security, Stability and Development Pact for the Great Lakes

Region. It is encouraging to note that the two countries took a decision to fully restore their diplomatic relations.

185. While the political situation and relations with the neighbouring countries gradually improved, the security and humanitarian situation in the Kivus, in general, and in North Kivu, in particular, continued to be a source of major concern. On this score, the threat that the ex-FAR/Interahamwé have continued to pose to peace and security in the DRC and in the region at large should not be ignored.

186. The *Congrès national pour la défense du peuple* (CNDP), a political *cum* military movement created by the dissident General Laurent Nkunda, constituted further source of serious concern. Given the failure of the various agreements concluded with the CNDP, particularly with a view to bringing to successful conclusion the process of training the national army, the Congolese Government decided to use force to restore its authority in the region. There have been ceaseless outbreaks of fighting between the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) and the dissidents since August 2007. On 3 December 2007, the FARDC launched a general offensive against the positions held by General Nkunda's men. Among the other national armed groups active in the field, mention must be made of the Mai-Mai militia which, on the pretext of protecting its community, refused to join in the process of training the national army.

187. The humanitarian situation engendered by the current fighting and violence in North Kivu have become quite worrying. The HCR has reported more than 800, 000 displaced persons and thousands of refugees notably in Uganda, as a result of the situation. Serious human rights violations have also been recorded.

188. At its 97th Meeting held on 25 October 2007, the PSC strongly condemned the acts perpetrated by General Laurent Nkunda and his men, and urged them to rejoin, without delay, the integration centres with a view to their integration into the Congolese army. It also, just as firmly, condemned the acts of destabilisation in the region, and the violence unleashed against the people by the ex-FAR/Interahamwé, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the other armed groups operating in the East of the DRC.

189. In this connection, it is important to mention the meetings held especially within the framework of the Tripartite + Mechanism. For instance, a Tripartite + meeting, under the facilitation of the Government of the United States of America, was held in Kampala from 15 to 17 September 2007. The Commission was represented in observer capacity, by a delegation headed by my Special Representative in Burundi and the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes. The meeting took important decisions reflected in a document entitled "Strategies to put an end to the threats to regional security by negative forces". This ministerial meeting was followed by that of the leadership of the armed forces and intelligence services of the concerned countries, held in Lubumbashi, on 1 and 2 October 2007.

190. In addition, in the margin of the meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Committee of the process of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, held in Nairobi from 7 to 9 November 2007, the Foreign Ministers of the DRC and Rwanda agreed on "a common approach to the threat posed by the ex-FAR/Interahamwé to security and stability in their two countries". In pursuance of this Agreement, a

Tripartite + Summit was held in Addis Ababa, on 5 December 2007, under the aegis of the United States of America. The Summit brought together the Heads of State of Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, as well as the Interior Minister of the DRC. The meeting, among other things, established a joint group to monitor implementation of the Nairobi Agreement. The AU is a member of this monitoring mechanism, which held its first meeting in Goma on 16 December 2007. In addition, a meeting of the Joint Verification Mechanism between the DRC and Rwanda was held on 20 and 21 December 2007 in Gisenyi, in application of the decision of the two countries' Foreign Ministers on the resumption of allegations verification.

191. At its meeting of 25 October 2007, the PSC invited the Commission to send a fact-finding mission to the DRC on the security problems along the borders with the CAR and The Sudan resulting among other things from population exodus, to assess the said problems in concert with all the concerned players and come up with pertinent recommendations. This request was in consequence of the information provided by the DRC Government representative at the PSC meeting, regarding the presence, in the Eastern Province, of Bororo preachers that came in from the countries of the region and the resultant security problems. Pursuant to this decision, I sent a delegation to the DRC and the CAR. The delegation was also mandated to visit The Sudan and other countries of the region, before submitting its report.

192. In conclusion, the Commission welcomes the progress made in the DRC during the period under review, and the efforts deployed by the Congolese Government to consolidate peace and promote the socio-economic revival of the country. In this respect, the Commission commends the Government for its decision to organise, in January 2008, a Conference on Peace, Development and Security of the North and South Kivu provinces, which would bring together representatives of the State, the Civil Society and the International Community. It encourages the countries of the region to pursue their efforts at promoting coordinated action to resolve the problems generated by the presence of armed groups. It urges the International Community to continue to provide support towards post-conflict reconstruction and development in the DRC.

I.III.6. Sudan

(i) South Sudan

193. At its last ordinary session, Council was briefed on the steps taken by the Sudanese parties in furtherance of their commitments under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), including their efforts to resolve the outstanding issues in the implementation of the CPA. Since then, the Commission has continued to follow closely the evolution of the situation, and maintained close contacts with both the parties and the international actors involved in the peace process, notably the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and the Assessment and Evaluation (AEC), through its Chairman, Ambassador Tom Vraalsen.

194. While the partners to the CPA, the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), have continued to stress their commitment to the Agreement, the period under review was essentially marked by further strains in their relationship, arising from the difficulties encountered in the implementation process of the CPA. Thus, on 11 October 2007, the SPLM

suspended the participation of its ministers and presidential advisors from the Government of National Unity (GoNU). The SPLM explained its decision by what it described as deliberate tactics by the NCP to obstruct the implementation of the CPA, highlighting, among others, issues relating to the demarcation of the North-South border, the implementation of the Abyei Protocol, the redeployment of the SAF, transparency in the sharing of oil revenues, the funding of the census process, and the failure of its partner in the CPA to act on a recommended reshuffle of SPLM ministers in the GoNU. The SPLM called on the international community to assist in resolving the impasse. Earlier on, especially in the month of September 2007, the SPLM had voiced serious concerns at the difficulties encountered in the implementation of the CPA, warning that such a situation could lead to a return to conflict.

195. On its part, the NCP, while rejecting the call to involve third parties, as joint mechanisms are provided for to address outstanding issues, urged the SPLM to lift the suspension of its participation in the GoNU. While visiting South Africa, President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir stressed that “there will be no return to war whatsoever,” and reiterated his Party’s commitment “to the full implementation of the Agreement in letter and spirit”, as well as his resolve to work together with the SPLM in genuine Partnership to resolve the outstanding issues and to achieve the unity of the Sudan. On 23 October 2007, the NCP presented to the international community in Khartoum a document stating that the SPLM and the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) had also acted in violation of the CPA and delayed its implementation. The document cited violations of the ceasefire arrangements, such as the failure of the SPLA to provide information required concerning maps, assembly areas and re-deployment of forces to the Ceasefire Joint Monitoring Commission (CJMC), as well as the fact that the GoSS went beyond the powers constitutionally conferred upon it.

196. In the meantime, in a statement issued on 16 October 2007, I expressed my deep concern at the difficulties facing the implementation process of the CPA. I urged the parties to take all steps required to address the outstanding issues and ensure the successful implementation of the CPA in both letter and spirit. I reiterated the commitment of the AU to continue working with the parties in this respect, as well as its full support to the CPA.

197. Clearly, while significant progress has been made in the implementation of the CPA, since 2005, through, inter alia, the adoption of the Interim National Constitution and the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan and the establishment of the institutions provided for in the Agreement, as well as the general compliance with the ceasefire, a number of challenges are yet to be overcome by the parties. It is against this background that the PSC, at its 89th meeting held on 24 August 2007, urged the parties, with the support of AU Member States, to intensify their efforts to address the outstanding issues in the implementation of the CPA, including the Abyei Protocol, the full redeployment of forces, the complete formation and deployment of the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs), the demarcation of the North-South border and wealth sharing, and ensure that all the necessary steps are taken in preparation for the forthcoming elections as stipulated in the CPA.

198. In view of the tension between the parties to the CPA and the implications thereof, the PSC convened yet another meeting on 27 November 2007 to review the situation. On that occasion, the PSC expressed its deep concern with regards to the

difficulties faced in the implementation process of the CPA and the suspension by the SPLM of its participation in the GoNU. The PSC stressed that failure to address the outstanding issues in the implementation process of the CPA could jeopardize the significant progress achieved thus far, with serious consequences for peace and stability in the Sudan and in the entire region. At the same time, the PSC noted with satisfaction that, in spite of these difficulties, both parties have reiterated their commitment to the CPA and their determination to seek a solution through peaceful means and dialogue. It urged the parties to expedite their consultations and spare no efforts to overcome the obstacles impeding the full implementation of the CPA.

199. I am pleased to inform Council that, on 11 December 2007, following extensive discussions between the two partners to the CPA, the SPLM announced that its ministers would be rejoining the GoNU soon. The parties further agreed on other confidence building measures aimed at strengthening the relations between the North and the South. In this respect, they agreed that the National Assembly would meet in Juba, the capital of South Sudan, four times a year; they also decided that 9 January, the day on which the CPA was signed, would be officially designated as a peace day in Sudan. While the Abyei impasse remains to be resolved, the parties hope that these preliminary initiatives would help to smooth the way towards national reconciliation.

200. In its communiqué of 24 August 2007, the PSC requested the Commission to take all the necessary steps to fully support the implementation of the CPA, including through the appointment of a new Special Envoy and the establishment of an appropriately staffed AU Liaison Office in Khartoum, with an Office in Juba. At the time of finalizing this report, steps were underway to establish the AU Office. I have also decided to appoint a new Special Envoy for the CPA implementation. He will work closely with IGAD, the United Nations and other relevant international actors to help the parties successfully implement the CPA.

201. The CPA is such a complex agreement, dealing with issues as sensitive as power and wealth sharing and self-determination, that, to say the least, difficulties in its implementation should not be unexpected, especially given the deep mistrust between the North and the South generated by more than two decades of devastating conflict. Undoubtedly, the parties have come a long way. While it is their duty to remain true to their commitments in order to deliver the lasting peace and stability the Sudanese people have been yearning for for so long, it is also incumbent upon the international community as a whole to accompany and support them. The importance of the CPA cannot be overemphasized, for its failure would not only affect the Sudan and the region, but will also have serious repercussions in the entire continent.

(ii) Darfur

202. Since its last report to Council, the Commission, working with the United Nations, has remained involved in the efforts aimed at re-launching the political process in Darfur and strengthening the peacekeeping operation through the deployment of the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation (UNAMID). While significant progress has been made regarding UNAMID deployment, more efforts are required to bring the political process to a successful conclusion.

203. During the period under review, my Special Envoy for Darfur, Salim Ahmed Salim, and his UN counterpart, Jan Eliason, supported by their respective teams, intensified their consultations with the Sudanese parties, as well as with a wide range of Darfurian and other stakeholders, with a view to preparing for the start of the substantive negotiations. Among other issues, these consultations focused on determining the parties' positions on the venue, agenda, format and modalities for their participation, as well as on the organization of workshops to enhance their understanding of the issues to be discussed. The Special Envoys and the members of the Joint Mediation Support Team (JMST) undertook several missions to Khartoum, Darfur, Asmara, Kampala, Paris, London and other places to carry out additional consultations.

204. The Special Envoys also invited the leaders of the Movements to meetings in Arusha, Tanzania, and Ndjamen, Chad, in August and September 2007, respectively, in an effort to provide a convenient forum for consultations among themselves. In Arusha, the Movements came out with an agreed common position on the issues referred to above, but requested additional time to agree on a common negotiating team with others who were not present in Tanzania, including Abdulwahid El Nour, leader of one of the factions of the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A). They submitted a five item draft agenda - power sharing, wealth sharing, security, land, and humanitarian issues - for the envisaged negotiations. As to the venue, they stated that their preference would be one of the countries of the region and, if this was not possible, then any other country that the Special Envoys would consider convenient in terms of facilities and logistics. Regarding the meeting in Ndjamen, it should be noted that only few of the principal rebel leaders were in attendance.

205. Subsequently, and as part of the preparations for the Talks, the two Special Envoys led an AU-UN mediation support team working session, in Addis Ababa, from 6 to 10 October 2007. During that meeting, they discussed key strategic and process-related issues of the mediation.

206. In order to assist the Movements to unify their ranks and to form a common negotiating position, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) took the initiative to bring to Juba many of the non-signatories in the months of October and November 2007. These efforts by the SPLM were fully supported by the AU and the UN.

207. The Darfur Peace Talks opened in Sirte, Libya, on 27 October 2007. The inaugural ceremony was presided by the Libyan Leader, Col. Muammar Gaddafi. The representative of the current AU Chairman, President John Kuffor, and I, representatives of the four regional partners (Chad, Egypt, Eritrea and Libya), and other members of the international community, as well as members of Darfurian civil society, also attended the opening ceremony. Unfortunately, some of the leaders of the Movements, including Abdulwahid El Nour, and Khalil Ibrahim, of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), refused to attend the Sirte Talks.

208. In Sirte, the JMST organized presentations by experts to familiarize the representatives of the Government and the Movements with the issues to be discussed during the negotiations. The JMST also dispatched a delegation to Juba and North Darfur to consult with the various Movements which did not come to Sirte.

Subsequently, the two AU-UN Chief Mediators, Sam Ibok and Taye-Brook Zerihoun, held discussions with the highest authorities of the SPLM and leaders of the rebel groups in Juba as well as those of the SLM/A-Unity in Northern Darfur. The Chief Mediators stressed the need to rapidly conclude the Juba process and allow the Mediation to proceed on the implementation of its Roadmap. It should be noted here that, in organizing the Talks, the Special Envoys outlined the process as having three phases: inauguration of the Talks; consolidation of consultations with all stakeholders, with a view to crystallizing the positions of the parties; and commencement of substantive negotiations.

209. The Juba process was concluded on 29 November 2007 under the chairmanship of the President of the Government of Southern Sudan and First Vice-President of the Sudan, Salva Kiir Mayardit. As a result of this process, the Movements united the 17 groups and other individuals into two broad coalitions. However, the two groups requested more time to go back to the field and consult with their respective constituencies in order to strengthen the gains made in Juba and possibly come out with a unified negotiating team and position.

210. As part of the efforts to promote the Sirte process, the two Special Envoys convened a meeting with the regional partners, in Asmara, Eritrea, on 14 November 2007. They held another meeting with the regional partners in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, on 4 December 2007. The participants agreed that the Juba unification process had ended on a positive note, with significant potential for the formation of the critical mass necessary for the start of the substantive Talks. They also agreed on the need to give more time to the Movements to enable them finalize their reorganization. At the Sharm El-Sheikh meeting, participants agreed on the desirability of having another Arusha type meeting, which would bring together the leaders/ representatives of the various movements. Such a meeting, however, would be dependent on the disposition of the Movements to have it and could be held prior to the commencement of substantive negotiations.

211. Council will recall that, at its meeting held on 22 June 2007, the PSC endorsed the deployment, as soon as possible, of the AU/UN Hybrid Operation, to be funded by UN assessed contributions and managed according to UN procedures, rules and regulations. This was followed by the adoption by the Security Council, on 31 July 2007, of resolution 1769 (2007) authorizing the establishment of UNAMID for an initial period of 12 months and deciding that the operation, which shall incorporate AMIS personnel, shall consist of 19,555 military personnel and an appropriate civilian component, including up to 3,772 police personnel and 19 Formed Police Units (FPUs) comprising up to 140 personnel each.

212. As part of the preparations for the transfer of authority from AMIS to UNAMID, the UN and the AU have established a multidisciplinary transition planning team. The Team is headed by the Deputy Joint Special Representative, and is currently implementing the deployment plan of UNAMID on the ground.

213. The force generation process is in progress at the UN Department for Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) in New York, where the AU has assigned 2 officers for follow-up and coordination. Contributions are still outstanding, especially in areas of aviation and heavy ground transportation units. Between October and November 2007, an AU-UN team visited potential Troop Contributing Countries

(TCCs) to provide necessary advice and assistance to TCCs to ensure that force elements and equipment to be deployed are genuinely capable of operating in the environment of Darfur and also meet the UN standards. From 19 to 21 November 2007, a combined AU /UN special task force was dispatched to Ethiopia and Egypt to determine the possibility of the early deployment of two infantry battalions from these two countries as part of the early effect package. Both countries pledged their readiness to deploy in January 2008.

214. Regarding the initial Headquarters operating capability, the Joint Special Representative, Rodolphe Adada, his Deputy, the Force and Deputy Force Commanders of UNAMID and other key personnel, as well as Sector Commanders from Nigeria, Rwanda and Senegal have been deployed. Deputy Sector Commanders from Egypt, Pakistan and China have been appointed and are preparing to be deployed to the Mission area.

215. Furthermore, 135 advance elements of the Chinese engineering company have deployed on 24 November 2007, while the first FPU from Bangladesh was deployed in the Mission area on 21 November 2007. Both contingents are awaiting the arrival of their equipment. Arrangements for the deployment of FPUs from Nigeria and Nepal are at an advanced stage and are expected to be concluded soon. The Police Commissioner from South Africa and his Deputy from Uganda have also been selected. In the meantime, two additional battalions from Nigeria and Rwanda were deployed in October 2007 as part of the strengthening of AMIS.

216. The speedy and effective deployment of UNAMID depends, among other factors, on the cooperation of the Sudanese Government in facilitating the acquisition of land and flight operations for the Mission's. Efforts are underway to address these issues in a spirit of Partnership, as well as speedily conclude the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) for UNAMID.

217. I am happy to inform Council that the Chair of Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC) Preparatory Committee (Prepcom), Abdul Mohamed, is continuing with his consultations with a range of stakeholders and prominent individuals in Darfur, including meetings with representatives of the Native Administration, political parties and armed movements, civil society organizations, academics/intellecuals, and IDP leaders. Issues relating to compensation, rehabilitation and return featured prominently during these consultations.

218. The security situation continues to be of utmost concern. A number of attacks involving various parties have been recorded during the period under consideration, targeting civilians, humanitarian workers and the Sudanese Armed Forces alike. Also worth noting is the prevailing security situation on the Chadian side of the Chad/Sudan border, which affects adversely the situation in Darfur.

219. As Council is aware, throughout its presence in Darfur, AMIS has operated under a very challenging security environment. On 29 September 2007, an attack was perpetrated by unidentified armed elements on the Mission's military group site in Haskanita, resulting in the death of 10 AMIS personnel, while 10 others were seriously wounded. In a statement issued on 30 September 2007, I expressed outrage at this attack and stressed that this heinous act would not deter the AU from continuing its efforts in bringing about lasting peace in Darfur and alleviate the

suffering of the populations of the region. The PSC, meeting on 2 October 2007, also condemned this attack, and requested the Commission to undertake, jointly with the United Nations, a thorough investigation of the incident, with a view to identifying the culprits. Since then, a joint AU/UN investigation has been underway. Preliminary information suggests that the attack was conducted by rebels entering the camp in vehicles bearing the inscription "JEM".

220. It is hoped that all the Sudanese parties will demonstrate the necessary political will to move the peace process forward. In this regard, I would like to express my appreciation to the two Special Envoys for their sustained efforts, as well as to the regional and international partners assisting the process. I also wish to thank the Government of Sudan for the cooperation it has extended thus far and urge it to continue in this spirit so as to resolve the remaining outstanding issues and facilitate the early deployment of UNAMID.

221. As the mandate of AMIS comes to an end, I cannot but express the gratitude of our continent to the brave women and men, who, at the peril of their lives, made, over the last three years, every sacrifice to stem the violence in Darfur and assist the Sudanese parties in finding a durable way out of this conflict. They did so under extremely difficult conditions and environment. On 24 December 2007, I travelled, together with the Commissioner for Peace and Security, to El Fasher, the Mission's Force Headquarters, to bid farewell and pay tribute to AMIS personnel, before the transfer of authority to UNAMID scheduled for 31st December 2007. I also met, in Khartoum, with President Omar Hassan Al Bashir, to assure him of the continued involvement of the AU in the peace process and to encourage his Government to extend its fullest cooperation to UNAMID. Finally, I would like to reiterate my gratitude to all the Member States that contributed personnel to AMIS, as well as to our partners for their generous support.

I.III.7. Situation in Chad and Chad-Sudan Relation

222. In my previous report covering the period January-June 2007, I commended the efforts invested by Chad and The Sudan to normalise their relations damaged by the activities of rebel movements on both sides of their common border. This optimism was all the more justified because throughout during the period under consideration, signs of easing of the tension and national reconciliation between the Chadian Government and the various opposition movements were observed.

223. During the reporting period, the Chadian authorities continued to dialogue with the opposition movements. On this score, President Idriss Déby received on 30 July 2007, in N'djamena, thanks to the mediation of President El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, a group of about thirty Chadian exiles led by former President Goukouni Weddei. Just as encouraging was the signing, on 13 August 2007, of an Agreement for the Strengthening of the Democratic Process in Chad" between the presidential party and the democratic opposition parties – an event resulting from the negotiations that took place from 14 April to 10 August 2007.

224. On 6 September 2007, one of the armed movements, the Chadian Democratic and Revolutionary Council led by Ali Ahmat Aghabach, signed a peace agreement with the Government under the auspices of Libya. A month later, on 8 October in Cotonou, the Government and some exiled political parties embarked

upon negotiations leading to an agreement which paved the way for them to return to their country.

225. Lastly, negotiations entered into in July between the Government and four leaders of political-military movements - Mahatmat Nouri of the Union for Democracy and Development (UFDD), Hassan Aldjinedi of the Chad National Concord (CNT), Timane Erdimi of the Rally of Forces for Change (RFC) and Abdelwahid About of the Fundamental Union for Democracy and Development (UFDD-F) - led to an Agreement solemnly signed in Sirte, Libya, on 25 October 2007, under the auspices of the Libyan Leader Colonel Kaddafi, in the presence of Presidents Idriss Deby Itno and Omar Hassan Al Bashir. The Agreement provided, inter alia, for a cease-fire, integration of rebels in State organs and in the Administration and encampment of their troops for eventual disarmament.

226. However, the situation suddenly took a turn for the worse in Eastern Chad, when, in the night of 24-25 November 2007, an armed group later identified as belonging to an arm of the UFDD led by Mahatmat Nouri, attacked the national police company in Hadjer-Hadid, a locality less than 100 kms from the town of Abéché. In a Communiqué dated 25 November 2007, the spokesperson of the Chadian Government accused rebel leaders Mahatmat Nouri and Timane Erdimi of having “taken the heavy responsibility of violating the Peace Agreement of 25 October 2007”.

227. On 26 November 2007, heavy fighting erupted in Abou Goulem, a locality situated 90 kms to the East of Abéché, between the UFDD forces and the Chadian National Army. Clashes continued, but sporadically, days after and saw the arrival on the scene of other rebel movements such as the RFC of Timane Erdimi, on 1 December 2007 in Aram Kolé, and another movement that had until then been unknown - the People’s Front for National Renovation (FPRN) on 5 December 2007, in Tissi, along the Sudan-CAR border.

228. The leader of the CNT, for his part, decided to implement the Sirte Agreement opting on 7 December 2007 to return to N’djaména. Similarly, some elements of the UFDD-Fondamentale, at a press conference on 26 November 2007 in N’djaména, decided to distance themselves from the resumed armed clashes and called on all the protagonists to implement the Sirte Agreement.

229. It was against this background that, on 1 December 2007, the Minister of Defence, Mahamat Abdelkérime Nour, was dismissed from the Government, after he sought refuge in the Libyan People’s Bureau in N’djaména. Formerly the leader of the United Front for Change (FUC), Mahamat Nour had signed, in Tripoli, on 24 December 2006, an Agreement with the Government by which he joined the Cabinet on 4 March 2007. However, the reluctance of his troops to be disarmed in spite of his call for them to do so, the skirmishes that followed on 16 October 2007 in Goz-Beida, and the clashes of November 2007 in Guéréda, pointed a finger of suspicion as to whether his movement was really intent on honouring the Agreement signed in Tripoli.

230. Clashes in the East of Chad revived the fierce polemic between Chad and The Sudan. Chad, through the Government’s spokesperson, implicated The Sudan, declaring that “Chad held The Sudan responsible as it had the obligation to contain

the armed elements of all the signatories to the Sirte Agreement until application of the key clause of this Agreement, that is, regrouping, encampment and disarmament". In addition, the Ambassador of The Sudan in N'djamena was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Chad, on 27 November 2007 to explain what was going on. Finally, at a press conference on 29 November 2007, the Chadian Prime Minister declared that the rebels were merely tools in the service of The Sudan to destabilise Chad and forestall the deployment of the Chad/CAR EUFOR, the operation the EU intended to carry out in Eastern Chad and in the North-East of the CAR, by virtue of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1778 (2007).

231. The Sudanese authorities, for their part, denied any involvement in the clashes in Eastern Chad. On 5 December 2007, the Sudanese Government, in a Press Release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, declared that "what was happening in Chad was an internal affair which had nothing to do with The Sudan". On 7 December 2007, The Sudan announced the closure of its border with Chad following escalation of the clashes.

232. Lastly, the trial of the detainees of the so-called "*Arche de Zoé*" affair opened in N'djamena, concluding among other things with the sentencing, on 26 December 2007, of all those implicated to terms of imprisonment ranging from 4 years with no reprieve to 8 years with hard labour. On 27 October 2007, I condemned the scandalous behaviour of this association and commended Chadian and French Governments for their firm stand on the issue. Later, in a Press Release dated 7 November 2007, I requested that the case be treated in light of the sovereignty of Chad and Chadian institutions.

I.III.8. Central African Republic (CAR)

233. During the period under review, the situation in the CAR was dominated by consultations among local socio-political stakeholders, including the armed movements, with a view to the holding of an inclusive political dialogue. Nevertheless, the security situation remained fragile due to the presence of armed movements in the country, some of which had not renounced the use of force.

234. For instance, the People's Army for Restoration of Democracy (APRD), a rebel movement with which the Government was yet to sign an agreement, remained active in the North-West and in the North of the country. There were several clashes between the CAR Armed Forces (FACA) and elements of the APRD. However, contacts were established with the group, and discussions set in motion with a view to reaching an agreement, with the assistance of the Centre for Human Dialogue (CHD), an NGO based in Geneva, Switzerland.

235. Several APRD elements indicated their intention to lay down their arms, especially in the Paoua and Kaga-Bandoro localities; but for a start there were no assembly structures in place and the Government had only very limited means to properly look after them; hence the fear that these elements would resume their attacks. Another area of concern was the problems encountered in the implementation of the Peace Agreements signed in Sirte, Libya; and in Birao, CAR, in February and April 2007, with the Central African People's Democratic Front (FDPC) and the Union of Democratic Forces (UFDR), respectively. Lastly, the CAR

continued to be faced with the blight of organised crime, perpetrated by the Zaraguinas (highway bandits). On this score, the Government has continued to maintain the contacts initiated with some Zaraguinas in the region of Bozum to speed up restoration of security in the area.

236. The CAR defence and security forces, still being restructured and upgraded, with the support of France and South Africa, were yet to attain the level of operational capacity required to deal with the security situation prevailing in the country; and hence the need to maintain the presence of the CEMAC multinational Force (FOMUC). The Commission also supported the successive requests of CEMAC for the EU to continue to fund FOMUC under the Peace Facility for Africa (PFA). A joint AU-EU mission which was in the CAR from 8 to 15 November 2007 came to the conclusion that FOMUC should carry on with its support activities to secure the country and restructure the CAR defence forces for at least two more years, and recommended renewal of the PFA financing. In addition, the Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), at their Summit held in Brazzaville, on 30 October 2007, further highlighted the need to keep the Force, and instructed the ECCAS Committee of Ambassadors to study the modalities of transferring the supervisory authority from CEMAC to the ECCAS.

237. It was in this context that Central African countries were preparing the inclusive political dialogue, which would have to take on board the politico-military movements. On 30 November 2007, the Head of State François Bozizé promulgated two decrees establishing the Dialogue Preparatory Committee and appointing its members; and following its formal inauguration on 18 December 2007, the Committee started deliberations. The AU was invited to take part in its meetings organized with the support of the CHD and the United Nations Peace-Building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA).

238. For its part, the Commission continued to deploy effort in support of reconstruction and consolidation of peace in the country. Following a preparatory mission to Bangui, the Commission organised, on 19 October 2007, in Addis Ababa, in collaboration with the African Development Bank (ADB) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), an African Solidarity Conference in favour of the CAR, with Member States and ECCAS in attendance. Organised as a prelude to the Donors' Round Table to be convened in Brussels, the Conference was designed to demonstrate Africa's solidarity with the CAR and facilitate mobilisation of the International Community. Several countries indicated their readiness to assist in the efforts under way in the CAR. The Commission, for its part, took the opportunity to announce that it would contribute financially towards the inclusive political dialogue and extend technical support to a number of sectors.

239. The CAR development partners' Round Table was held in Brussels on 26 October 2007. On that occasion, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers adopted by the CAR Government in September 2007 and leading the country to attain the point of decision in the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, was considered. The Round Table helped redeem the pledges of assistance amounting to about 600 million US dollars to be raised for the period 2008-2010. If they were to materialize in good time, these pledges coupled with improved governance and security, should stimulate significant revival in economic activity and boost poverty alleviation.

240. The CAR is in dire need of Africa's support and that of its development partners to enable it overcome its problems in a sustainable manner. The Commission intends to help resolve these problems to the best of its ability, especially by following up on the conclusions of the African Solidarity Conference and by accompanying the country in its efforts to promote dialogue and national reconciliation.

I.III.9 Multidimensional Presence in CAR and Chad

241. On 25 September 2007, the Security Council, by its Resolution 1778 (2007), approved the establishment in Chad and the Central African Republic, of a multidimensional presence intended to help create the security conditions conducive to a voluntary, secure and sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons. The Council decided that the multidimensional presence shall include, for a period of one year, a United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), comprising a maximum of 300 police and 50 military liaison officers and an appropriate number of civilian personnel. MINURCAT's mandate shall cover issues relating to security and the protection of civilians as well as human rights and the rule of law. Meanwhile, the Security Council authorized the European Union to deploy, for a period of one year, an operation (known as EUFOR Chad/CAR) to support the MINURCAT, notably by contributing to protecting civilians in danger, particularly refugees and displaced persons, by facilitating the delivery of humanitarian aid and the free movement of humanitarian personnel, and by contributing to protecting United Nations personnel, facilities, installations and equipment.

242. Moreover, the Security Council encouraged the Government of Chad to establish a "Police tchadienne pour la protection humanitaire (PTPH) – Chadian Police for Humanitarian Protection". It will be dedicated to maintaining law and order in refugee camps, sites harbouring displaced persons and major towns in surrounding areas, and to assisting in securing humanitarian activities in eastern Chad.

243. The Resolution was adopted in a context marked by a disturbing security situation in both Eastern Chad and North-Eastern CAR, giving rise to an acute humanitarian crisis. According to the United Nations, there are currently 240,000 Darfur refugees and 180,000 displaced persons in Eastern Chad, while 300,000 Central African nationals had to abandon their homes, becoming either internally displaced persons in their own country or refugees in neighbouring countries. The authorities of both Chad and CAR welcomed the multidimensional presence and supported it.

244. About 70 MINURCAT police and military liaison officers and other civilian personnel have already been deployed in the field in implementation of Resolution 1778 (2007). The Mission is working together with the Chadian Government for the establishment of the PTPH. However, there has been some delay in the constitution of the EUFOR Chad/CAR. In his report on the MINURCAT dated 17 December 2007, the United Nations Secretary General stated that this delay could affect the deployment of the MINURCAT.

I.III.10. Liberia

245. Since the last session of Council, the Commission has continued to follow closely developments in Liberia. The period under review was characterized by further progress in the efforts to consolidate peace and reconstruct Liberia, as it emerges from years of conflict and devastation.

246. On 13 November 2007, the World Bank decided to clear Liberia's outstanding arrears, while the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced that it had secured sufficient financial pledges from member countries to allow it to provide debt relief to Liberia. As indicated by the International Contact Group on Liberia, in a statement issued on 16 December 2007, these developments are important steps towards a comprehensive solution to Liberia's unsustainable external debt burden under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPIC) and reflect the international community's continued strong support for the Government's economic and financial reforms. By the end of 2006, the country's external debt portfolio was estimated at US\$ 3.7 billion, which is about 800 % of Liberia GDP.

247. More generally, 2007 has been a year of remarkable achievements in Liberia. Among others, it is worth mentioning the fulfilment of the requirements for the Kimberly process membership, which made it possible for the UN Security Council to lift the sanctions on trade in diamonds; the substantial increase in public revenues; the ongoing preparation of a full Poverty Reduction Strategy to serve as a comprehensive development framework for the Government and its partners; the increase in school enrolment by 40%; the improvements in public financial management, including the steps taken as part of the Governance and Economic Assistance Management Programme (GEMAP); and the fight against corruption; as well as the efforts being made for Liberia to regain the control of its natural resources and ensure that they benefit its people. Not the least, mention should be made of the restoration of electricity and water supplies to parts of the capital, Monrovia, for the first time in 15 years.

248. The promotion of national reconciliation and inclusiveness in the decision making process has continued to feature prominently in the Government's activities. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, whose mandate is due to expire in September 2008, will resume activities on the statement taking process in January 2008, which will involve a wide range of personalities. On her part, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has embarked on a consultative process aimed at seeking the views of Liberian political parties and civil society groups on issues of national concern. I commend President Johnson-Sirleaf for these initiatives and encourage her to intensify them, for no sustainable peace and stability will be achieved without overcoming the many cleavages that have for so long characterized the Liberian society.

249. Progress has also been made regarding the security situation, which has remained generally calm both within Liberia itself and along the country's borders with its neighbours. Efforts continue to be made in carrying forward the security sector reform. So far, 3,500 policemen have been trained, while the training of a 500-strong Police Quick Reaction Unit is underway. However, serious financial and logistical difficulties continue to constrain the operational capability of the Liberian

National Police (LNP). Efforts are also underway with respect to the training, restructuring and reform of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). Over 600 soldiers have been trained, while 500 more are undergoing training. Here again, faster progress is required if Liberia is to meet the daunting security challenges facing it. The objective is to build a new 2,000 strong army.

250. It is against this background of significant progress in the stabilisation of Liberia that, last August, the United Nations Secretary-General made proposals on a phased drawdown of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). The Secretary-General indicated that the process would “allow UNMIL to adapt to evolving priorities and to conduct a gradual, phased and deliberate transfer of responsibility for the security of Liberia to the Government in a manner that gives the Government the opportunity to build its capacity, while the Mission continues to maintain the prevailing stability”. In its resolution 1777 (2007) of 20 September 2007, the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of UNMIL until 30 September 2008, endorsed the recommendations for a reduction in the number of military and police components of the Mission, and expressed its intention to review by that date recommendations for further UNMIL reduction in the context of the security situation in Liberia and the sub-region.

251. While Liberia has, in a very short period, made tremendous achievements, numerous and daunting challenges still lay ahead: the country’s institutions, including the security ones, need to be consolidated; rule of law and national reconciliation should be deepened; and the socio-economic needs of the victims of the conflict that ravaged Liberia for many years and the population, in general, should be addressed. Clearly, these are challenges that require not only continued commitment and focus from the Liberian leaders, but also sustained support from Liberia’s partners and the international community as a whole, including AU Member States.

I.III.11. Côte d’Ivoire

252. Since the signing of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and an Additional sAgreement on 4 and 26 March 2007, respectively, by President Laurent Gbagbo and Guillaume Soro, Secretary General of the New Forces, under the auspices of President Blaise Compaoré, President of Faso, current President of ECOWAS and Facilitator of the Direct Dialogue, there have been a chain of demonstrations for national reconciliation and reunification of the country. Furthermore, the parties took appropriate measures to honour their commitments, even though there were delays in the implementation of vital aspects of the Ouagadougou Agreement.

253. On 30 July 2007, President Gbagbo and Prime Minister Soro incinerated about 2,000 weapons of war at a ceremony christened “Flame of Peace” held in Bouaké in the presence of seven African Chiefs of Staff and several other foreign personalities as well as a mammoth crowd of Ivorians. On his way to Bouaké, President Laurent Gbagbo, for the first time since the eruption of the crisis, crossed the ceasefire line which represented the *de facto* partition of the country, thus giving symbolic expression to the country’s reunification. From 28 to 30 November 2007, President Gbagbo toured several areas in the North of the country under the control of the New Forces. On that occasion, the President of the Republic reiterated his call for an end to the war. Everywhere he visited, the President was hosted by the Prime Minister surrounded by a huge throng of joyous crowd. Furthermore, the two former

opposing forces - the Defense and Security Forces of Côte d'Ivoire (*FDSCI*) and the Armed Forces of the New Forces (*FAFN*), marched side by side in Abidjan and in other cities of the country on the occasion of the commemoration of the 47th independence anniversary of Côte d'Ivoire on 7 August 2007.

254. For its part, the International Community continued to support implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement. On this score, the United Nations Security Council, on 16 July 2007, adopted resolution 1765 (2007) endorsing the recommendations contained in the United Nations Secretary General's report on the need to align the role of UNOCI with the new phase of the peace process, as defined by the Ouagadougou Political Agreement. That resolution put an end to the mandate of the High Representative for Elections and decided, as a result, that the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General in Côte d'Ivoire would certify that all the stages of the electoral process would provide all the guarantees required for the holding of open, free, fair and transparent presidential and parliamentary elections in accordance with international standards. Moreover, the Security Council declared that it welcomed the creation of an International Consultative Organ (ICO) as agreed by the signatory parties and the Facilitator, to accompany the Ivorian political forces and the Facilitator in the implementation of Agreement. The African Union is a member of this body. Again, at the Donors' Round Table organized by the Ivorian Government on 18 July 2007, the pledges made towards funding the crisis exit process amounted to over 180 billion CFA Francs.

255. However, as indicated earlier, delays occurred in the calendar for implementing the Ouagadougou Political Agreement; first, as a result of the disturbances occasioned by the 29 June 2007 attack against the Prime Minister in Bouaké; and then, owing to a number of technical issues which had not been taken into account at the time the Agreement was signed. It was against this background that the Evaluation and Accompaniment Committee (EAC) met in Ouagadougou on 4 September 2007 presided by the Facilitator, with members of the ICO including the AU, in attendance. On that occasion, it was agreed, among other things, that the public hearings should recommence before the end of September 2007 to take decision on issuance of birth certificates to all those desirous of obtaining the document, ahead of the operation for identification of the entire citizenry. The public hearings were, indeed, launched on 25 September 2007 but was bugged by logistics difficulties. As a result, of the total 111 teams envisaged, only 25 could be deployed to conduct the operation throughout the national territory; and only about 55,000 birth certificates had been decided and issued.

256. In his 1 October 2007 report on UNOCI, the United Nations Secretary General welcomed the positive climate that had prevailed since the signing of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement. He however expressed serious concern at the non-compliance with the established timeframes, thereby slowing down the process which, if the situation persisted, would have jeopardized effective implementation of the Agreement. On 23 October 2007, following consultations on that report organized by the Security Council, its President reaffirmed Council members' full support for the Agreement, paid tribute to the Facilitator and applauded the initial measures taken by the parties to implement the Agreement. He also voiced Security Council members' concern over the delays, and called upon the parties to fully honor their commitments in good faith and, in particular, to take concrete measures as a matter of urgency, to move forward the process of identification and inclusion of voters on the voters'

registers, the disarmament and dismantling of the militias, the DDR, restoration of State authority, unification and strengthening of the defense and security forces and respect for human rights.

257. The United Nations Security Council, on 29 October 2007, adopted resolution 1782 (2007) extending to 31 October 2008, the sanctions regime imposed on Côte d'Ivoire in November 2004 under the terms of resolution 1572 (2004) – arms embargo, travel restrictions and freezing of accounts, other financial assets and economic resources; and of resolution 1643 (2005) – import ban on all rough diamonds from Côte d'Ivoire. Council decided to re-examine these measures in light of the progress achieved in the implementation of key stages of the peace process. At the 104th Meeting of the PSC held on 20 December 2007, the Ivorian delegation demanded the lifting of these sanctions which, in its view, was out of step with current developments in the peace process. The PSC took note of this request.

258. To speed up implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement, President Gbagbo and Prime Minister Soro concluded, in Ouagadougou on 28 November 2007, the Second and Third Additional Agreements to the Ouagadougou Political Agreement, both in respect of definitive selection of a technical operator – namely, a French company called *SAGEM Sécurité* (SAFRAN Group) to produce Ivorian identity cards as well as voters' cards, and also work out a new election calendar. This calendar was supposed to conclude with the organization of presidential election not later than the first half of 2008 in accordance with a calendar to be recommended to Government by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC).

259. More specifically, the calendar made provision for the start of the process of encampment of former fighters, the storage of weapons and dismantling of the militias by latest 22 December 2007; payment of fixed monthly allowance to the former fighters until such time as they were re-integrated or re-absorbed in the new defense and security forces or in civil life; the commencement of redeployment of the tax and customs administration throughout the national territory not later than 30 December 2007; conclusion of redeployment of the administration and public services across the country by 30 January 2008 at the latest; the FDSCI to avail the Integrated Command Centre (ICC) with elements of the national police and the *gendarmerie*, and the FAFN to provide 600 troops under the terms of the Pretoria Agreement, all with a view to constituting joint units to maintain security of the peace process; re-establishment of the salaries of elements of the FAFN former members of the national armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire, payment of all arrears due to them, and their re-integration into the new national army, the *gendarmerie* and the paramilitary corps; recourse to the arbitration of the Facilitator to determine the quota to be applied for the integration of FAFN troops and on the issue of the grade to be accorded to the soldiers who had changed category in the FAFN; as well as the launch before the end of December 2007, of the operation to rebuild the civil records lost or destroyed in a number of civil registries.

260. At the aforesaid Meeting, the PSC noted, with satisfaction, the encouraging developments in Côte d'Ivoire since the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement and the progress achieved in its implementation. It also called upon the parties to redouble their efforts to fast track the implementation process. On this score, Council welcomed the conclusion of the Second and Third Additional Agreements and

encouraged all the political forces and the Ivorian civil society to leave no stone unturned to consolidate the peace momentum generated in the country.

261. On the whole, the process has been evolving in conditions of normalcy despite isolated cases of violence. The most worrying development during the period under review occurred on 29 June 2007 on the occasion of the visit of the Prime Minister to Bouaké to install judges in that area for resumption of the public hearings. On landing in Bouaké airport, the aircraft in which the Prime Minister was traveling was hit by rocket fire resulting in the death of four people with several others wounded. The Prime Minister escaped unhurt. This attack was unanimously condemned by the political class, the Ivorian civil society and the international community including the Executive Council at its session held in Accra.

262. In the aftermath of that attack, the FDSCI and the FAFN put in place specific measures to ensure the safety and security of the airports located in their respective areas of control. Furthermore, the Government opened a judicial enquiry at national level and addressed a request to the United Nations to institute an international commission of enquiry with to identify the perpetrators of the attack. In response to the request, the United Nations, on 1 October 2007 fielded a week-long exploratory mission to Côte d'Ivoire. The findings of the mission are still being awaited.

263. At humanitarian level, the on-going momentum paved the way for the voluntary return of numerous displaced persons to the Central, Northern and Western regions of the country with the assistance of humanitarian organizations. Besides, for the first time since the crisis erupted, there was only one resumption date for the school year throughout the national territory, and that was on 17 September 2007.

264. In conclusion, it is befitting to express satisfaction at the significant progress achieved in Côte d'Ivoire since the signing of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement I hereby encourage all the parties to resolutely subscribe to this momentum towards reconciliation and reunification of the country, and by so doing make the progress towards peace irreversible. I take this opportunity to reiterate my gratitude to the Facilitator and to once again assure him of the continued support of the African Union.

I.III.12 Western Sahara

265. The main highlight of the period under review was the launching of direct negotiations between the parties to the dispute on Western Sahara, namely Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO, as mandated by United Nations Security Council resolution 1754 (2007) of April 2007. In that resolution, the Security Council called upon the parties to enter into negotiations without preconditions in good faith, taking into account the developments of the last months, with a view to achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, and requested the Secretary-General to set up those negotiations under his auspices.

266. The two parties met twice in Manhasset, New York: first, on 18 and 19 June, and then on 10 and 11 August 2007. The talks did not result in any movement forward, as the parties positions remained far apart: while Morocco insisted on its proposal of autonomy for the Territory, within the sovereignty and territorial integrity

of the Kingdom, the Frente POLISARIO argued for a free and fair referendum of self-determination, in accordance with the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and relevant resolutions of the United Nations. In the communiqué issued by the Personal Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General, Peter Van Walsum, at the end of the second round of talks, in agreement with the parties, the latter acknowledged that the current status quo was unacceptable and committed themselves to continue the negotiations in good faith.

267. It is against this background that the United Nations Security Council, on 31 October 2007, adopted resolution 1783 (2007), by which it called upon the two parties “to continue to show political will and work in an atmosphere propitious for dialogue in order to engage in substantive negotiations, thus ensuring implementation of resolution 1754 (2007) and the success of negotiations”. The Security Council further called upon the parties “to continue negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General without preconditions and in good faith, taking account of the efforts made since 2006 and developments of the last months, 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, noting the role and responsibility of the parties in this respect”. In addition, the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the status and progress of these negotiations by 31 January 2008. In the meantime, the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 30 April 2008.

268. Since the adoption of resolution 1783, the Personal Envoy has been in active consultation with the two parties in order to set a date and determine the venue for the coming round of the negotiations. And consequently, it has now been disclosed that agreement has been reached to convene the third round of negotiations at the same venue, in Manhasset, New York, between 7 and 9 January 2008.

269. In conclusion, the long deadlocked conflict in Western Sahara has now been given a rare window of opportunity towards a possible solution. While the talks did not so far lead to any breakthrough, the very fact that they took place was in itself a welcome development. I would like to express my ardent hope that the parties would indeed heed the call made by the Security Council, to negotiate in earnest and without preconditions, so that the dispute can be resolved in a manner that is fully consistent with international legality, in particular the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

I.IV. AFRICA PEACE FACILITY

270. As Council is aware, the Africa Peace Facility (APF) was established for a period of three years by the EU, with a total financial envelop of € 250 million drawn from the 9th European Development Fund (EDF), to fund peace support operations conducted under the authority of the AU. The establishment of the APF, which become operational from May 2004, followed a request by the Assembly, in Maputo, in July 2003. Subsequently, and at the request of the AU, the APF was replenished by an additional € 50 million, bringing the total funds available to € 300 million.

271. A number of African-led peace support operations have been supported under the APF, notably AMIS and AMISOM. In addition, an ambitious capacity building programme for the AU and the Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution is underway as part of the capacity building component of the APF. This includes the establishment of Liaison Offices to the AU, in pursuance of the relevant provisions of the PSC Protocol, as well as support for the operationalization of the CEWS and the ASF.

272. Within the framework of the APF, a Joint Coordination Committee (JCC), co-chaired by the AU and the EU and comprising representatives of the Regional Mechanism, was established to review the operations of the Facility. At the 3rd meeting of the JCC held in Addis Ababa on 29 September 2006, the EU confirmed its commitment to extend the APF for a further three-year period (2008-2010) and to provide funding amounting to € 300 million under the 10th EDF.

273. It is against this background that the AU and the EU organized in Djibouti, on 2 and 3 November 2007, a workshop on the lessons learned regarding the implementation of the APF for the period 2004-2007. The workshop, which brought together representatives of the AUC, the EU, the Regional Mechanisms and other relevant institutions, provided an opportunity to assess the implementation of the APF and to identify the difficulties and challenges encountered. A number of recommendations were made, pertaining to the scope and general structure of the APF, the implementation modalities, the decision-making process, the institutional weaknesses and the human resources constraints, among others. Overall, the workshop considered the APF as a successful instrument, stressing that it is so far the only substantial and predictable source of funding for AU-led peace support operations and other related activities.

274. The conclusions of the workshop will be reviewed during the 4th meeting of the JCC and will frame the implementation of the APF for the period 2008 – 2010. At the time of finalizing this report, consultations were underway between the AU and the EU to agree on a date for the 4th meeting of the JCC.

I.V. FOLLOW-UP OF DECISION ASSEMBLY/AU/DEC. 145 (VIII) ON THE FUNDING OF AU-LED PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

275. Council will recall that, at its Accra session, I briefed it on the steps taken as a follow-up to Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.145 (VIII) adopted by the Assembly at its 8th Ordinary Session held in January 2007. In that decision, the Assembly, recalling that the maintenance of international peace and security is the primary responsibility of the United Nations Security Council, called upon the United Nations to examine, within the context of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, the possibility of funding, through assessed contributions, peace-keeping operations undertaken by the AU or under its authority, with the consent of the United Nations. I informed Council that, subsequent to that decision, South Africa availed itself of its presidency of the United Nations Security Council to organize, on 28 March 2007, a debate on the theme: "Relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the AU, in the maintenance of international peace and security." The Security Council adopted a presidential statement requesting the Secretary-General to provide a report, in consultation with the relevant regional organizations, on

specific proposals on how the United Nations can better support arrangements for further cooperation and coordination with regional organizations on Chapter VIII arrangements.

276. The request made by the Assembly was also discussed during the 9th Africa-EU Ministerial Troika meeting held in Accra, Ghana, on 31 October 2007. In this respect, the EU expressed its commitment to work together with the AU towards the establishment of UN arrangements to provide predictable, flexible and sustainable funding for peacekeeping operations undertaken by the AU or under its authority, including within the context of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, and with the consent of the UN Security Council.

277. It is against this background that the Commission, in consultation with South Africa, took the initiative to brief the PSC on the follow-up of the Assembly Decision and Security Council presidential statement, and to facilitate an interaction with UN representatives, on the occasion of the 98th meeting of the PSC held on 8 and 23 November 2007. At the end of the meeting, the PSC adopted a document meant to be a contribution to the report that the United Nations Secretary-General is expected to submit. The document outlines the principles that should inform the proposals on the enhancement of the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the AU, and makes specific proposals on the cooperation between the PSC and the Security Council. Regarding more specifically the issue of the funding of AU-led peace support operations, the PSC urged the Security Council to support the request made by the Assembly. It further proposed the appointment by the UN Secretary-General, in consultation with the Commission, of a high-level panel to look into the issue and make recommendations on how to put it into effect. In the meantime, and building on the experience of the UN light and heavy support package for AMIS, the PSC called for the provision by the UN of similar support to all AU-led peace support operations undertaken with the consent of the Security Council.

278. I take this opportunity to inform Council of the Italian Government Decision to establish a Peace Facility to support conflict prevention, management and resolution initiatives in the Continent and to strengthen AU's logistics, operational and institutional capacities in this area. This Facility, amount of which totals 40 million Euros is in pursuance of the commitment by the President of the Council of Ministers of Italy, Mr. Romano Prodi, on the occasion of the AU Assembly held in January 2007 and his statement at the United Nations Security Council Session which took place in New York on 25 September 2007. The formal signing of the Agreement on this Facility took place in Lisbon, on 8 December 2007, on the sidelines of the EU-Africa Summit. May I, at this juncture, express AU's gratitude to Italy for this gesture and for its sustained support for our efforts.

J. POLITICAL AFFAIRS

J.I. DEMOCRATIZATION, GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RIGHTS, HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

279. Promotion of democracy, elections, good governance and respect for human rights have continued to be the focus of the Commission in the field of political affairs. Clearly, stability and development of the Continent cannot be achieved unless there is respect for and attainment of these values which are today unanimously shared by all. Whilst there has been very positive progress across the continent, Africa continues to face many challenges in the consolidation of democratic values and practices. The establishment of the Pan-African Governance Architecture is one of the key responses to these challenges.

280. In this regard, the entry into force in August 2006 of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, and in particular, the adoption in January 2007 of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance constitute vital landmarks in the process of establishing the Pan-African Architecture on Governance.

J.II. GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY

J.II.1. African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance

281. Of particular significance over the past few months has been the efforts deployed to ensure that the adopted African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Human Rights find practical expression and popularized across Member States. To sustain the ratification momentum, a high level Brainstorming on the Charter was held from 28 to 29 October 2007, in Windhoek, Namibia.

282. The initial meeting in Namibia on the Charter provided the basis for the acceleration of the signing and ratification of the Charter. Furthermore, a Southern Africa workshop took place in Lesotho, from 20 to 22 December 2007, to map out appropriate strategies for speedy ratification and entry into force of the Charter. The high attendance at these meetings was a testimony to the will of Member States and their partners to bring the activities thus set in motion, to successful conclusion.

283. The ratification of the Charter on Democracy, Elections and Human Rights is fundamental to the collective commitment of Member States. Ratification is essential as it will provide the African Union with the basis for engaging with Member States where unconstitutional changes in government are experienced and where there are concerns with state governance and human rights practices. In Partnership with Member States and civil society organizations, greater attention will be focused in the next few months on the wider popularisation of the Charter with further regional workshops planned to encourage ratification.

284. It is however noteworthy that no instrument of ratification of the Charter has yet been deposited at the Commission and that only some ten Member States have

signed the Charter. I take this opportunity to appeal to Member States to take speedy measures to ratify the Charter, if they have not already done so.

J.II.2. Constitutionalism in Africa

285. As part of the process of developing the democratic practice in the continent and ahead of the Conference on African Constitutions scheduled next year, a Workshop on African Constitutions was organized in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, from 5 to 6 November 2007 pursuant to preparations for the Conference, the objective of which is to develop a critical understanding of the state of African Constitutions and to map out strategies for enhancing constitutionalism in Africa. That Workshop came up with pertinent recommendations on the terms of reference of the Conference and the practical modalities for its preparation.

J.II.3 Establishment of a Pan-African Governance Architecture

286. Apart from the strategic objective of endowing Africa with a legal, institutional and operational framework to meet the numerous challenges arising from governance related matters in the Continent, the establishment of a Pan-African Architecture on Governance also stems from the will to bring together under one umbrella, the very many on-going initiatives in Africa, and project the leadership role of the African Union.

287. One of the central initiatives for enhancing cooperation between different stakeholders involved in Governance is the initiation of a research study that serves to map the multilateral governance landscape in the continent and to provide the basis for understanding the role of the AUC governance monitoring across the continent vis-à-vis the role of other Organizations involved in this area. In taking forward the ongoing study, a workshop would be held with relevant multilateral stakeholders and with wider interest groups in Governance. The study and planned workshops are part of the Commission's efforts directed at enhancing cooperation and ensuring effective governance support and monitoring of Member States practices and approaches.

J.II.4. Anti-Corruption

288. The ratification of the AU Convention on Prevention and Combating of Corruption by over fifteen countries provided the basis for the coming into force of the Convention. Whilst added attention is being placed on ensuring that all Member States ratify the Convention, attention is increasingly being focused on its implementation. To enhance efforts directed at ratification and implementation, the Bureau established by the 2nd Meeting of National Anti-Corruption Bodies convened in October 2007 in South Africa and focused its attention on the articulation of practical strategies for implementation. In addition to establishing the foundations for the constituting of the envisaged Anti-Corruption Board, the Bureau placed added attention on the application of the Convention and the strengthening of national anti-corruption bodies.

289. As the momentum is established for the implementation of the Convention, increased attention will be focused on how Member States are complying with the provisions of the Convention and the overall commitment to act against corruption in

Member States. Whilst there is increased progress against corruption through the information exchanges that take place between Member States, there is still a long way to go towards ensuring the eradication of the scourge of internal and cross-border corruption.

J.II.5. State Capacity Development

290. The Commission, in collaboration with the Bureau established by the 5th Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public Service, has been active in supporting efforts aimed at enhancing state capacities for development and service delivery across Member States. In this regard, the Ministerial Bureau met in Namibia from 24 to 25 October 2007 to consider progress made in the implementation of the Addis Ababa Declaration of the 5th Conference of Ministers of Public Service, namely:

(b) All Africa Public Sector Innovation Awards

291. One of the central instruments for enhancing and recognising good practices across Member States, is the newly introduced All Africa Public Service Innovation Awards. An extensive marketed effort has been undertaken and a number of Member States were visited during the popularisation process. The Secretariat for the Awards, under the leadership of Mauritius, has received a number of submissions. It is expected that the Awards will be made at the 6th Conference of Ministers (2008) of Public Service after an extensive adjudication process.

(c) The Charter for the African Public Service

292. In keeping with the decision of the Executive Council on the Addis Ababa Declaration, a process has been initiated under the leadership of Algeria to review the existing Charter for its adoption by the AU competent organs. To this end, two Workshops were held, the first in South Africa in July 2007 and the second in Algeria in December 2007. These Workshops on the Charter provided a basis for the revision of the Charter and for its subsequent submission to the Conference of Ministers of Public Service. The Charter would be revised and presented in an updated draft to the 6th Conference of Ministers of Public Service in 2008. The Charter will serve as the primary instrument for promoting state capacity development.

(d) African Management Development Institutes Network

293. The African Management Development Institutes Network (AMDIN) has emerged as a primary platform for enhancing capacity development efforts for good state administration across the continent. The Network, through the support and participation of the Commission, has conducted a second training workshop for trainers. This effort was made possible thanks to the support provided by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

294. The African Management Development Institutes Network held its first Conference and Council Meeting in August 2007. AMDIN's development has been very positive and all indications suggest that it will be a sustainable entity to serve as an important vehicle for continent-wide public sector capacity development efforts. As one of the initiating institutions, the Commission will continue to be represented on

the Executive Council of AMDIN and will continue to assist in shaping its future strategy and direction.

(e) **Africa Public Service Day**

295. 23rd June, established by African Ministers of Public Service as African Public Service Day, was marked by national events throughout the continent with a focus on anti-corruption. In addition to the celebrations and reflection on public service that took place across Member States on that Day, an experience exchange Seminar, with a focus on Anti-corruption, was arranged under the leadership of Namibia on 25 and 26 October 2007. Whilst highlighting the challenges of corruption in the public service, the exchanges revealed creative strategies to enhance the status of public service and the contributions of public servants across the Continent.

J.III. ELECTIONS OBSERVATION

H.IV.2. J.III.1. Elections Monitoring and Observation in Member States

296. Under this activity, the Commission fielded observer missions to the Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Madagascar and Togo on the occasion of the presidential and/or parliamentary elections in these countries. It is important to recall that African Union's participation in the observation of these elections was consistent with the criteria contained in the Durban Declaration of July 2002 on the Principles governing Democratic Elections in Africa, regarding the binding two months deadline set for issuance of invitations by Member States.

297. The conduct of the elections in the four countries was generally satisfactory. African Union's participation in the observation of the elections in question testifies to its will to accompany Member States in their efforts to consolidate democratic gains, and above all, to consolidate peace and stability, both of which are very essential prerequisites for their economic and social development. This will to get involved in the electoral process in Member States responds to two vital concerns; the first being to ensure Member States of its support in this huge enterprise that is democratization, and then to help inculcate in national public opinion, a climate of trust and confidence, thus ensuring that the elections are conducted in a climate of freedom, fairness and transparency

298. The second round of the legislative elections in the **Republic of Congo** was held on 5 August 2007. Notwithstanding some problems arising from organization of voting, the elections took place in a calm and serenity climate. The ruling party – the Congolese Labour Party – won absolute majority of the seats in the national assembly.

299. In Sierra Leone, the presidential and parliamentary elections took place on 11 August and 8 September 2007, respectively. Mr. Ernest Bai Koroma of the "All Peoples' Congress" (APC) was elected with 54.60% of the votes. This party also secured a majority of the seats in the national assembly.

300. In Madagascar, the legislative elections were held on 23 September 2007 in a climate of normalcy. Parti Tiako I Madagascar (TIM) won virtually all the seats in the national assembly.

301. The ruling party in Togo - *Le Rassemblement du Peuple Togolais/Togolese People's Rally* (RPT) won absolute majority in the national assembly in an early legislative election held on 14 October 2007.

302. In Kenya, parliamentary and presidential elections were held on 27 December 2007, in accordance with the country's electoral calendar. The African Union could not honour the invitation from the Kenyan authorities to dispatch an observer team, for the simple reason that the invitation was transmitted after the established deadline.

303. The results proclaimed by the Independent Electoral Commission were favourable to the outgoing President Mr. Mwai Kibaki, but were contested by the Opposition led by Mr. Raila Odinga on the grounds that the elections had been manipulated. The ensuing political crisis was followed by massive violence, which claimed hundreds of lives with about 250,000 people forced to flee their homes.

304. In a Press Release dated 31 December, the African Union Commission expressed serious concern at the violence that was consuming Kenya, and called upon the political players to exercise restraint and embrace dialogue. The Commission reaffirmed its commitment to the democratic principles enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union and other pertinent instruments, particularly the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance which underscores the importance of holding regular, free, fair and honest elections.

305. The Chairperson of the African Union President John A. Kufuor of Ghana, in consultation with the Commission, offered his good offices and then embarked on a visit to Kenya. The Commission was part of this visit, which lasted from 8 to 11 January 2008. The end of the visit was marked by the commitment of the two parties to find a political solution to the crisis.

306. I hereby reiterate our concern at the events in Kenya in the aftermath of the presidential election. Once again, I condemn the violence, which plunged Kenya into mourning and created a highly tragic humanitarian situation in the country.

307. The violence which erupted in Kenya following the proclamation of the results of the presidential election challenges us in many ways. Apart from the loss of lives and the sufferings brought upon the civilian population, thus sparking a humanitarian situation unprecedented in Kenya, the political crisis has dealt a huge blow on the stability of a Member State, the political development of which had generated so much hope in our collective march towards democracy and development. It behoves us all to do our utmost to ensure speedy normalization of the situation in Kenya, because continued tension will have catastrophic consequences not only for the country but also for the region at large. The African Union will spare no effort to assist Kenya in finding a solution to the crisis and overcome the fall-outs of the post-electoral violence which has been dogging the country.

J.III.2. Workshop on Review of Electoral Observation

308. Pursuant to its work programme and desirous of improving its participation in electoral processes in Member States, especially in the field of elections monitoring and observation, the Commission organized in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, from 12 to 13 November 2007, a Workshop on Review of the election observation exercises carried out by the Organization between 1990 and 2006. The objectives of the Workshop were to identify the challenges in election observation and develop strategies to strengthen African Union election observation missions. Participants applauded this initiative by the African Union to subject itself to external evaluation. The Commission will, in future, submit periodic reports on elections monitoring and observer missions to boost its intervention in the observation of electoral processes in our Continent.

J.III.3. Prospects

309. The Commission's performance in the area of elections monitoring/observation and promotion of democracy has, over the years, been somehow dampened particularly as a result of the constraints it had to contend with, mainly in regard to institutional capacity as well as human and financial resources.

310. On this score, the Commission will, in 2008, develop a manual for use by its observers along the lines of those elaborated by other International Organizations operating in this field. Such a document will supplement the Directives for Elections Observation and Monitoring Missions adopted in July 2004. The two documents will enable African Union observers to carry out their field activities with greater effectiveness and competence.

311. The effective establishment early in 2008 of a Democracy and Elections Assistance Unit will also enable the Commission to more effectively coordinate its activities in the domain of elections observation and monitoring in Member States.

312. Lastly, the Electoral Assistance Fund will help the Commission to overcome financial difficulties, thereby placing itself in a position to :

- dispatch to Member States a team of appropriate strength able to cover a large proportion of the territory ;
- observe the entire electoral process, from compilation of voters' register to proclamation of results; and
- observe the post-electoral period which is often prone to disputes.

313. It is gratifying that a symbolic budget has been adopted by the competent organs of the Union for the take-off of the Fund. The Commission takes this opportunity to appeal to Member States to make substantial contribution to enable the Fund to intervene more effectively in the field of democracy and elections in Member States.

J.IV. COOPERATION IN GOVERNANCE ISSUES

314. As part of its activities in the area of governance, the Commission embarked upon contacts with its partners and, on this score, participated in the series of meetings organized by them. Prominent among these meetings were the 7th Forum on Governance in Africa which took place in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in October, and the International Conference on Democracy and Human Rights in Africa organized by UNESCO on promotion, by national institutions, of Human Rights, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance held in Cairo in December 2007.

J.IV.1. 7th Governance Forum

315. Jointly organized by UNDP and ECA, the Forum took place from 24 to 26 October 2007 on the general theme of State capacity building in Africa, with participants from some thirty African States, international institutions and the civil society. The conclusions of the Forum included the fact that the capacity of the State needs to be enhanced to enable it assume a leadership role in the strengthening of good governance and, hence, in the promotion of development. However, this leadership role could be exercised only within the context of close Partnership with the key players, particularly the private sector and the civil society.

316. The areas of focus on the issue of building State capacities were: consolidation of democracy and popular participation mechanisms, unrelenting promotion of peace and security; strengthening management institutions to ensure good socio-economic governance and integration into the globalisation process. Pertinent recommendations were put forward as part of a Declaration which the Presidents of Faso and Rwanda, the chief moderators of the Forum, were mandated to bring to the attention of their Peers in the African Union.

J.IV.2. International Conference on Democracy and Human Rights in Africa: the Role of Human Rights Institutions

317. This Conference was held in Cairo on 3-4 December 2007 at the initiative of UNESCO and as part of the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Agenda included the role of national institutions in the promotion of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. A representative of the Commission made an exhaustive presentation of the Charter. Thereafter, measures to raise awareness of and promote the Charter were recommended, including a purpose campaign for its speedy ratification.

J.V. PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

J.V.1. 20th Anniversary Commemoration Seminar

318. The Commission, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Government of the Republic of Congo co-organised a Seminar on the Commemoration of 20th Anniversary of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights on the theme: **Promoting a culture of human rights: The African Commission Twenty Years on.** This event took place from 8 to 9 November 2007

on the margins of the 42nd Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Brazzaville, The Republic of Congo.

319. The Seminar, which was attended by representatives of AU Organs, former Members of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Civil Society Organisations, took stock of the achievements and challenges of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights since its establishment in 1987 and came up with proposals for the enhancement of the mandate of the African Commission as a key Treaty body in the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa. . The Seminar underscored the need to continue the collaboration between the African Commission and other Organs of the African Union, National Human Rights Institutions, Civil Society Organisations and other partners; to strengthen the promotional activities of the African Commission across the continent. It urged the African Union to increase human, financial and material support to the African Commission and requested the African Commission to follow up on the operationalisation of the Human Rights Voluntary Fund.

J.V.2. International Tolerance Day

320. On International Tolerance Day, 16 November 2007, the Commission and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights issued a joint Statement on the theme: "**Tolerance A Prerequisite for Building the Culture of Human Rights in Africa**". The Statement was issued during the 42nd Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo. The statement called for a concerted effort by all stakeholders, Member States, National Human Rights Institutions, Civil Society Organisations and the International Community, to build a culture of human rights in Africa, through combating intolerance and promoting the values of tolerance across the continent. It stressed that it is only through tolerance, truth, justice and reconciliation that societies can heal themselves from the scourge of armed conflicts, gender-based violence and all forms of conflict related violence.

J.V.3. International Human Rights Day

321. On 10th December 2007, the Commission joined the United Nations to observe a yearlong commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the UDHR, as a mark of its commitment to human rights standards and principles both as tools and goals.

322. The Commission commended those Member States that would undergo the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process in 2008 and called upon them to approach the UPR as an opportunity to provide credible information that will assist the Human Rights Council in identifying human rights challenges and remedies that will match the expectations of their citizens. In the same vein, the Commission commended those Member States that have undergone the African Peer Review Mechanism and encouraged the rest that have not yet done so to accede and undergo the review, in order to enhance democracy, political, economic, corporate, social governance and human rights on the Continent.

323. The Commission also called on every nation and every individual to recommit themselves to and uphold the fundamental human rights obligations, principles and

responsibilities that are enshrined in all national, regional and universal human rights instruments.

J.V.4. AU-UN Consultation on Human Rights, Justice and Reconciliation

324. With reference to the Declaration on Cooperation with the United Nations which was signed on 16 November 2006 with the then Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, relevant stakeholders from the African Union and the United Nations as well as representatives of Regional Economic Communities, the academia, civil society and donors met in Bahir Dar, Ethiopia from 19 to 20 October 2007. The aim of the consultations was to discuss strategies and activities to operationalize the pertinent sections relating to human rights, justice and reconciliation. Inspired by the existing plans of various components of the two institutions, the Meeting drew priorities for the AU-UN cooperation in the field of human rights, justice and reconciliation during the 2008-2009 cycle. The priorities include support to the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and relevant Departments within the African Union Commission. It is anticipated that both the UN and the AU will give the 10-Year Capacity Building Framework its desired support.

J.V.5. AU-EU Human Rights Dialogue

325. The Commission and the European Union held a Dialogue Forum on human rights issues in September 2007 in Brussels. This forum was in pursuance of the suggestion of the 6th EU – Africa Ministerial Troika Meeting in Vienna to hold an expert level human rights dialogue, which was confirmed at the subsequent 7th Meeting in Brazzaville, Congo.

326. The dialogue was intended to offer an opportunity to discuss modalities for implanting joint commitments in human rights and to determine how to increase EU-AU coordination in human rights international fora, including the UN Human Rights Council. The dialogue also allowed parties to discuss ways in which the EU can support African owned human rights and democracy building efforts on the basis of inter alia the African Charter on Democracy, Governance and Elections and initiatives such as the EU – Africa Plan of Action on Trafficking of Human Beings. The Forum welcomed the cooperation and agreed to develop a proposal or framework for the cooperation, which will be based on the common interests of the two institutions in the areas of human rights.

J.V.6. Resource Centre for Democracy, Governance and Human Rights

327. During the period under review, the Resource Center for Democracy, Governance and Human Rights acquired various pertinent publications, newspapers and magazines. The number of users of the facilities, including representatives of Member States, National Human Rights Institutions, Civil Society organizations and individuals, has continued to grow steadily. There is also greater interaction between the Resource Centre and other Libraries and Organisations both within and outside the continent.

J.VI. HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

328. It should be noted that since 2003, tens of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons returned home in safety and dignity due to conducive conditions that were created by countries of origin such as in Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and in the South of the Sudan.

329. However, on the other hand, for the past seven months, the Continent has witnessed mass movements of people especially in the Horn, Eastern and Central regions. Sometimes the very same people have become yet refugees or internally displaced for the second or even the third time. These victims of forced displacement often experience massive violations of human rights abuses, sexual violence, abduction, and forced recruitment into the armed forces of different parties. Sadly, this scenario places Africa as the continent with the largest number of victims of forced displacement in the world. Due to an increase of thousands of victims of forced displacement for the past few months, the number of refugees is today more than 3 million and over 15 million internally displaced persons.

330. The Commission is equally concerned about the humanitarian situation facing several countries on the continent as a result of natural disasters during the past months. Mass movements of people are on the rise as a result of the occurrences of natural disasters. Floods, heavy rainfalls, typhoons and drought have led to homelessness, food shortages, increasing rates of communicable diseases and death, especially among vulnerable populations. The number affected accounted for about 1.5 million.

331. As a gesture of solidarity, the Commission has made donations to most affected countries at the tune of US\$ 300,000: Ghana (US\$75,000), Togo (US\$50,000), Sudan (US\$100,000), and Uganda (US\$75,000). It is important that the African Union consider ways and means of putting in place mechanisms and adequate resources to manage such devastating situations.

332. In the light of the AU Decisions on Forced Displacement, the Commission has continued to work closely with AU partners in a number of ways in order to address this dehumanizing problem, through conferences, meetings and workshops that discuss the humanitarian situation in Africa. The partners are mainly the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the African Humanitarian Action (AHA). The Commission meets with these partners within the framework of the AU Coordinating Committee on Assistance and Protection to Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons every six months to develop a joint programme of work that is used inter alia to implement the AU Decisions.

333. Among the important programmes and activities, the Commission, together with the Representative of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, participated actively in the 58th Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (EX-COM). The Commission made intensive preparations for the meeting of the Member States Legal Experts on the draft AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons, and the 2008 AU Special Summit on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, the Joint

AU/ICRC Calendar for 2007 as well as the promotion of International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

334. On its part, the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees undertook field assessment missions to the following Member States: Liberia, Sierra Leone and The Sudan. The missions met with Government Officials, Representatives of the African Union's Office, UNHCR and other UN Humanitarian organizations, as well as refugees, returnees and IDPs. In all the areas that were visited, inadequate resources to cater for the basic essentials as well as security concerns were highlighted as the major problems aggravating the suffering of the victims of forced displacements.

335. Following the assessment missions, in solidarity with the Member States hosting such large numbers of victims of forced displacement, the Commission granted financial contributions amounting to US\$ 600,000 to Guinea (US\$ 100,000), Cote d'Ivoire (US\$ 100,000), Liberia (US\$200,000) and Sierra Leone (US\$ 200,000).

336. In line with the Executive Council Decision of July 2004, the Commission has spearheaded the task of elaborating a legal framework for the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons in Africa which culminated in the convening a meeting of Member States Legal Experts on the draft AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa that was held from 15 to 17 December 2007 at the AU Headquarters. All efforts are being exerted towards its adoption, if possible by the 2008 Special Summit on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons. The Commission wishes to stress the need for the international community to devote greater attention to the victims of forced displacement as they do not currently benefit much from its assistance.

337. Furthermore and in the light of Decision Dec. EX/CL/353 (IX) of the Executive Council, the Commission presented a Concept Paper on Access to Post-Primary Education for Victims of Forced Displacement during the meeting of the Ministers of Education which was held in August 2007 in South Africa so as to ensure provision of post primary education for victims of forced displacement. The Commission would undertake resource mobilization campaign in order to ensure that victims of forced displacement have easy access to post primary education, once this policy is adopted by the competent organs.

338. Moreover, the Commission undertook, as requested by Council, to revise the Rules of Procedure of the revitalized AU Coordinating Committee on Assistance and Protection to Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa and its Terms of Reference. This work has been completed and is being submitted for consideration by AU competent organs.

339. Finally, Member States are urged to participate in the first ever Special Summit of Heads of State and Government on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons scheduled to be held in September 2008. It will be an auspicious opportunity to explore ways and means of eradicating the phenomenon of large scale forced displacement caused by conflicts and natural disasters in the continent.

J.VII. AFRO ARAB COOPERATION

340. Pursuant to Decision EX.CL/Dec.363 (XI), the study on “Development of an Institutional Mechanism for Afro-Arab Strategic Studies/Redefinition of the Role of Afro-Arab Cultural Institute in Bamako, Mali”, was concluded in collaboration with the League of Arab States. The African and Arab consultants have submitted their report to the 3rd AU/LAS Inter-Secretariat Consultative Meeting, held in Addis Ababa from 14 to 16 December 2007. The Meeting, among other things, agreed to set-up a multi-sectoral Task Force from the two parties to critically review the report and facilitate the transformation process without affecting the on-going cultural programme of the Institute. The first meeting of the Task Force will take place in the first half of March 2008.

341. The Commission, in collaboration with the League of Arab States, finalized the study on a framework and modalities for the establishment of a standing Afro-Arab Development Forum. This document was equally reviewed and endorsed by the 3rd AU/LAS Inter-Secretariat Consultative Meeting for adoption by the respective Policy Organs. It is to be recalled that the principle to establish such a Forum was endorsed by the 19th Arab Summit held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in March 2007.

342. In light of the Cairo Declaration on Afro-Arab Cooperation and decisions on the subject, the Commission, in collaboration with the League of Arab States, initiated the establishment of Committees of Afro-Arab Ambassadors in selected capitals / cities such as Addis Ababa, Cairo, Brussels, Geneva and New York. Consideration is being given to include other important capitals such as Washington DC. The aim is to encourage regular meetings and consultations for the purpose of coordinating actions and positions on issues of common concern to the two regions.

343. Efforts are underway to create direct working relations between the Commission and Arab specialized institutions, as was recommended by the 2nd Inter-Secretariat Meeting. The Commission in this regard, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Arab Fund for Technical Assistance to African Countries, while negotiations on similar instruments with the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD) and the Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development (AAAID) have been finalized.

344. Unlike the previous six editions of the Afro-Arab Trade Fairs which have been organized every two years since 1993, to facilitate direct contacts between African and Arab businessmen and develop trade and investment links between African and Arab countries, the 7th edition originally planned to take place in Khartoum, Sudan, in 2005, was postponed due to low level of confirmations by African and Arab countries. Consequently, the African Union Commission and the League of Arab States agreed to undertake an in-depth evaluation of the performance of the Fair, with the aim of rectifying organizational problems and improving the impact of the Fair in the future. The Commission, in collaboration with the League of Arab States, has fully accomplished the necessary background work for this task and submitted a proposal to BADEA for financial assistance to undertake the evaluation.

345. In the meantime, the Commission will soon start preparations for the 7th edition of the Fair, which is now scheduled to take place in Djibouti in 2009. All Member States of the African Union are urged to participate at the event.

346. The foregoing achievements notwithstanding, sustained efforts are required to enhance Afro-Arab Cooperation. To this end, it is important that the Decisions of the 6th AU Summit held in Khartoum in 2006 and the 19th Arab Summit held in Riyadh in 2007, to hold the 2nd Afro-Arab Summit as soon as possible are implemented. In pursuance of these Decisions and the recommendation of the 3rd AU/LAS Inter-Secretariat Meeting, the Commission will intensify consultations with the League of Arab States to determine the dates and venue for the Summit and start the preparations for its successful organization.

K. AU REPRESENTATIONAL OFFICES

347. In discussing the question of African diplomatic missions, it is needful to underscore the crucial role they are expected to play in multilateral relations. Such a role challenges our Organization which should provide these missions with adequate resources and enhance their capacities to enable them extend technical support to the African Groups and Member States' Missions to harmonize African positions, enable Africa to speak with one and the same voice and occupy its rightful position in the international community. The following recommendations are pertinent:

- Upgrade these missions, ensure that they enjoy the same benefits and face up to the same obligations as Member States' missions and those of other inter-governmental organizations;
- Restructure these missions, endow them with functional organizational structures and enhance their capacities in terms of human resources and expertise;
- Acquire appropriate premises to ensure better accommodation for the missions, provide adequate logistics resources to accompany the African Groups and African organizations in their efforts at defending the interests of the Continent and ensure better visibility for our Organization and Africa in the world; and
- Put in place a mechanism to coordinate the African Groups in the multilateral posts especially Geneva, New York, Washington D.C., Brussels, Cairo and Addis Ababa, for more effective coordination and harmonization of our positions in multilateral diplomacy and better management of the stakes and challenges inherent in cross-cutting issues.

K.I. BRUSSELS OFFICE

348. The Mission endeavored to strengthen ties with the African Group in Brussels and in Europe, the partners (EU, ACP, UN agencies, Arab States and others) and to popularize the African Union and its strategic and priority programmes.

349. The Mission followed closely and participated actively in the negotiations for the finalization of the Africa -EU Joint Strategy and its First Plan of Action, the EPA negotiations by the different Regions, the implementation of the EC Support Programme, the discussions at the ACP on various economic and social issues, the programming of the 10th EDF, the preparation of the AU-EU Ministerial Troika meeting and the Africa-EU Summit in Lisbon, the Consultative Conference on African Diaspora in Europe, the meetings of African and European Parliamentarians, the Commission and Council of Europe on matters of Peace and Security.

K.I.1. Joint Strategy

350. The Office gave the necessary support to the delegations of the AU Commission during the meetings with the European Commission and contributed to the finalisation of the Africa-EU Joint Strategy and its First Plan of Action until their adoption by the Ministerial Troika in Accra, Ghana, on 31 October 2007. In this connection, the Mission organised meetings of coordination and information with the African Group and the ECOWAS/UEMOA and COMESA representations in Brussels and held regular consultations with the European Commission in this respect.

K.I.2. EPA Negotiations

351. In light of the decisions of the AU Assembly, the process of negotiations of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), as an urgent, priority and burning issue over the past months, mobilised the continuous attention and energy of the Mission. However, the different regions did not always associate the Commission in their negotiations with the EC. This did not facilitate the coordination and harmonisation of the African positions on these crucial negotiations.

352. Within that context, the Mission organised consultation meetings with the African Group and the RECs representatives (ECOWAS/UEMOA, COMESA), the ACP Secretariat for a good understanding and better monitoring of the negotiations and ensure the leadership of the AU in the process. The Mission, in cooperation with the Trade and Industry Department of the AUC, organised a Retreat for the African Group and the Chief negotiators in Ostend, Belgium on 25 and 26 August 2007 to take stock of the EPA negotiations by the different Regions with the participation of the experts of the AUC, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) with a view to ensuring the sharing of information and harmonisation of the different positions.

353. Concurrently with the Conference of the ACP Ministers of Trade in October 2007, in Brussels, the Mission organised, at the request of the Trade and Industry Department of the AUC, a meeting with the Senior Officials and another one with the Ministers of Trade of the AU Member States. The AUC Commissioner in charge of Trade and Industry explained the concerns of the AUC and the challenges for the Member States while recalling the decisions of the Assembly on the subject which should guide at all times Member States and the Chief negotiators in the EPA negotiation process.

354. In spite of all these efforts to come up with a common position, some members of SADC, EAC and ESA signed what are termed as the Interim Agreements with the EC. It is imperative to maintain a regular coordination and sharing of information between the Commission, the PRC, the AU Permanent

Missions and the African Groups in Brussels and Geneva on all economic, trade, social and cultural issues.

K.I.3. Diaspora

355. In the preparation of the Summit on the Diaspora scheduled in the beginning of 2008 in South Africa, the Mission cooperated with the Embassies of South Africa in Brussels and Paris to organise the Consultative Conference with the African Diaspora in Europe. The Consultative Conference was held in Paris from 11 to 12 September 2007, with the participation of the representatives of the African Diaspora in Europe and Diplomatic representations of African countries and other countries having a population of African origin. The Conference was chaired jointly by the AU Permanent Representative in Brussels and the South African Ambassador in Paris. The Mission organised several meetings with the representatives of Organisations/Associations of the African Diaspora in Brussels with a view to preparing their participation and contribution to the Consultative Conference of Paris. The Mission attended the meeting of African States in Addis Ababa and the preparatory Ministerial meeting of the Summit on the African Diaspora in Midrand, South Africa, which made a synthesis of all the Consultative Conferences organised in the different regions of the world.

356. Apart from the preparation of the Conference, the Mission discussed with the Diaspora the possibility of it contributing in kind (expertise, equipment, materials etc.) and /or in cash to the projects and programmes to be implemented in the countries / regions of Africa. The Mission proposed to the African Diaspora Organisations/Associations to organise and structure themselves into a Federation with a Bureau which could serve as a conveyor belt and link between the Mission and the Diaspora. The Mission intends to prepare, with the assistance of these Organisations, a Directory of existing skills and expertise within the African Diaspora in Europe which will be of significant use for the activities and programmes/projects in the countries / regions of origin.

357. In the same vein, the Mission organised on 30 November 2007, a on AIDS, with the participation of the African Group, the Deans of the Caribbean (Haiti) and the Pacific (Solomon Islands) countries, the Civil Society Organisations(CSOs) of the African Diaspora working in the field like LIBIKI, Projet Matongé, Cap Santé and Doctors in the Diaspora, the EU, the Belgian Ministry of Social Affairs, students of the Lycées, the UN agencies, IOM and others. The meeting decided to establish a Committee, under the aegis of the Permanent Mission, to organise and manage the resource mobilisation activities to help the sick patients and launch initiatives like **“Les Médecins pour l’Afrique”** (Doctors for Africa).

358. The Mission will organise meetings with and for the youths (within the framework of the Year of African Youth) and women in order to popularise the actions of the AUC in their favour such as the Protocol on the Rights of Women, the African Charter on Youth, African Culture and so on.

359. It will be necessary for the Commission and particularly the CIDO Directorate, to continue to engage CSOs in the Diaspora, in order to encourage them carry out activities to assist the members of the African Diaspora in Belgium and beyond, in Europe to overcome their problems. In this regard, the participation of some

representatives of the CSOs in Europe in meetings of the ECOSOCC or other meetings devoted to Diaspora would be promoted. Likewise, the possibility for awarding an annual AU Prize, to a Diaspora Organisation which would have distinguished itself through its activities, could be envisaged.

K.I.4. Africa-EU Lisbon Summit

360. The Mission participated actively, in cooperation with the Mission of Portugal to the EC and through a series of meetings organised in Brussels and Lisbon, in the preparation of the Lisbon Summit held on 8 and 9 December 2007. In this regard, it sensitised the CSOs of the African Diaspora about the development concerns of Africa calling for their contribution in the preparation for their Summit. The Mission further participated in the meetings of the European Civil Society and that of the European Parliamentarians to inform them about the problems of Africa and their possible contributions towards the establishment of a genuine and strong Partnership between the EU and Africa. The High level Seminar, organised by the EU Portuguese Presidency on 7 November 2007 in Lisbon, during the European Development Days, was a similar opportunity to sensitise the partners.

K.I.5. Peace and Security

361. The Mission participated in several meetings in the Belgian Senate, the European Parliament, the EU Council Secretariat, the Council of Europe, NATO and of the ACP, some of them having been attended by the Commissioner in charge of Peace and Security in the AUC. Issues on the Darfur conflict and AMIS / UNAMID, the African Peace and Security Architecture, the African Peace Facility, the conflict in The Comoros, the Central African Republic, Chad, etc.. were discussed during these meetings.

362. The Permanent Representative represented, among others, the Department of Peace and Security, at the meeting organized by the OIF Ad hoc Consultative Committee on Guinea in Paris on 30 May 2007, the Preparatory meeting for the Round Table and the Round Table itself on the Central African Republic in Brussels on 26 June and 30 October respectively and the Round Table on The Comoros in Paris on 28 November 2007. Furthermore, the Mission attended the Second meeting of information on the EU military operation in East Chad on 16 November 2007 at the General Secretariat of the Council of Europe.

K.I.6. Other Activities

363. The Mission gave the necessary support to the AUC delegations on mission in Brussels with logistic, material and other means, including the facilitation of meetings of the Commissioners with their counterparts of the EU and the ACP and the implementation of the Staff exchange programme between the AUC and the EC.

364. The Mission held regular consultations with the ACP Secretariat on issues of interest to AU and its Member States, such as the Sessions of the ACP Committee of Ambassadors, the programming of the 10th EDF, the technical meetings, the African Peace Facility, as well as the utilisation of the resources allocated to ACP in favour of AU Member States.

365. Following the directives of the Political Affairs Department regarding the Afro-Arab Ministerial meeting held in Cairo in November 2006, the Mission initiated meetings with the Representative of the Arab League in Brussels in order to set up a Committee of African and Arab Ambassadors within the framework of Afro-Arab Cooperation and establish quarterly meetings. The Secretary General of the League of Arab States has also given instructions to his Representative in Brussels to act in the same sense.

366. The Mission has held meetings with Embassies of the EU Member States, Japan, China, the UN agencies like UNDP, UNIDO and others to discuss the follow up of cooperation with the AU.

K.I.7. New Premises

367. The present premises are inadequate in terms of office accommodation and meeting facilities. At present, the meetings of the African Group are held outside the Missions of the ACP General Secretariat or in other EU institutions depending on the availability of these meeting facilities. Furthermore, for the purposes of coordination and rationalisation of financial resources, the Commission wishes that the premises of the Brussels Office accommodate the RECs representations as is the case of the Representation of COMESA at the moment. It has therefore been recommended that the Mission be provided with adequate premises. In this connection, the Mission has approached some estate agencies which have identified a building in a good location (Avenue Roosevelt). This building, if acquired, could be modified to provide a big meeting hall and a large number of offices. The Mission has contacted a firm of architects for preliminary studies in order to have an idea on the offer made. The same firm could help evaluate the present building for it to be sold and the income could be supplemented to purchase the new building.

368. Finally, there is need to provide the required staff to ensure better effectiveness of the Office.

K.II. CAIRO OFFICE

369. The AU Permanent Delegation to the League of Arab States (LAS) continued to follow up the activities of LAS, foster close cooperation relations with the League in the various political, economic, social and cultural fields. It attended and followed up the statutory meetings convened during the period under review. In this context, it is to be noted that the League of Arab States held meetings and adopted decisions of interest to the African Union, as follows:

K.II.1. Peace and Security

370. The Mission coordinated activities between AUC and LAS, such as the situation in Darfur, Somalia and the Comoros, with a view to avoiding contradictory positions or duplication in efforts. In this respect, decisions were adopted by 128th Session of LAS Ministerial Council (4 to 5/9/2007):

i) On Darfur

371. The meeting expressed appreciation for the role of the League of Arab States in collaboration with the AU, UN and EU, to solve this problem, and the continued efforts to establish peace and stability, as well as supporting mediation between the government of Sudan and the rebel movements. It welcomed UN Security Council's decision No. 1796 on the AU-UN Hybrid Force in Darfur. It called on African and Arab countries to participate in the hybrid force so as to enhance the African character of this force, and called on the Arab countries to fulfill their obligations to support AU force in compliance with Khartoum Summit decision of 2006, to contribute an amount of US\$ 150 million. It welcomed the steps taken to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the government of Sudan and SPLM, and requested both parties to speed up the implementation of the CPA. It also welcomed the positive steps for the implementation of the peace agreement in East Sudan, and the participation of the political movements in the political process in the country. As regards the humanitarian situation in Darfur, a high level Arab conference took place in Khartoum on 30/10/2007. During that conference, an amount of USD\$ 250 million was pledged to cope with the humanitarian situation in the region. The League of Arab States is also planning to organize a similar conference for development and rehabilitation in Southern Sudan, as well as in East Sudan.

ii) On Somalia

372. The 128th LAS Council Session expressed support to the AU Mission in Somalia and condemned all actions against the AU forces in that country. It called on African Countries to participate in these forces to complete the number required for AU-forces. It also invited Arab countries to continue helping in deploying these forces. It finally expressed the LAS support for Somalia's national reconciliation efforts and called on parties that are not yet part of the reconciliation process to join therein. Further, Arab Members States were requested to provide Somalia with all necessary aid and support to alleviate human sufferings of the Somali people.

iii) On The Comoros

373. The 128th Session of the Council expressed the appreciation for the joint efforts of LAS, AU, UN, and neighbouring countries, especially as regards the Fomboni Agreement 20/12/2003. It called on the Comorian parties to overcome their differences on the power sharing between the Federal Government and the islands authorities within the implementation framework of the Constitution of the Union of the Comoros. It called on the illegal President of Anjouan to abide by the decisions of the international community, especially the AU decisions, calling for the organization of new presidential elections in Anjouan. In this respect, contacts have already been established between AU and LAS to implement the decision of the 95th Session of the AU Peace and Security Council to enforce sanctions against officials in Anjouan. The LAS on its side confirmed that it shall implement these decisions. With regard to the contribution to the development efforts in favour of the Comoros, the General Secretariat of LAS was instructed to organize an Arab Conference for Investment & Development in Comoros, in 2008.

iv) Peace Process in Palestine and The Middle East

374. The Mission, in cooperation with relevant Departments in LAS and Arab Diplomatic Missions accredited to LAS, continued its efforts to keep them informed of the AU support to the Palestinian issue and its quest to find a just solution to it, in accordance with the 9th AU Summit Declaration in support of the Arab Peace Initiative. The Arab Ministers of Foreign Affairs on their part, in the 128th session of their Council, expressed appreciation to the AU for this position and expressed gratitude to the Chairperson of the AU Commission for his efforts in this respect.

375. It is to be mentioned that some African countries were represented at the Annapolis Conference on 25th November 2007, on the Peace in Middle East, at the invitation of the President of the United States of America: Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia (members of the Committee for the Arab Peace Initiative), Mauritania, Senegal, and South Africa. The Conference, organized by the United States of America intended to find a solution for the Palestinian problem based on the principle of the establishment of two states.

K.II.2. Strengthening Afro-Arab cooperation

376. The Mission maintained close working relations with the different departments of LAS General Secretariat and particularly Africa and Afro-Arab Cooperation Department, with which it had regular consultative meetings on the follow up of the implementation of the decisions of the 2nd AU/LAS Inter Secretariat meeting (Cairo, 4-6 December 2006). In this connection, the Mission hosted and participated in the following meetings and activities:

(1) Establishment of an Afro-Arab Development Forum

377. The establishment of an Afro-Arab Development Forum was recommended by the First African and Arab Independent Experts meeting held in Cairo, Egypt, 22-23 January 2003, the Working Group on Afro-Arab Cooperation held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 12 May 2004 and the 1st AU/LAS Inter-Secretariat Meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 12 May 2005. The rationale behind the establishment of this Forum is:

- i) To encourage participation of governmental and non-governmental actors with special emphasis on Private Sectors, Civil Societies, Academicians, Women and Youth Associations, Professional Organizations, etc., in the development process of the two regions;
- ii) To focus on inter-regional development cooperation issues in the areas of peace and security, poverty eradication, population, infrastructure and energy, water and environment, agriculture and food security, health, education, culture and human resources development, etc.

378. On the basis of a decision of the 2nd AU/LAS Inter-Secretariat meeting, Cairo, Egypt December 2006, the Permanent Delegation hosted and actively participated in the meeting between officials from AUC – LAS General Secretariat, 8-9 August 2007 to finalize the concept paper for the establishment of the forum, which was examined

and adopted by the 3rd AU/LAS Inter-Secretariat Consultative Meeting, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 14-16/12/2007.

379. It is expected that the Forum will enhance Afro-Arab cooperation in all fields of political, economic, social and cultural development, including the enhancement of relations between the two regions, the coordination of efforts in order to face the challenges of globalisation, the promotion of joint ventures, the facilitation of regular contacts between policy makers, civil societies, private sector, researchers, professional organizations, etc.

(2) Implementation of MOU with the Arab Fund for Technical Assistance to African Countries (AFTAAC):

380. This MOU was signed in Addis Ababa on 18/12/2006. The Fund is aimed at providing technical assistance to African countries in the field of agriculture, health, ITC, academicians, etc. To implement this MOU, the Fund proposed to AUC the establishment of training programs in relevant fields of interest, which could include diplomatic skills, administration and leadership. These training programmes to be agreed by the two parties could be implemented during 2008.

(3) Implementation of the General Cooperation Agreement between the African Union and the League of Arab States:

381. The Agreement was signed on 28 March 2007 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and endorsed by the 11th Session of the AU Executive Council in Accra, Ghana, 1-3 /07/2007, Decision: EX.CL/Dec.363(XI). On its part, the LAS Council at Ministerial level endorsed the Agreement at its 128th Session in Cairo, Egypt, 5/09/2007, by Decision A/6814.

- **Organizational Proposals For Implementation of the Agreement:**
 - To facilitate the implementation of this Agreement, the two organizations and their specialized institutions are called upon to make contributions towards its effective implementation in the relevant fields of competence.
 - The two Organizations should effectively grant the mutual special observer status to each other in their respective meetings and conferences at ministerial level and summits, while discussing agenda items of common interest to both parties. (Article III)
 - The status of AU and LAS representatives at their different meetings should be strictly observed, especially at summits and ministerial Council levels. Clear instructions should be given to the respective Protocol and Security services in the two Organizations to facilitate the participation of these representatives.

- **Preparation of short and medium-term programs:**
 - To ensure the successful implementation of the Agreement, a short and Medium Term cooperation work program, based on Article II,

needs to be prepared and adopted by the AUC and the LAS General Secretariat.

- Such Program can be translated into practical annual programs. The follow-up should be undertaken through the regular meetings of the two organizations, and their specialized agencies as well as the Inter Secretariat Consultative Meetings.

(4) The Follow-up on the transformation of the Afro-Arab Cultural Institute into Afro-Arab Institute for Culture and Strategic Studies:

382. The Office is following up on the efforts of the two Organizations to enable the Afro-Arab Cultural Institute to perform its duties and overcome the financial and human resources difficulties it is presently facing. The initiative of the AUC to transform this Institute to an Afro-Arab Institute for Culture and Strategic Studies was approved by LAS General Secretariat. The aim of this initiative is to provide policy makers in the two regions with technical advice and strategic studies. It also aims at furthering Afro-Arab brotherhood, enhancing Partnership and dealing with challenges that face the two regions. To finalize this process, a team of Independent Experts of the two sides was formed to advise on possible solutions to overcome the financial and human resources problems facing the Institute. This team of experts held five (5) sessions at the Mission's office in April 2007 and its report was considered by the 3rd AUC/LAS Consultative Meeting, 14-16/12/2007, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

(5) Finalization of MOUs between AUC/LAS specialized Institutions:

383. Within the framework of the mission of the Permanent Delegation to consolidate cooperation with Arab specialized organizations and agencies with AUC and its specialized organizations and agencies, the Office contacted some relevant Arab Institutions to draft MOUs between them and the AUC. These contacts materialized in the preparation of the following draft memoranda.

- Draft Memorandum of Understanding between the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), Khartoum, Sudan.
- Draft Memorandum of Understanding between the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), Khartoum, Sudan.
- Draft Memorandum of Understanding between the African Union Commission (AUC) and the Arab Authority for Agricultural Development and Investment (AAAID), Khartoum, Sudan.

384. Each memorandum was submitted to the Office of the Legal Counsel of the AUC and in the respective Organizations, for clearance. It is expected that these MoUs would be signed in 2008.

K.II.3. Activities of the Group of African Ambassadors in Cairo

385. The Mission continued to host and service the monthly meetings of the African Group in its premises. Moreover, the Mission's premises, hosted the meetings of the regional ambassadorial groups where issues of common interest were discussed.

The Mission contributed also to cultural manifestations which were organized by the African Group of Ambassadors in Cairo.

K.II.4. Relations with the Host Country, Egypt

386. During the period under review, the Mission has maintained close working relations with the Host Country, Egypt. It has liaised with delegations from Headquarters and the concerned Egyptian Authorities for the following meetings/events:

- The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of Child, Cairo, Egypt 25-27 October 2007.
- The African Ministers Responsible for Child Affairs, Cairo, Egypt, 29/10 – 3/11/2007
- The AFRA High Level Policy Seminar, Aswan, Egypt, November 2007.
- The establishment of the Pan African Bourse, Cairo, Egypt, 22 November 2007.
- The arrangements for the Africa-EU Ministerial Meeting, Sharm Al-Sheikh, Egypt, 4-5 December 2007.

K.III. GENEVA OFFICE

387. As a centre for multilateral interaction, especially in matters of human rights protection and promotion, disarmament, promotion of socio-economic development and provision of humanitarian assistance, the Mission has continued to engage in constructive dialogue with AU partners in the international organizations and agencies based in Geneva. To this end, the Mission organized periodic experience sharing and consultation meetings with the leadership of these international organizations and institutions as well as with the representatives of the Regional Groups. The Mission continued to work closely with the African Group, particularly in the promotion of the Vision of the African Union.

388. With regard to the World Trade Organization, it is needful to provide more sustained support to the African negotiators in Geneva in terms of expertise, statistics and negotiation techniques to enable them to exert greater pressure and defend the vital interests of the Continent through the team of African experts who would operate in a network to support the African Groups in Geneva and Brussels. It is also necessary to focus on the medium and long-term rather than on immediate gains at national and individual level, as a way of breaking the present deadlock in the negotiations.

K.III.1. Human Rights, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Affairs

1. Human Rights Council

389. Since its creation on 15 March 2006 by resolution 60/251, this Council has devoted itself to activities relating to institutional issues and establishment of its structures. The Human Rights Commission held its 72nd and last session on 27 March 2006 in its capacity as the key organ of the United Nations with responsibility for promotion and protection of human rights. With the support of the Mission, African

States provided their input to this process and, in particular, proposed and succeeded in obtaining adoption of **the Code of Conduct for Human Rights Mandate Holders**. This document has now become the activity reference governing all those with the mandate to conduct United Nations human rights activities at country level. The adoption of the Code is a significant achievement for Africa, and forms an integral part of the Council's text on institutional development, in the same vein as the new mechanism put in place by the Council titled Universal Periodic Review (UPR). On this score, Africa could contribute to implementation of the UPA in light of the experience of African Union Member States with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the MAEP process.

390. Other activities of the Council concerned mainly the human rights situation in African countries. Member States paid special attention to the situation in Darfur which till now features regularly on the agenda of the Council. This issue was indeed discussed at an extra-ordinary session which took place on 6 December 2006. The Council held other extra-ordinary sessions to discuss the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, in Lebanon and in Myanmar.

391. With regard to Darfur, the Council decided to field a high-level mission to the region in February 2007, to assess the human rights situation and assess Sudan's needs in this area. Consideration of the mission report and the ensuing debate thereon resulted in the setting up of an experts' group to continue to assess the situation. The African Group in Geneva and the Sudanese government cooperated fully with all the mechanisms, and held several consultations with the European Union and other stakeholders on this issue.

392. The Council also discussed other human rights situations in African countries such as Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Liberia.

393. Other thematic issues of importance to African States addressed by the Council relate to the right to development, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, effective implementation of the Durban Declaration, ethnic minorities, social forum, the human rights of people of African descent, trafficking in and violence against women and children, torture, toxic waste and other dangerous products, etc.

394. On the future activities of the Council, African countries are invited to embark upon implementing its various decisions, particularly those pertaining to technical assistance, capacity building and related matters. In this connection, the Mission engages in interactive dialogue with the High Commission for Human Rights with a view to obtaining further assistance towards capacity building in African States, as they deploy effort to promote and protect all human rights. It also intends to facilitate collaboration between the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the High Commission for Human Rights to enable them to share experience and best practices.

395. The international community celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 2007. African countries are invited to look into, on regular basis, the key issue of the worsening human rights situation such as acts of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia which have continued to affect an increasing number of people of African descent more than others.

2. Disarmament, Peace and Security

396. During the period under review, the Commission participated actively in the deliberations on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention at the experts' meeting of States parties to this Convention held in Geneva in August 2007. In the final declaration, special emphasis was placed on the need for all the parties to fully implement the Treaty, upgrade the capacities of States to act both at country and regional levels, information exchange, technology for peaceful purposes and to preserve States' legitimate needs in terms of economic and technological development.

397. Thus, Africa's position on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is to push for not only scrupulous compliance with the Treaty, but also for the requisite assistance to States to enable them to effectively implement the Treaty.

398. The activities of the 7th Conference for Review of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention are in progress. African States and the Commission should continue to be seized of the issue. To this end, the African Union participated in the Conference on improving the Convention held in Geneva in 22 November 2007.

399. Member States should similarly remain seized of issues relating to anti-personnel mines especially as the number of Africans killed or wounded by these weapons is higher than in all other regions of the world. Africa has the unenviable record of anti-personnel mines in its soil in relation to other Continents on the planet. Over 40 million anti-personnel mines are planted in the Continent. The African Union should redouble its efforts in the context of the security dialogue between the African Union and the European Union to devise a common demining programme for the African Continent.

400. With respect to peace consolidation, it is noteworthy that the United Nations Commission on Peace Consolidation has, since its inception, been mobilizing substantial resources for some African countries. The Mission participated in the 6th session of the Commission held on 6 November 2007. This Commission has already made available US\$ 35 million to Burundi and Sierra Leone towards the building of peace infrastructure and other reconstruction needs. Other African countries emerging from situations of conflict will similarly benefit from the facilities granted by this Commission. The African Union will establish necessary contacts with the Commission to enhance the effectiveness of its activities in Africa.

3. Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

401. The African Union was represented at the 58th session of the Executive Committee of the High Commission for Refugees which took place in Geneva from 1 to 5 October 2007, by a high-powered delegation led by the Commissioner for Political Affairs, and including the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Gabon in Addis Ababa in his capacity as the Chairperson of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees. The delegation briefed the meeting on the efforts deployed by the African Union to tackle the numerous challenges arising from the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons in many Member States.

402. The Executive Committee welcomed the convening, for 2008, of a Special African Union Conference on the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons, on the recommendation of the Ministerial Conference held in Ouagadougou. The Executive Committee was also informed about the legal instrument on protection and assistance to internally displaced persons. Upon adoption by the competent organ of the Union, this new instrument will be the first of its kind in the world and will complement the 1969 Convention on Refugees. Lastly, the Executive Committee underlined the need for convergence of efforts on the part of the African Union and the United Nations particularly in regard to the new UN approach known as **“Delivering as One”** especially with respect to the policy guidelines on education of refugees embarked upon by the African Union Commission, and targeting young girls and former child soldiers.

4. Humanitarian Assistance

403. The 30th International Conference of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies held in Geneva from 26 to 30 November 2007 was the occasion for elections into their Permanent Committee. That election was contested by nine candidates, two for Africa, two for the Americas, three for Asia and two for Europe. Africa’s candidates were those presented by Mali and Cameroon. The Mission coordinated efforts aimed at adopting block vote strategy for the two African candidates. In the end, Mali’s candidate was elected in the third position for a seat on the Permanent Committee of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, after over 10 years of Africa’s absence in this Committee.

404. At another level, African Union Commission’s position condemning the abduction of Chadian and Sudanese children by a French non-governmental organization by name “Arche de Zoé” was widely endorsed by the Regional Groups in Geneva. Thus, in its Declaration “Together for Humanity”, the International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent expressed international community’s concern at all activities bearing on human trafficking and abduction of children.

5. Support to the Palestinian People

405. Coordination between the Commission and Member States of the Union also contributed to the adoption of a resolution by the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent aimed at implementing the “Memorandum of Understanding” between the Palestinian Red Cross and Israel’s Magen David Adom. However, this agreement is tottering as a result of the institutional obstacles mounted by the Israeli government.

406. The Commission was also represented at the celebration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people instituted in 1977 by United Nations General Assembly resolution 32/40 B. On that occasion, the Permanent Representative of the African Union in Geneva reiterated the Union’s unflinching support for the Palestinian people and their right to an independent State in accordance with Declaration EX.CL/Dec.321(X) of the Executive Council of the African Union adopted in Addis Ababa in January 2007.

K.III.2. Economic, Science and Technology Matters

1. World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

407. At the 43rd series of meetings of the Assembly of WIPO Member States, the participants could not arrive at a consensus on three key issues: desirability of considering the report of the corps of internal inspectors; tax reduction under the Patent Cooperation Treaty and the programme budget. On placing on the agenda the report of the corps of internal inspectors in which the Director General of WIPO was criticized for having changed his date of birth, developing countries were looking forward to his resignation, in contrast to the view of developing countries which would prefer not to link an administrative and staff rules related problem to that of quality of management of the Organization. As this report was not discussed at the session, it impacted negatively on the rest of the meeting.

408. The ongoing informal negotiation leaves a ray of hope that a satisfactory solution will be found to this issue. To this end, an extra-ordinary General Assembly to discuss the issue will be convened to adopt the new programme budget. Moreover, the process of selection of a new Director General has been set in motion. In this regard, the Mission has intensified its efforts at fostering the cohesion and solidarity of the African Group in accordance with WIPO procedures.

409. It should be noted that, in the absence of sufficient votes and with many African countries not up-to-date with their statutory contribution, the African Group could not manage to have their resolution adopted. Member States are therefore urged to pay up their contributions in international organizations, and by so doing, preserve their voting right.

2. Universal Postal Union (UPU)

410. The Administrative Council of UPU met between October and November 2007. Despite the nominal zero growth of its budget with hampers development of UPU activities particularly in regard to Africa whose postal sector development level is quite low, this organization is actively preparing the Nairobi Congress where vital decisions affecting its future will be taken. However, many African countries are likely to lose their right to vote during decision taking, as a result of their arrears of contribution. African countries are therefore urged to engage in talks with UPU to preserve their voting rights and to press for an end to the nominal zero growth of the budget of the institution.

3. International Telecommunications Union (ITU)

411. The “Connect Africa” Summit - one of the initiatives of the new Secretary General of ITU aimed at speeding up telecommunications development in Africa - was held in Rwanda in October 2007. At the Summit which was co-organized by ITU, the African Union Commission and other partners, the parties involved in funding ICTs in Africa made pledges amounting to US\$ 55,392,750,000. It is now for African countries to take advantage of these pledges to engage in and implement projects to reduce the digital gap between them and the countries of other Continents. The planned creation of a committee within the Commission to follow-up on and implement the outcomes of this Summit is vital to identify priority projects at

continental level and to monitor implementation of such projects, in coordination with ITU.

K.III.3. International Trade Matters

1. World Trade Organization (WTO)

412. Since the resumption of negotiations in February 2007, the various committees have been working on the issues under negotiation. The chair of the Committee on Agriculture, in July 2007, published a full text which was seen as an acceptable basis for negotiation. Following on the heels of this text, four working documents were produced covering export financing (credit, credit guarantees and insurance), State commercial enterprises, food aid and export competition. Members of the negotiating team seem to have reached some points of convergence. The African Group supports some of the modalities proposed by the chair on State commercial enterprises, and emphasizes that special safeguard measures should be adopted to protect sensitive products. With regard to cotton, and faced with the proposal notably by the European Union, the African Group maintains its position which is that the partners should revisit their stance and rally behind the proposal of the chair of the Negotiation Committee on Agriculture.

413. The text on market access for non-agricultural goods (NAMA) was published by the chair of the negotiation group in July 2007. Divergent positions emerged on the question of preferences, capacity building, the treatment meted to the least developed countries and the parameters of the formula. This text was not well received by several members on the grounds that it neither stimulated real commitment nor led to meaningful consensus. Consequently, a new text will be produced, but is not likely to be available before January 2007.

414. Negotiations are in progress in the other committees particularly on rules, but without tangible outcomes. The chair of the negotiation committee on 30 November 2007 distributed the committee's draft consolidated texts on anti-dumping measures, subsidies and compensatory measures, including subsidies to fishing. This is presently being examined by all WTO Members. On services, negotiations are similarly underway on seven issues including a proposal by the African Group on special and differential treatment. It is however almost certain that the negotiations will not move forward as long as there is no ray hope on agriculture and NAMA.

415. As for aid for Trade, the first global consideration thereof was organized by WTO in Geneva from 20 to 21 November 2007, with very high-level delegations of Member States, international agencies and donors in attendance. Furthermore, a session of the WTO General Council on Aid for Trade was organized soon after this forum. At the end of these meetings, donors' commitment to further finance Aid for Trade was noted. However, the financial resources required and the practical modalities are yet to be defined. Besides, it was shown that Aid for Trade would generate greater impact if it were to be directed to projects with regional dimension, particularly in the infrastructure sector. Highlighting the regional approach challenges the African Union to join forces with ECA and ADB in implementing development assistance. This mechanism could also be consolidated by establishment of a committee of African experts on Aid for Trade. Such committee will, among other things, have the task of identifying the projects to be funded as well as country and

regional needs, approaching donors, establishing frameworks for meetings between countries, regions and donors, offering all the necessary technical assistance to countries and regions to enable them to speedily access the aid and participating in the assessment and monitoring of the aid. Africa is often criticized for its poor capacity to consume the credits made available by donors. This committee will help our countries to reverse this trend.

416. The African Group remains quite engaged in the negotiations, and is manifesting enormous capacity building needs not only to more effectively prepare its proposals for the negotiating table but also to share the same understanding of sensitive matters. Thanks to the assistance of some partners, the Mission was able to organize two Seminars in 2007 and is intent on maintaining this momentum if afforded adequate resources.

2. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

417. The 54th annual session of the Trade and Development Board – lead organ of UNCTAD - held in October 2007, considered issues of interest concerning UNCTAD and preparations for the 12th session of its Conference (UNCTAD XII) which will take place in Accra, Ghana, from 20 to 25 April 2008. The theme will be “Addressing the Opportunities and Challenges of Globalization for Development”. The session will afford the opportunity to define the broad framework of UNCTAD’s future work programme. The Council on 2 October 2007 set up a preparatory committee with open-ended membership to be chaired by the President of the Council. To defend the interest of the African Continent at UNCTAD, the African Group got together to prepare an African common position to be reflected in UNCTAD XII final document currently being negotiated by the various Regional Groups.

3. International Trade Centre (ITC)

418. The 41st session of the Joint Advisory Group composed of ITC stakeholders recently completed its work. A new funds management system as well as a new consolidated work programme for 2008-2009 was adopted. This programme which directs nearly 40% of its funds to Africa was validated, but its budget is yet to be finalized. Furthermore, participants will continue informal discussion to define the structure and future mandate of the ITC advisory organ. The meeting provided opportunity to stress the need to establish JITAP III, in the face of reluctance on the part of donors. African countries will have a lot to gain by getting together to encourage the donors and other development partners to finance the ITC and JITAP III.

K.III.4. Social Affairs

1. International Organization for Migration (IOM)

419. Deliberations of the IOM Council which held its 94th session from 27 to 30 November 2007 was preceded by a session devoted to international dialogue on migration, discussion panel on migration in the global economy, and migration and climate change. On globalization and issues relating to migration of workers, the African Group expressed concern over brain drain and its repercussions on socio-economic development, the human rights of migrants and on the crucial role to be

played by the Diaspora in the development of countries of origin. The African Group had several information sharing and consultation meetings on migration matters with the Director General and his Deputy prior to the opening of the Council session. At those important meetings, the African Group underscored key issues such as the need to ensure greater African representation in IOM, opening of an IOM Mission with regional mandate in Central Africa and creation of a capacity building centre in Africa.

420. The leadership of IOM took cognizance of Africa's concerns and decided to constitute an in-house working group on Africa which will continue with its deliberations at the next meeting of the organization.

2. International Labour Organization (ILO)

421. The 300th Session of the ILO Governing Board was held from 1 to 15 November 2007. As part of preparations for the meetings, the African Group decided to meet on daily basis to coordinate its position on issues of common concern. In this regard, it decided to appoint a spokesperson to intervene on behalf of the Group in all the committees and ensure that Africa's concerns are reflected in the meeting documents. At that Governing Board session, the most pertinent issue was the draft resolution on enlarging the membership of the Board adopted at the 11th African Regional Meeting held in Addis Ababa in April 2007. In accordance with the Group's request, substantive discussions on this issue will be held on the occasion of the 301st session of the Government Board slated for March 2008.

3. World Health Organization (WHO)

422. In the second half of 2007, WHO organized two crucial meetings: the 2nd Session of the Inter-Governmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property from 5 to 10 November 2007 and the Inter-Governmental Meeting on Preparedness for possible Flu Pandemic from 20 to 23 November 2007.

a) 2nd Session of the Inter-Governmental Working Group on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property

423. This meeting was organized to negotiate the draft global strategy and action plan formulated in the aftermath of the first session of this inter-governmental working group in December 2006. The Africa Region participated actively in the negotiations; and in its interventions, focused on the common positions on the theme of traditional medicine which, it stressed, should be reflected in all the pertinent documents of the global strategy and plan of action

424. African Union's pharmaceutical plan should serve as benchmark for Africa's concerns. Two proposals, one on creation of a global funding mechanism particularly for medical research and development; and another for formulation of an international treaty for medical research and development, were presented on that occasion.

425. The working could not conclude its deliberations at its second session; and so decided to resume discussion in April 2007. Not much progress was made at that meeting, but this did not prevent Africa from voicing its views, in strong terms, during

the session. Even if no consensus was achieved on the formulation of a global strategy and plan of action, the Africa Region succeeded in getting its proposals incorporated in the draft working documents. On account of the common issues to be taken on board by African Union's pharmaceutical plan and by the Inter-governmental working group on public health, innovation and intellectual property, it is needful for Africa to come out open and lend its political support to Africa Region's activities in this process, as a way of reaffirming the Continent's commitment to alleviate the disease burden besetting Africa.

b) Inter-Governmental Meeting on Preparedness for possible Flu Pandemic

426. This meeting was organized to discuss the issue of sharing and exchange of the viruses and the advantages to be derived from the use of the viruses. The meeting came up with two documents, namely:

- a draft text on the principles for sharing of the viruses, sharing of advantages, financing, collective action, sovereign rights, capacity building, transfer of technology and control mechanism; and
- a draft document on implementation of the various elements relating to sharing of viruses, sharing of advantages, financing and control mechanism.

427. The meeting could not conclude its deliberations owing to lack of consensus on the draft documents. It therefore came up with a provisional Declaration; but the Africa Region registered its reservation on its adoption. The concerns expressed by the Africa Region, included the fact that the Declaration did not mention any deadline for conclusion of the work of this inter-governmental meeting on preparedness for possible flu pandemic. The Group is presently developing proposals to improve the text of the provisional Declaration.

K.IV. SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL OFFICE (SARO) - LILONGWE

428. The AU-SARO has maintained constructive and productive relations between the AU and the Member States in Southern Africa, as well as with SADC and COMESA. The activities of the Office with the Member States, SADC, COMESA, and regional organizations were in varying integration and development issues.

K.IV.1. Political and Socio-Economic Situations of the Region

429. During the period in view, the Southern Africa region continued to maintain peaceful political environment which was an asset to the continuation in economic growth and development for most of the countries. Generally, governments continue to take measures to foster political stability and to promote better external relations. Economic growth rate for Southern Africa, as a whole, stood at an average of about 6 percent. It is expected that this should be sustained and improved in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals target of 7 percent. The region places emphasis on trade and infrastructure development. Other important areas of priority are the health sector, refugees, immigration and food security. Improvement in this sector is

seen as fundamental to capacity-building and sustainable economic growth and development in Southern Africa region.

430. *Health:* Regional leaders continue to accord priority to health matters while the region remains more affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the continent. Some countries during this period continue to sustain the positive progress made in containing new infections. But there are concerns as the epidemic is linked to tuberculosis.

431. *Refugees/Migration:* Refugee/migration issues remain important matters in the political, economic and social life of the region during this period. The movement of people essentially from East Africa towards South Africa posed some difficulties to a number of countries; the transit countries and the countries of destination. Transit countries are confronted with difficulties distinguishing between refugees and genuine migrants. Substantial part of those cared for at the refugee camps by the transit countries and UNHCR turn out to be migrants. They create economic and social problems to transit countries when they fail to get through or decide not to go to intended countries of destination. Their presence in transit countries generally culminate in job losses and depression in labour market. AU-SARO worked with the UNHCR in the attempt to find solutions to the refugee problems at the Dzaleka Refuge Camp in Malawi. Also, the countries of destination are confronted with difficulties in the absence of social and economic infrastructure to absorb them.

432. *Food:* The food situation in most countries remains satisfactory during this period with Malawi and Zambia in the position to export maize surplus to other countries in the region. It is anticipated that food security in the region could be sustained in the coming months with adequate inputs and rains.

K.IV.2. Integration in SADC and COMESA

433. Integration and development continued to advance during this period with both Organizations engaged in efforts to deepen integration and enhance the achievements in economic growth and development with appropriate reference to AU integration agenda. Integration in SADC continues to focus on trade expansion, infrastructure development and the promotion of foreign direct investment. In the deepening of integration, the Lusaka Summit of 16 to 17 August 2007 inter alia, urged rapid completion of the work of the Ministerial Task Force on the Road Map for SADC Customs Union. The range of rate of growth of economies of the Member States of COMESA was from 2.8 percent in Swaziland to 8 percent for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The critical areas of integration are trade, infrastructure, agriculture, investment and peace & security. The Member States agreed at the Summit of Nairobi, Kenya, in May 2007 to the establishment of Customs Union in 2010.

K.IV.3. Activities with AU Departments, RECs and Regional Organizations

434. AU-SARO worked with AU Departments, RECs and a number of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in the areas of integration and development in Southern Africa.

K.IV.4. AUC Departments

435. The Office participated in the Second Ministerial Meeting on African Integration held from 26 to 27 July 2007, in Kigali, Rwanda, organized by the Commission. This meeting discussed further the road map on the rationalization and harmonization of RECs, following up the previous Ouagadougou Declaration on the same subject. The Office represented the AUC at the Workshop on *Good Governance and Sustainable Management of Petroleum and Mineral Resources*, organized by the World Bank, African Development Bank and the African Union, held on 10 December 2007 in Lusaka, Zambia. The Workshop discussed ways to improve on key governance issues in order to ascertain more meaningful contribution of mineral resources to economic growth and development of producing countries.

436. Furthermore, in the social sector, the Office participated in a number of activities on continental integration and development in the region such as the 6th General Assembly Session of the African Population Commission in Johannesburg, South Africa (16 - 17 July 2007), organized a brainstorming event on 1 December 2007, the World AIDS Day, at the Guidance, Counseling and Youth Development Center for Africa in Lilongwe, Malawi. The Minister of Health, Hon. Marjorie Ngaunje, M.P., Regional Representatives of the UNFPA, WHO, the High Commissioner for South Africa, representative of the youth, and the AU Regional Delegate to SADC addressed the gathering. The gathering included the youth, representatives of government ministries, members of the diplomatic corps, as well as members of the private sector and the civil society. The event refocused attention on the urgent need to fight HIV/AIDS epidemic.

437. In the area of agriculture and rural economy, the Office led the AU team to the Regional Consultative Workshop on Land Policy in Southern Africa, Windhoek, Namibia, 29 to 31 August 2007. The Office participated also in the Regional Technical Appraisal Workshop for four countries (Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe) to develop a Joint Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Project, held in Maputo, Mozambique from 12 to 16 November 2007. The curtailment of the incidence of the tsetse and trypanosomiasis on livestock is important towards improvement in nutrition and higher agricultural output.

K.IV.5. RECs

438. The Office participated at the Summit of COMESA. The Office worked with the RECs at regional meetings organized by the UNECA-SA. The Office disseminated information about the activities of the AUC and AU-SARO to the RECs and the Member States.

K.IV.6. Regional Organizations

439. *UNECA-SA*: The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Southern Africa Regional Office provides technical support to the RECs and countries in Southern Africa (*UNECA-SA*) for the promotion of integration and economic development. During this period, the Office worked closely with *UNECA-SA* in integration and development activities in the region. The Office participated in the meeting arranged by the *UNECA-SA* in Johannesburg, South Africa, 4 – 5 September 2007 on macroeconomic convergence in SADC. The main purpose of the

meeting was to discuss the progress the SADC Member States have made in macroeconomic convergence criteria and targets as stipulated in the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Member States in August 2002 and as further reiterated in the draft of SADC Finance and Investment Protocol. The debate was intensive and fruitful with the general view expressed that the primary and the secondary targets should be retained for now. The later in particular were perceived as critical to economic growth and job creation. It was agreed that the institutions on macroeconomic convergence should be strengthened as appropriate to ensure sustained process. More importantly, there was agreement on the necessity to speedily address the issues relating to the harmonization of statistics that is vital to meaningful comparison on convergence.

440. Also, on 7 December 2007, the Office attended the Meeting on Joint AUC-AfDB-ECA Prospectus on Regional Integration in SADC, held in Maputo, Mozambique. The meeting was convened with the aim to implement UN Secretary General's proposal in his 2006 Report that called for a joint sub-regional prospectus on regional integration. The meeting had set up the task force to address the recommendation.

441. *Guidance, Counseling and Youth Development Center for Africa:* The AU-SARO worked closely with the Guidance, Counseling and Youth Development Center for Africa in Lilongwe. The Youth Center was established in Lilongwe following the Ministerial decision of the OAU in 1979. In addition to these, the AU-SARO worked closely with the Center for Ticks and Tick-Borne Diseases (CTTBD) in the consummation of its objectives during this period. In particular, the Office offered appropriate political support to its training programs.

442. *Non-Governmental Organizations:* The Office worked with non-governmental organizations such as SAPRN and FANRPAN, very important networking Southern Africa NGOs on poverty and agriculture, to promote integration and development agenda of the AU.

K.IV.7. Coordination of African Group

443. The African Group in Lilongwe is organized to have monthly meetings to exchange views on current issues in the members, the region, continent and the international community. The Office at these meetings elaborated on the outcome of the COMESA Summit, Nairobi, May 2007 and AU Summit, Accra, July 2007. The AU Regional Delegate at these meetings elaborated the main declarations and decisions of the RECs and AU Summits and exchanged ideas on actions to be taken at national or regional levels for their implementation.

K.V. NEW YORK OFFICE

444. During the reporting period, the Commission, through its Permanent Observer Mission in New York, carried out relevant activities, both in terms of support to the African Group activities, as well as the follow up and participation in various UN activities.

K.V.1. Peace and Security matters

445. The Mission focused on the Security Council's activities related to African issues under its consideration, namely the Sudan, Somalia, Côte d'Ivoire, Western Sahara, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Chad, Central African Republic, the situation between Ethiopia and Eritrea and on the situation in the Middle East.

446. Regarding the issue of Darfur, the AU Mission facilitated consultations between the African Members of the Council and the Commission, with respect to the finalization of resolution 1769 (2007) authorising the African Union-United Nations Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Furthermore, the AU Mission participated in the 5727th meeting of the Security Council on 31st July 2007, during which this resolution was adopted. The presence of a military and a policy expert from the Commission enabled the Mission to carefully follow the Force and Police generation processes. So far, the selection of the senior leadership of the UNAMID had been concluded, while final selection of the troops and Police Contributing Countries is about to be finalized. The initial joint high ranking operation and technical advisory team visit to the 11 African potential troop-contributing countries was conducted. The experience in this process establishes the need for the allocation of permanent Military and Police advisers to the AU Mission in New York.

447. Regarding the issue of Somalia, a briefing was made to the Council's members during its consideration of the Report of the Secretary General on 20 August 2007. The Mission reiterated the AU call for support to the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the rapid deployment of UN mission.

448. The visit of the Chairperson of the Commission to New York from 19-26 September 2007 provided further impetus for the consideration of the situations in Darfur and Somalia. The Mission facilitated the organisation of the 2nd High Level Consultation on Darfur on 21 September 2007 at the United Nations. Held at ministerial level, the meeting was attended by delegations from over 26 African countries as well as other partners. In their joint communiqué, the AU Chairperson and the UN Secretary General urged all parties to join in the political talks which were due to begin on 27 October 2007 in Libya, reiterated the need to ensure the essentially African character of troops for UNAMID and its early deployment, the establishment of an effective ceasefire monitoring mechanism and the strengthening of humanitarian assistance in Darfur.

449. The Mission also facilitated the Chairperson's participation in the Security Council Presidential debate on "Peace and Security in Africa", on 25 September 2007, at the initiative of the French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, President of the Security Council in the Month of September 2007. During the Meeting, the Chairperson called for a zero-tolerance policy on use of child soldiers and violence against women and highlighted the continuing threat posed by illegal trading in small arms and light weapons. He expressed the hope that foreign military presence on the continent would be reduced with the increasing capacity of the African Union in addressing conflict on the continent.

450. An informal meeting between the Chairperson and the delegation of the Elders led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, was organized at the Mission on 24 September

2007. Their exchange of views focused on the visit the Elders intended to pay in early October 2007 in Sudan, to meet with the Sudanese parties involved in Darfur crisis, and with members of International community.

451. The Mission participated in the Open Debate held in the Council on 6 November 2007, on the “The role of regional and sub-regional organizations in the maintenance of International Peace and Security », initiated by Indonesia, President of the Security Council for the month of November 2007. During this briefing, the Mission stressed the significant efforts and leadership of the African Union towards addressing crisis situations in the continent, as well as its aspiration for an effective UN mechanism to support peacekeeping operations conducted by regional organizations.

K.V.2. Political Matters

452. The Mission facilitated consultations between the Chairperson and Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under Secretary General for Political Affairs, on 26 September 2007. The exchange of experts between the AU and UN to undertake joint analysis of political situations in various African countries was decided. The Mission held further consultations with the UN Department for Political Affairs, with a view to further strengthening cooperation between the two Organizations in areas, such as mediation, preventive diplomacy, early warning, knowledge management and the implementation of the 10-year Capacity-building Program for the African Union.

453. The Mission hosted the first meeting of the Ministerial Committee on the Union Government on 29 September 2007, to follow up implementation of the Accra Declaration. The Committee considered their work program and decided to hold two more meetings in Accra and Addis Ababa, respectively on 26-27 October 2007 and 27-30 November 2007.

454. The Mission also held consultations with the facilitators of UN Mandates Review process (Namibia and New Zealand) during which it underscored the need for the process to ensure that gaps in the UN mandates with respect to Africa are identified, and to ensure the sustainability of the review process.

K.V.3. Conflict Prevention

455. The Mission participated in the preparation and deliberations of the Seminar entitled “*An effective Global Conflict Prevention Strategy in Africa, the Role of the Security Council*” which took place on 3 December 2007, at the initiative of Congo, Chair of the Security Council Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. The Mission reaffirmed the leading role of the African Union in the continent and the need to strengthen the AU-UN Partnership. The need for clarification of the respective mandates of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the ECOSOCC regarding the question of conflict prevention was stressed. The absence of permanent representation of Africa in the Security Council was deplored as well as the Ad hoc nature of the Working Group.

K.V.4. Post Conflict Reconstruction

456. The Mission participated in the work of the Peace-building Commission (PBC) on the two African countries under its consideration, which culminated in the adoption of the Monitoring and Tracking Mechanism Strategic Framework for Peace building in Burundi, and the Sierra Leone Cooperation framework on 5 and 12 December 2007, respectively. During these processes, the commitment of the African Union Commission and the Ministerial Committee on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development to work closely with the Peace building Commission was reiterated. It was noted that one of the policy outcomes was the recognition that peace building and post reconstruction indeed constituted major components of conflict prevention, given the importance of consolidating peace, and ensuring that countries emerging from conflict did not relapse into conflict. This underscores the importance for the AU to speed-up operationalization of various components of its post conflict prevention architecture, to be in tune, and to launch concrete collaboration with the PBC and other related UN bodies.

K.V.5. Non-Proliferation, Disarmament and Counter-Terrorism

457. Regarding the persistent issues of small arms and light weapons, the Mission lent its support to the African Experts of the First Committee of the United Nations which led to the adoption of the resolution calling for strengthening of the Regional Centre for Disarmament in Africa based in Togo.

458. The Mission monitored the presentation of the *Ecole Internationale de Force de Sécurité* (EIFORCES) by Cameroun at the UN on 22 October 2007. African States urged partners to provide assistance to this institution aimed at training troops and experts for peacekeeping operations. The Mission also followed up the meeting on the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy held on 4 December 2007 at the General Assembly. The Mission facilitated the participation of the African Union in the sub regional workshop on the preparation of responses to the United Nations committee on Counter terrorism held in Botswana in November 2007, and monitored the review meeting on the Implementation of the UN Global Counter terrorism Strategy in the General Assembly in December 2007. During its interaction in these processes, the efforts of the African Union were noted, which culminated in the establishment of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism.

K.V.6. Facilitation of the Work of the African Group

459. For the six-month period from July to December 2007, the AU Mission facilitated the organization of 18 meetings of the African Group at ambassadorial level and more than 24 meetings at expert level. The African Group mainly focused on the work of the 62nd session of the General Assembly and its 6 main committees, the consideration of the issue of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa and the issue of the UN Security Council Reform. The highlights of the period include exchange of views leading to the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which reflected the major concern of Africa. The Resolution on Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union was updated to reflect recent developments on issues of common concern. It was adopted on the

last day of the 61st session of the General Assembly, following a long process of consideration and consultation with partners. The highlights of the period include exchange of views leading to the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which reflected the major concern of Africa. The Resolution on Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union was updated to reflect recent developments on issues of common concern. It was adopted on the last day of the 61st session of the General Assembly, following a long process of consideration and consultation with partners.

460. The Mission worked closely with the African Group in ensuring that the “Resolution on Eliminating Rape and other forms of sexual violence in all their manifestations including in conflict and related situations” and the “Resolution on elimination of violence on migrant women”, reflected the provisions of the Protocol of the African Charter of Human and People’s Rights and the Solemn Declaration of Gender Equality in Africa. Other matters were considered, such as the draft resolution “2001-2010: Decade to roll back Malaria in Developing Countries, particularly in Africa, the implementation of the Declaration of commitment on HIV/AIDS, the thematic debate on climate change, the high level dialogue on Financing for Development.

461. On the 20th November 2007, in conjunction with UNIDO and African Group, the Mission actively participated in the preparation and organization of the Africa Industrialization Day. The interactive Seminar was based on the theme "Technology and Innovation for Industry - Investing in People is Investing in the Future".

K.V.7. African Candidatures in the International system

462. The Mission facilitated the implementation of various decisions of the African Union and of the African Group in New York with respect to African candidatures in the international system. This included successful election of the Libyan People’s Arab Jamahariya and Burkina Faso as non-Permanent Members of the Security Council for the period 2008-2009, and the appointment by the Secretary General of another African (from Benin) to the post of Director of the UN Convention for Combating Desertification. Most African candidatures presented by the African Group were successfully elected for various UN organs and bodies, such as UNICEF, UNDP, UN-HABITAT, UNEP, Executive Board of the World Food Program, The Committee on International Trade Law, the UN AIDS/HIV Program Coordination Committee, the Joint Inspections Unit, and for other specialized Commissions.

K.V.8. Multilateral Interaction

463. The Mission facilitated consultative interaction between the troikas of the African Group and the European Union. Issues of common concern on the agenda of the UN were discussed such as climate change, peacekeeping and post conflict reconstruction and development issues.

464. Various academic, international civil society organizations and actors such as *Médecins Sans Frontières*, Long Island University, Columbia University, the International Peace Academy, The World Council of Churches, the ICRC, the World Federation of Religious Councils and others continued to show zeal and interest towards Africa. One of them, the Africa Travel Association awarded a special

recognition to the Chairperson of the Commission, for his relentless efforts in continental integration during its Second Annual Presidential Forum attended by several African Heads of State and Government. The Mission maintained active engagement with them to provide information on the AU's perspectives on developments, as well as policy guidance to help them shape their activities focusing on Africa. During this interaction, the Office noted that civil society was showing a growing interest on issues such as the renewal of the philosophical basis of the United Nations, in order to stress its human development responsibilities in the light of current world trends in areas such as environment, food security, migration and rights of indigenous peoples.

K.V.9. Economic and Social Matters

465. The Mission participated in the annual substantive sessions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), held in Geneva from 2 to 27 July 2007 that was tasked with two new functions this year, the Annual Ministerial Review and the Development Cooperation Forum. Issues concerning the African countries under review were underscored, in particular, development in cooperation issues. The Mission closely followed-up also the thirty-ninth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women meetings in its last session held at United Nations Headquarters in New York and in Geneva, from 23 July to 10 August 2007. The Committee recommended actions for the promotion and protection of women's rights in 15 countries, which included Guinea and Kenya.

466. The Mission followed-up the General Assembly's two-day informal thematic debates on climate change held from 31 July to 1 August 2007 at the UN. The Mission also monitored the high-level event on climate change on the 24 September 2007 before the opening of the General Debate of the 62nd session of the General Assembly. Focus was put on the latest eye-opening scientific assessments of the phenomenon, as well as on the two components of the response, such as adaptation and mitigation, the role of the private sector and possible next steps in the multilateral process. African delegations noted the diverse effects of climate change on the African Continent and underlined the importance of fulfilling international commitments in relation with climate change, particularly with respect to technology transfer, capacity building and mobilization of financial resources.

467. The Mission also monitored the "High-Level Dialogue on Interreligious and Intercultural Cooperation for the Promotion of Tolerance" held from the 4 to 5 October 2007 at the UN General Assembly. The Secretary-General was requested to ensure the systematic and organizational follow-up of all interreligious, intercultural and intercivilizational matters within the United Nations system.

468. The Mission followed up the joint debate devoted to the New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support; 2001-2010: Decade to Roll Back Malaria in Developing Countries, particularly in Africa, held on the 18th October 2007. The meeting discussed the activities undertaken and progress made since the last report in meeting the 2010 malaria goals, in the context of General Assembly resolution 61/228 and the Abuja Declaration on Roll Back Malaria in Africa (2000).

469. From 23 to 25 October 2007, the Mission participated in the follow-up of the third High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development. The Dialogue provided a major substantive contribution to the preparation of the Doha Conference. The meeting addressed six major areas of the Monterrey Consensus: mobilizing domestic financial resources, mobilizing international resources, international trade, international cooperation for development, external debt and the coherence of the international monetary financial and trading systems.

470. The Mission participated in the Second Pan African Forum on Children: Mid-term Review, organized by the African Union in , Egypt from 29 October to 2 November 2007. Subsequently, a summary of the meeting was circulated to the African Group in preparation for the Commemorative high-level plenary meeting devoted to the follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children “World Fit for Children” held at the UN in New York on 11-12 December 2007. The Hon. Alima Mahama, Minister of Women and Children’s Affairs of the Republic of Ghana addressed the Assembly on behalf of the current Chairperson of the African Union. The AU Commissioner for Social Affairs also attended the event and various consultations.

471. The Mission facilitated the participation of the AU Commissioner for Economic Affairs in the first meeting of MDG Africa Steering and Working Group with the UN Secretary General, on the 13th and 20th September 2007 at the UN. The AU Commissioner for Economic Affairs also attended the MDG’s Africa Working Group meeting which took place at the UN on the 30th November 2007. The meetings were held in accordance with the initiatives of the Secretary-General to expedite the achievement of MDGs in Africa in the area of health, education, agriculture and food security, infrastructure and statistical systems.

472. The Mission also facilitated the participation of the AU Commissioner of Trade and Industry in the High Level Panel on Enhancing at South-South and Triangular Cooperation at the UN on the 17th October 2007, as well as the participation of the AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture in the “International Women Leaders Global Security Summit” from 14 to 19 November 2007.

473. The Mission monitored discussions on the Report of the Human Rights Council, which included two new instruments, notably a Code of Conduct and the Institutional Building, and the establishment of the Universal Periodic Review. These instruments will facilitate and harmonize the assessment of human rights situation in all Member States, without discrimination or favour.

474. Regarding the question of accountability for genocide, war crimes against humanity, the Mission continued to monitor discussions at the UN on the possible adoption of a plan of action to ensure that international Justice plays an integral role in post-conflict peace building, within the context of the Justice Rapid Response Mechanism.

K.V.10. Communication and Documentation

475. During the period under review, the Mission serviced all meetings of the African Group and various meetings/Seminars at the United Nations. The Accra

Summit decisions were transmitted to the General Assembly for the 62nd Session and the Communiqués of Peace and Security Council were transmitted to the concerned bodies as soon as they were available. In order to facilitate easy access to AU documents and to better service the African Group, the United Nations and other UN Specialized Agencies, the Mission conducted a study for the establishment of a Documentation Centre whose the budget was approved and currently being implemented. The study also covered the establishment of a Website which was subsequently launched in December 2007. The Video Conference equipment has been installed for communication purposes between the AU Regional Offices and the Headquarters. So far, the Office can communicate with the offices in Addis Ababa, Brussels, Geneva and Lilongwe. The challenge of meeting the great demand for AU documents is still present and unless the AU takes full advantage of modern technology use, the AU Mission in New York will continue to bear the burden of this handicap in accessing documents.

K.VI. WASHINGTON D.C. OFFICE

476. During the period under review, the African Union Mission to the United States of America continued to consolidate its presence and outreach with various constituencies and stakeholders. Towards this end, the Mission was officially launched on July 11, 2007, on the margins of the Joint AU/OAS meeting entitled, “Democracy Bridge: Multilateral, Regional Efforts for the Promotion and Defense of Democracy in Africa and America”, held on 10 to 12 July 2007, in the presence of a high level delegation from the AU Commission comprising the Commissioner for Peace and Security, the Chief of Staff, the Legal Counsel and other senior officers. Also in attendance were, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and Senior officials of the US State Department Africa Bureau, the Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps and other members of the Diplomatic Corps as well as Representatives of Africa-focused Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations.

477. Of particular significance during the period was the legitimization of bilateral relationship between the African Union and the United States of America on July 25, 2007 through the presentation of credentials by the Head of Mission to President George W. Bush, accrediting her as Ambassador, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the African Union to the United States of America.

478. In the area of **Building and Sustaining Bilateral Relationships**, the Mission intensified efforts in ensuring that working relationships with both the executive and legislative branches of the US government and agencies were further strengthened. The Mission specifically initiated discussions with the Chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus and other key members with a view to finding an appropriate mechanism to formalize working relationship between the Members of the Congressional Black Caucus and the African Union. As a first step, the Mission was invited to participate in the 37th Annual Legislature Conference of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Foreign Affairs Brain Trust on Africa held on 28 September 2007 and delivered opening remarks on the theme, “**The new Africa: Opportunities and Challenges**”. In its opening remarks, the Mission, amongst other things, challenged the Congressional Black Caucus to play a leadership role in deepening the relationship between African-Americans and

Continental Africans based on 500 years of shared history and common struggle for emancipation. The Mission seized the opportunity to reiterate the central role of the Congressional Black Caucus in constructing the necessary institutional mechanism to formalize its relationship with the African Union in order to effectively advance and secure the interests of all peoples of African descent and mobilizing them to contribute in the development of Africa.

479. In **Building Political Constituencies**, the Mission remained engaged with various stakeholders with a view to influencing progressive US policies towards Africa. Sensitizing the African Diaspora to build and consolidate Diaspora networks were also part of those efforts. To achieve these objectives, the Mission actively participated in the following events:

- Panel Discussion organized by the Center for Global Development working paper entitled, **“Does IMF Constrain Health Spending in Poor Countries?”**. The Mission brought to bear Africa’s perspective on the role of IMF on Health Spending Limits in developing countries and the impact on the implementation of national health programs.
- Annual Constituency for Africa (CFA) Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series on the theme, **“Working with the African Union to Build Diaspora Links**.The Ron Brown African Affairs Series provided important forums to promote the African Union Mission’s vision and priorities as well as articulate the Union’s views and perspectives on some of the critical emerging US foreign policy issues.
- The Mission organized, in Partnership with the Constituency for Africa, an African Health Strategy Luncheon at the US Congress. The objective of this initiative was two-fold: Firstly, to popularize the African Health Strategy 2007-2015 in implementation of the Johannesburg Declaration of April 2007 and secondly, to ensure that the African Health Strategy is recognized by US Congress and other policy makers as the continental framework for addressing Africa’s health challenges holistically and, in that context, align its objectives with those of the two Congressional Legislatures which were under consideration, namely, **The US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief(PEPFAR) and The African Health Capacity Investment Act 2007**.
- The Andrew Young Lecture Series of the Africa Society of the National Summit on Africa featured the Mission and provided another critical platform for the visibility of the Mission and the promotion of the African Union’s Vision for the 21st Century.

480. In the area of **Informing the American Public and Promoting Africa**, the Mission’s central objective is to build a positive image and promote Africa through information sharing/dissemination and advocacy. In this context, during the period under review, the Mission, within its limited resources, honored a number of requests for speaking engagements at Universities and other Fora in various parts of the United States. The Mission also addressed a Seminar organized by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies on, **“The importance of Regional Cooperation: Role of the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities”** and was invited

to address future US Foreign Service Officers at the US Foreign Service Institute on the subject of **“The African Union: Organizational Structure and Priorities.”**

481. In the framework of forging strategic Partnerships, the Mission established Partnership with the Academy for Educational Development (AED) to co-organize an annual African Presidential Series as a platform for informing the American public through interactive dialogue between African Leaders, US Policy Makers and Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations.

482. President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete of the United Republic of Tanzania launched the inaugural Lecture Series on September 17, 2007 and delivered an address on the theme, **“Africa’s Development Challenge: The Role of International Civil Society and NGOs”**

483. In Supporting Multilateral Relationships, the Mission continued to consolidate its working relationships with the World Bank Group, the International Monetary Fund and the Organization of American States.

484. With respect to the World Bank Group, following a series of consultations with the Vice President of the Africa Region, the Mission facilitated meetings between the latter and the AU Chairperson and Commissioners in Addis Ababa to discuss modalities for formalizing working relationship between the AUC and the World Bank through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. It has been mutually agreed by the two parties that the Mission would serve as a liaison to ensure a seamless working relationship on the basis of mutually agreed areas.

485. As a concrete expression of the impending Partnership, the Bank has begun to associate the Mission in all its activities and programs relating to Africa, as follows:

- Participation in the 2007 Annual Meetings of the World Bank and IMF and Panel discussions at the Stakeholders Consultations’ Meeting on Regional Integration highlighting AU’s views on the Bank’s draft Assistance Strategy for Regional Integration in Africa;
- Participation in the Launching of the Bank’s Africa Region HIV/AIDS Agenda for Action 2007-2011;
- Membership to the Bank’s High-Level External Advisory Committee on Booster Program for Malaria Phase II Development;
- Joint Launch of the first ever World Bank Open House on Diaspora.

486. It is important to note that the Bank is seriously laying the foundation to define its future working relationship with the African Union Commission based on its priorities and comparative advantages. The Commission will be inspired by this approach in drafting the framework for the envisaged MOU.

487. Regarding the IMF, the Mission has initiated contacts and consultations are still ongoing.

488. The Mission facilitated the establishment of institutional working relationship between the Organization of American States and the African Union Commission which was further consolidated by the joint organization of an OAS/UN Meeting on the theme, **“Democracy Bridge: Multilateral, Regional Efforts for the Promotion and**

Defense of Democracy in Africa and the Americas”, held in Washington DC from 10-12 July 2007. A major outcome of the meeting was the signing by the two institutions of a Declaration of Intent as a foundation for future cooperation in specific fields. The Mission is currently liaising between the AUC and the OAS Secretariat to finalize the draft Memorandum of Understanding.

K.VI.1. Coordinating African Position:

489. This is one area which continues to be a challenge for the African Union Mission. From the observation of the Mission, these challenges are informed by the following situations:

- (1) The current environment engenders bilateralism and, like every diplomatic environment, is driven by the interests and priorities of individual countries;
- (2) Most of the Initiatives such as the Millennium Challenge, PEPFAR and AGOA are bilateral and selection is based on certain requirements;
- (3) The Mission in its current situation is not in a position to organize or coordinate meetings of the African Group without a permanent and befitting Office premises and relevant organizational structure and staff.

490. During the period under review, the Mission organized only one briefing for the African Diplomatic Corps at the conclusion of the AU Summit in Accra but continues to attend the monthly meetings of the African Group. The Mission is monitoring the evolution of the current debates within the African Group around the following major policy issues.

- i.* The New Partnership for Development Act sponsored by Rep. Jim McDermott which is aimed at expanding AGOA to benefit Cambodia and Bangladesh and raising concern both within the African Diplomatic Corps and pro-Africa Advocates;
- ii.* The Re-Authorization of PEPFAR;
- iii.* AFRICOM.

K.VI.2. Participation in Meetings/Conferences:

491. During the reporting period, the Mission participated in the following meetings/conferences:

- Regional Diaspora Consultations held in Barbados, New York and Paris;
- Regional Mid-Term Review on Africa Fit for Children, Cairo;
- Ministerial Diaspora Meeting; Johannesburg, South Africa;
- High Level Consultations on Health Work Force, Addis Ababa

K.VI.3. Commemorative Events

492. The Mission jointly commemorated World AIDS Day 2007 on November 28, 2007 with the Global Health Council, Family Health International (FHI), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and, the Office of the United States Global

AIDS Coordinator. In the remarks delivered and the subsequent Press Release issued, the Mission made a call to the US Congress for speedy action to re-authorize PEPFAR, integrate nutrition and enact the African Capacity Investment Act 2007. The Mission also commemorated the Day of the African Child.

493. In conclusion, the Mission which has been established and is operational since a year ago, has, within its limited human resource and financial capacity, made great strides in consolidating its presence and building relevant political constituencies. The current premises of the Mission do not bode well for Africa's image and will undermine what has so far been achieved in various areas. It is therefore recommended that efforts be made to address the urgent requirements of the Mission in the areas of accommodation and human and financial resources.

L. HUMAN RESOURCES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

L.I. HUMAN RESOURCES AND YOUTH

L.I.1. African Youth Charter:

494. After its adoption by Assembly in July 2006 and its official Launch in November 2006, the African Youth Charter is being popularized through advertisement, sensitization and official advocacy processes. Three regional workshops (Central, East and West) were organized by the Commission and Radio, TV and Media were contacted in order to popularize the Charter with a view to speeding up its signature and ratification. Decision-makers of visited countries have been equally sensitized in this respect. In addition to the strategies developed for the popularization involving all relevant social and political actors and youth within the Member States, the Commission developed also a Master Plan of Action for the period 2007-2015. The main goal of the Plan of Action is to accelerate the ratification process of the Charter and to promote the effective involvement of Governments, Parliamentarians, Partners, Youth, Civil Society and other relevant actors. The Document will be submitted to the Ministers of Youth for consideration and adoption during their 2nd ordinary Session in 2008.

495. A number of Countries (Angola, Tanzania, Nigeria) are translating the Charter into local languages to extend the popularization process to all the youth at local and national levels and prepare them for a better appropriation. Many youth organizations are promoting and popularizing the Youth Charter through different activities. In this regard, **the African Day** (25th of May 2007) was used by a number of youth organizations (Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Congo, DRC, Togo, Cameroon, Djibouti...) to promote youth activities and to popularize the Youth Charter.

496. The celebration of **the African Youth Day** (1st November 2007) was another opportunity seized by the Commission to organize various activities. The theme was "Partnership between the Youth and public authorities" The Chairperson of the Commission addressed the African Youth and the youth in the Diaspora to commend their efforts and to encourage them to pursue their good work. On this occasion, he requested Member States to accelerate the ratification and the implementation of the

Charter. The Chairperson also launched the 1st Edition of the African Youth Initiative and Creativity Award 2007 (AYICA 1) on the African Youth Day, Edition 2007.– This was based on a competition organized to select the best design of poster to popularize the African Youth Charter.

497. To date, seven (7) countries have signed the Charter, namely: Mali, Burundi, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Rwanda and Gabon; three among them have ratified: Rwanda, Mali and Gabon. The Commission is ensuring follow-up, coordination and monitoring of the processes. The Pan African Youth Union and other international organizations and UN Agencies are giving support to Member States where it is needed.

498. The above-mentioned Conference of Ministers to be convened early 2008 will also consider, among other documents, the Draft Programme of Action on the celebration of the Year of the African Youth, 2008, in line with the Banjul Decision EX.CL/Dec.292 (IX) and the Consensus Statement issued by the 5th Edition of the African Development Forum, the theme of which was “Youth and leadership in the 21st Century”. The Commission is actively preparing the celebration of the Year of African Youth, 2008 and calls upon Member States to accelerate the ratification process for the Charter and to ensure the visibility of the Youth during the Year 2008. It also invites the Youth to undertake creative and visible actions in favour of the implementation of the African Youth Charter for their own development. The second edition of the African Youth Initiative and Creativity Award 2008 (AYICA 2) will be launched and the AUC Chairperson will hand the Awards of the first Edition to the winners on that occasion.

499. In the same vein, the Bureau of the Conference of African Union Ministers in charge of the Youth met in October 2007 In Tripoli, Libya, together with the members of the Steering Committee to consider the progress reports of the youth programmes and various activities under implementation in the Commission, including the status of ratification and implementation of African Youth Charter, the revitalization of PYU and the preparations for for the celebration of the African Youth Day (1st November 2007) and the Year of the African Youth 2008. The Bureau recommended the acceleration of the ratification process of the Charter and endorsed the preparatory measures for the Year of the African Youth which should be in the form of a Programme of Action. The Bureau also recommended that the 2nd ordinary session of the Conference of the AU Ministers of Youth be convened at the AU Headquarters in January 2008 before the Summit, to adopt the Programme of Action and to officially launch the Year of the African Youth 2008. However, due to the congested agenda linked with the Summit preparations, this Conference will be convened soon after the Summit.

L.I.2. Revitalization of the Pan-African Youth Union

500. In line with Banjul Decision EX.CL/Dec.292 (IX), the revitalization of the Pan African Youth Union and its utilization as a continental youth structure is under process. The Bureau meeting held in Tripoli from 17-19 October 2007 considered, among other documents, the plan of action to accelerate the implementation of the developed Strategy.

501. In the framework of its missions, the PYU is promoting Youth empowerment for continuous advocacy for the Charter, so as to ensure its popularization and

implementation. It coordinates with National Youth Councils and regional coordination teams, leads and facilitates communication between the African youth and the African Union Commission. In order to improve its Partnership with PYU, the Commission is increasing its involvement in the PYU working processes and programmes management and has suggested measures to ensure sustainable technical and financial resources for the Pan African Youth Union, in line with the above-mentioned Decision.

502. The PYU has just held in November 2007 its 4th Executive Committee Meeting, which prepared documents to be discussed in the next Congress, planned for April 2008 in Luanda (Angola). The Commission attended the Executive Committee meeting and advised the participants on the steps to be taken for the revitalization process, which should be finalized during the Congress. During this meeting, the PYU presented to the members of the Committee, for consideration, the progress and financial reports and other legal documents, including the PYU policy and work programme for 2008 and the revised Statutes. The outcome of the PYU Executive Committee meeting will be considered by the next PYU Congress in Luanda, in which the Commission will be represented.

L.I.3. Capacity Building in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

503. As an important part of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015), the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), appears as a means to address skills development for a large number of unemployed and out of school youth in Africa. TVET will also address uneducated or low-educated youth to provide them with technical and professional skills and livelihoods. The last session of COMEDAF (3rd ordinary session) held in August 2007 has adopted a draft strategy to revitalize TVET in Africa and made a recommendation to ensure the quality of TVET and its implementation in Member States. The ministers also recommended the use of TVET in Africa as means to promote socio-economic development of the Continent as well as the employment and self-employment for youth, while encouraging entrepreneurship with development of management skills and job-related training. A recent meeting with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and major education partners also facilitated a reflection on TVET in Africa and the funding opportunities from relevant partners. The Commission is striving to raise awareness of the Member States on the necessary measures to be taken to ensure the effectiveness of TVET and the improvement of the curricula and teaching approaches in TVET training centres. Relevant indicators are being prepared to facilitate the implementation and evaluation of this programme. In this regard, the Commission is trying to mobilize partners with a view to supporting Member States in the implementation of TVET, while the latter are invited to give the appropriate consideration to TVET at national level in their content, approaches, funding and market-based training.

504. Following the regional TVET workshops for post-conflict countries, such as DRC, Liberia and Burundi, non-formal TVET pilot-projects were developed and are being analyzed for the inputs from the Commission. The implementation of the pilot projects in the selected countries will start in 2008, although the Commission is still exploring possible source of funding to support the acquisition of training materials and equipment as well as the required human resources, expertise and consultants.

L.II. EDUCATION

505. In this sector, the Commission has encountered some difficulties due to shortage of manpower for the effective implementation of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa, including the Mwalimu Nyerere African Union Scholarship Scheme. This required at least five new professional officers. The Commission has not been able so far to attract African experts to advertised posts. However, UNESCO has made a firm offer to second a Senior Officer to the Commission, who was expected to start work in December 2007. One Senior Policy Officer is also to take up the post early 2008. In a high level meeting between RECs, the Commission, COMEDAF III Bureau Ministers, UNESCO, ADEA and AfDB, the Minister of Education of South Africa and UNESCO offered to provide support to Commission through a Young Professionals Internship Programme.

L.II.1. Implementation and Monitoring of the Second Decade of Education for Africa

506. *“The Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa”* consists of the following areas of focus:

- Gender and Culture.
- Education Management Information Systems
- Teacher Development
- Higher Education
- Technical-Vocational Education and Training
- Curriculum and Teaching-Learning Materials
- Quality Management.

507. The Commission has begun to establish strategic Partnerships with key stakeholder institutions for the implementation of the Plan of Action in these areas of focus. Implementation strategies have also been developed in the areas of Teacher development; Higher Education, particularly in the areas of harmonization and quality; Technical and Vocational Education and Training; Education Management Information Systems. Progress in the implementation of the Plan of Action has been reported to the COMEDAF Steering Committee and Ministerial Bureau meetings that were held in Addis Ababa in May 2007 and January 2008, as well as the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF III) held in Johannesburg in August 2007. The Ministers of Education committed to assigning a Focal Point for liaison with the Commission concerning the Second Decade of Education. So far, 25 countries have provided the Commission with the Focal Points. The Ministerial Bureau of COMEDAF will play a more pro-active role in the follow up of the implementation of the POA. They will liaise with Member States in their regions, as well as RECs to ensure domestication of the POA and timely reporting at all levels. They will also help to organise annual regional conferences of Ministers of education.

508. Mechanisms for collaboration with RECs, ADEA and UNESCO have also been discussed and agreed to, in a high-level meeting held in Tunis in November 2007. SADC has already integrated the Plan of Action into its Regional Education Protocol, and will serve as an example for other RECs.

509. The African Development Bank has committed to carry out a feasibility study on the establishment of the African Education, Science and Technology Fund, to support the implementation of the AU Plans of Action in Education and in Science and Technology.

510. All these development are based on the guiding principles adopted by COMEDAF in September 2006. They will ensure the success of the second decade of education.

L.II.2. Higher Education

511. The Commission has signed a memorandum of agreement with the Association of African Universities (AAU), whereby the AAU undertakes to be a lead implementing agency for the Commission in higher education. In October 2007, the Commission participated in the Conference of Rectors, Vice Chancellors and Presidents of African Universities (COREVIP), hosted by the AAU, where the AU higher education programme was presented to this important group of stakeholders. As the key partner in higher education, the AAU has been able to attract support from DFID's Challenge Fund for the revitalisation of African Universities. The Commission is represented on the Steering Committee for the management of this Fund. Its involvement will help to ensure that Africa's priorities as spelled out in the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa are kept in focus.

L.II.3. Harmonization of Higher Education in Africa

512. The Commission has developed a framework for the Harmonization of Higher Education in Africa, through a participatory consultative process involving the AAU and meetings of African experts in February and May 2007, the COMEDAF Steering Committee and Bureau in May 2007, the COMEDAF III in August 2007, and an internet based discussion forum from August to October 2007. The same process was used to develop an African Quality Rating Mechanism for Higher Education. Every effort has been made to bring on board, harmonize and co-ordinate other relevant initiatives. In particular, close collaboration is being sought with UNESCO in the review or re-drafting of the Arusha Convention for Harmonization of African Higher Education. Initiatives by the AAU, CAMES and RECs are also being taken on board.

L.II.4. Curriculum and Teaching and Learning Materials

513. The University of South Africa's Centre for African Renaissance Studies (CARS), collaborated with the Commission to produce reports on the educational publishing industry in Africa; and on updating science text books for schools, using new knowledge generated from academic journals from African Universities. A meeting of experts and stakeholders held in Pretoria in January 2007 proposed establishment of a biennial Conference on African Educational Publishing. Discussions are underway with ADEA and the East African Book Development Association to collaborate in the organization and hosting of the First AU Pan-African Conference on Educational Publishing in Africa" from 25th to 28th March 2008.

L.II.5. Teacher Development

514. Collaboration discussions with the Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEA) in Nairobi, Kenya, with the support of the Government of Kenya and Japan International Corporation (JICA), on enhancing the teaching and learning of Science, Technology and Mathematics in African schools are yet to bear fruit. The main reason is the shortage of professional staff in the Education Division, which made it impossible for the one officer to attend planned meetings and activities. This collaboration will be concretized in 2008. The Commission has drafted an implementation strategy for Teacher Development in collaboration with the UNESCO Institute for capacity Building in Africa (ICBA) in Addis Ababa. The strategy is holistic using contemporary and open and distance learning methods, for pre-service as well as in-service training of teachers and other educational professionals. A meeting of experts and potential partners will be held early in 2008, to allocate roles and responsibilities for implementing the Plan of Action in this area.

L.II.6. Mwalimu Nyerere African Union Scholarship Scheme

515. This AU Flagship Programme is a scholarship scheme of distinction, which supports young, high performing Africans to study in leading African universities, preferably outside their country of origin. After the first advertisement, applications were received from all regions of Africa for this scheme, although only twenty-three countries were represented among those who applied within the stipulated period. The first meeting of the Scheme's Selection Committee was held in November 2007. Forty three (43) young people were selected to receive full tuition fees, subsistence stipend and an allowance for learning materials. There is need for enhanced publicity for the Scheme, especially to attract female applicants and ensure that all Member States participate. The African Quality Rating Mechanism for Higher Education will be used to assess and rate the quality of African Universities as well as specific programmes. Only highly rated institutions and programmes will be eligible to participate in the Scheme.

516. Discussions are underway with the European Commission to expand the Scheme to cover ACP countries outside Africa, with an outlay of 60 million Euro over four years, from the European Development Fund, EDF 10. The expanded Scheme will encourage Universities to form academic and research consortia among themselves to enable students to study in more than one leading University. The expanded Scheme will also include exchange programmes between African, Caribbean, Pacific and European Universities. In order to effectively manage the Scheme, the Commission will need a dedicated Secretariat within the Division of Education, with at least two professional officers and an Administrative Assistant.

L.II.7. Establishment of the African Education Fund

517. The African Development Bank expressed commitment to assist the Commission to establish an African Education, Science and Technology Fund, in presentations made to the meeting of COMEDAF III in August 2007 according to terms to be agreed to with the Commission. A high-level meeting attended by the Commission, ADEA, NEPAD and AfDB was held in Tunis in July 2007 to discuss the

process for establishment of the Fund. The AfDB has hired a consultant on behalf of the Commission, to carry out a feasibility study on the Fund, which is expected to become operational in 2008. Money from the Fund will be earmarked for the Commission's activities in policy making, sharing of best practices and networking, and capacity building of RECs to support the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa. A meeting was also held in Tunis in November 2007 to discuss the capacity building needs of RECs in this context, so as to ensure that their needs are factored into the programme.

L.II.8. Education Observatory of the African Union

518. The Pan-African Institute for Education for Africa (IPED) will be the Education Observatory for Africa. The main mandate is to host Continental Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), linked to regional and country levels. A Plan of Action for capacity building to transform the IPED was developed in 2006. A new structure for IPED has also been drafted and is submitted for approval to the AU policy organs in 2008. In December 2007, a Senior Finance Officer was dispatched to IPED to begin the capacity building process, by installing new systems for financial management and property management, training staff, and other related issues. Money from the French Fund will be used to buy office and communication equipment for the institution.

519. The Implementation strategy for Education Management Information Systems was developed with ADEA support in a meeting of experts held in Harare in September 2007. In December 2007, a follow up meeting was held to develop a framework for assessing the capacity of Member States to implement EMIS. The meeting also developed a range of indicators to be used in the monitoring and reporting of progress in the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa. EMIS is key to the success of the Second Decade of Education. The documents were to be considered and endorsed by the second ordinary meeting of the COMEDAF III Steering Committee and Bureau in early 2008.

L.III. PARTNERSHIPS

520. As education is in one way a cross cutting issue, the Commission ensures that every AU initiative involving education takes into account the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa as Africa's articulation of its priorities and vision in this area. Thus the education programme has contributed to culture, children's rights, post conflict reconstruction and gender issues through the involvement of all relevant Departments.

L.III.1. The Association for the Development of Education for Africa (ADEA)

521. A draft Memorandum of Understanding between the Commission and ADEA has been cleared by the Legal Counsel and is awaiting signature. ADEA is in the process of transferring its Headquarters to Tunis, at the offices of the African Development Bank. COMEDAF III agreed in principle to the merger of the Steering Committee and Ministerial Bureau of ADEA, with the same institutions of COMEDAF III in August 2007. ADEA has invited AU Member States from North Africa to join, in

order to match the AU membership structure. ADEA is already a major partner in education, and it has integrated the Second Decade plan of Action into its Strategic Plan.

L.III.2. UNESCO

522. UNESCO has now integrated the AU Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa into its Priority Africa Programme. This is an important practical demonstration of Partnership which will lead to increased AU/UNESCO collaboration in the future.

L.IV. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (S&T) AND ICT

L.IV.1. The January 2007 Summit of Heads of State and Government

523. The AU recognized the need for a focused discussion at the highest level on effective development and utilization of science and technology and assigned the theme “*Science, Technology and Research for Africa’s socio-economic development*” for the January 2007 Assembly. The Commission, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), the scientific community in Africa and the Diaspora through the African Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology had an opportunity to recommend to the Heads of State and Government key issues relating to S&T that needed to be addressed to support Africa’s programmes of S&T. The Assembly subsequently took a decision, Assembly/AU/Dec.161 (VIII), on science and technology part of which include the Declaration of the Year 2007 as the launching year of building constituencies and champions for science, technology and innovation in Africa and approval to establish a Pan-African Intellectual Property Organization (PAIPO).

L.IV.2. African Union Exhibition on Science and Technology

524. With the technical support of the United Nations Economic Commission (ECA), the Commission organized in Addis Ababa from 22nd to 30th January 2007, in parallel to January 2007 Summit, an exhibition aimed at showcasing and displaying the science, technology and innovative projects from various African Institutions, Member States and Development Partners that highlighted the returns on investment in S&T with a view to sensitizing African policy-makers on the critical role of science and technology in socio-economic development.

525. Likewise, on the margins of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF III) held in August 2007 in Johannesburg, South Africa, the Commission mounted an exhibition of educational materials for the teaching and learning of Science and Technology.

L.IV.3. The 4th AMCOST Bureau Meeting

526. The Bureau of the African Ministers Conference on Science and Technology (AMCOST) met on the 8^t June 2007 in Pretoria, South Africa to prepare for the Third Ordinary Session of AMCOST. The Bureau made a number of recommendations to AMCOST relating to the implementation of Africa's Science and Technology

Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA) by Member States and the RECs. The latter were urged to domesticate the CPA and implement the decisions, and report on implementation progress regularly during AMCOST meetings, including the implementation of the January 2007 Assembly Decision aimed at raising awareness of the importance of science and technology for economic and social development; and the establishment of a funding mechanism for the CPA for which the Commission, the NEPAD Secretariat, and the AfDB were called upon to develop a proposal.

L.IV.4. African Science and Technology Day

527. The African Union Member States celebrated the African Science and Technology Day on 30 June 2007. The Commission urged Member States to raise community awareness of the central role of the science and technology in the pursuit of national economic and social goals, through national science and technology programmes such as exhibitions, Seminars and/or workshops and media coverage.

L.IV.5. First African Women Conference in Science and Technology

528. The Commission held the First African Union Conference of African Women in Science and Technology in August 2007 as part of implementation of the January 2007 Summit decision on S&T. Women are a resource that could be used towards social and economic development of the continent through participating in Africa's science and technology programmes. The meeting expressed concern on the under-representation of African women in science, mathematics and engineering fields. It made a number of recommendations among them a proposal to establish a continental association under the auspices of the African Union to better coordinate the activities of women in science and technology and recommended to the Commission to establish African Union awards and recognition mechanisms for girls and women in clusters of science and technology, at national, regional and continental levels and called on AMCOST to work towards establishment of technology incubators, and introduce and expand formal and non formal entrepreneurship training and requisite facilities.

529. As a follow up to these recommendations, the Commission facilitated a meeting on 15 to 16 December 2007 of an Ad-hoc Committee set-up by the Conference as an interim arrangement. This meeting developed modalities of establishing a continental mechanism that brings together African Women in Science and Technology with the objective of coordinating at national, regional and continental levels their initiatives, activities, while encouraging cooperation and visibility in science and technology. It also developed an implementation strategy for encouraging technology incubators specifically for women, to support women entrepreneurship in science and technology.

L.IV.6. The Third Ordinary Session of the African Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology (AMCOST III)

530. The AMCOST III session took place in Mombasa, Kenya, from 12 to 15 November 2007 to consider the implementation of S&T 2007 Summit Decisions and Africa's Science and Technology Plan of Action (CPA). The meeting made several recommendations, including the call for the establishment by Member States and

Regional Economic Communities (RECs) of African Science and Technology Desks and the domestication of the CPA by linking its flagship projects to their development and poverty reduction programmes; the development of appropriate institutional, legal and governance framework to facilitate effective communication, coordination and access to scientific materials by centres of excellence and to strengthen networking between them.

L.IV.7 AU-WIPO Award 2006-2007 Edition

531. The AU-WIPO Awards Programme is an initiative of the Africa Union (AU) Commission and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). It is a leading continental award in Africa, honoring the scientists and technologists whose efforts are towards addressing critical problems in Africa using scientific solutions. AMCOST III appreciated the importance of the African Union best Scientists and AU/WIPO awards, stressed the need for effective communication and broadening the scope of the fields of competition and the increase of the amount of the Awards, in order to attract more applications and ensure greater participation. In this regard, it recommended the rerunning of the competitions.

L.IV.8 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

(a) ICT Bureau Meeting

532. The meeting took place in Cairo, Egypt on 25-26 March 2007 for the Steering Committee meeting and 27 March 2007 for the Bureau meeting. The meetings discussed and made recommendations on the following items:

- (i) ARAPKE flagship projects.
- (ii) Resource mobilization.
- (iii) DSF 1% Principle.
- (iv) Policies and Regulatory framework conducive to the development of telecommunications, information and communication (ICT) Networks and Services in Africa.

(b) Second Meeting of ICT Ministers:

533. The meeting was scheduled to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in October 2007. Following the Ministerial Meeting that took place in Kigali, Rwanda, in preparations for Connect Africa Summit, the Ministerial Conference has been postponed to 2008.

(c) Implementation of ARAPKE flagship projects:

534. The Steering Committee of the ICT Ministerial Conference formed a working group to undertake the process of identifying the flagship projects of ARAPKE. The group selected 11 projects while the resource mobilization process would determine the implementation phase and its modalities for the selected projects. An expert was recruited in October 2007 to assist in this regard.

(d) ICT Empowerment for youth

535. The document has been developed with appropriate recommendations to empower the youth. A workshop was organized on 6 and 7 December 2007 to enrich this document before its submission to the next ICT Ministerial Conference for consideration.

(e) Promoting the Use of ICT in Africa

536. The Commission sent reminders to all Member States to urge them to implement promotional ICT activities during the period of the ICT Week, such as organizing AICTW, Paperless Day and other ICT Best Practices Competition (AUBPA).

(f) Development of the African Databank

537. A database developer has been identified and the project will be pursued in 2 phases. The first phase will involve development and implementation of a pilot module. The next phase will be the implementation of all the system modules. The Terms of Reference, the initial study and the quotations have been submitted, to facilitate signing of the contract with the developer company.

L.IV.9. Biosafety Unit

538. As a follow up on the Decision EX/CL/Dec. 26(III), the Commission has revised the African Model Law on Biosafety and made it widely available to Member States and stakeholders. The Commission also sensitised Member States on the need to enhance their participation and their capacity so as to develop a common position in international negotiations under the Convention on Biological Diversity and Biosafety. In this regard, the Commission put an emphasis on the capacity building of its Biosafety Unit to be able to monitor such continually evolving activities in this specialized area of technology and development.

539. In this area of Biosafety, the Commission has organized the following meetings in the second semester 2007:

- An Experts Meeting on the revision of the African Model Law on Biosafety held in August 2007;
- An African Regional workshop on Risk Assessment and Risk Management organized in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological diversity in 2007;
- A workshop on Capacity Building and Briefing of African Delegates for the 5th Meeting of the Ad Hoc Open Ended Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing co-organized with partners in October 2005;
- A Preparatory Meeting of African Delegates for the Fourth Open-ended Ad hoc Working Group of Legal and Technical Experts on Liability and
- A Redress in the Context of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety organized in October 2007, with the collaboration of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

540. It will be also noted that its November 2007 meeting. AMCOST III adopted a recommendation recognizing the need of leadership of the Commission on biosafety issues in Africa, requesting the involvement of other relevant African Ministries in the revision of the African Model Law on Biosafety, as well as the institutionalisation of the Biosafety Unit within the Commission.

M. SOCIAL AFFAIRS

541. The AU Commission continues to address social, political and economic challenges that act as a barrier to the rapid integration of the African continent in the global economy. The Commission has greatly contributed to this process through the implementation of programmes and activities in the areas of health, population, social welfare, employment, labour and migration, as per the relevant Decisions of the AU Organs.

M.I. HEALTH, POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

542. Following the endorsement of the Africa Health Strategy during the July 2007 Accra Summit, the Commission worked very closely with the Bureau of the AU Conference of Ministers of Health (CAMH) to elaborate an Implementation Plan which was adopted by the Bureau of CAMH in November 2007. The Bureau recommended that the Commission should convene a High Level Consultation on Health MDGs and prepare a report on the same. It was also agreed that the Commission convene a Conference on African Traditional Medicine in August 2008 in order to receive a report on the Mid-Term Review of the AU Decade on African Traditional Medicine.

543. The overall approach of the Africa Health Strategy is health systems strengthening where a major challenge is the human resources for health crisis. In this regard, the Commission has been co-chairing the Task Force on Scaling Up Education and Training of Health Workforce under the Global Health Workforce Alliance (GHWA) established by the World Health Organization. The Task Force presented its recommendations at a High Level Consultation, which was hosted by the Commission on 15 and 16 November 2007.

544. With respect to promotion of access to affordable medicines, the Commission is servicing the Technical Committee on the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa, which has already met once. The Technical Committee is mandated to elaborate the Phase II Plan for local production of generic medicines in line with the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa endorsed by the AU Summit in Accra, Ghana, in July 2007. The Technical Committee will meet on 18 and 19 February 2008 in South Africa to finalize its work.

545. The Commission convened the 6th Ordinary Session of the African Population Commission where the State of African Population Report 2006 was launched. The report underlines the need to integrate population issues in development planning, especially in the implementation of the MDGs. In addition, the West African and

Southern Africa regions successfully organized regional forums on population and development under the auspices of the African Population Commission. The theme of the regional forums was "*Making Motherhood Safer: A National Priority Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals.*"

M.II. HIV/AIDS, TB AND MALARIA

546. For a long time, Africa will continue to face the immense challenge due to the impact of HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria on the continent's socio-economic development. For an effective response at all levels, the AU should ensure that the three diseases are kept high on its agenda as mandated by the Assembly, among other strategies to promote health and well-being.

547. During the period under review, preliminary plans were prepared in connection with the 2006 Commitments adopted in the Abuja Call for Accelerated Action towards Universal Access to HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria Services for a review meeting due in 2008. In this respect, national reports are anticipated from Member States and will be utilized to compile a continental Progress Report. Furthermore, in the 2008-2010 Implementation Plan for the AU Commission Strategic Plan and AIDS Watch Africa (AWA) Strategic Framework, priority activities to be undertaken by the AU Organs and Programmes, the RECs and other stakeholders are listed to efficiently accelerate the response to HIV/AIDS on the Continent. These activities include resource mobilization and building the capacity of the Commission, among others.

548. The AU started implementing priority activities in the area of HIV/AIDS and the Militaries, ageing and HIV/AIDS and the orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). In the particular case of OVC, HIV/AIDS and Malaria were mainstreamed in the Cairo Call for Accelerated Action towards "Africa Fit for Children", the major outcome of the Mid-term Review of "Africa Fit for Children" held in Cairo, Egypt, from 29 October to 2 November 2007. Because of the higher vulnerability of women and girls to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and violence during conflict and post-conflict situations, efforts are being undertaken to assess the situation of women and girls in several regions of the continent. Focus will be laid on the threat or reality of violence, HIV/AIDS and other sexual and reproductive health and rights issues. It is hoped that the outcome of the desk-review and field survey will be ready for presentation to the AU organs in 2008.

549. In the same vein, to increase advocacy for implementation of strategies against HIV/AIDS, World AIDS Day was marked continent-wide on or around 1 December 2007. The activities focused on the theme: "Leadership" with the slogan: "Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise!" The Commission urged all Member States to mark the Day country-wide. In order to raise and sustain the momentum of the World AIDS Campaign and raise awareness, the Commission also organized a programme of activities at the AU Headquarters and in some regional offices, and disseminated educational material and other memorabilia.

550. In line with the AU Malaria Elimination Campaign/ Programme, a process of involving the AU in planning and convening regional meetings for reviewing and planning activities relating to Accelerating Access to Malaria Control Interventions towards universal access, has also been started. Indeed, the Commission has

participated to the annual review and planning meeting of two regions on this issue, during the period under review. The Commission is also party to Governing Board of the Multi-lateral Initiative on Malaria (MIM). At national and regional levels, efforts have been intensified towards elimination of Malaria by 2010 since the launch of the Malaria Elimination Campaign in April 2007. In the same vein, more funds have been mobilized in 2007 from international partners for malaria programmes at national level.

551. In implementation of recommendations of the 1st Inter-Agency Meeting on Coordination and Harmonization of HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria Strategies, held in Addis Ababa in November 2006, the Commission played its role, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders. The Commission undertook some missions and had consultations in the framework of collaboration with various partners from the UN family, RECs, international Civil Society Organizations and NGOs. Amongst others, it has taken the opportunity to promote and disseminate African Union Policies and Programmes as well as disseminating, popularising the work of the AIDS Watch Africa. It also mobilised the involvement of concerned stakeholders in the work of AWA and its related programmes and activities.

552. As concerns other epidemics, the Commission is sustaining advocacy in support of Polio eradication efforts. It has now initiated action to urge Member States to contain meningitis epidemic through surveillance, vaccination and timely and appropriate treatment. The challenge is to ensure that vaccines are readily available and accessible.

M.III. LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT AND MIGRATION

553. In line with the 2004 Ouagadougou Extraordinary Summit on Employment promotion and poverty alleviation, the Commission developed a poverty alleviation programme with a focus on the informal sector economy regarded as a major employer of the vulnerable groups such as women, youth and people living with disabilities yet with poor and unhealthy working conditions. In this regard, the Commission is engaged in a Study on the Informal Sector in Africa whose aim is to explore ways of improving the living conditions and create employment for the poor through labour-intensive infrastructure upgrading in the informal sector. The specific objectives of this study are to develop policies and strategies aimed at promoting the role of the informal sector in the national economy as well as to design strategies for adequate protection of workers in the informal sector.

M.I.1. Migration and Development

554. Following the adoption of the Banjul Decision EX.CL/276.304 (IX) on Migration Policy Framework for Africa in June 2006, a Plan of Action has been developed in collaboration with partners for the implementation of the Policy Framework. However, a follow-up mechanism for the operationalization of the Framework could not be considered in 2007 as scheduled due to the postponement to 2008 of the preliminary meeting with RECs, starting with ECOWAS, which would enable Member States, the RECs and relevant partners to popularise the AU and RECs instruments on migration; describe the future challenges and needs of migration at the continental,

regional and national level and identify Migration focal Ministries and Contact persons. Plans are underway to visit the RECs with an aim to gather information on their plans for the implementation of the Framework.

555. The Global Forum on Migration and Development was established as a follow up to the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development which was held in September 2006. The AU Commission attended the first Global Forum which was hosted by the Kingdom of Belgium. During the Forum several countries announced the launch of projects aimed at enhancing the development impact of migration and reducing its negative effects. The government of the Philippines, will host the second Global Forum in 2008.

556. Regarding the Joint Africa-EU Declaration on Migration and Development endorsed by the January 2007 Assembly Decision, the Commission, in collaboration with EU and other partners, has developed a 2008 Plan of Action for the implementation of both the Joint Africa-EU Declaration on Migration and Development and the Ouagadougou Plan of Action on Trafficking in Human Beings Especially Women and Children. It will report on the status of implementation of the Plans at the appropriate time.

M.III.2. Promotion of Tripartism

557. In line with the principle of tripartism promoted by the Labour and Social Affairs Commission, the Commission, in collaboration with the Organization of Trade Union Unity (OATUU), organised regional workshops for Trade Union Leaders with an aim of sensitizing them on the recommendations of the 2004 Ouagadougou Summit on Employment and poverty Alleviation.

M.IV. CHILD SURVIVAL, PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT

558. The Commission continued to sensitize Member States which have not yet done so, to ratify and implement the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. To-date, forty one (41) Member States have ratified the African Charter and deposited the ratification instruments with the Commission. An urgent appeal is again made to those Member States which have not yet ratified the African Charter to expedite the ratification process.

Declaration and Plan of Action of Africa Fit for Children

559. It will be recalled that in 2001, the Assembly adopted the African Common Position on Children - Africa Fit for Children as Africa's contribution to the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Children in 2002. In the Plan of Action of Africa Fit for Children, the Commission was called upon to "conduct a mid-term review of the progress achieved in the implementation of the Plan of Action". This request was reiterated in the Assembly Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.75(V) in Sirte, Libya, in July 2005. In implementation of that Decision, the Commission convened the Second Pan-African Forum on Children: Mid-Term Review in Cairo, Egypt from 29 October to 2 November 2007. The Meeting which was held at Experts and Ministerial levels, assessed the progress made in implementing the Plan, on the basis of a questionnaire which was sent to all AU Member States. The replies

received were consolidated into a report, which was one of the main working documents of the Forum.

560. The Second Pan-African Forum debated on the various issues related to children and conducted two round-table discussions on: Violence against Children and Budgeting and Resources for Children's Programmes. At the end of the deliberation, the Ministers of the Forum:

- (i) *inter alia*, decided that the Pan-African Forum focuses on children only and not youth, in line with the definition of children as contained in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.
- (ii) Adopted the Call for Accelerated Action on the Implementation of the Plan of Action *Towards Africa Fit for Children (2008-2012)* as Africa's contribution to the United Nations General Assembly Commemorative High-Level Plenary Meeting, devoted to the follow-up of the 2002 UN Special Session on Children, to be held in New York in December 2007.
- (iii) Accepted and endorsed the appeal made by the First Lady of Egypt, H.E. Mrs. Suzanne *Mubarak* to launch an African campaign on the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) as a programme within the framework of the Call for Accelerated Action to achieve an Africa Fit for Children.
- (iv) Issued a *Communiqué* on the attempted kidnap of Sudanese and Chadian children from Chad and,
- (v) Adopted the *recommendations* of the Roundtables.

M.V. PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF THE AGED AND AGEING

561. With regard to the AU Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing, the Commission is exploring ways of establishing the Advisory Council as called for in the Plan of Action. However, since the establishment of such an organ have considerable financial implications, the Commission, in consultations with HelpAge International – Africa Region, is looking at modalities to set up a Steering Committee as an interim measure to follow-up and monitor the implementation of the Plan of Action on Ageing. The proposed Steering Committee would meet once a year to assess progress made in implementing the Plan of Action and provide guidance on the way forward. Furthermore, in light with the Resolution adopted by the 41st Session of the African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa, the Commission, in close collaboration with the latter, will soon embark on the process of elaborating a Protocol on the Rights of Older people in Africa.

562. The Commission also presented the AU Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing at an Experts Group Meeting on Aging organized by the UN ECA in collaboration with HelpAge International and UNDESA in Addis Ababa from 19-21 November 2007. Among others, the objectives of the Meeting were to: raise

awareness on issues of ageing; exchange views and cooperate on the review and appraisal for the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA); and enhance and promote sub-regional, regional and international Partnerships for providing social, economic and health support to the elderly. The meeting recommended that the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing be harmonized with the AU Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing in Africa and that a Partnership be established between the Commission, UN ECA, HelpAge International, UNDESA and other stakeholders to follow-up on the implementation process.

563. Within the framework of its Partnership with Norway and Sweden and in implementation of Ouagadougou Plan of Action for Promotion of Employment and Poverty Alleviation, the Commission is following up the social protection agenda. In this regard, the Commission has hired a Consultant to conduct a desk study on social protection in Africa. The study will subsequently be submitted to the Ministerial Meeting on Social Development to be held in April 2008 for consideration. Within the framework of the Livingstone Call for Action on Social Protection, the Commission in collaboration with HelpAge International – Africa Region, is organizing Experts Group Meetings at regional level to promote the inclusion by Member States of the social protection in their National Development Plans with consequent budgets.

M.VI. SOCIAL POLICY FRAMEWORK

564. As mandated by the AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission, the Commission is finalizing the elaboration of the Social Policy Framework. It will be recalled that a draft Social Policy Framework (SPF) was presented to the 3rd and 4th Sessions of the AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission (LSAC). Subsequently, the LSAC recommended that the Commission should further improve the document to address all social development programmes and submit it to the consideration of Ministers in charge of Social Development (vide Decision EX.CL/Dec.290 (IX)). The Commission is finalising the SPF which will be submitted to the Conference of the Ministers of Social Development scheduled to be convened in April 2008.

M.VII. DISABILITY ISSUES

565. As requested by the Governing Board of the African Rehabilitation Institute (ARI) and with a view to revitalising and strengthening the Institute, the Commission has hired a Consultant to carry out a survey and make concrete proposals on how best to review the mandate of ARI, restructure it and strengthen its capacity to enable it function more effectively. The study of the Consultant will be presented to an Extraordinary Session of the ARI Governing Board and thereafter to the Meeting on Social Development. In the meantime, Member States, which are members of ARI, are called upon to continue to support the Institute. The Commission would like also to appeal to Member States to accelerate actions at national level in implementing the Plan of Action on the African Decade of Disabled Persons (1999-2009).

M.VIII. DRUG CONTROL

566. Among the development challenges Africa has to grapple with is addressing the increasing production and abuse of drugs, as well as use as transit for trafficking or stockpiling destination. Youths are at highest risk for both abuse and trafficking of drugs and the associated crimes of money laundering and trafficking in humans. It is also a fact that the undue violence and crimes against humanity in conflict situations are, to a large extent, compounded by drug abuse. Drugs are therefore a threat to human security and development. To address these challenges, the Third Ordinary Session of the AU Conference of Ministers for Drug Control and Crime Prevention was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 3-7 December 2007 on the theme: "Africa`s Renewed Commitment to Fighting Abuse and Trafficking of Illicit Drugs and Preventing Crime". The main outcome of the Session was a Revised AU Plan of Action on Drug Trafficking and Abuse, and Crime Prevention (2007-2012), and its Follow up Mechanism, for implementation in close Partnership by stakeholders at all levels.

M.IX. INTERIM EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT OF ACALAN

567. The statutes of the African Academy of Languages were adopted by Assembly of the Union Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.95. This historic Decision which was taken at the Assembly of the Union in Khartoum devoted to education and culture, for the first time in the history of the Organization, made ACALAN a unique inter-governmental institution with continental dimension, in the world. That Decision was followed by other important Decisions which placed the question of African languages at the centre of the process of Africa's cultural renaissance. They include the decisions on the review of the Linguistic Plan of Action for Africa adopted in 1986, the African Cultural Renaissance Charter, the decisions on the relation between education and culture and the proclamation of 2006 as the Year of African Languages (YAL). The celebration of YAL underscores the high importance accorded to African languages as factors of the development and integration of the peoples of Africa. At the Assembly of the Union held in Accra, Ghana, in July 2007, and following the appeal by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Year of African Languages was extended to December 2007 in order to establish a link with the year 2008 proclaimed International Year of Languages by the United Nations.

568. As a matter of fact, the 61st Session of the United Nations General Assembly "Recognizing that the United Nations pursues multilingualism as a means of promoting, protecting and preserving diversity of languages and cultures globally..., recognizing also that genuine multilingualism promotes unity in diversity and international understanding, and recognizing the importance of the capacity to communicate to the peoples of the world in their own languages (...) proclaims 2008 International Year of Languages" following the resolution adopted by the United Nations General Conference on Education, Science and Culture at its 23rd Session held on 20 October 2005, and then invited UNESCO to play the role of lead organization for celebration of the year.

569. Despite the extension of the Year of African Languages to the end of December 2007, the Decision to celebrate the Year of African Languages had very

little effect. It should be mentioned, in this connection, that apart from some activities initiated by some universities, particularly the University of Cape Town, South Africa, in 2006; the University of Bamako on the occasion of the National Day for celebration of the YAL on 12 March 2007; and the symbolic intervention by the ACALAN Executive Secretariat at the UNESCO African Regional Conference on Literacy held in Bamako, very few activities were undertaken in celebration of the Year of African Languages. The celebration was therefore far below expectation at continental level. Africa should therefore brace itself to celebrate the Year of African Languages in 2008.

570. To this end, It is absolutely necessary that all African countries mobilize themselves so that the Continent may not be left behind when the rest of the world will be organizing different events to celebrate the Year 2008. There is a need for the Assembly of the Union to take a decision on this issue and make an appeal to Member States of the Union not only to initiate and implement activities to celebrate 2008, but also and above all, to design, sustain and multiply their home-made activities to enhance, promote and protect African languages, particularly those in imminent danger as well as linguistic diversity and multilingualism, as recommended by the 61st United Nations General Assembly.

571. Furthermore, that Decision could invite UNESCO, ACALAN and the World Network for Linguistic Diversity (MAAYA) to join hands in initiating special activities to bolster the process of promoting languages and multilingualism, and celebrate jointly and with other partners, the International Year of Languages. The World Network for Linguistic Diversity (MAAYA) came to being on the occasion of the second phase of the World Summit on Information Society (SMSI) held in Tunis in November 2005 at the initiative of ACALAN during the African Union ICT Week. This Network was officially launched on 21 February 2006 on the occasion of the International Mother Language Day at UNESCO, with the Director General of this Institution and the major funding organs in Tunis, in attendance. The objective of Draft Decision would therefore be to: (a) invite Member States of the African Union to celebrate the International Year of Languages with activities to develop African languages and multilingualism, and (b) propose joint celebration of the International Year of Languages (IYL) by UNESCO, ACALAN and MAAYA Network with input from other partners.

572. ACALAN has already presented proposals to several organizations and structures across the world to enable the African Continent to make its input in the celebration of the Year 2008 through language development. On this score, ACALAN has, on behalf of MAAYA, addressed correspondence to the following personalities:

- Director General of the United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);
- Secretary General of the International Organization of the Francophonie (IOF);
- Austrian Federal Minister of Education, Arts and Culture through the Director General of General Education, Planning and International Affairs, whose country is the initiator of the International Year of Languages; and
- Norwegian Structures (especially the NORAD Foundation and University) bearing in mind that 2008 is also the Norwegian Year of Cultural Diversity.

N. INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY

573. During the period under review, the Commission embarked on a number of activities of strategic importance in the area of infrastructure and energy. Priority was placed on the elaboration of policies and strategies in the fields of railway transport, electricity, oil and gas, Telecommunications and ICT, post as well as on the implementation of specific projects aimed at the development of ICT infrastructure and services in Africa. These included the e-Governance VSAT project for the African Union Commission and its Regional Offices, the Pan-African e-Network project for Tele-education and Tele-medicine in cooperation with the Government of India and the Unified Telecommunication Numbering Project.

574. In the course of strengthening cooperation with partners, the Commission, in collaboration with the European Commission (EC), organized a high level Launching of the Europe Union – Africa Infrastructure Partnership which is aimed at supporting and accelerating development of infrastructure in Africa. In the same spirit, the Commission convened a consultative meeting with the African Development Bank (ADB) and the NEPAD Secretariat to discuss modalities for formulating a Common Infrastructure Programme for Africa based on the various initiatives of the organizations and within the framework of the Coordination Mechanism for Infrastructure Development adopted by African stakeholders.

N.I. TRANSPORT

N.I.1. Road Transport

First African Union Conference of Ministers responsible for Road Transport

575. The Commission, in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of South Africa, organized the First African Union Conference of Ministers responsible for Road Transport under the theme: *"Reliable and affordable road transport for economic development and integration of Africa"*. The Conference was held in Durban, South Africa, from 15 to 19 October 2007.

576. The Ministers considered and made decisions on the major current issues in road transport sub-sector in Africa including the following:

- Vision of the African Union on infrastructure and road transport
- Development of road transport infrastructure in Africa
- Harmonization and facilitation of road transport in Africa
- Road safety, environment protection and combating of infectious diseases particularly HIV/AIDS
- Capacity building
- Financing of the road transport sub-sector in Africa

577. Finally, the Ministers adopted the following main outcome documents detailing the conclusions and recommendations of their deliberations:

- Durban Declaration on Road Transport in Africa; and
- Road Transport Plan of Action.

578. A separate report on the Conference is submitted to the Executive Council.

N.I.2. Railway Transport

Professional Conference on Interconnection, Interoperability and Complementarity of African Railway Networks

579. The Commission, in collaboration with the International Union of Railways (UIC) and the Government of the Republic of South Africa, organized a Professional Conference on Interconnection, Interoperability and complementarity of African Railway Networks which was held on 20 and 21 November 2007 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Conference aimed at addressing the critical problem of multiple railway gauges and variations in standards for railway infrastructure and equipment currently existing in the continent which make it rather difficult to interlink Africa's railway networks with a view to achieving optimal economic performance and enhanced continental integration. This problem has its roots in the different colonial legacies of African countries and has not yet been seriously and collectively dealt with since the independence of most of African countries.

580. The subject is one of the key activities outlined in the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the Ministers responsible for Railway Transport during their First Conference under the auspices of the African Union held in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo in April, 2006. The Ministers requested the African Union Commission to give priority to actions which will remove technical, institutional and regulatory constraints to the integration of African railway networks.

581. The Professional Conference reviewed the state of railways in Africa and considered a number of key issues related to the development and integration of African railway networks including:

- The meter-gauge railway and the various development options;
- Railway interconnection, interoperability and complementarity in Africa: the needs and ongoing initiatives;
- Possibilities and opportunities for high speed railway transport development in Africa;
- Strategies for railway transport development in Africa in the 21st century; and
- International cooperation as a key lever for railway development in Africa

582. A number of recommendations were made focusing on the gradual improvement of existing railway networks, enhancement of their interoperability and construction of new railway lines with priority on missing links to facilitate the interconnection of existing and new networks. In that regard, some of the key recommendations made include:

- Significant technical improvements should be made on existing metric tracks, in order to enhance their operating performances;

- The African Union Commission and the Union of African Railways should ensure the development of rail transport by exploring the different possibilities of interconnection and interoperability between networks;
- The Commission, the NEPAD Secretariat and the Union of African Railways should speed up the updating of the Railway Master Plan for Africa, in conformity with the Brazzaville Declaration, making railways the backbone of the Integrated Transport Infrastructure Master Plan for Africa;
- The Commission should accelerate the process of establishing an African Railway Development Fund;
- The Commission should ensure coordination and harmonisation of technical standards in collaboration with the Union of African Railways;
- The use of the standard gauge should be encouraged in the future construction of new railway lines in order to enable Africa keep abreast with global railway transport developments with particular regard to the operation of high capacity and high speed trains; and
- The International Union of Railways should assist the African Union in the establishment of an interconnected and interoperable African Railway Network.

583. The report of the Conference will be submitted to the First African Union Conference of Ministers responsible for Transport in Algiers, Algeria, in April 2008.

N.I.3. Maritime Transport

Revision of the African Maritime Transport Charter

584. It would be recalled that, to-date, the African Maritime Transport Charter adopted in 1994 has not yet entered into force due to inadequate ratification by Member States. Furthermore, in view of the long duration of more than ten years since its adoption and the number of significant developments that have taken place globally within the sub-sector, the continent and the world during that period, the Charter has, to a large extent, become obsolete. In this regard, African Ministers responsible for Maritime Transport meeting under the auspices of the African Union in February 2007 in Abuja, Nigeria requested the Commission, among others, to undertake the revision of the Charter in order to make it an effective policy and strategic instrument for facilitating sustainable development of maritime transport in the continent.

585. The Commission convened a meeting of maritime transport experts in September 2007 at its Headquarters in Addis Ababa to discuss ways and methodology of revising the Charter. The meeting of experts reviewed the existing Charter highlighting the relevance of its various provisions, including their strengths and weaknesses as well as indicating and making specific recommendations on areas in need of revision. The meeting also proposed a new structure of the Charter to reflect current priorities of the sub-sector. Finally, the experts agreed to constitute themselves as a working team under the leadership of the Commission and apply their specific competencies to re-draft the various parts of the Charter.

586. Preparation of the initial draft of the Charter has been accomplished by the team of experts and a second meeting of experts will be convened in February 2008 to review the draft before its submission to Member States and the Conference of

Ministers responsible for Transport scheduled to hold in Algiers, Algeria in April 2008 for consideration and approval.

N.I.4. Air Transport

Implementation of the 1999 Yamoussoukro Decision on the Liberalization of Air Transport Markets in Africa

587. The implementation of the 1999 Yamoussoukro Decision on the Liberalization of Air Transport Markets in Africa is the main activity currently pursued by the Commission in the field of air transport. The major outstanding components of this project include the following:

- Setting up of the Executing Agency to oversee and regulate the single African air transport market envisaged in the Yamoussoukro Decision;
- Harmonization of air transport competition rules;
- Establishing a dispute settlement mechanism; and
- Formulation of a criteria and evaluation of the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision

588. The Third African Union Conference of African Ministers responsible for Air Transport held in Addis Ababa in May 2007, decided that the Executing Agency should be established within the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC). In that regard, the African Union Commission held a consultative meeting with the Bureau of AFCAC in December 2007 to determine measures to be taken as well as the timetable for AFCAC to begin carrying out the functions of the executing agency. To that end, a consultant has been engaged to study and outline specific recommendations on the reforms and capacity building needs of AFCAC in order to enable it to effectively carry out the responsibilities of the executing agency.

589. Work on the Rules of Competition, Dispute Settlement Mechanism and evaluation of the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision is going on with the completion target of February – March 2008.

590. Also, in view of similar developments in other regions of the world particularly the European Union (EU) which has already established a single EU air space and adopted a common air transport policy, the Commission is spearheading efforts to elaborate and adopt a Common External Air transport Policy for Africa to ensure the protection of the interests of the Member States in negotiating and concluding air service agreements with EU States and other third parties. In this connection, and in line with the decision of the Third African Union Conference of African Ministers responsible for Air Transport, the Commission will convene a meeting of air transport experts in February 2008 in Addis Ababa, to review a consensual document on a Common African Position for Negotiation of Air Service Agreements between African Union States and European Union States. Preparation of the document is underway.

591. The outcome of all these activities will be submitted to the First African Union Conference of Ministers responsible for Transport scheduled to hold in Algiers, Algeria in April 2008, as earlier indicated.

N.I.5. Preparation of the Continental Integrated Transport Master Plan for Africa

592. The Commission engaged a team of five (5) experts on short-term basis to prepare detailed Terms of Reference and Tender Documents necessary for carrying out the process of recruiting a consultancy firm that would conduct the study and prepare the documents of the Continental Integrated Transport Master Plan for Africa.

593. In that connection, the Second Coordination meeting on the elaboration the Master Plan was convened at the Headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 27 and 28 September 2007 to consider the project methodology including the calendar of activities and tasks of the team of experts. The meeting was attended by officials of the Department of Infrastructure and Energy of the African Union Commission and representatives of key stakeholder institutions including the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the Pan-African Association for Port Cooperation (PAPC), NEPAD Secretariat, some Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as well as members of the team of experts engaged to draft detailed Terms of Reference and Tender Documents of the Project.

594. The Team of experts commenced its assignment in September 2007 and submitted the requested documents to the Commission at the end of November 2007. The Commission has reviewed the documents and is now in the process of engaging the services of a consultancy firm that would carry out the study and prepare the requisite Master Plan documents.[DK1]

N.I.6. Preparation of the First Session of African Union Conference of Ministers of Transport

595. As mentioned in the previous report of the Commission, the Bureau of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport met in Algiers, Algeria from 6 to 7 April 2007 to review a number of activities being implemented and planned in the transport sector under the auspices of the African Union. The meeting was convened as the first round of Ministerial conferences on the various modes of transport, including air, railway, maritime and road transport, and was coming to a conclusion in 2007. In that connection, it was agreed that the First African Union Conference of Ministers of Transport should be convened in 2008 at the end of the tenure of the current Bureau.

596. The main objective of the conference would be to take stock of the implementation of the plans of action adopted during the various sub-sector Ministerial conferences and chart the way forward for an integrated and holistic development of the entire transport sector. Also, adoption of the Rules of Procedure of the conference including functions of its Bureau would be on the agenda. This is intended to make the Conference of African Ministers of Transport an effective Specialized Technical Committee (STC) of the African Union as provided for under Article 14 of the Constitutive Act.

597. The Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria offered to host the Conference of African Ministers of Transport in Algiers in April 2008. The Bureau was grateful to the Government of Algeria for its generous offer. The

Government has already affirmed its decision to the Commission and preparations for the Conference have been initiated for both technical and logistical arrangements.

N.II. ENERGY

N.II.1. Electric Energy

598. The study on formulation of a Continental Policy and Master Plan for Development of the African Electricity Sector was launched. The major activities under implementation are as follows:

- evaluation of the current situation of the Sector;
- formulation of a Continental Policy; and
- preparation of the specifications for formulation of the Master Plan for development of the Sector.

599. The study will draw from the policies and programmes of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). To this end, missions to the RECs, the Regional Power Pools, River and Lake Basins Organizations and African Institutions working in the field of electric energy sector development were undertaken to West, Central and East Africa. Similar missions will be fielded to Southern and North Africa from January to February 2008.

600. A report on the status of the sector, a framework for continental electric energy policy and the draft tender document for producing the Master Plan for African Energy Sector Development, will be put in place. Furthermore, a validation workshop on this stage of the study will be organized in the first half of 2008. This workshop will bring together representatives of RECs, the Regional Power Pools and Specialized Institutions of the sector such as, ECA, ADB, NEPAD Secretariat, AFREC, AFUR, AFSEC and UPDEA.

601. With respect to establishment within the African Union of a Coordination Structure for the Large Hydro-Electric Integration Projects development, the Commission has launched a legal and institutional study to put in place an appropriate and safe framework for all the stakeholders involved in the development of the Great Integrating Hydro-Electric Projects. The Interim Report presented by the consultant in charge of the study has been examined by the Commission and the Report will be finalized in light of the Commission's observations. A debriefing workshop on the outcomes of this study will be organized in the first quarter of 2008.

N.II.2. Hydrocarbons (Oil and Gas)

602. The joint AU/ADB studies on (i) the impact of the oil price rise on African economies, (ii) prospects of the hydrocarbons (oil and gas) sector in Africa, and (iii) mechanisms for establishment and operationalization of the African Petroleum Fund, are under finalization. The outcomes of all these studies, once finalized, will be transmitted to Member States of the African Union as directed by the 8th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union. Workshops to popularize the outcomes of these studies will be organized during 2008.

603. Regarding establishment of an African Petroleum Fund, this Fund will be lodged at ADB and should be operational in the second half of 2008. The Fund will utilize the resources obtained from donors for assistance to low-income countries that are net importance of oil, seriously affected by the rise of the price of oil. The objective of such assistance is to enable these countries to overcome their temporary balance of payments difficulties. The Fund will operate by offering non-refundable grants, concessional loans or a combination of these two types of instrument.

N.II.3 Biocarbons

604. The Commission jointly organized with Brazil and UNIDO the First High Level Seminar on Biocarbons in Africa, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 30 July 1 August 2007. The main objective was to sensitise African decision-makers on the advantages offered by this new source of energy for several African countries as well as the stakes and challenges arising from these advantages. The Seminar was attended by over 250 delegates from Member States of the African Union, the seven RECs, NGOs, the private sector, the academia, organizations of the United Nations system and African institutions operating in the energy sector. Ministers from a number of African countries (Ethiopia, Guinea Conakry and Zimbabwe) also participated in the Ministerial Round Table.

605. The Seminar adopted a Declaration known as “Addis Ababa Declaration on Sustainable Development of Hydrocarbons in Africa” as well as a short and medium-term Plan of Action. The major recommendations of this Seminar were as follows:

- Need to devise a well-designed continental policy for hydrocarbons production and consumption in Africa that is environment friendly and does not compromise food security in African countries, to prevent the continent from becoming a mere producer of raw materials for the industries of developed countries, given the fact that the primary concern is to reduce the energy gap;
- Need to institute Partnership between the African Union, Brazil, UNIDO and other interested parties. To this end, an inter-regional network should be put in place and made operational as speedily as possible; and
- create an African center for biocarbons, centers of excellence and biocarbons development in Africa to sustain national and regional programmes and provide impetus for development of the sub-sector.

606. It is intended to organize meetings of the different regions of the continent, to disseminate the outcomes of this Seminar.

607. The Seminar was a success and the set objective attained. The high attendance at the Seminar and at the exhibition organized to that effect, demonstrate the great interest generated by that important event.

N.III. TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES, AND POSTAL SYSTEM

N.III.1. Pan-African Network for on-line telemedicine and tele-education network project

a) Update on the project

608. The project for establishment by India of a Pan-African network for on-line services by satellite and optic fiber is designed mainly to provide for the 53 Member States of the African Union tele-education and tele-medicine services.

609. In the African continent, the network will be made up of a land hub station which will communicate by satellite with:

- 53 VSAT stations installed in 53 national hospitals (one hospital in each Member State) for tele-medicine; 53 VSAT stations installed in 53 national universities (one university in each Member State) for tele-education;
- 5 VSAT stations in 5 African universities known as regional lead universities¹ and 5 VSAT stations installed in 5 hospitals known as regional super-specialized hospitals² for provision of the network's tele-education and tele-medicine services.

610. In India, the network will also comprise one land hub station which will communicate with 6 Indian hospitals and 6 Indian universities for provision of the network's tele-education and tele-medicine services.

611. The African land hub stations will be linked to India's land hub station by submarine fiber optic cable.

612. At the level of the African continent, the network will have:

- One land hub station; and
- 116 VSAT stations distributed as follows:
 - 5 VSAT stations for the regional lead universities;
 - 5 VSAT stations for the regional super-specialized hospitals; and
 - 2 VSAT stations for each country, that is 1 VSAT in a center of learning and 1 VSAT in an hospital.

613. Two agreements in this regard have been signed between the Commission and India. The first agreement between the Government of India and the African Union Commission covers the general aspects of the establishment of the Pan-African network. The second was signed between the Commission and an Indian company called "Telecommunications Consultants India Limited" (TCIL) for the supply, installation, operationalization and maintenance of the network by TCIL over

¹ **Regional lead universities: under the project, these universities which will be selected on the basis of set criteria, each with a studio to provide distance education to 53 universities in 53 States.**

² **Regional super specialized hospitals: under the project, these universities will be selected on the basis of set criteria and will provide distance health care to 53 hospitals in 53 Member States.**

a period of five years. A project participation agreement to be signed between this Indian company "Telecommunications Consultant India Limited (TCIL) has been presented to Member States.

b) Implementing the project

614. The Commission contributed to implementation for the project by carrying out the following major activities:

- Formulation of the texts of the various agreements and protocols in the four working languages of the African Union and transmission thereof to Member States for signature and participation in the project. As at 30 November 2007, the TCIL had signed the protocol agreement for participation in the project with twenty seven (27) Member States;
- Sensitization of the Member States and key players to participate in the project.

615. Construction of the hub station is in progress and visits to the construction sites will be organized by the stakeholders. The TCIL has been officially requested to put in place a schedule for VSAT deployment in the 27 Member States that have already signed the Protocol.

616. *Ad-hoc* groups have been established to study and put forward recommendation on the following issues:

- Selection of Indian university courses proposed by India for the tele-education component of the project;
- Modalities for management and the structures of the Pan-African on-line services during and after Indian assistance; and
- Establishment of "a business plan" and tariff proposals for services to be provided by the network.

617. The work of the above-mentioned group will be accelerated so that the conclusions may be presented to the 5th meeting of the Steering Committee of the project in March 2008.

N.III.2. E-Governance Project (VSAT)

618. In furtherance of the institutional transformation of the African Union, the e-Governance project (VSAT) of the Union is designed to ensure full connectivity and provision of modern telecommunication services between the Headquarters of the Commission and regional offices, external missions, the Regional Economic Communities and Member States through a satellite interconnection network. The project will enable the African Union to avail itself of a communication system and, hence, a greater autonomy in terms of services and services availability. An antenna will be installed at each of the sites to enable the African Union to provide video-conference services, access high speed internet, telephony on Protocol Internet (PI) and an integrated data management facility.

619. The project implementation is at a very advanced stage. Construction of the hub station at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa has been completed and the network was officially inaugurated on 25 May 2007 on the occasion of Africa Day. Presently, the existing internet communication of the Commission is carried out through this hub station. All needed equipment are already in place in all the sites. As at 30 November 2007, installation had been completed in 50% of the sites, and installation is underway in the other sites. All the work of installation of the network is expected to be completed in December 2007.

620. It should be emphasized that one of the cardinal reasons for the delay in project execution stemmed from obtaining VSAT licenses. Despite the resolution of the Heads of State and all the moves by the Commission to obtain these licenses on time, as at 30 November 2007 the requisite licenses were yet to be obtained in Egypt and Djibouti. The licenses so obtained were issued for only one year that is 2007. We are concerned that the process of renewal of the licenses may have to recommence in 2008 and that the exemptions granted may be limited, whereas the project can be viable only if it is exempted from licensing fees.

N.III.3. Harmonization of telecommunications and ICT policies and regulatory frameworks

621. The Commission carried out studies on elaboration of a harmonized policy and regulatory framework for coherent and speedy development of regional and continental telecommunications and ICT networks and services. The major expected outcomes of the studies are:

- a shared regional and continental vision on the role and expectations as well as necessary impetus to the telecommunications and ICT sector;
- a harmonized policy reference framework for development of the telecommunications and ICTs sector as well as regulatory practices applicable at regional and, indeed, at continental level, particularly strategic guidelines and issues on which community directives are needed, etc;
- identification of cross-cutting studies to be undertaken; and
- an appropriate mechanism for consultation and cooperation between the key players and partners especially to strengthen the community approach in the development activities of the sector.

622. A High Level Committee (HLC) comprising experts from the RECs, specialized regional and international organizations and institutions was constituted in July 2006 to support the Commission in the project implementation. The study report was adopted by the HLC at its 4th meeting held in Addis Ababa, from 3 to 5 October 2007. This document will be translated and transmitted to Member States for comments and observations. A final version incorporating the observations and comments will be presented to the ordinary session of the Conference of African Ministers of Communications and Information Technologies in May 2008.

N.III.4. Project for establishment of a unified telecommunications numbering space in Africa

623. The project for establishment of a unified numbering space (ATMS) is intended to enhance the interconnection of African ICT networks and enable the operators to build umbrella networks with African internet exchange stations. This project also, and above all, represents a powerful symbol of African unity and integration.

624. The preliminary study as well as the economic feasibility study and the service potentials offered by this unified numbering space (ATMS) have been completed. They paved the way for identifying ATMS potential services, the advantages offered to the players of the sector and the model structure of the first ATMS network known as ARINET.

625. It is needful to obtain from the International Telecommunications Union a common code for individual African countries (+28 or 288) or group of African countries which will co-exist with the existing international country codes. To this end, an appropriate request has to be addressed to this institution by a group of countries. In this connection, the Commission elaborated a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU-ATNS) for participation in the project and transmitted same to the states for signature. As at 30 November 2007 only five countries (Benin, Ghana, Burundi, The Comoros and Republic of Congo) have signed the MoU-ATNS, and three countries (Seychelles, Botswana and Egypt) had notified the Commission of their decision not to participate in the project. A reminder was sent to Member States with a view to obtaining a minimum of 10 states willing to participate in the project and, if possible, enough states representing the 5 geographical regions to constitute the Bureau of signatories to the MoU-ATNS.

N.III.5. Harmonization of Postal Policies and Regulations and Strategies to strengthen the Postal Sector in Africa

626. The Commission has embarked upon a study for harmonization of postal policies and regulations and formulation of strategies to strengthen the postal sector. After an exhaustive analysis of the state of the sector and of the need for reform, the study advocated strategic policies, guidelines and regulatory models for development of this vital sector. These guidelines and models relate primarily to:

- Perquisites for a successful postal reform scheme;
- Modalities for financing the reform; and
- Guidelines of a structure to commercialise the postal enterprise.

627. The conclusions and recommendations of the study will be submitted to experts and Member States' Ministries responsible for postal services for consideration in the first half of 2008.

N.IV. OTHER ACTIVITIES

N.IV.1. NEPAD Medium to Long-Term Strategic Framework (MLTSF)

628. The Sector Workshops to conclude the process of reviewing Part 1 of the study on the elaboration of the NEPAD infrastructure Medium to Long Term Strategic Framework (MLTSF) were held from 26 to 28 July 2007 in Addis Ababa. The Commission, which has a leadership position in the undertaking, participated in the workshops. It would be recalled that the sector regional workshops were organised as follows: Libreville, Gabon, for Central Africa in March 2007; Tunis, Tunisia, in early April 2007 for North Africa; Arusha, Tanzania, in late April 2007 for Eastern and Southern Africa; and Abuja, Nigeria, in early May 2007 for West Africa. The Commission had also attended these workshops.

629. During the sector workshops, participants expressed general dissatisfaction with the work of the consultants and unanimously agreed that a review of the Study Terms of Reference was necessary in order to provide clear guidance to the consultants to enable them produce the expected outcome.

630. Furthermore, consultations were held on the margins of the workshops between the Commission, the African Development Bank and the NEPAD Secretariat on the need to develop a common infrastructure programme for Africa based on ongoing programmes within the respective Organisations, particularly the infrastructure policy and master plan programmes undertaken by the African Union, the MLTSF and the NEPAD Strategic Development Programme (SDP). It was agreed that officials of the two Organisations (AU and ADB), together with the NEPAD Secretariat, should meet to work out the modalities for merging those programmes.

N.IV.2. Coordination between ADB, AUC and NEPAD SECRETARIAT

631. Following the sideline consultations held in July 2007 during the sector workshops of the MLTSF Part 1 Study, officials of the Commission, ADB and NEPAD Secretariat met in October 2007 in Addis Ababa to discuss ways of merging their programmes into a common infrastructure programme for the continent. They agreed to form a team to review the Terms of Reference of all the programmes and, on that basis, prepare the common programme to be subsequently submitted for adoption by the authorities of the three parties. The work of preparing the common programme is ongoing and the target is to finalise the first draft by end of March 2008.

N.IV.3. European Union-Africa Partnership for Infrastructure Development in Africa

632. The African Union Commission and the European Commission, from 24 to 25 October 2007 attended, at the Headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa, the official launch of the EU-Africa Partnership for Infrastructure Development in Africa and the first meeting of the Steering Committee of the Partnership, held under the theme "Creating and Sustaining Regional Infrastructure Networks and Services in Africa". Ahead of the above events, a consultation meeting of the African party was organized on 23 October 2007 in order to effectively prepare for discussions with

the European side and to speak with only one voice. The main issues discussed at the meeting were:

- Modalities and conditionalities for obtaining financing under this Partnership;
- Appropriate procedures needed to reduce the funding bottlenecks inherent in the existing EU instruments which account for the low consumption of resources;
- Eligibility criteria for continental and regional projects;
- Duties of the Steering Committee Secretariat;
- Operating principles of the Partnership Steering Committee ; and
- ADB access to the Trust Fund.

633. The vision of the Partnership is to extend support towards trans-border, regional and national infrastructure development in the transport, water and sanitation, energy and information and communication technologies (ICT) sectors to ensure connectivity of the continent and its regions and facilitate regional integration. This Partnership is also designed to upscale investment in the above mentioned infrastructure and electricity services sectors and more effectively coordinate the measures aimed at upgrading infrastructure networks.

634. The Partnership launching activity which took place on 24 October 2007 was attended by 172 delegates representing 18 European Union Member States (31 delegates), 22 African Union Member States (33 delegates), other countries with diplomatic missions in Addis Ababa (11 delegates), the European Commission (15 delegates), the African Union Commission (19 delegates), Regional Economic Communities and specialized institutions of the African Union (16 delegates), the African Development Bank (8 delegates), bilateral and international funding institutions (22 delegates) as well as consultants and the media (13 delegates). Participants heard presentations and deliberated on implementation of the Partnership, regional and continental strategies for infrastructure development in Africa and EU – Africa Partnership in the field of energy.

635. After the day's discussion, a Declaration was adopted focusing on the following:

- EU Member States called upon to step the funding for infrastructure in Africa as part of their commitments to upscale Official Development Assistance (ODA);
- Support to EU–Africa Partnership activities for infrastructure particularly through the financial resources of Trust Fund which, in the six months of its operation, mobilized 97 million Euro from the European Community resources and from individual contributions of European Union Member States;
- Involving European development financing institutions in the activities of the infrastructure Trust Fund;
- Establishing the Partnership Steering Committee to define priorities, issue guidelines for the activities of the Partnership and exchange knowledge;

- Creation of Africa-EU Partnership on Energy to consolidate the Africa-EU dialogue on energy as well as energy security to promote large-scale investment in energy infrastructure in Africa; and
- Greater private sector involvement and enhancement of public-private Partnership for infrastructure development.

636. With respect to concrete actions in progress in favour of the African Union under the EU-Africa Partnership on infrastructure, the following could be mentioned:

- 2 million Euros financial assistance to the Infrastructure and Energy Department as part of the 55 million Euros budget assistance to the African Union Commission in 2007, for formulation of continental transport, energy and telecommunications policies and master plans;
- 10 million Euro funding in the process of approval at the European Commission as part of the 9th EDF to finance preparatory actions and concrete transport, energy and ICT projects studies with effect from 2008.

637. The first meeting of the Partnership Steering Committee held on 25 October 2005 was attended by 65 delegates representing African and European Member States as well as African and European institutions engaged in the infrastructure sector. Participants agreed on the proposed operating principles of the Steering Committee and the creation, within the Infrastructure and Energy Department of the African Union Commission, a Secretariat for the Partnership Steering Committee to which adequate resources will be allocated to ensue its smooth functioning.

638. It is important to underscore that the outcomes of the launch of this Partnership were presented to and adopted by the Second EU-Africa Summit held in Lisbon, Portugal, from 8 to 9 December 2007 in pursuance of EU-Africa Joint Strategy and related Plan of Action.

N.V. LAUNCH OF THE AFRICAN ENERGY COMMISSION (AFREC)

639. The minimum ratifications required for operationalization of AFREC, that is, fifteen (15), was attained in December 2006. The AFREC Convention has since entered into force and two meetings of AFREC technical experts have taken place in Addis Ababa, under the auspices of the African Union Commission, to examine the legal and regulatory texts for establishment and functioning of AFREC organs and prepare the official launch of the Energy Commission.

640. In accordance with the Convention establishing the Commission, the official launch of AFREC activities will take place at its Headquarters in Algiers, Algeria, from 16 to 17 February 2008. The Commission is working closely with the Algerian Government to ensure the success of this important event. The Commission in 2007 provided the funding needed for the operation of AFREC, and resources have also been set aside under the 2008 budget to support AFREC until all its structures are put in place.

O. RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE

641. During the second half of 2007, the Commission continued to work with Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the NEPAD Secretariat, development partners and other regional and international institutions to implement the African Agriculture Agenda (AAA) within the framework of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the Sirte Declaration on Agriculture and Water and existing Decisions of the AU Summit of Heads of State and Government.

642. Notable progress was made in key areas of comparative advantage that promote agriculture and rural development in Africa. In particular, the coordination role of the Commission in the implementation process of the AAA at national, regional and continental levels was consolidated with the convening of the Second CAADP-Sirte Partnership Platform and the AU-NEPAD-RECs and Lead Pillar Institutions meeting on CAADP-Sirte Implementation. Significant progress was also achieved in the implementation of the Climate Change for Development Strategy and Action Plan (Clim-dev-Africa); the CAADP Companion Document with respect to the establishment of strategic Partnerships for sustainable fisheries; acceleration of the process for regional assessments and consultations of the joint AUC-ECA-AfDB Africa-wide Land Policy Framework and Guidelines Initiative; the launching of the Pastoral Policy Initiative that aims to develop a Pastoral Policy Framework for the continent; and capacity building in quality assurance of national and regional veterinary vaccine producing laboratories. Major progress was made in resource mobilization, particularly for the eradication of tsetse and trypanosomiasis, and the control of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in Africa.

O.I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL AGENDA WITHIN THE CAADP-SIRTE FRAMEWORK

643. The Commission, in an effort to accelerate the implementation process of the African Agriculture Agenda, organized the Second AU-NEPAD-RECs and Lead Pillar Institutions and the CAADP-SIRTE Partnership Platform (PP) Meetings in September 2007 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to review progress of CAADP implementation since the last meeting in Midrand, South Africa in September 2006. The meetings were attended by representatives from five RECs (COMESA, ECCAS, ECOWAS, CEN-SAD, IGAD), development partners, donor institutions, and delegates from some Member States.

644. The AU-NEPAD-RECs meeting noted that since the last meeting in Midrand, South Africa, one CAADP Compact had been concluded by Rwanda and three other compacts signed in Malawi, Uganda and Zambia. It applauded the exemplary efforts of COMESA in facilitating implementation of the Round Table Process and called on the other RECs follow Sirte. The meeting also recognized the progress made by COMESA, ECCAS, ECOWAS and IGAD in the implementation of the CAADP pillars. The meeting further called upon Member States to honour their commitments to key AU Summit Decisions including the 10% budget allocation to agriculture and the

Abuja Declaration on Fertilizer. Furthermore, it called on all cooperating partners to fully align their programmes and activities to the CAADP Agenda.

645. The CAADP Partnership Platform meeting examined the key outcomes and recommendations of the AUC, NEPAD, RECs and Pillar Lead Institutions Meeting, discussed issues of partner engagement and coordination, and identified priority areas of action. It called for the need to: accelerate and strengthen the Country Roundtable Processes drawing on the lessons learned; hold regular CAADP-PP meetings on a six monthly basis; establish a Trust Fund to support the CAADP-Sirte process; keep CAADP-Sirte on the G8 agenda and engage Japan as well in this regard and continue dialogue and review of the delivery of commitments through the APF (2007) and TICAD (2008).

O.II. IMPLEMENTATION OF CAADP: PILAR 1: Extending the Area under Sustainable Land Management and Reliable Water Control Systems

O.II.1. Climate Change

646. Following adoption of a Decision on Climate Change by the 8th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union in January 2007, the Commission embarked on the elaboration of an implementation program for *Climate Change for Development Strategy and Action Plan*. This activity was undertaken in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and African Development Bank (AfDB) to assist Member States to develop and implement home-grown solutions to climate challenges facing the continent.

647. The Commission is working closely with UNECA, AfDB, development partners and other international organizations to develop a program implementation framework on climate change and to assist in its implementation, taking into consideration the priorities of Member States. ToRs for the development of Climate for Development in Africa Program (Clim-Dev-Africa) have been developed.

O.II.2. Green Wall for the Sahara Initiative

648. In January 2007, the Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, adopted a Decision endorsing the Green Wall for the Sahara Initiative (GWSI). During the period under review, the Commission developed a draft Strategic Action Plan for Implementation of the Initiative, and is working closely with the Member States to develop and implement their national action plans. The Commission undertook missions to Senegal, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Chad and Djibouti to promote implementation of the GWSI at national level. The UNCCD African Committee on Science and Technology at the 8th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification recommended the Initiative as one of the main priorities in the Continent and for it to be endorsed by the Committee of the Whole of the UNCCD.

O.II.3. Disaster Risk Reduction

649. The Commission has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Secretariat of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UN/ISDR) to provide a Regional Adviser for disaster risk reduction (DRR). The Adviser reported to United Nations Economic Commission for Africa from where

he now works with the Commission to implement the DRR Program as approved by the Executive Council in January 2006.

650. In collaboration with the UN/ISDR and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), which is hosted by the World Bank (WB), a mission was undertaken to ECOWAS to discuss the modalities for the preparation of a programme for the ECOWAS Policy on DRR. Similarly, the AUC and UNISDR/WB undertook a joint mission to Malawi for sensitisation and awareness creation for national planning to implement the DRR programme. The Commission, together with ISDR is preparing to work on the regional consultations on a DRR Policy/Strategy for ECCAS.

O.II.4. Trans-boundary Water Management

651. In efforts to enhance the implementation of the “Sirte Declaration on the Challenges of implementing Integrated and Sustainable Development in Agriculture and Water in Africa” the Commission continued to work closely with the African Ministers’ Council on Water (AMCOW) to strengthen existing River and Lake Basin Organizations (R/LBOs) by bringing them together, under one organizational body.

652. The Commission developed “Guidelines for Establishment of Cooperation Agreement to Support the Development of Basin Agreements” and presented it to the AMCOW 6th Ordinary Session in Brazzaville. Subsequent to this, an AMCOW Decision requested the Commission to disseminate the document to Member States to be used as reference material. The design of the layout of the Guidelines was completed and is ready for printing and dissemination to Member States. Moreover, an AMCOW Declaration noted with appreciation the progress made by the Commission.

O.II.5. African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD)

653. With regard to implementation of the African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development, significant process was registered during the period under review. The Tendering process was concluded and a company selected to provide the Technical Assistance (TA) service for the AMESD Project Monitoring Unit (PMU). The Commission hosted a High Level Consultation on the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) in October 2007. The process for the identification and employment of a coordinator under the EU Grant was initiated and the Commission identified appropriate space for the technical assistance team.

O.II.6. A Framework and Guidelines for Land Policy in Africa

654. The joint African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) consortium on Land Policy in Africa undertook a number of activities to fast-track the process of developing an Africa-wide Land Policy Framework and Guidelines. It also made progress in developing land policy benchmarks and indicators for measuring performance and progress in the implementation of key land issues at national and regional levels. The consortium continued to explore and consolidate the relationships established earlier in the year with leading national and regional

institutions including development partners dealing with land policy and land reform issues in Africa such as the International Land Coalition (ILC), United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Rockefeller Foundation, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

655. The main task accomplished was the completion of the Regional Assessments and Consultations on Land Policy in Southern Africa. From the regional assessments, a regional background discussion paper was produced documenting the key land related issues that should guide the framework. It also documented specific regional land related issues, initiatives and the lessons that should be included in the continental framework and identified the knowledge, institutional and resource gaps as well as the capacity needs. These constituted the basis of discussions during the regional consultations organized in August 2007 by the AUC-ECA-AfDB consortium in collaboration with the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) in Windhoek, Namibia. The consultative workshop brought together a wide-range of stakeholders on land issues in the region, including high-level representation from national governments, civil society, private sector, centers of excellence and development partners. The regional consultations came up with key recommendations on the revision of the regional background document, whose elements will enrich the draft continental framework and guidelines of the land policy, and a road map for the development of benchmarks and indicators as well as mechanisms for assessing performance of land processes.

656. Following completion of the Southern Africa regional process, four inception workshops were organized in collaboration with the respective Regional Economic Communities to begin a similar process in the Central, East, North and West African regions. Regional assessments were completed for East and West Africa and are on-going for Central and North Africa, in preparation for the regional consultations that will begin in January and February 2008 in East and West Africa respectively.

O.II.7. Promotion of Sustainable Agricultural Farming Systems to Combat Desertification in Africa

657. Consistent with its mandate to advocate, sensitise and coordinate multi-country continental initiatives the Commission, through its technical office, SAFGRAD, prepared a working document spelling its vision, relevance and strategies to serve as a forum for agricultural and rural development in semi-arid areas. A consultative workshop was organized under the theme '*Partnership for Sustainable Development of Rural Livelihoods in Semi-Arid Areas*' and attended by representatives of RECs, regional and sub-regional agricultural research for development organizations, international agricultural research centres, development partners and experts. A comprehensive strategy for addressing crucial issues to promote livelihood processes in semi-arid areas of Africa was developed along with a set of relevant recommendations for consideration by the Commission's decision-making bodies.

O.II.8. Development of the Fouta Djallon Highlands (FDH) Natural Resources Monitoring Tools

658. The Commission embarked on a programme to establish the “Regional Fouta Djallon Natural Resources Observatory” that will assess, evaluate, and monitor changes in the status of natural resources in the Fouta Djallon Highlands.

(g) Studies and Second Meeting of Experts for the Setting-up of the Regional Observatory for Monitoring Natural Resources in the Fouta Djallon Highlands

659. A draft Action Plan for the establishment of the Regional Observatory was finalized by the AU Coordination Office based on the results of the First Expert Meeting held at the end of 2006 and a review of existing capacities. The plan outlined the mechanisms to be put in place in order to ensure an effective cooperation of all actors in the collection and processing of information related to the state of natural resources and management. An institutional review of key national (ministries) and regional institutions (NBA, OMVG, OMVS) including regional programmes in the field of natural resources was completed by a consultant. The review study also included identification of strategies for networking of the various monitoring systems in the sub-region. The draft Action Plan for the establishment of the Regional Observatory and the report of the institutional review was submitted for validation at a Second expert meeting in December 2007.

(h) Development and dissemination of land resources management policies and practices including livestock

660. The objective of the sub-programme is to gather, take inventory of and disseminate necessary information on sustainable development of the Fouta Djallon Highlands to the relevant institutions, stakeholders and actors.

(i) Creation of a regional framework for cooperation and synergy:

661. A functional regional consultative framework that regroups all programmes and projects within the Fouta Djallon Highlands was formalized. All the major actors were identified and information about their programmes obtained. Discussions were held with major development partners to sensitise and convince them to fully collaborate and participate in the process. A first meeting of all programmes and projects operating in the FDH was held in December 2007.

(j) Enhancing Regional Cooperation in the Fouta Djallon Highlands

662. The main objective of this initiative is to establish the legal and institutional instruments for regional cooperation that will strengthen the countries’ commitment to sustainable land management of the Fouta Djallon Highlands, particularly with the aim of preserving its water resources. The affirmation of the international character of Fouta Djallon Highlands will facilitate the resource mobilization and intervention coordination in the region.

663. A Regional Consultative Committee (RCC) meeting was held in June 2007 and attended by focal persons from all Member countries (Gambia, Guinea, Guinea

Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Sierra Leone), representatives of ECOWAS, CILSS, River Basin Organisations (Niger Basin Authority - River Senegal Organization - OMVS, River Gambia Organization), UNEP, FAO and the African Union including several officials from National Technical Departments, NGOs and the media from the Guinea (country hosting the meeting). The meeting examined the appraisal documents of the Fouta Djallon Highlands Integrated Natural Resources Management Project and made recommendations and suggestions for their finalization by the Coordination Office and FAO.

664. A regional consultant was recruited with support from the Development Law Services of FAO and a Norwegian Trust Fund visited all Member States (The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Sierra Leone) to identify ways to broaden and refine the existing draft of the Legal and Institutional Frame-work convention. The consultant discussed with Government officials the available draft Framework Convention to determine if its scope could be expanded. This was reviewed, revised and published in English and French.

(k) Resource mobilization

665. Following recommendations of a Ministerial Conference, the African Union Coordination Office took the initiative, in collaboration with Member States and support from UNEP and FAO, to design a Global Environment Facility (GEF) project in support of the Fouta Djallon Programme. The "Fouta Djallon Natural Resources Integrated Management project " was developed and submitted to GEF Council that accepted to finance it to the tune of 11 millions dollars over two phases covering a period of 10 years.

666. The appraisal documents of the project were completed following the meeting of the Regional Consultative Committee held in Conakry and various consultations between the AU Coordination Office, UNEP and FAO. The finalized documents were submitted to GEF by UNEP at the end of 2007.

O.III. IMPLEMENTATION OF CAADP: PILLAR 2: Improving Infrastructure and Trade-related Capacities for Market Access

O.III.1. African Common Market for Food Products

667. One of the commitments made during the AU Extra Ordinary Summit on Agriculture and Water held in Sirte, Libya, in February 2004 was the immediate establishment of the African Common Market for agricultural products. The Commission has been working in collaboration with the FAO on a project with the following objectives: (i) to carry out background analyses on the barriers to trade on basic food products at both the continent-wide and regional levels; (ii) using the results of the background analysis, to prepare a Strategy and an Action Plan on the formation of a common market for basic food products. The main outputs of this project are: (i) a Strategy for forming an African common market for basic food products; (ii) an Action Plan for forming the common market for basic food products; and (iii) A Synthesis Report of the background analysis. The studies were completed in September 2007 and a high-level stakeholder workshop convened in December 2007 in Addis Ababa to validate the project recommendations.

O.IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF CAADP: PILLAR 3: Increasing Food Supply and Reducing Hunger

O.IV.1. African Seed and Biotechnology Programme

668. The 8th Ordinary Assembly of the African Union which took place in Addis Ababa, in January 2007, endorsed the African Seed and Biotechnology Programme (ASBP) as a strategic framework for the development of the seed sector in Africa and further requested the Commission to establish the necessary institutional arrangements to coordinate the effective implementation of the ASBP at the national, regional and continental levels.

669. In July 2007, funds for the take off of the Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) on ASBP were released by the FAO. This was followed by a review of the TCP budget and development of Draft project profiles. In August 2007, ASBP Pamphlets were produced and printed for dissemination to relevant stakeholders. From August 2007 to November 2007, the Commission, with the financial support of the FAO, carried out sensitization missions to the RECS on the ASBP. These missions were necessary for familiarizing the RECs with the goals, objectives and activities of the ASBP, the identification of an ASBP focal point in each REC and further discussion on roles and responsibilities of the RECs in implementation of the ASBP at Regional level. Further discussions on the draft project profiles were also carried out with the RECs.

O.IV.2. Implementation of the Abuja Declaration on Fertilizer for African Green Revolution

670. The African Fertilizer Summit that took place during the African Union Special Summit of the Heads of State and Government in June 2006 adopted the Abuja Declaration on fertilizer for the African Green Revolution. As a follow up to the implementation of this decision, country and regional fertilizer questionnaires were prepared by NEPAD and reviewed by AfDB and the Commission with technical input from the International Fertilizer Development Cooperation (IFDC) for completion by Ministries of Agriculture. Two semi-annual reports on progress made towards the implementation of this decision at country and regional levels were prepared by NEPAD and submitted to the Commission in October 2007. This report has also been distributed to the Member States, RECs and other relevant stakeholders.

671. One of the decisions adopted during the fertilizer summit requested the RECs to develop regional fertilizer strategies. As a follow up towards the implementation of this decision, the Commission and NEPAD undertook joint missions to the RECs in November and December 2007 to discuss the outcome of the Second Semi-Annual progress report on the implementation of this decision and also to assist the RECs develop their regional fertilizer strategies.

O.IV.3. African Position on Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in Agriculture and Food Security

672. A workshop on biotechnology was organized and attended by 56 participants from 25 countries and 16 organizations to discuss a paper on GMOs. The need for a

departmental committee on issues of GMOs and bio-safety was recommended and the committee was approved by the Chairperson in October 2007. Following the recommendations of the experts meeting, a task force composed of relevant stakeholders and eminent scientists, was organized.

O.IV.4. Framework for African Food Security

673. In May 2007, an expert reference group meeting was held to define the process for developing a framework for African Food Security under CAADP Pillar 3. The draft framework was developed between July and September 2007 and presented to various stakeholders including RECs for further inputs prior to finalization and presentation to the meeting of the Conference of African Ministers of Agriculture.

674. The Framework for African Food Security (FAFS) addresses the challenges of CAADP Pillar III and prioritizes strategies and responses to these challenges to assist decision-makers in finding best practice solutions to addressing hunger and malnutrition in ways that support the CAADP agenda. This pillar specifically targets the chronically food insecure and those affected by emergencies and crises. The pillar also seeks to ensure that the policies and strategies of the other pillars support efforts to reduce and/or eradicate hunger and malnutrition.

O.IV.5. Coordination of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Systems (SPS) in Africa

675. An effective system to monitor food safety in Africa was established during the period under review. Linkages for Capacity Building in Sanitary and Phytosanitary systems in Africa were also established with various development partners. This enabled some countries to access and share critical information on pests. The East African program received support from USAID-APHIS for projects in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania as well as Zambia where all countries have been provided with servers. The need to extend this work to all COMESA and ASARECA (Association of Researchers in Eastern and Central Africa) countries including Rwanda and Burundi is being explored. Like the East African Region, and with the aim of advancing to a Plant Bio-security system for West Africa, a quarantine pest-listing workshop was organized in November 2007 in Bamako, Mali.

O.IV.6. Food safety systems in Africa

676. In Africa, few countries have sufficient database on pests. Through collaboration with the European Union and USAID, some African countries were facilitated to access and share critical pest information.

O.IV.7. Abuja Summit on Food Security Action Plan

677. The Abuja Summit on Food Security adopted a number of resolutions and requested the Commission and NEPAD to develop an action plan for their implementation. The Commission and NEPAD, in collaboration with the International Technical Committee (ITC) which was instrumental in planning the Summit, developed an implementation Matrix in May 2007. The ITC is composed of the AUC, NEPAD, FAO, WFP, UNECA, IFPRI and the Government of Nigeria. The committee

met in October and November 2007 to finalize the Matrix and the report for presentation to the Conference of African Ministers of Agriculture in March 2008.

O.IV.8. Establishment of an African Farmers' Forum (AFAFO)

678. Establishing a forum to mobilize the collective strengths and capabilities of small to medium scale farmers and promote and strengthen their capacity including that of women and youths and their organizations is a key objective of the Commission. This is in line with promoting regional integration in Africa through development of a networking platform of farmers' organizations that allows farmers across Africa to interact through meetings, workshops, bulletins, media and other means so as to build a common understanding of their problems and resolves in order to reduce hunger and poverty in Africa. One of the activities to establish the forum is to undertake an inventory and assessment of the status of national and regional farmers' organizations, cooperatives and their networks. An announcement was made to hire consultants to undertake this assignment. A total of twenty (20) applications were received and short-listed. Letters of appointment will be issued by the Commission in due course.

O.V. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CAADP COMPANION DOCUMENT

O.V.1. Fisheries Access Agreements

679. A TCP was to reinforce institutional capacity for a qualitative improvement of fisheries access agreements signed between AU Member States and their foreign partners. The objectives of the assistance are to: Conduct a review of current fisheries access agreements among African countries and between African countries and foreign countries/institutions especially with respect to access and Partnership agreements; Conduct an analysis of these fisheries agreements and highlight the challenges faced by African countries in negotiating agreements that would reflect their rights and interests; and Develop a strategy/plan of action to improve the negotiation skills/capacity of African countries to better deal with fisheries access agreements related to the operation of foreign distant water fishing fleets.

680. A consultant was hired to consult with several Member States and Regional Fisheries Bodies in West Africa, Southern Africa and East Africa to obtain their views and concerns on Fisheries Access Agreements. The consultant produced a report on Fisheries Access Agreements and an Action Plan that the Commission could implement. Thereafter, a Regional Workshop on Fisheries Access Agreements, organized by the Commission, in collaboration with FAO, was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in July 2007 to validate the report and action plan. The Workshop was attended by 32 participants from Gabon, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Namibia, Kenya, Senegal, Seychelles, Tanzania, AUC, FAO, Sub-Regional Fisheries Commission (SRFC) of West Africa, West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and the African Development Bank (ADB). One of the immediate recommendations for the Commission to implement was to develop a template for Fisheries Access Agreements that can be used Member States.

O.V.2. Strategic Partnership for a Sustainable Fisheries Investment Fund in the Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) of Africa

681. The Strategic Partnership is a new initiative to make additional financing from the GEF and other partners available to coastal countries in Africa to support sustainable marine fisheries. The initiative includes: (i) the Sustainable Fisheries Investment Fund, which is a financing mechanism to make available US\$60 million in GEF grants over the next 10 years to co-finance country-level projects aimed at sustainable marine fisheries, and (ii) the Strategic Partnership in the form of a Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) of stakeholders, donors, regional organizations, Large Marine Ecosystems (LME) Programs, etc., led by the African Union to advise the Investment Fund and help exchange lessons learned and promote sustainable fisheries issues within the region. The Strategic Partnership was launched in 2006 with negotiations ongoing until recently. In July 2007 the post of RAC Coordinator was advertised in Sept 2007. The AUC and World Bank signed a Grant Agreement of USD 650,000 as for the running of the RAC secretariat.

O.VI. IMPLEMENTATION OF CAADP: PILLAR 4: Agricultural Research, Technology Dissemination and Adoption

O.VI.1. Improving Farm Productivity and Rural Incomes through Biological Control of Insects

682. During the period under review, SAFGRAD developed a Project Document on how it could assist Burkina Faso to install an insectarium facility equipped with cold rooms and a laboratory destined to eliminate parasites; provide advisory service to producers to enhance and facilitate their access to improved technologies, strengthen the value-chain through support of actors who play the role of interface between those who promote increased production and markets; and promote regional harmonization. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with project partners in Burkina Faso. Key institutional partners from the sub-region and resource persons were also identified.

O.VI.2. The African Striga Research and Control Programme for Enhancing Food Security through Control of Parasitic Weeds in Africa's Crop Production

683. During the period under review, SAFGRAD continued to deepen its impact in participating countries in West and Central Africa as well as expand program activities to the Southern and Eastern African regions. SAFGRAD facilitated mutual and experiential learning opportunities among scientists from various countries working on Striga management and control by providing a regular forum for them to exchange views, experiences, aspirations and challenges.

684. Consistent with its capacity-strengthening role, SAFGRAD developed a Training Module for Participatory Striga Management in Africa. An assessment of the status of Striga Research and Control in Africa was also undertaken covering the existing regional and sub-regional Striga control and management initiatives, geographical coverage, institutional networks, approaches used and outcomes and mechanisms of cooperation.

685. A Consortium of Actors on Striga control and management was initiated and a consultative workshop organized with potential partner institutions in Striga control & management. The consultative meeting recommended that SAFGRAD and the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) play a lead role in mapping out Striga infestation areas in Africa, define priority research on critical areas, and deploy proven technologies to control it. SAFGRAD and AATF are currently working on that recommendation.

O.VI.3. Enhancing Rainwater and Nutrient Use Efficiency for Improved Crop Production, Farm Income and Rural Livelihood;

686. SAFGRAD continued to collaborate with its partners and stakeholders in documenting and analyzing the progress of the first phase of the pilot project in the Volta Basin involving Burkina Faso and Ghana, with a view to jointly formulating effective dissemination mechanisms and approaches for scaling up and scaling out beyond semi-arid areas of the Volta-Basin. It also contributed to capacity strengthening of key actors (National Agricultural Research Systems (NARS), farmers, CSOs) through organization of a series of training workshops for experiential learning and effectiveness. SAFGRAD began the process of developing a programme document that will make an inventory of existing sub-regional and regional initiatives, salient features, geographic distributions, approaches used, institutions involved, outcomes achieved; analyse strengths and weaknesses; and identify and develop strategic areas to be addressed as well as outline options and mechanisms for effectiveness in addressing the strategic issues.

O.VII. SPECIALIZED PROGRAMMES

O.VII.1. PATTEC (Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign)

687. The Commission continued during the period under review, to drum up action and ensure that the activities necessary for the elimination of tsetse and trypanosomiasis are initiated and sustained. This includes development of tsetse and trypanosomiasis eradication projects as well training to generate the necessary technical capacity needed to execute activities in the eradication of trypanosomiasis. The Commission was also engaged in efforts aimed at increasing awareness about the purpose of the PATTEC initiative and in mobilizing resources in support of Africa's war against trypanosomiasis.

688. Since the adoption of the Summit decision to embark on a Pan African Tsetse & Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign (PATTEC) in July 2000, a number of achievements have been recorded towards the implementation of the decision: A continental Plan of Action for implementing the objectives of PATTEC was developed and adopted by affected countries. A PATTEC Coordination Office was incorporated in the structure of the AU Commission. In recognition of the increasing scope and activities in the role and mandate of the Commission in the implementation of PATTEC, the Summit in Khartoum adopted a decision authorizing the Commission to effect the necessary changes in the structure of the PATTEC Coordination Office in response to its increasing responsibilities.

689. The Commission raised USD70 million (in soft loans and grants) from the African Development Bank to support PATTEC activities in 6 countries. A further USD360 million in pledges and expressed commitment in a special donors' conference on PATTEC jointly organised by the Commission and the ADB in Addis Ababa in February 2007 was secured. Virtually, all the resources were pledged by affected countries, indicating that many countries now realise the seriousness of trypanosomiasis as a health, development and productivity constraint and are determined to eradicate it.

690. The African Development Bank pledged US\$75 million to support a second group of countries in the next phase of the ADB-supported PATTEC programme. The World Health Organization (WHO) contributed a total of USD90,000 to support the Commission's work in the development and dissemination of publicity and public information materials. The PATTEC Coordination Office has been engaged in efforts to mobilise resources on behalf of affected Member States in support of the implementation of PATTEC and has engaged dialogue with BADEA, the Bill and Melinda Gates, World Health Organization, International Atomic Energy Agency and Islamic Development Bank, all of which have indicated willingness to support PATTEC and invited the Commission for further discussions.

691. Botswana and Namibia successfully achieved tsetse and trypanosomiasis eradication and are now tsetse and trypanosomiasis-free. Countries in the CEMAC region developed a comprehensive plan for the eradication of tsetse and trypanosomiasis. The Commission mediated over discussions between several groups of countries to develop modalities of cooperation in joint tsetse and trypanosomiasis eradication in areas of a common tsetse infestation, including Sudan and Ethiopia; Angola, Botswana, Namibia and Zambia; Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania; Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad and Nigeria; Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria and Togo; Mozambique and South Africa; Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

692. The Commission carried out various supportive functions, including organizing training courses; development of project proposals for identified project areas; preparation and dissemination of publicity and public information materials; consultations with affected countries and partners to remind them about their individual and collective obligations to the implementation of PATTEC and mobilize action; and monitoring and evaluation of progress in the execution of PATTEC projects. Discussions were engaged with Regional Economic Communities (ECOWAS, COMESA, SADC, CEMAC and EAC) on the development of an enduring framework through which cooperation between the Commission and RECs in the promotion, support and coordination of PATTEC activities can be realized.

O.VII.2. AU-IBAR (Inter African Bureau for Animal Resources)

693. As a specialized technical organ of the African Union, AU-IBAR's portfolio covers all aspects of Animal Resource development on the continent. In accordance with the Commission's vision and in harmony with the mandate of the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture, AU-IBAR carries out its work through the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other relevant institutions in Member States. The ultimate goal is poverty alleviation and improvement of food security, especially

among the rural poor. The key activities undertaken during the period under review are as follows:

O.VII.3. Dry Land Livestock Wildlife Environment Project (DLWEIP)

694. This project assisted communities to develop Natural Resource Management Plans with zoning of areas devoted to conservation, settlement and grazing in its pilot sites (Burkina Faso and Kenya) and reseeded degraded lands. People from pastoralist communities were also trained on prevention of conflicts related to the use of natural resources, networking and lobbying. The project facilitated awareness among transhumant livestock owners on legislation at national and sub-regional levels in relation to cross border livestock movements. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) approved, under the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF), a project on the "*Development and strengthening of mechanisms for solving conflicts on shared natural resources in the Karamajong ecosystems in East Africa*" to be implemented by AU-IBAR.

O.VII.4. North Eastern Pastoral Development Program (NEPDP)

695. This project facilitated private and public sector players in pastoral areas by providing essential services to open up markets for pastoral livestock and livestock products. Improved market access provided opportunities for increasing household incomes and food security. This was achieved through institutional support, policy advocacy, provision of financial and non-financial services and provision of disease surveillance and animal health services. The project made significant progress with visible gains in the capacities of the target institutions and concomitant gains in household incomes. It also generated lessons that can be scaled-up to other pastoral areas in the region.

O.VII.5. Participation of African Nations in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standard-setting Organizations (PAN-SPSO)

696. A €3.86 million project was agreed with the EU Commission and awaited signature before December 2007. With the support of RECs, the ACP Secretariat authorized AU IBAR to implement this project in Partnership with AU-IAPSC (Yaoundé) which aims to reduce poverty and enhance food security in Africa through better access to international trade and markets. It will also facilitate the effective participation of Member States to meet the requirements of international standards setting organizations and improve capacity building in the implementation of food safety standards and measures. In this regard, the project also covers aspects of CAADP pillar 3.

O.VII.6. Somali Livestock Certification Program (SOLICEP)

697. AU-IBAR was approached by the European Commission in June 2007 to assist a devastated Somalia by establishing a credible livestock certification system which will significantly contribute to the livelihood of the Somali livestock keepers through strengthening animal exports. IBAR successfully completed the €2.8 million project proposal, which has been accepted by the EC for funding.

O.VII.7 Support Programme for Integrated National Action Plans (SPINAP)

698. A lot of effort was made during the period under review to control the highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) on the continent. The €22.5 million SPINAP project was signed between AU- IBAR and the EU on 30th April 2007 for a three-year period and covers 47 ACP countries. It addresses financial gaps and the needs of individual country National Action Plans for HPAI control. It seeks to contribute to the reduction of the socio economic impact of avian and human influenza (AHI) and the potential loss of human lives. It will also strengthen national capacities to prevent and control AHI.

699. Currently well into its inception phase, it has received a lot of support from participating countries. Information dissemination to policy and implementation level personnel in all 47 countries, including a standardized requesting template to be used for acquisition of funds has been done. A funding allocation was also made so that each country has a rough guide as to what resources can be allocated to it. All the above was adopted and endorsed by the first steering committee meeting, chaired by the Director of Rural Economy and Agriculture, held with all members and stakeholders at AU – HQ in Addis Ababa in September 2007. Countries have started the process of applying for the funds, which are currently at AU-IBAR, and recruitment of staff for the project is underway.

O.VII.8. Somali Ecosystem Rinderpest Eradication Coordination Unit (SERECU)

700. This project is concerned with the final eradication of the dreaded Rinderpest disease from Africa. The period under review is part of the bridging phase between SERECU I (ended February 2007) and SERECU II – to start in 2008. The limited activities undertaken during this phase were funded by FAO through a Letter of Agreement (LoA) and include: A stakeholders workshop to review the progress made in the verification of freedom, including the preparation of SERECU II Project proposal; a global rinderpest eradication programme (GREP) consultative meeting during which a way forward was drawn to ensure that all African countries attain rinderpest freedom by 2010; and follow-up investigations into sero-positive sites in Somalia to ascertain the rinderpest status in these areas.

O.VI.9. International Scientific Council for Trypanosomiasis and Control (ISCTRC)

701. The Council held its 32nd Executive Committee Meeting in September and the statutory biennial 29th Conference in October 2007 in Luanda and Angola respectively. The Committee comprised of African Region country representatives, FAO, IAEA, WHO, PAAT, ILRI, CIRDES, ICIPE, PAAT and PATTEC, refined and endorsed the Conference programme reviewed progress over the last two years and made recommendations to strengthen institutions, including ITC in The Gambia. The conference was attended by over 200 scientists from 34 countries (26 of them from Africa) and 14 international organizations.

O.VII.10. Multi-institutional Collaboration

702. In collaboration with ILRI, CDC, FAO, OVI and FAO/OIE Reference Laboratories, AU-IBAR organized advanced laboratory training courses in the diagnosis of highly pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). The objective is to have a network of laboratories in Africa, capable of confirmatory diagnosis of HPAI as one of the crucial pillars of implementing national integrated action plans for the prevention and control of HPAI. Collaborative arrangements were also made with USAID and ILRI to undertake Participatory Epidemiology and Participatory Disease Surveillance on HPAI in Africa. An FAO team was affiliated to AU-IBAR in Partnership in the establishment of the East African Regional Animal Health desk.

O.VII.11. The ALIVE Partnership

703. International institutions such as the FAO, the OIE, ILRI and others are associated with IBAR since 2005 by a Partnership agreement within the ALIVE Platform. Transfer of the Chairmanship of the Executive Committee to AU/IBAR was completed in September 2007 during the 10th Session of the Executive Committee and 3rd General Assembly of the ALIVE Partnership. This transfer was the second stage in the process planned for the AU to take over ownership of the ALIVE Governance, a process which started in June 2005 when the chairmanship of the General Assembly, the policy-making organ of the Partnership, was handed over to the AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture.

O.VII.12. Animal Health & Production Bulletin

704. A special edition of the “Bulletin of Animal health and Production in Africa” dedicated to Avian Influenza was published during the period under review.

O.VII.13. Pastoral policy initiative: A policy framework on pastoralism in Africa

705. The Commission is cognizant of the plight and potential of pastoral people in Africa. To address the problems of pastoral communities, a Pastoral Policy Initiative was launched to develop a Policy Framework on Pastoralism in Africa that will secure and protect the lives, livelihoods and rights of pastoralist people and their communities. The framework will provide the basis for continental commitment to the political, social, and economic development of pastoral communities. In Partnership with UN OCHA-PCI, an inception workshop was organized in July 2007 in Isiolo, Kenya. The workshop brought together participants from different African pastoralism backgrounds: members of African governments, leaders of pastoralist communities, officials of Regional Economic Communities, research institutes, bilateral organizations and nongovernmental organizations. A specialist task force was formed, and regional assessments and consultations are the next steps. The policy framework will then be submitted for further consideration and adoption by the appropriate organs of the AU.

O.VII.14. Climate Change on Livestock in Africa

706. AU-IBAR has been involved in the preparation of an international conference on the implications of climate change for agricultural productions systems in ACP

countries to be organized next year by Cooperation Technical Agreement (CTA). A joint proposal with ILRI on “Supporting the vulnerable: Increasing the adaptive capacity of agro-pastoralists to climatic change in West and Southern Africa using a trans disciplinary research approach” was prepared and submitted to BMZ for a 3 year project 2008 - 2010.

O.VII.15. AU-IAPSC (Inter African Phyto-sanitary Council)

707. The Inter African Phytosanitary Council is mandated by AU Member States to ensure coordination in the prevention, emergency preparedness and control of diseases and pests of plants and plant products. In collaboration with National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPO’s), IAPSC assists Member States to adopt International Standards for Phyto-sanitary Measures; enhance human resource capacities in phyto-sanitary measures; develop modules in the areas of phyto-sanitary legislation, pest diagnostic capabilities, pest risk analysis, surveillance, pest free areas, places and sites of production, pest reporting and eradication, inspection systems at points of entry and exit, and export certification; and promote market access through adoption of international standards for phyto-sanitary measures.

708. The major challenge for the IAPSC office during the period under review was the progressive implementation of the Common African Plant Protection Strategy, intended to ensure sustainable food and feed production, improved market access and sustainable environment and natural resource protection; and capacity development to ensure compliance with World Trade Organization-SPS and ISPM measures. The activities planned and implemented by IAPSC during the period under review were as follows:

(l) Strengthening Plant Quarantine Capacities of AU Member States

709. Following the successful implementation of three training workshops in regional economic Communities (SADC, COMESA and ECCAS), efforts were geared towards organizing similar capacity development workshops in the ECOWAS and UMA regions to assist traders and local producers obtain export certification and facilitate export produce in accordance with WTO requirements. These workshops have helped to enhance plant health in the different sub-regions of the continent regarding interception and routine sampling of plants and plant products. IAPSC also established and consolidated its relations with NPPO focal points from all over the continent.

(m) Control of Trans-boundary Pests in Africa: The Case of Grain-eating Birds (*Quelea* spp)

710. A programme aimed at promoting more accessible techniques and methods of controlling grain-eating birds was conceived within the framework of the consolidation of the plant protection bodies of AU Member States. The preliminary phase (identification of countries affected by *quelea* birds) was also completed. Countries identified as high risk zones of *Quelea* infestation included Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Gambia, Senegal, Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, Namibia, Botswana, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Sudan.

(n) Emergency Assistance for Red Locust Control

711. In August 2007 and at the request of the International Red Locust Control Organization for Central and Southern Africa (IRLCO-CSA), IAPSC provided logistical support to the special red locust control operation. Using strategic application of bio-pesticides in the Malagarasi Basin, the Iku-Katavi Plains and in South Rukwa, IAPSC was able to provide significant relief from the locust invasion.

(o) Partnership Building and International Collaboration

712. IAPSC made significant moves to strengthen relations with national and international partners. Partnership agreements were initiated between IAPSC and the Crop Life Cameroon and HYDRAC (Hydrocarbons, Analyses and Controls). Preparations of joint information dissemination materials are underway as a tool to enhance public awareness of the tasks of IAPSC and Crop Life Cameroon as well as joint organisation of training workshops. Discussions with HYDRAC are at an advanced stage for the establishment of two reference laboratories for residue analyses and formulation of pesticides.

(p) Harmonization of Desert Locust Control in the Western Region

713. Within the context of a global control of locust in West Africa, a memorandum was addressed to the Ministers in charge of plant protection of the countries concerned and those at risk proposing the establishment of an **Inter-State Desert Locust Control Organization for the Western Region (IDLCO-WR)**. Member States in West Africa were encouraged to support the initiative to control Desert Locust invasion.

(q) Participation of African Nations in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards-setting organizations (PAN-SPSO)

714. The goal of the PAN-SPSO project is to contribute to the reduction of poverty and enhanced food security in Africa through greater access for agricultural products from African countries to international markets. As a joint project involving AU-IBAR, IAPSC began implementation of the plant health aspects of the project.

O.VII.16. PANVAC (Pan-African Veterinary Vaccine Center)

715. PANVAC continued to pursue its mission to promote the availability of safe, effective and affordable veterinary vaccines, facilitate the development and introduction of improved or new vaccines, and strengthening Africa's capacity in veterinary vaccine development, production and quality assurance. Work was focused on international independent quality control of Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP) from the Cameroon, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger and Botswana; Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) from Niger and Botswana and Newcastle Disease from Mali. The tender process to refurbish the reagents production laboratory was completed and a contractor selected for the identified work. PANVAC also standardized and harmonized quality control techniques in Africa, maintained the repository of biologicals and submitted cell lines and vaccines seeds to national veterinary laboratories of Mali, Cameroon, Senegal, Nigeria and Kenya. A training course on harmonization of quality control techniques was held in Debre Zeit,

Ethiopia from 19 to 30 November 2007. An agreement was reached between PANVAC and the Injectable Business Unit in France to facilitate the production of the first experimental batch of the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza vaccine in Egypt and to jointly organize in 2008, a workshop on the use of new adjuvants for the production of inactivated vaccines.

716. To build capacity, PANVAC organized three training courses on (i) Implementation of Quality Assurance in Veterinary vaccine producing Laboratories (22 to 26 October 2007) in Nairobi (Kenya) for managers of vaccine producing laboratories in Cameroon, Niger, Mali, Ethiopia, Botswana, Kenya, Mozambique, Zambia, Nigeria, Egypt and Chad; (ii) Harmonization of Quality Control of Veterinary vaccines (CBPP and PPR) from (19 to 30 November 2007) in Debre Zeit (Ethiopia) for officers in charge of vaccine producing laboratories in Cameroon, Niger, Mali, Ethiopia, Botswana, Kenya, Mozambique, Zambia, Nigeria, Chad and Zimbabwe; and (iii) Maintenance and calibration of laboratory equipment from (17 to 21 December 2007) in Debre Zeit (Ethiopia) for managers of vaccine producing laboratories in Cameroon, Niger, Mali, Ethiopia, Botswana, Kenya, Mozambique, Zambia, Nigeria, Egypt and Chad. PANVAC also provided technical advice to the Department of Livestock of West African Economic and Monetary Union and veterinary laboratory of Kabul (Afghanistan).

717. In July 2007, PANVAC organized the Fourth Pan African Meeting of Directors of National Veterinary Vaccine Laboratories in Pretoria (South Africa) attended by Directors and Representatives from 13 veterinary vaccine laboratories (Botswana, Cameroon, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Zambia) as well as by representatives of international organizations. A workshop was jointly organized by PANVAC, FAO and AU-IBAR on the final eradication of Rinderpest in Africa in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) from 10 to 12 December 2007. The workshop was attended by Directors of Veterinary Services from Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gambia, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria and Somalia.

718. PANVAC worked to strengthen relations with international technical organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the FAO, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), the OIE reference laboratories in France and UK and the International Laboratory for Molecular Biology (USA) and the recently opened Regional Animal Health Centre (RAHC).

P. ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

719. During the period under review, the Commission carried out a series of activities comprising studies, meetings organization, participation in meetings of partner institutions and training in integration matters.

P.I. SECOND CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN MINISTERS OF INTEGRATION

720. African Ministers of Integration held their Second Conference in Kigali, Rwanda, from 26 to 27 July 2007. The Conference was preceded, on 24 – 25 July 2007, by a meeting of Experts which, in particular, examined a study on rationalization of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) prepared and presented by the Commission.

721. The study was conducted on the basis of available information and consultations with Member States and the RECs. As all Member States had not responded to the questionnaire transmitted to them by the Commission, pursuant to the study, and to enable the RECs to eventually enrich the study, it was recommended that it be transmitted to Member States which, after consultation with their private sector, the civil society and other stakeholders, would forward the comments to the Commission. Given the fact that no reaction was received from the RECs, the Commission expects Member States to come up with comments for use in fine-tuning the study.

722. The Ministerial meeting also discussed the following thematic issues:

P.I.1. Can Africa take up the challenge of its economic and political integration? Can the European example serve as a model?

723. While recognizing that the European example, given its success, is a source of inspiration, the meeting was of the view that Africa should develop its own integration model within the framework of the African Union, because the challenges faced by the continent are different from those confronting Europe; and in this regard, it was needful to support the activities of the RECs in the formulation of common policies.

P.I.2. Creation of a Common Market in Africa: results obtained, challenges to be addressed and future prospects (the case of COMESA)

724. Deliberations focused on infrastructure development, establishment of appropriate project funding mechanisms, diversification of production to service the market arising from integration, enhancing the capacities of regional and continental integration structures, free movement of goods, as well as coordination and harmonization of the programmes and activities of the RECs.

P.I.3. Inter-State mobility of production factors: a catalyzer of or obstacle to regional integration?

725. The meeting advocated that the Commission, in concert with UNECA and ADB, should work with Member States to harmonize trade laws and financial legislations to promote free movement of capital; take appropriate measures to speed up the process of creating Pan-African Securities Exchange in order to foster financial resource mobilization in the continent. The meeting further requested Member States to create a conducive climate for mobility of production factors and to establish mechanisms to combat criminal activities. It also requested the RECs, in

collaboration with Member States, to harmonize the laws on immigration with a view to promoting free movement of persons.

P.II. SECOND EDITION OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME ON INTEGRATION

726. Pursuant to human capacity-building in the RECs and Member States, the Commission organized the second edition of the training on regional integration in close collaboration with the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) and the Arab Bank for Development in Africa (BADEA) which financed the training. English and French sessions of the training took place from 13 August to 7 September, and from 22 October to 16 November 2007, respectively, at IDEP Headquarters in Senegal. The major training modules are as follows:

- economic integration: conceptual and theoretical issues and Pan-African Integration;
- multinational programme as part of regional integration;
- regionalism in the context of global economy;
- common problems of African regionalism;
- monetary cooperation and African economic integration;
- building capacities for African economic integration;
- industrial policies and strategies in the context of regional integration; and
- Towards African Economic Community/African Union.

727. The trainees drawn from the AU Commission, the RECs, Member States and the private sector expressed their satisfaction at the course content, the excellent organization of the training and the professionalism with which the lecturers dispensed their courses.

P.III. THIRTEENTH SUMMIT OF THE HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT OF THE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY OF CENTRAL AFRICAN STATES (ECCAS)

728. At the invitation of the current Chairperson of the Economic Community of Central African States, President Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo, the African Union Commission participated in the meeting of the consultative commission, the Council of Ministers and the Thirteenth Ordinary Session of the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of ECCAS which took place in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, from 22 to 30 October 2007.

729. The key issues discussed by the Summit were:

P.III.1. Strategic Vision of ECCAS

730. The ECCAS General Secretariat submitted a project on its strategic vision on integration of the region together with an 18 – year activity programme achievable by the year 2025. The activities in question are structured around 15 strategic areas and categorized as short, medium and long term programmes covering all the security and integrating projects and programmes for the central Africa region. In view of the stakes available in the region and the human and financial capacity of the

General Secretariat, the Summit approved three priority activity areas to be implemented by the year 2015:

a) Peace, Security and Stability:

731. Following in the footsteps of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, ECCAS is endowed with an organ known as “Peace and Security Council of Central Africa” (COPAX) built on two major pillars, namely: Multinational Force of Central Africa (FOMAC) and the Early Warning Mechanism of Central Africa (MARAC). FOMAC which has a staff headquarters also served as the regional standby brigade (BRA), regional unit of the African Standby force (FAA) as advocated by the African Union. As for MARAC, this structure is designed to furnish to the ECCAS policy organs necessary information and analysis for crisis management and conflict prevention.

b) Large-scale infrastructure, particularly transport

732. In view of the fact that free movement of persons, goods, services and capital is a fundamental parameter of integration, it is absolutely necessary to fast track implementation of the consensual transport master plan in Central Africa (PDCT-AC) through, among other things, harmonization of national regulations, mobilization of resources required to conduct feasibility studies and carry out projects to link up the capitals of Member States in terms of bituminized roads and bridges such as the bridge (road-rail) planned to be constructed between Brazzaville and Kinshasa.

c) Energy, Water and Environment

733. ECCAS energy policy is being implemented by the Central Africa Power Pool (PEAC) established in 2003 and built on two major pillars: Priority Integration Projects (PIP) and Border Pilot Electrification Programme (PPET). The objective sought by PIP is development or rehabilitation of hydro-electric dams and intra-regional and, indeed, extra-regional electricity interconnection; while the PPET aims at electrification of the border areas by recourse to the electric power installations in the nearest border countries. As regards water resources, the Summit decided “to promote integrated water resource management and create, within the ECCAS General Secretariat, an appropriate framework for coordination and harmonization of activities in this area”.

P.III.2. Transformation of ECCAS Secretariat into a Commission

734. The planned transformation will enable ECCAS General Secretariat to exercise coercive powers on Member States in the event of non-compliance with community decisions, directives or regulations in the areas where the States would like to cede to the community some degree of sovereignty. The idea of transforming the General Secretariat into a Commission was endorsed by the Summit of Heads of State and Government without prejudice to the conduct of the study to clearly define its dimensions. The Summit also decided to re-elect General Louis Sylvain Goma as Secretary General of ECCAS for another four years mandate.

P.III.3. Signing of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)

735. Central Africa and the European Union (EU), on 16 July 2004, signed a Roadmap for EPA negotiations according to which the two sides agreed to conduct negotiations on the following issues, in three stages:

- Deepening regional integration in Central Africa;
- Enhancing the capacities, upgrading the economies of the States, and formulating the keys structures and concepts of the agreement; and
- Trade liberalization, market access, definition of the transitional period and products cover.

736. After a series of negotiations and consultations culminating in a meeting of the Joint Trade Ministerial Committee enlarged to include national authorizing officers of EDF with European Trade and Development Ministers, held in Brussels on 6 February 2007, the two parties agreed to sign EPAs in December 2007, taking into account not only the provisions of the former Lomé Convention but also the legal deadline for concluding the EPAs stipulated by the Cotonou Agreement and the Roadmap.

P.III.4. Union Government and Progress towards the United States of Africa

737. The Heads of State and Government made the commitment to: (i) work towards accession by ECCAS Member States to the idea of establishing the United States of Africa as a common and desirable objective; (ii) and hence, ensure harmonization of RECs activities with those of the African Union; and (iii) contribute to acceleration of the integration process in Africa. The Heads of State further urged Member States and the ECCAS General Secretariat to contribute fully towards the brainstorming on the Union Government project and get actively involved in the efforts to rationalize the RECs.

P.III.5. Rationalization of RECs

738. In accordance with the recommendations of the First Conference of African Ministers of Integration, ECCAS advocated rationalization through harmonization and coordination of its integration policies, programmes and instruments with those of CEMAC in order to establish, in the long run, one single REC for the Central Africa Region. To this end, ECCAS called upon the two organizations to create a Steering Committee comprising the AU, ECA and ADB to devise a Roadmap in this regard.

P.IV. PARTICIPATION AT THE TWELFTH MEETING OF THE COMESA COMMITTEE OF GOVERNORS OF CENTRAL BANKS

739. The Commission attended the Twelfth Meeting of the COMESA Committee of Governors of Central Banks held in Tripoli, Libya, from 8-9 November 2007. Major issues discussed during the meeting included the following: progress report towards achieving macroeconomic convergence in 2006; a study on the harmonization of concepts, methodologies and statistical framework for macroeconomic convergence;

report of the first meeting of Chief Executives of Stock Exchange in the COMESA region; and a study on cost benefit analysis of an autonomous COMESA Monetary Institute versus the existing COMESA Structure.

P.IV.1. A study on the harmonization of concepts, methodologies and statistical framework for macroeconomic convergence

740. The meeting reviewed progress achieved in the COMESA region in the year 2006 focusing on the following areas, among others: interest rates, gross domestic product (GDP), and debt as a percentage of GDP. It was reported that COMESA region achieved weighted average inflation rate of 30 percent in 2006, which was higher by 8 percent compared to the weighted inflation rate achieved in 2005. The region registered an average growth rate of 7 percent in 2006 which was slightly lower than the 7.6 percent achieved in 2005. Furthermore, nine COMESA countries managed to achieve a single digital inflation rate.

P.IV.2. A study on the harmonization of concepts, methodologies and statistical framework for macroeconomic convergence

741. The meeting discussed a study report on the harmonization of concepts, methodologies and statistical framework for macroeconomic convergence which mainly focused on the current practices of COMESA Member States, in the compilation of national accounts, consumer price indices, government finance, and balance of payments. The outcome of the study revealed that a number government institutions, dealing with statistics, are facing financial constraints which has aggravated the problem of poor and unreliable statistics in Africa. Despite this being the case, the report strongly recommended that African countries, in particular offices dealing with statistics in Africa, should fully implement the international statistical guidelines. The Commission took this opportunity to inform the meeting about the African Charter on Statistics which has been developed in close collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

P.IV.3. Report of the first meeting of Chief Executives of Stock Exchange in the COMESA Region

742. This report mainly focused on the prospects and constraints of integrating capital markets in the COMESA region. During this meeting, the Governors approved a Plan of Action for the advancement of the integration of capital markets in the COMESA region. Under the same agenda item, the Commission informed the meeting about the study to be undertaken on the establishment of a pan-African stock exchange, as decided by the Heads of State and Government during the January 2006 AU Summit in Khartoum. The meeting agreed on the following actions, among others:

- Promotion of development of securities exchanges in COMESA member countries where they do not exist;
- Identifying gaps which are not being addressed by the other regions;
- Creation of securities market development committee;
- Harmonization of trading rules and procedures; and
- Compliance with international financial reporting standards.

P.IV.4. A study on cost benefit analysis of an autonomous COMESA Monetary Institute versus the existing COMESA Structure

743. A study on cost benefit analysis of an autonomous COMESA Monetary Institute versus the existing COMESA Structure was also presented to the Governors during the meeting. It is expected that the work by the Institute, once established, will lead to the creation of the COMESA Monetary Union aimed at achieving a COMESA single currency. The Governors agreed in principle to the proposal of establishing the institute. However, the following comments were raised:

- While pursuing the establishment of the Institute, Governors requested the possibility of strengthening the existing COMESA Monetary Unit; and
- Contributions towards the Monetary Institute to be based on COMESA contribution formula as opposed to the equal annual contribution by each COMESA member.

P.V. 9TH AFRICA-EU MINISTERIAL TROIKA MEETING, ACCRA, GHANA

744. The 9th Africa-EU Ministerial Troika Meeting was held in Accra, Ghana, on 31 October 2007. The meeting was preceded by a Drafting Committee, Experts and Senior Officials meetings. The meeting reviewed issues pertaining to the strengthening of the Africa-EU dialogue, peace and security, good governance, regional integration and trade, and key development issues. A communiqué was adopted at the end of the meeting.

745. The issues that were discussed and considered by the Troika Ministers were the following:

- i) Enhancing the dialogue between Africa and the EU:** Ministers welcomed and endorsed the Joint Africa-EU Strategy as elaborated by the Africa-EU Expert Troika and recommended by the Senior Officials Troika. They stressed the need to ensure its implementation once adopted by the Africa-EU Summit in Lisbon. They also welcomed and endorsed the First Action Plan derived from the Joint Strategy, which identified critical priorities that should be implemented in the next 2/3 years for the benefit of the people of Africa and Europe.
- ii) Peace and Security:** Ministers discussed progress made in the establishment of the Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and stressed the importance of ensuring the full operationalization of the APSA. Ministers welcomed the efforts being made by different parties to bring peace and stability in conflict countries.
- iii) Governance and Human Rights:** Ministers agreed to develop a platform for dialogue on all governance issues of mutual interest in order to strengthen the dialogue on governance issues. They further welcomed the report of the EU-Africa Human Rights Experts meeting of

19 September 2007 as well as the report of the Experts Meeting on the Issue of Cultural Goods held in Lisbon, Portugal, on 4-5 October, 2007.

- iv) **Regional Integration and Trade:** Ministers welcomed the new impetus the African side was giving to the issue of rationalization of RECs. Both sides agreed to continue to work together to advance the Doha Development Agenda within the WTO framework. Regarding EPA negotiations, Ministers noted that the December 2007 deadline would not be achievable in all regions and, therefore, called upon the EPA negotiating parties to agree on WTO-compatible solutions by 31 December 2007 to guard against the disruption of trade between the two parties. On private sector development, Ministers welcomed the outcome of the Recommendations of the Second EU-Africa Business Forum and called for their implementation by all stakeholders.

- v) **Key Development issues:** Ministers welcomed the report on progress made in the area of migration and reaffirmed their commitment to implement measures agreed in the final Tripoli Declaration. They also emphasised that climate change was a serious and long term challenge to sustainable development as well as to poverty reduction and, therefore, called for urgent measures to be undertaken to adapt to and mitigate the negative effects of climate change and further agreed that the two sides will engage in dialogue on concrete actions to respond to climate change. In addition to the above, Ministers welcomed the planned launching of the Partnership on Agriculture, agreed to work together to develop a shared vision and common policies and responses to stimulate specific action that addressed the energy challenges of the 21st century, and agreed to recommend that the Africa-EU Energy Partnership be launched at the Lisbon Summit. They also welcomed the launch in July 2007 of the Pan-African Infrastructure Development Fund as well as the launch in October 2007 of the EU-Africa Infrastructure Partnership and Trust Fund and Steering Committee to support AU/NEPAD-Infrastructure Short Term Action Plan.

P.VI. LISBON SUMMIT, PORTUGAL, 8-9 DECEMBER, 2007

746. The Africa-EU Summit of Heads of State and Government took place in Lisbon, Portugal on 8 and 9 December 2007. The meeting was the culmination of a strengthened political dialogue within the framework of which a Joint Strategy and Action Plan were developed. These documents were presented and adopted at the Summit. It was attended by 53 countries on the African side and 26 countries on the EU side. The Joint Strategy reflects the new relationship between the two continents emphasising a Partnership of equals, addresses both bilateral and global challenges, recognises a one integrated Africa and covers a broad-based people-centred Partnership. The strategic Partnership encompasses four broad clusters, namely

peace and security, governance and human rights, trade and regional integration, and key development issues.

747. The Lisbon Summit created the opportunity for leaders of the two continents to share views on all issues covered in the Joint Strategy. Specifically, five major themes were addressed in detail, namely governance and human rights, peace and security, migration, energy and climate change, and trade, infrastructure and development. Five Heads of State and Government from each side made presentations on these themes.

748. In the debate that ensued, leaders expressed their views on the various themes. Among the key issues of contention were the Economic Partnership Agreements and the situation in Zimbabwe.

749. On EPAs, the view on the African side was that more time was needed to conclude fair agreements. Hence, there was need to extend the 31 December 2007 deadline for negotiations. In addition, it was noted that the division of Africa into clusters in a manner that suited the EU without considering the regional configuration of Africa's integration efforts was inappropriate. EPAs must therefore support Africa's integration agenda as regional integration was key to Africa's development and integration into the global economy. The development dimension should be thoroughly considered, including the need to address issues such as better terms of trade, capacity, supply side constraints, and diversification of economies.

750. On Zimbabwe, leaders noted with concern the current human rights issues and called for dialogue to resolve the problem.

751. The Great Libyan Socialist Arab People's Jamahiriya offered to host the next Summit of Heads of State and Government of Africa and the EU in 2010.

P.VII. SECOND EU-AFRICA BUSINESS FORUM

752. The Second EU-Africa Business Forum, organized jointly by the AU Commission and the European Commission as part of the pre-Summit Private sector activities, was held in Accra, Ghana, on 21-22 June, 2007. It was attended by about 130 participants, representing businesses and regional organizations in Africa and Europe, as well as international organizations.

753. The objectives of the Forum were three-fold, namely, to *Influence improvements in the business and investment climate in Africa* through enhanced governance, capacity building and policy coherence in order to render business and investment in Africa easier and more attractive; *Give a voice to the private sector* through the opportunity to dialogue directly with the African Union Commission and the European Commission, and indirectly with the African Governments and regional organizations with which the two Commissions maintain a permanent dialogue; and *Make Africa more attractive to the European private sector* by providing a more accurate and positive image of the continent as a place for business and investment.

754. Four topics were discussed during the Forum. These are: Entrepreneurship, Interconnectivity (ICT), Interconnectivity (Infrastructure) and Trade Issues. (a) On trade, the overall goal was to encourage regional African market integration (intra-

and inter-regional trade); (b) On ICT Interconnectivity, the overall goals were Open and competitive markets for ICT; Bridge digital divide – ICT as a driver for socio-economic growth and competitiveness; Focus on local, implementable, holistic projects with design for regional scalability; and Increase speed and flexibility for ICT and development; (c) On Infrastructure Interconnectivity, the overall goals were Project prioritization and assessment of appropriate financing structures; Infrastructure Partnerships between European and African private sector; Project sustainability over the project life-cycle (O&M); Establish links between the Business Forum and the existing bodies (e.g. AU, NEPAD, ICA, etc); and (4) On Entrepreneurship, the overall goal was effective programmes supporting entrepreneurship which are vital for the development of both Africa and the EU.

755. The key outcome of the Forum was a private sector Declaration with a set of recommendations for each of the four topics discussed. For each of these, clear responsibilities of both the public and private sector were allocated.

P.VIII. AFRICA PARTNERSHIP FORUM (APF)

756. The Commission participated in the 9th Africa Partnership Forum (APF) which took place in Algiers, Algeria, from the 12th to 13th November 2007. The Co-Chairs for the African side were Ghana as Chair of the African Union and Ethiopia as Chair of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC) while Co-Chairs for the European side were Germany, as G8 Presidency and Denmark. The Forum mainly focused on governance in development and Partnership for development.

P.VIII.1. Governance in Development

757. Under governance in development, the Forum considered the following: (i) the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM); (ii) Peace and Security; and (iii) Economic Governance.

i. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM): The Forum commended the achievements made by African countries under the APRM and called upon African countries, which have not yet signed to the APRM to do so. In addition, the Forum recognized the role played by development partners and requested them to continue providing assistance to African countries, particularly in the area of capacity building.

ii. Peace and Security: The Forum noted with appreciation progress made by African countries in the area of peace and security, in particular the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. Recognizing the role of the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in addressing conflicts situations in Africa, the Forum emphasized the need to strengthen the capacity of these institutions.

iii. Economic Governance: The Forum took note of several developments in the area of economic governance achieved by many African countries, including macroeconomic stability; public financial management; accountability; and investment climate. In order to promote economic

governance further, African countries, which have not yet ratified the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption and the UN Convention against Corruption were called upon to do so.

P.VIII.2. Partnership for Development

758. The Forum commended the significant growth achieved by many African countries, which has been largely contributed by sound domestic reforms. Under this agenda item, the Forum focused on the following: (i) official development assistance; (ii) trade; (iii) infrastructure; (iv) agriculture; and (v) climate change.

i. Official Development Assistance: Under official development assistance, the discussion focused on the need to mobilize domestic resources in addition to the assistance from the development partners. To this effect, African countries were urged to strengthen public financial management and accountability in line with the Abuja Commitment to Action. Further, development partners were called upon to deliver their Gleneagles commitment to increase ODA to Africa by US \$25 billion by 2010.

ii. Trade: The Forum discussed and appreciated tremendous progress made in the area of Africa's trade since 2001 despite Africa being continuously faced with numerous challenges. It was pointed out that increased volumes of trade in Africa mainly came from oil and minerals. Among others, the Forum discussed the following (i) the need to accelerate the work on rationalizing regional economic communities; and (ii) WTO members to implement their commitments made during the 2005 WTO Conference.

iii. Infrastructure: The Forum put emphasis on the need to make resources available to infrastructure development, particularly in the following key areas: project preparation; capacity building; project investment; and private sector development.

iv. Climate Change: The Forum recognized that climate change continues to be a big challenge to both Africa and the international community. To this effect, the Forum recommended that climate change be integrated into economic planning and management at both national and regional levels.

P.IX. PARTICIPATION IN THE 2ND PAN-AFRICAN CAPACITY BUILDING FOUNDATION (ACBF) FORUM

759. The Commission participated in the 2nd Pan-African Capacity Building which took place in Maputo, Mozambique, from 1st to 3rd August, 2007. The Forum was organized by the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF). The Forum examined issues, including strategies, experiences and lessons in capacity building on the African Continent with a view to providing the African Capacity Building Foundation with guideposts in the development of responsive interventions under the Foundation's Second Strategic Medium Term Plan, 2007-2011 (SMTP II). Below, are some of the major items which were discussed during the Meeting:

P.IX.1. Africa: Capacity, Growth and Governance Performance-Prospects of Achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015

760. The Forum examined capacity, growth and governance performance in Africa and assessed the prospects of the Continent in achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. In order to address the above issues, the Meeting recommended that capacity building be people-oriented and civil society organizations be adequately capacitated and drawn into the process. In addition, the Meeting emphasized on the need to strengthen efforts at both national and regional levels for the development of home grown solutions to Africa's development problems as opposed to imported solutions, which very often are at variance with local requirements.

P.IX.2. Capacity Utilization, Retention and the Use of African Diaspora Communities as Development Actors- Challenges and Opportunities

761. Under this agenda item, the Forum highlighted the growing consensus that adequate capacity is crucial for sustainable growth and poverty reduction. However, it was pointed out that brain drain is one of the major capacity building challenges for the African Continent. To this effect, the Forum recommended the following: (i) Diasporan communities should be encouraged to participate in important national and regional assignments; and (ii) capacity building needs to be people-oriented, in particular involvement of civil society.

P.IX.3. Capacity Building in the Context of HIV/AIDS Pandemic-The Issues, Challenges, Lessons and Safety Nets

762. The Forum raised concerns regarding non-fulfillment of commitments towards Global Fund. In addition, it was pointed out that a mechanism be put in place for ensuring effective accountability. As a way forward, the Forum emphasized on the need for Partnerships-alliances between state and non-state actors for a common front in the fight against the pandemic.

P.IX.4. Capacity Building in Post-Conflict African Countries-Strategies, Lessons and Guides to Interventions

763. The Forum examined the root causes of historic conflict and socio-political tensions in Africa and made the following recommendations, among others:

- National governments need to develop the means or structures to deal with conflict in a non-violent manner;
- Capacity building in post-conflict countries should focus on (i) management of economic resources, (ii) good governance; and (iii) planning, strategizing, budgeting; and
- More attention ought to be given to conflict prevention as opposed to conflict management.

P.IX.5. Recent Development Experiences from China, India, Malaysia and South Korea-Some Lessons for Capacity Building in Africa

764. The Forum noted several economic achievements being made by the above countries and urged African countries to learn from their experiences. To this effect, the Forum's conclusions and recommendations were the following, among others:

- The role of human capital accumulation was a key driver for the performance of the above mentioned countries;
- The role of the Diaspora in economic development should be encouraged, particularly through investment;
- African countries need to work at cultivating the interface between the research community and policy makers; and
- African countries need to improve their economic management and institutions, especially factors of production, the financial sector, property rights, and markets, among others.

P.IX.6. Reform of Technical Assistance and Strengthening of Donor Coordination in the Building of Sustainable Indigenous Capacity in Africa

765. The Forum discussed and traced the history of technical assistance and identified some of the pitfalls. In this respect, it called upon both African countries and donor partners to coordinate financial assistance effectively, particularly in the area of capacity building; technical assistance; and policy formulation such as the use of Performance Indicators.

P.IX.7. Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Africa's Development-Capacity Building Strategies and Programs

766. Finally, the Forum examined capacity building strategies and programs for gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa's development. It was noted that women's movements in Africa had made some significant gains. Further, the Forum requested that gender be mainstreamed at all levels.

P.X. HARMONIZATION OF STATISTICS IN AFRICA

P.X.1. Meeting to coordinate statistics activities in Africa

767. The second meeting for coordination of statistics activities in Africa was held in Tunis, Tunisia, from 23 to 25 September 2007. In attendance were the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank (ADB), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), the South African National Statistics Institute and the Nigerian National Office of Statistics. Participants deliberated on coordination of capacity building programmes and statistics development in the continent.

768. After deliberation, the meeting:

- Commended the Commission for having conducted the process of development of the African Statistics Charter and invited it to strengthen the statistics function within the organization by establishing therein a statistics structure capable of playing a leading role in statistics coordination and in implementation of the Charter;
- Agreed that the four institutions (AU, ACBF, ECA and ADB) should organize jointly, every two years, a forum of statisticians and other experts involved in the analysis of the dynamics of African societies;
- Expressed regrets over the low level statistical function in some Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and recommended that specific measures be taken in this regard. The AU, ADB and ECA should also embark upon evaluation missions in these RECs starting with SADC Secretariat; and
- Agreed also that a working group be set up to study the possibility of coming up with common publications and harmonized data base at continental level to avoid duplication of efforts and publication of contradictory data on African countries.

P.X.2. Study on implementation mechanism of the African Statistics Charter and on creation of African Union Statistics Development Fund

769. Africa is faced with real difficulties in producing, in consistent manner, comparable and reliable statistics on all countries and regions of the continent. The reasons for this situation are legion. They include inadequate statistics activities funding, and the lack of continent wide legal, coherent and credible framework, poor coordination of statistics data gathering, processing and dissemination, etc. The present design of Africa statistics system does not allow for production of harmonized and quality statistics data capable of guiding and backstopping decision making in the continent.

770. To remedy these gaps, the Commission in concert with its partners, formulated an African Statistics Charter, objective of which is to serve as advocacy tool and an instrument for statistics development in the continent and help promote comparable and quality statistics data production required to manage the integration process. The preliminary draft of the Charter was validated by a meeting of members of the African Statistics System which took place in Rwanda in June 2007. That meeting also recommended establishment of an African Union Fund for statistics development in Africa.

771. To identify possible problems or obstacles that could halt the effective functioning of the Charter implementation coordination process and creation of the African Union Fund, the Commission embarked upon a study to examine in-depth the existing climate of statistics development in the continent and to propose measures and mechanisms to ensure continuous development and promotion of statistics capacities in the continent.

P.XI. CREATION OF FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THE PAN-AFRICAN SECURITIES EXCHANGE

772. As part of creation of the African Financial Institutions stipulated in Article 19 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, a joint Committee of the Association of African Central Banks (AACB) and the African Union Commission was set up at the General Assembly of AACB held in August 2007 in which the Commission was represented. That joint Committee was tasked to come up, before June 2008, with a common strategy for establishment of an African Central Bank (ACB) and a Roadmap to implement the strategy.

773. The Terms of Reference of the study to be conducted by a Consultant and funded by the African Union Commission were defined on 15 December 2007 by the Experts of the Joint Committee. Drawing from the existing African and foreign experiences on this issue, the study is expected, among other things, to prepare the grounds for consideration of the institutional and operational issues inherent in the establishment of a common Central Bank and a single currency, as well as the linkage between the ACB and the two other financial institutions, namely, the African Investment Bank and the African Monetary Fund.

774. Furthermore, discussions have continued between the countries hosting the Headquarters of the African Financial Institutions; Cameroon for the African Monetary Fund, Libya for the African Investment Bank and Nigeria for the African Central Bank, to ensure the signing of the Protocol Agreements establishing the Steering Committees for creation of each of these institutions in the countries concerned.

775. Additionally, in pursuance of Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.109 (VI) adopted in Khartoum in 2006, the Commission has embarked upon a feasibility study for a Pan-African Securities Exchange. In this regard, questionnaires were dispatched to all Member States of the African Union and missions were fielded to the States hosting the Headquarters of the 8 Regional Economic Communities recognized by the AU Banjul Decision and the Securities Exchanges in these countries. Also visited were ADB and the two existing regional Securities Exchange – the UEMOA regional property securities exchange (BRVM) and the Central African Properties Securities Exchange of CEMAC (BVMAC). The study will be presented to the Experts by the end of April 2008 prior to transmission of its conclusions to the Assembly of the African Union in July 2008.

P.XII. LAUNCH OF “FRIDAYS OF THE COMMISSION” FORUM

776. “Fridays of the Commission” is a discussion forum which offers to staff of the Commission, African diplomats members of the Permanent Representatives’ Committee (PRC), staff of international institutions, the academia and students in Addis Ababa, opportunity to meet and exchange views on a range of issues relating to socio-economic, political and cultural development of Africa. The inaugural forum took place on 5 October 2007 under the theme “Integration Process in Africa: bottom-top or top-bottom approach?” The Commission plans to organize this forum every three months and to publish a bulletin on every issue discussed. The bulletin of the inaugural forum will be published in due course.

P.XIII. PUBLICATION OF THE “AFRICAN INTEGRATION REVIEW”

777. The third edition of the *African Integration Review* will be published in January 2008. This review, it may be recalled, is published in two languages (English and French) and appears two times a year. It is a multi-disciplinary platform geared to Africa’s economic and political integration issues. This platform is open to all theoretical and strategic orientations and publishes research works on African countries and regions. Like every other scientific publication, articles for the review are submitted to a scientific committee for evaluation prior to their publication.

P.XIV. COOPERATION BETWEEN THE WORLD BANK AND THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

778. The Vice-President of the World Bank for Africa visited the African Union Commission on 4th October 2007. The purpose of the visit was to explore ways and means of establishing an operational and cooperation framework between the two institutions.

779. The meeting, among others things, identified four areas of cooperation, namely, regional integration; governance; post conflict reconstruction; and the role of the Diaspora in the development process. The meeting agreed that these areas be integrated into a common strategy which would serve as a basis for development of cooperation between the two institutions. During the meeting, the two sides emphasized on the need to have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in place before the two institutions could engage into any serious cooperation. To this effect, the MoU is currently being prepared and expected to be signed in January 2008.

780. Following the visit of the Vice President to the Commission, the two institutions have already started working together. For instance, “Workshop on Good Governance and Sustainable Management of Petroleum and Mineral Resources” was organized jointly by the World Bank, the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the African Union Commission in Lusaka, Zambia, from the 9th to 10th December 2007. The meeting discussed the following agenda items: (i) making the best deal; (ii) ensuring transparency; (iii) governance; and (iv) sharing the windfall of minerals in Africa.

- i) **Making the best deal:** The meeting noted that in most cases agreements made between the host countries and mineral exploring companies were generally flawed. To this effect, things like benefits, prices of minerals, among others are not clearly defined.
- ii) **Ensuring transparency:** The meeting noted that transparency was deficient in the process of mining industry. In this regard, the meeting dwelled more on the role of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). It was reported that a number of African countries have embraced the EITI standards in their national programs. Further, the meeting was informed that the African Development Bank in collaboration with the NEPAD Secretariat is working on the modalities to integrate EITI into their programmes.

- iii) **Governance:** The issue of governance was discussed in the context of earned windfall from mineral resources. It was pointed out that a number of governments, which are in the mining industry spend their revenues on short term plans or programmes, which in most cases resulted in economic destabilization.
- iv) **Sharing the windfall of minerals in Africa:** The meeting focused on corporate and social responsibility and boosting impact on accountability. The meeting then, emphasized on the need for the multinational corporations to contribute more to the social and economic issues, particularly in the communities where resources are being extracted.

781. As a way forward, the following is recommended:

- The African Union should consider putting in place a mechanism on good governance and sustainable management of mineral resources;
- Institutions like the World Bank, AfDB, should help countries producing mineral resources, in providing comprehensive data and information on mineral resources;
- The Africa Union, World Bank and the African Development Bank should engage in advocacy on good governance and sustainable management of petroleum and mineral resources; and
- There is a need to build capacity of human resources in countries producing mineral resources.

Q. TRADE AND INDUSTRY

782. During the period under review, the Commission to embarked upon implementation of its work programme as well as Executive Council Decisions EX.CL/Dec.364(XI) on WTO negotiations and EX.CL/Dec.367(XI) on Economic Partnership Agreements.

Q.I. INTRA-AFRICAN TRADE

Q.I.1. Harmonization of Customs Procedures

783. In line with Decision EX.CL/278(IX) urging “ *the RECs to coordinate and harmonize their policies among themselves and with the Commission with a view to accelerating Africa’s integration process*”, the Commission is pursuing its process of harmonization of Customs procedures. During the period under review, it has held a workshop on the harmonization of transit procedures.

784. This workshop which is the first of a series to be organized in that area has, amongst others, concluded that AU should coordinate regional projects by organizing, in collaboration with ADB and UNDP, a donor Round Table with a view to mobilizing resources for such projects under the Aid for Trade initiative. The

AUC/RECs Customs Coordination Committee recommended by the 3rd AU Sub-Committee meeting of Directors General of Customs should be put in place as a priority in order to develop a road map and an action plan for the harmonization of transit management systems. Other recommendations are that a model continental transit framework should be developed by the AUC incorporating international and RECs best practices. The Technical Working Group on capacity building should develop training programmes for officials and business actors on trade facilitation, and RECs should expedite implementation of their current transit programmes. Member States are also urged to honor their commitments under such programmes.

Q.II. COMMODITIES

785. Pursuant to implementation of the Arusha Declaration and Plan of Action of November 2005 and the Executive Council Decision (Dec. EX.CL/Dec.259 (VII) on African Commodities adopted in Khartoum in January 2006, a meeting was convened for 16 and 17 November 2007 to examine the conditions for setting up a task force to deliberate on issues relating to commodities in Africa. This task force will be composed mainly of African experts and will, if need be, incorporate non-African experts.

786. The meeting defined the Terms of Reference for setting up this task force. This body will be responsible for implementation of the recommendations to promote diversification, upscale commodities competitiveness and their contribution to development, effective participation of African producers in the international supply chain, expansion of commodity markets, establishment of commodities exchange and mobilization of funds for development of the commodities sector.

787. The meeting addressed issues relating to creation to commodities exchanges in Africa and capacity-building for producers and exporters, the objective being to offer more adequate organizational conditions to foster market transparency. This will enable African produce to be offered to a wider range of customers in all international exchanges and aligned to international price. It will be needful to strengthen the institutional and infrastructural dimensions of these exchanges.

788. The first meeting of the task force on commodities scheduled take place in 2008 will address implementation of all other vital issues in the Plan of Action, such as promotion of African commodities exchanges, feasibility of creating a fund for commodities diversification, as well as the nature and volume of the technical assistance to be extended to African commodities producers' and exporters' associations.

Q.III. STANDARDIZATION

789. In pursuance of the provisions of the September 2007 resolution EXT/MIN/CAMI/Res(I) of the First Extraordinary Session of the Conference of African Union Ministers of Industry, which endorsed implementation of the adopted Plan of Action, a process of re-activating standardization was set in motion by way of several actions. The objective of the plan was to upgrade productive and commercial capacities, promote investment, strengthen trade and economic governance

facilitation, create productive, decent and sustainable employment for youth, promote energy security, growth of industrial power and develop regional industrial innovation systems.

790. To improve market access for Africa's produce enjoying preferential treatment under the WTO and facing difficulties in regard to export to third countries' markets, a consultative committee presided by the Commission was established in July 2007 to identify the competitive instruments for control and harmonization of norms and standards. In November 2007, the African Regional Standards Organization (ARSO) held its 16th General Assembly in Khartoum, The Sudan. In attendance were the Commission, Member States, International Organizations as well as German and Swedish Partners. African countries should accede to ARSO, if they have not already done so, in order to contribute to standardization and harmonization measures in this area.

791. The objective is to popularise the African Standards Harmonization Model (ASHAM), have control over international standards, formulate scientific basis for the existing African standards and enhance the institutional, organizational and the related infrastructure capacities in the related areas of standardization, accreditation, certification (and later labelling), metrology and quality control from all African countries.

792. The Sudan has offered to host an Africa-wide training centre which will enlist the best African experts to conduct short and middle-term training sessions. Moreover, a study will be conducted at the end of the present financial year to define a framework of the ARSO strategy and actions to be implemented in 2008 in the area of standardization. The Commission supports the standardization process in as much as it is aimed at harmonizing African standards by enhancing the existing African capacities, control over international standards and provision of a scientific basis for African standards, acceptance of the standards by all concerned African policy bodies and by specialized international institutions such as (ISO, FAO, WHO, etc...)

Q.IV. INDUSTRY

793. The Conference of African Ministers of Industry (CAMI) remains the highest organ of African leaders where issues of industrial development are discussed. It was instituted in 1971 and holds its meetings once every two years under the aegis of UNIDO. With the advent of the African Union and its new responsibilities, a Memorandum of Understanding between the African Union Commission and UNIDO was signed during the CAMI-17 in Cairo in 2006. This document defined the critical activities that would be undertaken jointly in support of the industrial development endeavours of Africa and assigned to the AU Commission the leadership role in organizing the CAMI meetings.

794. In preparation for the January 2008 AU Summit whose central theme will be "the Industrial Development of Africa", the Commission organized in collaboration with UNIDO a number of activities in the first half 2007 whose outcome facilitated the deliberations of the first Extraordinary meeting of CAMI and was ultimately reflected in the Plan of Action for industrialization of Africa.

795. The main objective of the First Extraordinary Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry (CAMI) held in Midrand, South Africa, from 24 to 27 September 2007, was to articulate an industrial strategy and Plan of Action for Africa. The Conference was attended by representatives of forty-eight Member States, thirteen delegations from regional institutions and the United Nations Organization.

796. The Senior Officials Meeting considered the report of the Expert Group Meeting; the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Big Table 2007 on Natural Resources; Production and Diversification from Natural Resources to Manufactured Products; Powering Industrial growth: the Challenge to Energy Security for Africa; Innovation, Science and Technology for Industrialization; and Development of a Comprehensive Industrial Strategy and Consideration of Draft Action Plan. This Meeting observed that Africa's potential short to medium term comparative advantage lies in its huge natural resource endowments, namely, agriculture, mineral, energy, forestry, fishing and aquaculture. These resources provide opportunities for immediate exploitation, as well as a platform for Africa to develop a comparative advantage in the longer term through resource processing (downstream value-addition) and the development of resource inputs industries (upstream value-addition). The Meeting supported the formulation of a coherent resource-based and forward-looking strategy for Africa's industrialization.

797. Finally, the Conference encouraged complementarity among countries and regions, and considered a developed resource-based industrial strategy and its plan of action as a stepping stone in the establishment of a common structure for industries in Africa.

Q.IV.1. Industry, Trade and Market Access (ITMA) Cluster

798. The Commission is a member of the Cluster on Industry, Trade and Market Access (ITMA) launched on 3rd May 2007 in Vienna in support of the African Union and its New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) vision. The Cluster Convener is UNIDO, while the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) serves as Vice Convener. The formation of this Cluster is a clear translation of the firm commitment of the UN system-wide to scale up its support to the African Union and to NEPAD. It is meant to be an action-oriented and dynamic cluster geared towards joint activities and joint action in response to emerging challenges in the area of industry and trade. The overall programme is under the coordination of ECA which organized on 4th November 2007 the 8th Regional Consultative Meeting of AU/NEPAD programme in which the Commission actively participated with a view to building greater synergy in the industrial, trade and market access programmes and activities of the UN system and key stakeholders in Africa. The meeting gave an opportunity to respond to some of the misgivings surrounding NEPAD's achievements. It was also observed that one of the weaknesses of NEPAD is the lack of publicity and public awareness on its accomplishments, and that greater sensitization and awareness efforts were imperative.

Q.IV.2. AGOA

799. In response to the directives of the policy organs of the African Union asking the Commission to extend its technical support to African countries under AGOA, the Commission participated actively in the second meeting of the African Ministerial

Consultative Group on AGOA as well as in the 6th Forum of AGOA which was held in Accra, Ghana, from 16 to 19 July 2007.

i) Second Meeting of the African Ministerial Consultative Group

800. The African Group in Washington and Member States' Experts reviewed the constraints, challenges, response strategy and implementation plan of AGOA at the level of the countries and regions. The Ministers considered the report of the Experts focusing particularly on the problems arising from implementation of the activities relating to AGOA and the search for solutions to the supply constraints. They also identified the measures that should be taken jointly by AGOA stakeholders, notably Africa, the United States, United States Government and the Government of the eligible sub-Saharan African countries to enable Africa to benefit fully from AGOA.

801. The Ministers advocated the creation of a permanent framework for dialogue with the United States which could enable the Continent to have a grasp of all aspects of the relation with the United States of America especially at commercial level. They expressed the wish for a successful negotiation of a trade agreement between Africa and USA. The Minister further requested that the Aid for Trade initiative should become effective as soon as possible and that it should serve mainly to finance infrastructure development thereby contributing to elimination of supply related constraints.

802. The Commission observed that the growth of African exports to the United States under the AGOA system was essentially as a result of crude oil exports, and requested the United States of America to build petrochemical refineries and industries in at least three regions of Africa to process crude oil in the Continent into finished and semi-finished products to meet its own needs. The Commission urged the United States of America to invest massively in Africa in productive projects as a way of transferring technologies to the Continent as was done by China's traditional partners despite the language and cultural barriers.

803. At the closed-door session, the Ministers reiterated the fact that AGOA was articulated mainly around oil interests and that the voluntary measure taken by the United States to keep the dollar rate low affected the gains of African countries. They proposed the institution of permanent and structured dialogue with the United States in the same vein as TICAD, EPA and the dialogue with China. The Ministers further expressed the desire to be briefed on concrete intentions of the United States in regard to Aid for Trade. They also proposed a series of experts' meetings on investment with the aim of getting the various competing partners to invest in Africa especially in the area of production. The thrust of the debate should change from market access dimension towards trade facilitation and enterprise development.

ii) 6th AGOA Forum

804. The 6th Forum of AGOA was officially opened by the Chairperson of the African Union, President J.A. Kufuor of Ghana with theme "As Trade Grows, Africa Prospers-: Scaling up opportunities under AGOA". Liberia was welcomed as a new member and Mauritania reintegrated as one of the countries eligible for AGOA, thus bringing the number to 38 out of the 48 sub-Saharan countries. The Forum was

special in the sense that it brought together for the first time representatives of Governments, the private sectors and the civil society, including the Diaspora.

805. American private sector operators were invited to step up their investment in Africa beyond petroleum and precious stones extractive industries. Agriculture-based, processing, manufacturing and tourism industries were identified as the sectors in which American operators could invest and, by so doing, transfer technologies to Africa and build its capacities. They should also consider re-locating the industries or issuing contracts in respect of ICT development to the African Continent.

806. The African side handed to the American party the conclusions of the meeting of the African Consultative Group on AGOA for in-dept study. At the end of the meeting, Kenya offered to host the next Forum.

807. The lesson to be drawn from this Forum is that Africa must re-double its efforts particularly at the level of Regional Economic Communities to take maximum advantage of the temporary preferential regime initiatives such as AGOA to consolidate its own production capacity. It should first and foremost turn towards itself and speed up its integration process. Africa is currently being wooed on account of its oil which, unfortunately, is a perishable item, and the earlier it organizes itself for better management of this item and control its raw materials for re-investment to consolidate its industrial base, the more her chances to survive in the post-oil era.

808. Ghana has so far piloted this Ministerial Consultative Group on AGOA. Now that the mechanism is operational and its utility is accepted by the Trade Ministers, it would be desirable for the Commission to play its coordinating role and facilitate the contacts, the follow up measures and deliberation of this Committee in consultation with the country that is the chair of the Conference of Ministers of Trade.

Q.V. MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

Q.V.1. WTO Negotiations

809. The Doha Round of WTO Negotiations, which commenced in November 2001, intensified after the issuance of the Draft Texts of modalities in Agriculture and Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA). At the Doha Ministerial Conference, it was agreed that Agriculture and NAMA constitute the two major components of the Doha Round in which a development outcome is essential for the overall success of the Round. Although negotiations in both areas have been intensive, there are several issues on which WTO Members are yet to come to an agreement.

810. The issues of concern to African countries which are yet to be fully and satisfactorily addressed in the negotiations on Agriculture include those relating to Special Products, Special Safeguard Mechanisms, Cotton, Commodities, Tariff Escalation, and Long-Standing Preferences and Preference Erosion. In NAMA, concerns remain on the issues of less than full reciprocity and adequate flexibilities for developing countries and Small and Vulnerable Economies (SVEs). The ambitious tariff cuts that have been proposed in the modalities would not only create

adjustment problems in terms of revenue loss but also limit the policy space for developing countries to promote their domestic industries. Also, the agreed principle of less than full reciprocity in the reduction of commitments has not been given adequate attention.

811. Guided by the Common African Positions on the DDA and the AU Summit Declarations on the WTO negotiations, the African Group, in alliance with other Groups of developing countries in the WTO, has continued to insist on transparency and inclusiveness in the negotiating process and on development remaining at the center of the negotiations as agreed in the Doha Ministerial Declaration. While agreeing that progress in Agriculture and NAMA negotiations is sine qua non for the successful conclusion of the Doha Round, the Group has reiterated the need to address development concerns in other areas: Special and Differential Treatment and Implementation Issues; Services, including the effective implementation of GATs provisions on improving market access in Modes 4 and 1 and sectors and modes of export interest to African countries; Trade Facilitation; and Rules, including the provision of flexibilities to developing countries, such as non-reciprocal commitments, when concluding regional trading arrangements with developed country members (e.g. EPAs with the EU).

812. There is a widely shared feeling within the WTO that securing agreement on the modalities for Agriculture and NAMA by early 2008 is critical for the conclusion of the Doha Round by the end of the year. As consequence, negotiations have witnessed a higher level of intensity in recent weeks. While the conclusion of the Round by the target date is an objective worth pursuing, the position of the African Group is that substance and the extent to which outcome of the negotiations reflect the development dimension of the Doha mandate is a better determinant of progress than any arbitrary time frame or deadline. The Commission will continue to coordinate the efforts of African negotiators in the WTO negotiations and monitor the progress of the negotiations in accordance with the mandate given to it by the AU Summit.

Q.V.2. Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)

813. Negotiations on Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between the four African regions/groupings (CEMAC, ECOWAS, ESA and SADC) and the EU intensified during the last quarter of the year 2007. The Commission closely followed the negotiations. As part of its efforts to coordinate the African negotiating groups and ensure that they speak with one voice on major issues in the negotiations, the Commission organized a Retreat for the Group of African Ambassadors to ACP and EU and Chief Technical Advisors in Oostende, Brussels on 25-26 August 2007. It also organized special meetings for African Trade Senior Officials and Ministers, on the margins of the ACP Ministers of Trade Conference that was held in Brussels in November 2007. At various relevant meetings attended within and outside Africa by its officials, the Commission took the opportunity to present Africa's common position on the EPA negotiations.

814. It will be recalled that, due to the continued divergence of positions between the EU and ACP regions/groups on major issues, especially the development dimension of EPAs, the Assembly had recommended, at the January 2007 Summit,

the extension of the deadline and the securing of a waiver in the WTO for current trade regime. The European Commission has indicated its unwillingness to seek a renewal of the waiver in the WTO.

815. As a way forward, the European Commission issued a policy document on 23 October 2007, proposing a two-stage approach to EPAs. The first-stage, which is aimed at avoiding the disruption of trade after the expiry of the current WTO waiver, involves the conclusion of an interim EPA that would cover trade in goods. The interim agreement is expected to serve as a stepping-stone to the second stage of full and comprehensive EPA. The EC has agreed to sign the interim EPA with ACP regions, sub-regions, and countries that are willing to accept the option. For the non-LDCs unable to conclude an interim EPA, it has proposed the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) and for the LDCs, the Everything But Arms (EBA) market access. These trade regimes are however not as favourable as those under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement in terms of the rules of origin and their effects on the competitiveness of non-LDCs.

816. At meetings organized in Brussels by the Commission, the African Trade Ministers and senior officials considered the various options but were unable to adopt a common approach as the way forward. They however agreed that whatever option is chosen by any African negotiating group, no African country must suffer a disruption of its trade with the EU or be left worse-off after December 2007 as a result of the non-conclusion of EPA.

817. The current position with regard to EPAs is as follows: the CEMAC and ECOWAS groupings have rejected the option of an interim EPA on the ground that it does not adequately address the issue of binding commitments on the development dimensions of EPAs. They have opted for the continuation of current negotiations with a view to eventually completing comprehensive EPAs. Their position requires the extension of the current WTO waiver. The ESA and SADC groupings have agreed to Interim EPAs, with the former agreeing with the EC to conclude the negotiations of a comprehensive EPA by the end of December 2008. While the ESA countries have been negotiating EPA as a group, they have opted to sign the interim EPA as sub-groups or individual countries. The East African Community has already signed an interim EPA with the EU while the IOC has indicated its willingness to engage the EU with a view to concluding a separate interim EPA for its sub-region. In the SADC grouping, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique have concluded interim EPAs with the EU. The other countries in the grouping are yet to decide on their participation in interim EPAs. From the reports reaching the Commission, it would appear that pressures are being exerted on African countries/regions to initial interim EPAs or risk losing the favourable access of their products to the EU market after 31st December 2007.

818. The EPA negotiations pose a major challenge not only for the attainment of sustainable development in Africa but also for the continent's aspirations for unity and integration as encapsulated in the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community. Hence, the African Trade Ministers at their Brussels meeting called for the engagement of European leaders at the highest possible political level. The objective is to secure their political will and support and ensure that, for Africa, EPAs serve as effective instruments for the attainment of sustainable development, the eradication of poverty, the gradual

integration into the global economy, and the reinforcement of regional integration initiatives. The Cotonou Partnership Agreement legally commits the EU to leave no ACP country worse off after the expiry of the Cotonou preferences, in ways that are compatible with WTO rules. Having ruled out the option of the extension of the current WTO waiver, the EU needs to take necessary steps to meet its legal obligation and ensure that no African country will be worse-off after December 2007.

Q.V.3. Aid for Trade

819. It should be recalled that the Aid for Trade initiative was one of the important development-oriented outcomes of the current Doha Round of the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations. The African Group, under the coordination of the Commission and in strategic alliance with other groups of developing countries, played a key role in the adoption of the initiative by the 6th WTO Ministerial Conference that was held in Hong Kong, China, in December 2005. Aid for Trade is aimed at helping developing countries, particularly the LDCs, to build the supply-side capacity and the trade related infrastructure that they need to implement and benefit from WTO Agreements and more broadly to expand their trade.

820. As part of the process of the global review of Aid for Trade, an African regional Aid for Trade meeting, organized by the WTO, the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank (ADB), was held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on 1-2 October 2007. The Commission, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), African Trade and Finance Ministers, major donors, international agencies, and representatives of the private sector participated in the meeting. The primary objective of the Africa regional review meeting was to reflect on how to mobilize the resources required for the building of the continent's trade-related capacity. Similar Aid for Trade review meetings were organized for Latin America and the Caribbean region on 12-13 September 2007 in Lima, Peru, and for the Asia and Pacific region on 20-21 October 2007 in Manila, Philippines. The outcomes of these regional meetings fed into the WTO Global Aid for Trade Review meeting that was held in Geneva on 20-21 November 2007.

821. At the Dar-es-Salaam Africa review meeting, particular focus was put on the regional and cross-border dimensions of trade capacity building. Six of the RECs (COMESA, EAC, ECCAS, ECOWAS, SADC and UMA) made presentations highlighting the trade-related supply-side and capacity constraints facing their regions. They indicated the key priorities in the areas of policy and institutional capacity building as well as infrastructure development that are required to eliminate the supply-side constraints and address trade capacity challenges. For the effective operationalization of Aid for Trade in Africa, the review meeting agreed on the need for strong and effective leadership at national and regional levels to make trade and competitiveness a priority, for regional programmes and projects to be a central focus with a view to enhancing interconnectivity, reducing the costs of trade, and consolidating regional markets. The mobilization of the private sector, the harnessing of public private Partnerships, especially for infrastructure development, and the leveraging of the resources of regional development banks for regional capacity building and infrastructure development were also identified as key issues in Aid for Trade.

822. The scope of the WTO Aid for Trade initiative has been defined as comprising support for trade policy and regulations, trade development, trade-related infrastructure, building of productive capacity, and trade-related adjustment; if identified as trade-related development priorities in partner countries' national development strategies. The challenge facing African regions and countries is to utilize aid for trade as a catalyst for growth and development by mainstreaming trade into their development strategies, setting goals and priorities, and mobilizing all stakeholders for the realization of the goals and priorities. Meeting this challenge requires the establishment, as recommended in AUC Proposal on Aid for Trade, of national and regional Aid for Trade Committees, that should comprise all relevant stakeholders, to define trade-related capacity building priorities and develop action plans for their effective realization.

823. That Aid for Trade is now an important item on the international development agenda has been due largely to the efforts of African States under the coordination of the AU Commission. The Commission will continue to monitor the operationalization of the Aid for Trade initiative to ensure that it serves as an instrument for the promotion of sustainable development in Africa and ensure that international community and Africa's development partners deliver on the aid commitments they made in various forums such as Monterrey, Gleneagles, Hong Kong, Beijing, etc.

Q.VI. PREPARATION OF IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS

Q.VI.1. TICAD IV

824. The Commission is deeply involved in preparations for TICAD IV which will be held in Yokohama, Japan, in May 2008, preceding the G-8 Summit also to be held in Japan in July 2008. The TICAD Conference will address issues on the following priority areas of African development, namely, accelerating economic growth; ensuring human security, including the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); the consolidation of peace and democratization; and addressing environmental and climate change.

825. In preparation for the Conference, Japan and the co-organizers convened preparatory meetings in Lusaka, Zambia, on 30 and 31 October 2007 for Eastern and Southern Africa, and in Tunis, Tunisia, on 21 and 22 November 2007 for Western, Northern, and Central Africa. The Commission participated actively in the two preparatory meetings and highlighted the fact that the Japanese Government has to take in consideration the multilateral as well as the bilateral approach. The purpose of the preparatory meetings was to exchange with the regional participants on concrete issues, including their challenges and concerns, as well as their own actions, as related to the priorities and areas of cooperation of TICAD IV (accelerating economic growth, ensuring human security, including achieving the MDGs, consolidation of peace and democratization, addressing environmental issues and climate change) and which are of particular relevance to their countries and/or regions. It was also an opportunity to discuss the state of preparations for TICAD IV, including the schedule, draft agenda, logistical matters, and other practicalities and to hear from the various international organizations the initiatives they are likewise considering for Africa.

826. Participants at the meetings recommended concrete actions to be undertaken on the TICAD IV priority areas, namely, acceleration of economic growth, achieving the MDGs, consolidation of peace and democratisation, and addressing environmental issues and climate change.

Q.VI.2. UNCTAD XII

827. The Commission is involved in the preparation of the forthcoming quadrennial Ministerial Conference of UNCTAD XII, which will be held in Accra, Ghana, from 20 to 25 April 2008. In Partnership with the Government of Ghana, the UNCTAD Secretariat is preparing the **Creative Africa Initiative** to be launched at UNCTAD XII. This event is to showcase Africa's culture and creativity and to promote African creative industries through Conference cultural event.

Q.VI.3. Universal Exhibition 2010 in Shanghai, China

828. The Commission is continuing preparations for the World Exposition in Shanghai, People's Republic of China in 2010. In this regard, it held a preparatory meeting with a delegation from China in September 2007 at the AU Headquarters, followed by a meeting in Shanghai in November 2007. The objective of the two meetings was to agree on the development of an African Pavilion, the principles of designing its layout as well as the contribution of the AU Commission to the Expo 2010. To date, 158 countries, among which 48 are from Africa, and 21 international organizations have registered participation. A participation guide (2007 version) has been released. The construction of supporting facilities such as Expo Village, Expo Park, the Elevated Expo Boulevard and other underground complexes has started. A common African area will be organized in the African Pavilion with the assistance of Member States and RECs.

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