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REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION COVERING THE PERIOD JULY TO DECEMBER 2008

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FOREWORD

I have the singular honour to submit for the consideration of the Executive Council and the Assembly of the Union this report which sets out the major activities carried out by the Commission during the past six months.

It is the second report I am presenting to this august Assembly since I assumed office on 28 April 2008. The first report which I presented to you in Sharm El Sheikh in July 2008, gave an overview of the situation that I inherited from my predecessor, Professor Alpha Oumar Konaré. I take this opportunity to once again pay him glowing tribute. That report also brought to bear on our deliberations a number of key ideas that would guide our actions in the course of our mandate.

It is now my pleasure to highlight these key ideas which have been fine-tuned, revised and updated, and encapsulated in a new Strategic Plan for the next four years, a Plan which I now submit for your consideration in the present report.

The four basic pillars of this Strategic Plan, namely: Peace and Security; Integration, Development and Cooperation; Shared Values and Institutional and Capacity Building, have to a large extent been inspired by the experiences, both positive and not so positive, that we garnered while implementing the last Strategic Plan 2004-2007 adopted by this august Assembly in July 2004. Our approach is to focus more on the realities of the Continent's political, economic and social climate so that we can together move forward at a sustained pace with all Member States, all the Organs of the Union and all the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and with the support of all our partners and friends of Africa, towards continental integration, cushioned on concrete, qualitative and quantitative accomplishments that will be open to measurable and credible appraisal by our very selves, using clear-cut performance indicators.

Our Organisation is, indeed, endowed with a wide range and a relatively comprehensive set of documents (legal texts, decisions and recommendations) covering all spheres of human activity, documents that could make us the envy of other Continents. It must however be observed that the political will underpinning this wide range of documentary asset, an asset shaped by our good intentions, have not always been translated into concrete measures. Our peoples in their towns and villages gain nothing from these good intentions which are quite often relegated to the status of feasibility study and consigned to the dusty archives of our offices.

The Commission whose leadership you so kindly entrusted to me, will in the course of our mandate present to you a number of bold but realistic projects that would enable our peoples to appropriate the African Union in their day-to-day life, a Union which delivers positive and tangible results, rather than through an increasingly cloudy concept, albeit nurtured and steadfastly defended in the past by successive generations of African patriots.

It is my sincere hope that the African Union would realise its legitimate ambitions in the next few years. It is also my ardent wish that, at the end of the present sessions, the debate on the Union Government would culminate in a consensual road map with well-defined accelerators and benchmarks, in furtherance of our resolute and irreversible march towards the integration of our dear Continent and the emergence of the United States of Africa – the ultimate goal that we have unanimously endorsed in the best interest of our future generations and for their legitimate, full and unfettered participation in the management of world affairs.

Jean Ping

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

1. This report which gives an account of the activities undertaken by the Commission from July to December 2008 is the second which I have the honor to present to this august Assembly. As I indicated in my first report in June 2008, only two months after the present Commission assumed office, we are resolutely intent on devoting our best efforts to concrete actions and on taking advocacy measures in furtherance of the continent's physical integration through integrating projects such as infrastructure development projects with regional, inter-regional and continental dimension, effective implementation of the common positions adopted by our top policy organs and self-evaluation without complacency, of the actions we have taken in relation to the commitments that we freely entered into, so as to build our credibility vis-à-vis our people and all our partners, African and international alike. In its report on the Audit of the Union, and precisely in recommendation No. 3 which was endorsed by the Executive Council both in Arusha and Sharm El Sheik in July 2008, the High Level Panel underscored the need for both the Council and the Assembly to place high on the agenda of all their sessions, a report on the status of implementation of our Decisions. This recommendation is vital and we have started implementing it right from the present sessions. It underscores the fact that any new decision on the same issues must take into account the outcomes of the implementation of the previous decisions.

2. This report, it must be emphasized, differs from the first in terms of form, presentation and content. Indeed, it aims at painting a much more integrated picture of all the activities carried out under the four pillars defined in our draft Strategic Plan 2009-2012, namely:

- Peace and Security ;
- Integration, Development and Cooperation;
- Shared Values ; and
- Institution and Capacity Building.

Peace and Security

3. The African Union currently has a relatively well-oiled architecture in the Peace and Security pillar, as evidenced by all the institutions that have been established including the Peace and Security Council, the keystone of this whole system and which is enjoying increasing legitimacy within the international community. We already have in place a number of mechanisms and facilities, albeit still modest in stature, that enable us to move, relatively fast and resolutely into the thick of things, even though this is not enough to extinguish the hotbeds of tension in our continent or to prevent fresh resurgence of crisis.

Integration, Development and Cooperation

4. The reverse is entirely the case in the sphere of development. Like in the domain of peace and security, we have to establish similar architecture for the comprehensive development of our continent. We have the means to do so. Our partners are aware of this and it is this fact that explains the proliferation of partnerships with them. Indeed, they know that this continent is endowed with immense but largely unexploited resources, a young and abundant population as well as other potentials which, if harnessed, could change the course of human history, as we have seen in other continents that are less endowed than ours. At this threshold of the century, the African should take up this huge challenge and so make this continent proud. The development architecture must be built on concrete and more realistic action plans, anchored on the principle of subsidiarity between Member States, the RECs and the African Union. It must encapsulate all the actions initiated in the areas of economic integration, infrastructure, natural resource development, trade, scientific and technological research, social and human capital development and other relevant fields of development.

5. Our continent boasts a more youthful population than any other, and this is a key asset in our present day world. We need to strive for optimal development of this precious human asset by adopting appropriate policies and concrete actions geared to full actualization of the pledges contained in the Second Decade of Education for Africa and its Action Plan. By so doing, we would have ensured that this Plan is not relegated to the dusty archives of our Ministries as is the case with most of our plans and common positions. In recent months, the Commission deployed efforts to establish Pan-African University networks to promote science and technology, scientific research and innovation and link these to our continent's development. To this end, awareness building campaign was undertaken in Member States and vis-à-vis our development partners. Pledges of support have already been enlisted from some of these partners which could participate in the financing of these Pan-African Universities. Distribution of these Universities will be on regional basis, and their fields of specialization determined in accordance with the academic disciplines previously identified after wide consultation among all the stakeholders and partners. This is a concrete measure that could help integrate knowledge as well as scientific and technological exchanges at regional and continental levels. At the same time, as part of implementation of the recommendations of COMEDAF and AMCOST, the Commission in close cooperation with UNESCO and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), has been encouraging the adoption by Member States of the tools required to facilitate integration of educational systems and teachers' training mechanisms, thereby enhancing exchange of curricula and teachers

6. In the field of social development, HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis continue to bring grief and distress on African families despite the progress, albeit modest, achieved in the prevention and treatment of these diseases. In line with Africa's Plan for production of generic drugs in the continent adopted by the Abuja Summit in January 2005, studies are underway to identify the areas of production of essential medicines at regional and continental levels, with the support of development partners such as the EU. This action is

in the process of being realized especially in the East African Community and SADC regions.

7. I am glad to report the adoption of common social policies in recent months, including the Social Policy Framework for Africa adopted by the Conference of African Ministers in charge of Social Development in Windhoek, Namibia, in November 2008. Member States are invited to draw inspiration from this policy framework to promote their social security programmes.

8. A policy framework for sustainable development of sports was similarly adopted by our Sports Ministers in Accra, Ghana, in October 2008. This should also inspire our Member States to pursue integrated development of sports in the continent. The upcoming World Cup tournament taking place in South Africa in 2010, offers a propitious opportunity for the entire continent to capitalize on this historic event in all our stadia and to support the performance of African sportsmen and women who, for reasons of lack of appropriate support and any infrastructure worthy of its name in our countries, are increasingly emigrating to more endowed countries to develop their talents outside the continent. On this issue of emigration, unless care is taken, Africa is likely to lose our best talents built with our meager resources, as a result of the increasingly aggressive immigration policies known as "selected" immigration, to the detriment of its development.

9. As for our continent's inter-connectivity, the choice of the Theme for this Summit - "Infrastructure Development in Africa" - augurs well for increased awareness on the part of African leaders of the fact that every integration starts with physical integration of the means of multi-modal transport (road, railway, air and maritime transport, port and airport infrastructure) as well as integration of energy, communications and telecommunication. Preparation of this theme was, for the Commission, a key area of focus during the past months. To this end, it further mobilized Member States and all our development partners to review the continent's infrastructural topography so as to identify the missing links and explore all the resources that could finance investments in this area, so vital for the future of the continent. I take this opportunity to make an urgent appeal to all Member States, be they landlocked or not, and their RECs, to implement the regional and continental infrastructure development master plan. Once the needed infrastructure is in place, it will be easier for our populations to create new wealth based economies of scale on larger markets, move more freely with more goods and capital in furtherance of intra-African trade. This is in addition to the human interaction which such exchange would generate, an exchange that would further pave the way to build greater understanding as well as effective and stimulating solidarity among our peoples.

10. The Commission was also conscious of the absolute importance of conservation of our environment and of rational management of the numerous natural resources with which the continent is richly endowed. Thus, we participated actively in all forums that addressed the question of sustainable development, the thorny issue of climate change which seriously impacts on the continent, the protection of our environment and forests which are being recklessly depleted and the conservation of our water resources and pastoral potentials. On this score, we actively participated in the Brazzaville Summit on Sustainable Development and will make it a point to follow up on the outcomes of the

Summit and the commitments made by the continent in this environmental combat so crucial for the survival of humankind.

11. The Commission followed the financial crisis gripping the world, with all the attention it deserves. Working closely with the ADB and the ECA, it co-organized a meeting of African Ministers of Finance and Governors of Central Banks in Tunis on 12 November 2008 to find appropriate African responses to the global financial crisis. We have made an urgent call for the African Union to be fully involved in the preparation of the reforms envisaged in this connection, especially its effective participation in the G20 meeting held in Washington on 15 November and in the meeting due to take place in London in March 2009. It is also for this reason that the financial crisis has been proposed as the sub-theme of this Summit. This is to enable our leaders to bring their personal contribution to bear on the consideration of the measures needed to safeguard Africa's interest.

12. I would like to underscore how important it is for Africa to upscale its productive capacities, starting with the production of its food and less dependence on imports and food aid. In adopting the CAADP, it is our Organization's objective to make the best of our immense agricultural resources to stave off, for ever, the specter of cyclical food crisis. Despite the efforts invested in several quarters, it must be said that the continent has remained very fragile and unable to decently feed our populations; hence the need to refocus our activities on promotion of agriculture, agricultural inputs and training in order to ensure food self-sufficiency. We call upon all Member States that have not yet formulated action plans as agreed in the CAADP, to take appropriate measures to mobilize all the means necessary to develop and rehabilitate our agriculture.

13. It is through accelerated development of all our key resources, backed by quality physical infrastructure that Africa will be able to advantageously participate in the stakes and challenges of global trade negotiations such as the EPA and the Doha Round of the WTO. In this respect, it will be appropriate to establish free trade areas and customs unions under the auspices of the RECs which should formulate better articulated and harmonized policies to attain the objectives enshrined in the Abuja Treaty.

14. In all these efforts, the private sector's contribution needs to be revalued in a way to establish a network of African captains of industry, whose partnership and association with the public sector will help to stimulate our economies and create jobs for our numerous young people who are increasingly doubtful of their future and seek the usual adventures overseas, whereas there is a lot to be done in our respective countries with our huge resources, if only these are better and rationally managed. It is quite naturally needful to involve in these efforts, members of the civil society, women, the youth and the Diaspora who have been invited to progressively become the Sixth Region of Africa. The Summit to be held in South Africa in upcoming months has been carefully prepared to enable us to benefit from the quality input that these Africans could bring to bear, Africans who have remained faithful to their continent of origin.

Shared Values

15. To contribute to the emergence of a society resolutely focused on the comprehensive development of its environment, we have to build our continent around

shared values and submit ourselves to peer review mechanisms. This is the third pillar of our Strategic Plan. The values which emanate from the deepest roots of our most noble traditions and the legitimate aspirations of our peoples, are dynamic and evolutionary, and so are consistent with present day exigencies and address the challenges of tomorrow in an increasingly globalized world. These values we name as: good governance and the rule of law, democracy, free and credible elections, respect for human rights, transparency and accountability in the management of our States and our institutions, respect for our cultures and the richness of our diversity, etc. Here again, it is incumbent on us to establish a continental architecture of democratic governance, as it is a truism that the peace and security that we are advocating for each and every one, can flourish only in a healthy environment free of poverty, disease, ignorance and oppression.

16. We note and, indeed, welcome the remarkable progress achieved in the democratic process in recent years with, generally, elections organized regularly and in a climate imbued with serenity and transparency. We should nevertheless, equally express our deep concern at the electoral processes that were poorly organized, unfortunately resulting in violent protests and political instability. The Assembly has mandated us to pay further attention to such situations so that all our leaders and political stakeholders could, in a consensual democratic platform, organize free, credible and transparent elections, the prerequisite for peace and security for every one. The Panel of the Wise is actively studying this issue and its conclusions will, no doubt, be of great interest to all organs of the African Union in terms of drawing the necessary lessons and getting all our Member States to establish national mechanisms that could guarantee free elections – the solid foundation for the stability of our political regimes.

17. To this end, continent-wide standards have been put in place notably in the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance adopted by the Assembly in January 2007. I would like, at this juncture, to make an urgent appeal to Member States that have not yet done so, to as soon as possible, sign and ratify this crucial instrument which could become an invaluable tool for the African Peer Review Mechanism in our evaluation of the progress made in the consolidation of the values that we all defined for the good of our societies.

18. Another source of serious concern is the humanitarian crises bedeviling our continent. These include the forced displacement of numerous African populations, a situation which calls for mobilization of the entire African and international community. To this end, we are paying particular attention to the Special Summit convened this year to address this thorny issue so that appropriate response mechanisms could be put in place to effectively address the untold sufferings of the people victims of forced displacements, often caused by conflicts or crises that could have been prevented through concerted action.

19. Human rights is yet another crucial area of our legitimate concern. Our Union has, among its body of instruments, a Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, an African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and other human rights protection and promotion instruments at national, regional and continental levels. Therefore, the watch word should now be action so as to put this arsenal of legal tools effectively and on permanent basis in the service of human rights protection across the continent, without

waiting for others to hand down to us humiliating lessons on this issue. The commemoration on 10 December 2008, of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, offered opportunity to our Organization and all our Member States to reaffirm our unalloyed commitment to human rights promotion and protection. We are delighted that a Great African in the person of Ms. Navanethem Pillay to whom we pay the warmest tribute, was chosen some months earlier to bear the torch of human rights advocacy at international level. Clearly, this is a great source of pride and a symbol of recognition for our continent. It therefore seems to pave the way for us to share with the whole of humanity our values of respect for human rights, human solidarity and tolerance for the promotion of peace and understanding among peoples in all their diversity. Let us anchor these values even more deeply in the day-to-day life of our towns and villages.

Institution and Capacity Building

20. All these good ideas cannot be actualized unless they are backed and overseen by robust institutions and effective implementation mechanisms. As far as the Commission is concerned, it goes without saying that the good governance that we have been advocating for our Member States, should be internalized in tangible terms both in terms of the management of the human and financial resources placed at its disposal, and of effective and transparent implementation of the decisions taken by the top policy organs of the Union. This is our commitment in the Commission. Upon assuming duty, we made it a point to hold meetings of the Commission once a week so that, in keeping with the principle of collegiality, we could working together define and evaluate all the actions undertaken and also inject the necessary policy impetus into the entire staff of the Commission with the watchword: better coordination and participation at all levels; better management of human, material and financial resources; commitment to the obligation to produce results within specific timeframe; open and transparent communication within the Headquarters of the Commission and in our external offices; organization of monthly inter-departmental meetings at Directors' level and at all other levels in the Departments, for more effective oversight, involvement and participation of all staff in the implementation of the programmes and activities of the Union.

21. As for the other Organs of the Union, it can hardly be over-emphasized that without adequate support by Member States, they would not be able to satisfactorily carry out their missions. Here, we are referring to the Pan-African Parliament, the African Court of Justice and Human Rights, the launch of which is being awaited with the sufficient number of ratifications having been received, following the adoption of the Protocol on the merger of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Court of Justice, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

22. With respect to implementation of Decision *Assembly/AU/Dec.206 (XI)* on Union Government, the Commission has embarked upon wide ranging consultations so as to present a report on this issue. The report is now being submitted to the Assembly for consideration. It is absolutely necessary for the Assembly, following its numerous meetings and painstaking consultations and brainstorming on this issue so crucial for the continent, to do all it can to take a definitive decision so that all future efforts of the Union and its Organs may focus on implementation of mutually agreed programmes and projects.

23. The issue of integration of NEPAD's programme into the structures and processes of the Union also claimed our attention as evidenced by the progress report produced by the Commission in this regard. It is our hope that this process which should begin right away by integration of the structures and budget of the programme into the processes of the African Union, could be completed before the end of 2009 in accordance with the decisions taken by the Assembly at its various sessions in recent years.

24. Rationalization of the RECs and the increasing role they should play in speeding up the process of regional and continental integration are similarly an important element of our efforts. We have indeed set as mission to work very closely with the RECs especially through very active participation in their Summits so that we could, together, move forward to a minimum integration programme, thus enabling us to regularly measure our progress in our drive towards integration.

5. PEACE AND SECURITY

25. The state of peace and security on the African continent was extremely mixed over the past six months. Indeed, alongside the steady progress in the establishment of the continental peace and security architecture, as shown below, the geopolitical map of Africa continues to bear the marks of several latent crises and also marks of multiple full-blown conflicts in the face of which peace efforts are often met with opposition or simply foiled by the existence of diverse challenges, based on the logic of confrontation and on rivalries, to the detriment of concepts that are more receptive to the exigencies of peaceful solutions anchored on dialogue and compromise.

26. A major trend of this period relates to the resurgence of the scourge of coups d'état, which Africa thought had gone for good, with the unconstitutional changes that occurred in Mauritania, on 6 August 2008, and in Guinea, on 24 December 2008, to which should be added the attack on the residence of the Head of State of Guinea Bissau, in the wake of the legislative elections of 16 November 2008. These are obviously very disturbing developments, attesting to real political regression and, as such, call for a stern response from the competent bodies of our Union. The first step in this direction should be to work more resolutely to expedite the entry into force of the Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, whose provisions on unconstitutional change of Government are such that can cause all those who might be tempted to seize power by force to refrain from doing so.

27. Concerning more specifically the crisis situations, mention should be made, inter alia, of the disturbing developments in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the deteriorating situation in Somalia, a country that has for close to two decades now been characterized by indiscriminate violence, the collapse of State structures and the absence of any significant progress in the resolution of the Darfur crisis. The relations between Djibouti and Eritrea, characterized by high tension since the outbreak of the boundary dispute last April, have not undergone any improvement. The deadlock remains persistent in the peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and has even led to the

withdrawal of the United Nations peacekeeping mission. Nor was there any breakthrough in the Western Sahara question, where several rounds of negotiations initiated within the framework of the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council have come and gone without producing the slightest hint of a settlement. The final peace agreement to conclude the peace process in Northern Uganda was not signed because of the repeated refusal by LRA leaders. In Zimbabwe, the hope of seeing an end to the crisis in the wake of the agreement concluded by the parties in September 2008 did not come true, yet the humanitarian and socio-economic situation has remained most worrisome.

28. On a more encouraging note, the relations between Sudan and Chad are in the course of being normalized. In spite of the difficulties inherent in such processes and the uncertainties which characterize them, peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction efforts continued in Burundi, the Comoros, Liberia, Central African Republic (CAR) and in South Sudan, with the encouraging developments in the latter country stemming from the comprehensive peace agreement between the Government and the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). After several years of crisis, Côte d'Ivoire seems, at last, to be inching slowly but surely towards the end of the crisis, and the positive impact of the change will be felt beyond the borders of Côte d'Ivoire.

1. Establishment of a Continental Peace and Security Architecture

29. Pursuant to the Protocol Relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), the Continental Peace and Security Architecture is based particularly on the Continental Early Warning System, the Panel of the Wise and the African Standby Force (ASF). During the period under consideration, substantial progress was made in the operationalisation of these structures.

(a) Panel of the Wise

30. During the period under review, and in accordance with its work programme for 2008, the Panel of the Wise held three meetings: in Addis Ababa, on 17 July, in Algiers from 12 to 14 October, and in Nairobi, on 29 and 30 November 2008.

31. During the first of these meetings, views were exchanged on election-related conflicts. It was agreed in that regard that a workshop be organized in Nairobi, in December 2008, to come up with recommendations for submission to the Conference of the Union. The Panel also reviewed the status of peace and security in Africa, including the progress of the SADC mediation efforts in Zimbabwe and the situation in Sudan, in the light of the request of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) that an arrest warrant be issued against President Omar Hassan Al Bashir.

32. At its second meeting in Algiers, the Panel was received in audience by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. He reviewed the conflict and crisis situations in the continent and focused the discussions more particularly on the situation in Somalia, Darfur and the DRC.

33. The third meeting dealt with the situation in Somalia, the DRC and Zimbabwe. Concerning Somalia, in particular, the Panel met with the Prime Minister of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Chairperson of the Central Committee of the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS). This meeting was preceded by the workshop on election-related conflicts, attended by Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the United Nations and a number of other African institutions, including representatives of the civil society. The Panel intends to submit its recommendations, through the relevant organs, to the Assembly of the Union during the June/July 2009 session.

(b) Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)

34. The Commission has pursued its efforts towards the implementation of the Framework for the Operationalization of the CEWS, as endorsed by the Executive Council in January 2007. In this respect, and in order to enhance the data-collection and analytical capacity of the CEWS, the Commission has continued to refine existing tools and to develop new ones, including the indicators module and the CEWS Portal. The Commission has finalized arrangements to procure the necessary equipment to support the CEWS IT infrastructure, as well as ensure the connectivity of the early warning systems of the Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution to the AU Situation Room through VSAT. Finally, as part of the effort to enhance coordination and collaboration with the Regional Mechanisms, the Commission, jointly with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), convened the second technical meeting with these institutions, in Lusaka, from 15 to 17 October 2008.

(c) African Standby Force (ASF)

35. During the period under consideration, the Commission deployed its best efforts to implement the conclusions of the second meeting of African Ministers of Defence and Security held in Addis Ababa, on 28 March 2008, as endorsed by the Executive Council at Sharm El Sheikh. To that end, the Commission organized in Addis Ababa, from 30 to 31 July 2008, a meeting with the Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, which adopted the second Road Map of the ASF for the period 2008-2010. This document includes the ASF Training Plan, which was subsequently revised by an ASF training workshop, held in Addis Ababa from 17 to 19 December 2008.

36. Significant progress was made both at the regional and continental levels in implementing the Road Map. This was the case particularly with the setting up the civilian and police components of the ASF, as well as the organisation in Kampala, from 10 to 12 July 2008, and in Algiers, from 18 to 20 October 2008, of workshops on the civilian and police components of the ASF.

37. I am also pleased to point out that the Northern region which up to now was lagging behind schedule in putting in place its basic instruments, has taken a number of measures aimed at making its brigade operational. In this regard, mention should be made of the establishment in Tripoli, in December 2008, of the Executive Secretariat and the PLANELM of the Northern Brigade, as well as the adoption, by the Defence Ministers of

the region, of the Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE) and the Regional Training Plan during their meeting held in Tripoli from 21 to 23 December 2008.

38. Following the validation, by the Defence and Security Ministers during the above-mentioned meeting in Addis Ababa, of the study on the rapid deployment capacity, the Commission organized technical workshops in Nairobi, on 8 and 9 October 2008, and in Gaborone, on 11 and 12 December 2008, with a view to developing regional components of the rapid deployment capacity. Other workshops are planned for 2009, to be held in the Western, Central and Northern regions.

39. Lastly, I would like to inform the Council that, as part of the ASF training plan, the Conference for the initialization of the EURORECAMP/AMANI AFRICA programme was launched in Addis Ababa, on 21 November 2008, in the presence of representatives of the AU and EU Troika member countries, among others. It should be mentioned that the EU offered the EURORECAMP programme to the AU in order to facilitate the operationalization of the ASF.

2. Structural prevention of conflicts – Implementation of the AU (PFCUA) Border Programme

40. During the period under consideration, the Commission pursued its efforts to implement the AU Border Programme. A separate report has been submitted to the Executive Council on this issue.

3. Evolving situation on the ground

41. The following paragraphs present a succinct report on the trend of the various conflict and post-conflict situations in the continent, as well as other related developments. They also outline the deployment efforts made since the last ordinary session of the Executive Council in Sharm El Sheikh, with a view to promoting peace, security and stability in the continent. In this respect, I wish to mention that in October 2008, at the invitation of the Eritrean authorities, I paid a visit to Asmara, during which I exchanged views on the situation prevailing in the region and other issues of common interest.

a. Comoros

42. The period subsequent to the sessions of the Executive Council and the Assembly of the Union, both held in Sharm El Sheikh, was characterized by the continued efforts aimed at consolidating the progress made in the national reconciliation process, following the restoration of State authority in Anjouan. The Council may recall that this happened in the wake of the AU-led operation “Democracy in the Comoros”, launched on 25 March 2008.

43. My special envoy to the Comoros, Minister Francisco Madeira, travelled to the archipelago in August and September 2008 to hold discussions with Comorian authorities and other parties concerned on the modalities for organizing an inter-Comorian conference to deal, among other issues, with the streamlining of the current institutional architecture of

the country. It was obvious from these discussions that the Comorian parties have divergent views on both the agenda of and the modalities for holding the conference. While reiterating his commitment to respecting the autonomy of the islands and the “rotating” principle under which the Presidency of the Union should revert to Moheli in 2010, on the expiry of his term of office, the President of the Union intends to seize the opportunity offered by the Conference to launch a process to set up a new institutional structure upholding the sovereign prerogatives of the State.

44. The Presidents of the autonomous islands of Ngazidja and Moheli, supported by the Speaker of the National Assembly and a number of opposition political parties, fearing that the fundamental principles of the current Constitution might be challenged, are demanding, as a pre-condition, that the Union Government pledge not to place constitutional reforms on the Conference agenda. The truth remains that in the event of a breakdown in the inter-Comorian talks, the President of the Union had planned to resort to a constitutional referendum in March-April 2008. He requested AU assistance in this regard.

45. I would like also to inform the Council that following the end of the mandate of the AU Electoral and Security Assistance Mission (MAES) that was deployed since 2006, the Tanzanian contingent finally withdrew from the Comoros on 28 October 2008. On its part, the Sudanese contingent left the Comoros on 4 December 2008. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate my gratitude to these two countries for their commitment and their support to the reconciliation efforts in the Comoros.

46. The long-drawn-out crisis in the Comoros has had serious socio-economic repercussions on the country, worsened by the global economic crisis. I am pleased, however, to note that the international community has currently renewed its support to Comoros. The archipelago is henceforth eligible for the United Nations Peace-Building Fund and the International Monetary Fund post-conflict programme. Moreover, the African Development Bank recently decided to write off a substantial portion of debt of the Comoros owed to this institution. As for the World Bank, it is considering the possibility of resuming its institutional support that was interrupted during the crisis.

47. In this context which has become at long last conducive to the development of the country, I would like to reiterate my appeal for the Comorian parties to demonstrate a spirit of compromise with a view to overcoming their present differences, and proceed with the rehabilitation of the institutional framework of the archipelago. I urge the international partners to continue to support the efforts to consolidate the remarkable gains achieved in the Comoros over the past few months.

b) Somalia

48. The period under review was characterized by significant progress in the negotiations between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of Somalia and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS). On 19 August 2008, the two parties signed the Djibouti Agreement, which, inter alia, provides for the cessation of armed confrontation; the submission of a request to the United Nations for it to authorize and deploy an international stabilization force; the TFG to act in accordance with the decision

taken by the Ethiopian Government to withdraw its troops from Somalia after the deployment of a sufficient number of UN forces; as well as the establishment of a Joint Security Committee (JSC) and a High-Level Committee (HLC), to follow-up the implementation of security arrangements and issues relating to political cooperation between the parties, justice and reconciliation.

49. On 26 October 2008, the parties signed an Agreement on the Modalities for the Implementation of the Cessation of Armed Confrontation. On the same day, the TFG and the ARS issued a joint declaration providing for the establishment of a unity Government, as well as an inclusive and expanded Parliament. A month later, the HLC, meeting in Djibouti, reached an agreement on a number of guiding principles as a framework to strengthen the commitments of the parties on political cooperation. On its part, the JSC, meeting in Naivasha, Kenya, from 20 to 24 November 2008, reaffirmed the Agreement reached on 26 October 2008 and the parties' determination to continue to work towards its speedy implementation. Meanwhile, and as part of the efforts to sustain the Djibouti process on the ground, the ARS leadership took steps to establish itself within Somalia.

50. However, the overall political situation was compounded by the aggravation of the political crisis that arose between the TFG President, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, and Prime Minister Nur Hussein 'Adde'. This followed the decision taken by a Cabinet meeting chaired by the Prime Minister to remove Mohamed Dheere from his position as Mayor of Mogadishu and Governor of the Benadir region, on allegations of mismanagement of funds.

51. In view of the lack of progress in the implementation of the agreement reached in Addis Ababa, on 26 August 2008, by the leadership of the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs), under the auspices of the Ethiopian Government, in order to overcome this political impasse, the 13th Extraordinary Summit of IGAD convened in Nairobi on 29 October 2008. The Summit expressed profound concern regarding the political paralysis in Somalia and agreed on a number of steps to be implemented by the TFIs, including the appointment of a cabinet and the establishment of the Benadir administration. Meeting in Addis Ababa on 18 November 2008, the 30th Extra-Ordinary Session of IGAD Council of Ministers expressed utmost dismay at the failure of the top leadership of the TFG to agree on the establishment of a new cabinet and the formation of the Benadir administration. The Ministers reaffirmed the need to implement the decisions reached in Nairobi, decided to impose targeted sanctions, including travel ban and assets freeze, against all those who have become obstacles to the achievement of peace, and called on the AU and the UN Security Council to do the same.

52. It is against this background that, on 14 December 2008, President Abdullahi Yusuf announced his decision to dismiss Prime Minister Nur 'Adde'. This announcement was rejected by the Prime Minister. Subsequently, the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP) endorsed the cabinet proposed by the Prime Minister, while, at the same time, initiating an impeachment procedure against the TFG President. On 29 December 2008, the latter announced his resignation.

53. One of the major developments during the period under review was to the decision of the Ethiopian Government to withdraw its troops from Somalia by the end of 2008. In a letter sent to me on 25 November 2008, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia stressed that the presence of the Ethiopian troops in Somalia for nearly two years was never intended, but rather dictated by a desire to avoid a security vacuum. In my response to Minister Seyoum Mesfin, I recognized the immense sacrifices made by Ethiopia. I also wrote to the Chairperson of the Union and the Chairperson of the PSC, as well to the UN Secretary-General and, through him, to the Security Council, to bring to their attention the decision taken by Ethiopia, expressing the hope that action would be taken to ensure that the withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops does not result in a total breakdown of law and order in Somalia. Subsequently, I dispatched the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Amb. Ramtane Lamamra, to New York, where he had consultations with the African and the permanent members of the Security Council, as well as the UN Secretariat, on the situation in Somalia and how best to address it.

54. In view of Ethiopia's decision to withdraw its troops from Somalia, it is imperative to intensify the efforts being deployed towards enhancing AMISOM, whose authorized strength is 8,000 troops. In mid-October 2008, the second Burundian battalion was deployed in Somalia, bringing the total strength of the Mission to 3,450 troops. Efforts also continue to be made towards the deployment of AMISOM police component and the mobilization of additional forces. Among others, on 10 December 2008, I addressed letters to the Heads of State and Government of the members of the PSC and other African countries, to seek urgent contributions for the maintenance of AMISOM. I am pleased to report that President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria has written to me to pledge the support of his country, in particular by providing airlift for the deployment of additional contingents to Somalia. President Mohamed Hosny Mubarak of Egypt has also sent me a letter to confirm the readiness of his country to provide some logistical support to AMISOM. Furthermore, both Uganda and Burundi have confirmed their readiness to contribute additional troops, provided the necessary financial and logistical support is mobilized.

55. No progress was made during the period under review regarding the deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation or an international stabilization force. On 17 November 2008, the Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council proposals on a feasible international stabilization force to support the implementation of the Djibouti Agreement. The Secretary-General further indicated that he had approached some countries and one international organization that might contribute to the proposed multi-national force. At the same time, the UN Secretariat continues to review its contingency planning for a feasible peacekeeping operation. On 19 December 2008, the Secretary-General wrote to the President of the Security Council, outlining a number of steps to address the situation in Somalia in light of the withdrawal of the Ethiopian forces, including a support package for AMISOM.

56. In the meantime, the overall security situation in South Central Somalia seriously deteriorated. The Al Shabab and their allies are now in control of most of the strategic towns in the Lower Shebelle and the immediate areas North-East of Mogadishu. Furthermore, on 29 October 2008, a wave of coordinated car-bombings was perpetrated in the two Somali regions of Somaliland (Hargeysa) and Puntland (Bosasso), which hitherto

have been relatively stable, killing dozens of people and injuring many others. There have also been renewed attacks against AMISOM and humanitarian workers. As a result of the prevailing insecurity, the humanitarian situation in Somalia remains precarious. The civilian population has paid a heavy price as a result of the escalation of fighting during the past few months.

57. The period under review has also witnessed an increase in the acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia. This situation has prompted a number of initiatives. On 2 December 2008, and as a follow-up to earlier decisions, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1846(2008), in order to strengthen international efforts to fight piracy off the coast of Somalia. Furthermore, on 20 November 2008, at the initiative of the Government of Egypt, a high-level consultative meeting of States bordering the Red Sea took place in Cairo. On 11 and 12 December 2008, another international conference on piracy around Somalia took place in Nairobi, at ministerial level.

58. Once again, Somalia is at crossroads. Some of the most recent developments could lead to a total collapse of all the efforts deployed over the past few months to promote peace and reconciliation in the country. On the other hand, there have been encouraging steps which, if built upon and effectively supported, can create a new momentum in the search for peace, security and stability.

59. It is against this background that the 163rd meeting of the PSC held in Addis Ababa on 22 December 2008 reviewed the situation in Somalia. In particular, the PSC encouraged the TFG and the ARS to intensify their efforts towards the implementation of the Agreements they have reached, and urged all parties that have not yet done so to join in the peace process. The PSC further reiterated its serious concern at the divisions within the TFG and endorsed the sanctions imposed by IGAD. The PSC also decided to extend the mandate of AMISOM for two additional months, starting from 16 January 2009. It called on AU Member States to contribute the troops and other personnel required for the Mission to reach its authorized strength, and appealed to AU member States and partners to provide increased financial and logistical support. At the same time, the PSC reiterated the primary responsibility of the UN Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, calling on this organ to, immediately and without any further delay, take the steps expected of it, in particular by authorizing the deployment of an international stabilization force and, subsequently, that of a peace keeping operation to take over from AMISOM. Pending the deployment of such an operation, the PSC requested the Security Council to authorize a support package for AMISOM, bearing in mind the provisions of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

60. In this respect, I am pleased to note that, on 16 January 2009, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1863 (2008) through which it, among others, expressed its intent to establish a UN peacekeeping operation in Somalia as a follow-up to AMISOM, subject to a further decision by 1st June 2009, and welcomed the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's letter of 19 December 2008. Efforts are being made with the Troop Contributing Countries and the international partners, including the United Nations, to mobilise additional resources with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of AMISOM and increasing the capabilities of the Somali police and para-military joint forces in Mogadishu.

Furthermore, the AU is actively engaged in the political process leading to the expansion of the Parliament, the election of a new president and the establishment of a National Unity Government.

c. Peace process between Eritrea and Ethiopia

61. At its last Ordinary Session, I briefed Council on development in the peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea. In particular, I highlighted the lack of progress in the demarcation of the boundary between the two countries and the restrictions imposed by Eritrea on the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), which compelled UNMEE to temporarily relocate its military personnel and equipment from Eritrea and to suspend the implementation of its operations on that side of the border. In this respect, I indicated that, in view of the situation, the UN Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council, on 7 April 2008, a number of options for the future of UNMEE. These, among others, included bringing UNMEE back in its full force, should Eritrea reconsider its position, or terminating the mandate of the Mission in the absence of the conditions necessary for it to carry out its mandate.

62. On 30 July 2008, the UN Security Council, having considered the special report submitted to it by the Secretary-General and further communications between its President and Ethiopia and Eritrea, decided to terminate UNMEE's mandate with effect from 31st July 2008, emphasizing that this decision was without prejudice to both countries' obligations under the 2000 Algiers Agreements. The Security Council demanded that Ethiopia and Eritrea comply fully with their obligations, show maximum restraint refrain from any threat or use of force against each other, and avoid provocative military activities. The Security Council also expressed strong support to the efforts of the Secretary-General and the international community to engage with Ethiopia and Eritrea to help them implement the Algiers Agreements, normalize their relations, promote stability between them, and lay the foundation for a comprehensive and lasting peace between them.

63. As a result of these developments, the AU had to terminate the mandate of its Liaison Mission with Ethiopia and Eritrea (OLMEE). It is to be recalled that OLMEE was established by the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in 2000, with the mandate to complement, assist and cooperate with UNMEE, whose deployment took place under the auspices of the OAU. I would like to pay tribute to OLMEE personnel, as well as to all the member states that contributed to the Mission, for their commitment to the search for lasting peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

64. The Commission cannot but reiterate AU's 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 and normalize their relations cannot be over-emphasized. As in the past, the AU stands ready to assist Eritrea and Ethiopia in such endeavour.

d. Relations between Djibouti and Eritrea

65. At its session in Sharm El Sheikh, the Assembly addressed the situation at the border between the Republic of Djibouti and the State of Eritrea and the relations between the two countries. In its decision on the report of the PSC on its activities and the state of peace and security in Africa, the Assembly expressed deep concern over the situation prevailing at the border between Djibouti and Eritrea and the tension in the relations between the two countries. The Assembly strongly condemned the use of force, reiterated the obligation to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Member States, and called for the return to the situation prevailing at the common border between the two countries before the current tension, including the immediate withdrawal of all the forces positioned there since 4 February 2008. This decision followed the communiqué adopted by the 140th meeting of the PSC, which took place in Sharm El Sheikh on 29 June 2008.

66. One of the major developments since the meetings in Sharm El Sheikh relates to the dispatching by the UN fact-finding mission to the region. In accordance with the consultations held by the Security Council on 24 June 2008 on the situation between Djibouti and Eritrea, the mission visited Djibouti and Ethiopia from 28 July to 6 August 2008. The mission did not obtain approval from the Eritrean authorities to visit Eritrea. The report of the mission, which was sent to the Security Council on 11 September 2008, underscored the need for urgent political action to end the crisis and called for the demilitarization of the border and return to previous positions as at February 2008, noting, in this respect, that the Djiboutian army had already pulled back and that it is only logical for the Eritrean forces to do the same as was demanded by the Security Council.

67. On 23 October 2008, the Security Council, at the request of Djibouti, held a meeting devoted to the border dispute between Eritrea and Djibouti. On that occasion, President Ismail Omar Guelleh stated that, “following the abrupt, inexplicable and ill-considered occupation of part of Djibouti’s territory by Eritrean forces”, his country adopted a policy of calm and caution and sought out the good offices of a number of international organizations, including the AU. He invited the Security Council to call on Eritrea to honour its international obligations and to cooperate with the UN with a view to accepting its good offices to resolve the crisis. He further stated that his country’s priority was to achieve the demilitarization of the conflict area and the reestablishment of mutual trust by reactivating existing bilateral mechanism or by creating an arbitration mechanism to demarcate the border. He concluded by saying that inaction by the Security Council will not only encourage but reward Eritrea’s attitude, stressing that the conflict represented “a financial black hole an enormous burden on (its) limited resources and a distraction from (its) development objectives”.

68. On its part the permanent representative of Eritrea indicated that there had been no new developments since “the brief incident in June that was instigated by the unprovoked attack unleashed by Djibouti against our unit inside our own territory”. He went on to stress that, despite the negative campaigns, Eritrea had all along chosen the path of restraint and patience. He stated that, contrary to the claims made, Eritrea has not taken any land that belongs to Djibouti and does not have any territorial ambitions. He indicated that the desire

of his country is the restoration and cultivation of good-neighborly relations with Djibouti on the basis of full mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty.

69. The Commission made it clear to the parties that it is ready to contribute to the diffusion of the prevailing tension and assist in addressing the underlying causes of the current situation, which is inconsistent with the long-standing good relations between Djibouti and Eritrea.

70. On 14 January 2009, the Security Council adopted resolution 1862 (2009) in which it, *inter alia*, urged Djibouti and Eritrea to resolve their border dispute peacefully; reiterated its appreciation for the efforts by the UN Secretary-General, the AU and the Arab League to engage both parties; and welcomed the fact that Djibouti has withdrawn its forces to the *status quo ante*. The Security Council also demanded that Eritrea withdraw its forces and all their equipment to the position of the *status quo ante*, acknowledge its border dispute with Djibouti, engage actively in dialogue to defuse the tension, as well as in diplomatic efforts leading to a mutually acceptable settlement, and abide by its obligations as a member of the United Nations. On its part, the Commission made it clear to the parties that it is ready to assist in defusing the prevailing tension and in addressing the underlying causes of the current situation, which is inconsistent with the long-standing good relations between Djibouti and Eritrea.

e. Burundi

71. In the first half of 2008, there was significant progress in the process of implementing the Agreements signed between the Government of Burundi and PALIPEHUTU-FNL on 18 June and 7 September 2006, respectively, thus raising hopes for a definitive resolution of the conflict. These hopes however did not materialize. Delays and then constraints emerged, stunting the smooth conduct of the process. The constraints emanated mainly from the transformation of PALIPEHUTU-FNL into a political party with its existing appellation, whereas the Constitution and the law governing political parties prohibit any reference to an ethnic group. The constraints also arose from Government's stance according to which implementation of the 2006 Agreements should be undertaken in strict compliance with the provisions of the Constitution.

72. Concerned by this situation, I addressed a letter to President Pierre Nkurunziza and the leader of PALIPEHUTU-FNL, Agathon Rwasa, encouraging the stakeholders in Burundi to consolidate the gains achieved in the process of implementing the 2006 Agreements. I also wrote to the Facilitator, Mr. Charles Nqakula, South African Defense Minister, to whom I reiterated the Commission's support. Subsequently, at the instance of the Facilitator, President Nkurunziza and Mr. Rwasa agreed to meet twice a week, effective from 19 August 2008, with a view to finding a solution to the problems which the Political Directorate and the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JVMM) could not resolve. The first three meetings resulted in the Ngozi Declaration of 29 August 2008 by which the parties undertook, among other things, to work resiliently to accompany the process of implementing the 2006 Agreements within the stipulated timeframe.

73. Despite the sustained efforts deployed by the Political Directorate, of which my Special Representative in Burundi is Vice-President, the conditions for implementation of the Ngozi Declaration continued to prove elusive; and this state of affairs resulted in the suspension of the activities of the Political Directorate and of the JVMM. Faced with this constraint, the Regional Initiative on 6 November 2008 dispatched a ministerial mission to Bujumbura to deliver to the parties the following message: the 31 December deadline for finalization of the peace process was still in place; PALIPEHUTU-FNL should take appropriate steps to send its fighters to the assembly areas for the purpose of DDR; the Government should create space for integration of senior PALIPEHUTU-FNL personalities in the institutions; and PALIPEHUTU-FNL should eliminate the ethnic connotation in its name. The parties, for their part, reiterated their initial positions.

74. It was against this background that the Summit of the Regional Initiative met on 4 December 2008 in Bujumbura, a Summit in which I participated. In the Declaration published by the Summit at the end of the meeting, it was indicated, inter alia, that PALIPEHUTU-FNL could not be registered as a political party with its current appellation. Consequently, this movement made a commitment to carry out the necessary consultations within its ranks to find a new name that is consistent with the Constitution. President Nkurunziza committed to allot 33 posts to PALIPEHUTU-FNL leaders. He also reiterated his decision to free all political as well as war prisoners. The two parties agreed on the need to commence the DDR process without delay. Joint technical teams have since been put in place to work on these decisions. Difficulties however remain, but the stakeholders in this process are investing their best efforts to overcome them.

f. Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

75. With the signing of the *Actes d'engagement* which crowned the Conference on Peace, Stability and Development in the Kivus, held in Goma from 6 to 23 January 2008, and the commencement of implementation of the *Actes* under the auspices of the AMANI Programme, the process of normalization in the East of the DRC seemed to have taken an encouraging turn. On this score, it is noteworthy that the key objectives of the AMANI Programme are to maintain the ceasefire agreed by the parties to the several conflicts in the region, set in motion the disengagement of armed groups, enhance the integration of former fighters who so desire, into the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) and promote economic development in the Kivus.

76. In February, the National Congress for the Defense of the People (*CNDP*) led by dissident General Laurent Nkunda, one of the parties to the *Actes d'engagement*, denounced the slow pace of implementation of the AMANI Programme, and then suspended his participation in the activities of the Programme for four months. On 28 August 2008, the *CNDP* launched a large-scale military offensive against the FARDC in the Masisi region. Fighting subsequently spread to other areas of North Kivu where the *CNDP* took control of a large area and set up a parallel administration. It formally denounced what it described as the "failure" of AMANI Programme and called for national uprising against President Kabila's government, adding that he was prepared to enter into direct negotiation with the DRC Government "on a neutral ground".

77. It was in this context that I proceeded to Kinshasa from 10 to 12 October, where I held talks with the Head of State and other Congolese players, as well as international community representatives in Kinshasa. I reiterated AU's position for a political solution. I also urged the DRC to establish diplomatic relations with its neighbors. In the aftermath of the visit, I dispatched an emissary to Kinshasa in the person of Mr. Ibrahima Fall, former Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for the Great Lakes Region. Additionally, I participated in the deliberations of the Regional Summit held in Nairobi on 7 November 2008. The Commissioner for Peace and Security visited Kinshasa and Kigali; and the Commission participated in the meeting of Ministers of the countries of the region which took place in Nairobi on 20 December 2008, through the Deputy Chairperson and my envoy for the Great Lakes Region. In the same vein, I opened an AU Office in Goma, the preferred meeting venue of the International Facilitation involved in monitoring implementation of the *Actes d'engagement*. The PSC, for its part, examined the situation in the East of Congo at its 155th and 163rd Meetings held on 31 October and 22 December 2008, respectively.

78. Many other personalities, representatives of countries and international organizations partners in the peace process in the DRC, also visited Kinshasa and other countries of the region in an attempt to assist in the efforts aimed at putting an end to the conflicts. Thanks to the mobilization of the international community, including the AU, the concerned Regional Economic Communities (SADC and ECCAS), the United Nations and the European Union (EU), the CNDP declared a unilateral ceasefire on 29 October 2008, at the very time when its troops were at the gates of Goma. More specifically in regard to the United Nations, the Secretary General appointed a Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region in the person of Olusegun Obasanjo, to help find a lasting solution to the crisis. The Government of the DRC and the CNDP have, since 8 December 2008, started negotiations in Nairobi, with the facilitation of the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary General and the Monitoring Mechanism established by the Regional Summit held in Nairobi on 7 November 2008. After two working sessions almost entirely devoted to matters of procedure, the two parties suspended negotiations and agreed to resume the talks on 8 January 2009. In the mean time, on 20 December 2008, the United Nations Security Council, by Resolution 1843, authorized a temporary increase in MONUC's authorised strength.

79. Additionally, in an attempt to ease the tension created by the military situation on ground, the Governments of DRC and Rwanda, in November, inaugurated a round of bilateral consultations under the auspices of the 4 + 4 Commission. Meeting in Goma from 4 to 5 December 2008 within the framework of this Commission, the Foreign Ministers of the two countries agreed, among other things, on a military plan geared to dismantling the *Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR)*. The DRC Foreign Minister called upon Rwanda to exert its moral authority on Laurent Nkunda to get him to come to the negotiating table. He undertook to re-open his country's Embassies in Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi early in 2009. The two Ministers further decided to meet in Bujumbura to reactivate the Economic Community of the Countries of the Great Lakes (CEPGL). Consultations between the two countries have continued at the level of security chiefs.

80. On 14 December 2008, the Governments of DRC, Uganda and South Sudan (GoSS) launched a joint military operation against LRA (the Lord's Resistance Army) bases, a Ugandan rebel movement led by Joseph Kony, in the Garamba Park, North-East of the DRC. In reaction, the LRA perpetrated a series of mayhem, including widespread arson and massacre of the populations in the Congolese territory.

81. Despite the tireless efforts deployed by the International Community, the humanitarian situation in the East of DRC remains precarious. I was very much concerned by the humanitarian situation on ground and the numerous acts of violence meted to the civilian population. It is therefore needful to redouble efforts to speed up lasting resolution of the crisis and the restoration of State authority in the East of the country. To this end, consolidation of the situation of normalcy in the country is absolutely vital. I appeal to all the parties concerned to waste no time in reaching an agreement that would help to end the instability in the East of the DRC and to consolidate the tremendous progress achieved in the promotion of peace, security and stability in the DRC.

g. Sudan

i. Southern Sudan – Implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)

82. During the period under review, the Commission has continued to follow closely the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). I am pleased to report that, in spite of the many challenges facing them, the parties have continued to make progress in the implementation of their commitments under the CPA.

83. The overall security situation remains calm. Consistent with the provisions of the CPA, the Ceasefire Political Commission (CPC) and its affiliate bodies, including the Ceasefire Joint Monitoring Committee (CJMC) and the Area Joint Monitoring Committee (AJMC), continue to function normally.

84. On 13 October 2008, the Interim National Assembly (INA) convened its 7th and final session. Major legislations were discussed and passed, including the National Security Act and the Press and Media Act. The INA further endorsed the Political Parties Council and approved the national budget. The Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly (SSLA) also continues to meet and pass the necessary laws. Furthermore, on 22 October 2008, the Council of States, which normally meets in Khartoum and forms part of the INL, and the SSLA held their first-ever joint session in Juba. In a statement issued at the end of the session, the two bodies affirmed the necessity of realizing comprehensive development for the entire country. They also underscored the importance of the census results and the need to ensure that there are free and fair elections in the Sudan.

85. The CPA stipulates that the Sudanese general elections shall be held no later than 9 July 2009. In this regard, the enactment of the National Electoral Law of the Sudan, by the INA, took place on 7 July 2008. Following the passage of the National Electoral Act, the National Electoral Commission (NEC), which was supposed to have been established within one month, was finally endorsed by the INA on 17 November 2008. The nine

members of the NEC, including the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson, were nominated by the Presidency and approved by the INA.

86. The CPA provides that, at the end of the six-year interim period, there shall be an internationally monitored referendum, organized jointly by the Government of National Unity (GoNU) and the SPLM/A, for the people of South Sudan to either confirm the unity of the Sudan or vote for secession. The INA was, therefore, mandated to enact a Referendum Act by July 2007. However, at the time of finalizing this report, the Referendum Act was yet to be passed.

87. One of the key components of the CPA is the Wealth Sharing Protocol through which the GoNU continues to share the wealth of Sudan, particularly the oil revenue, with the GoSS and other oil producing states within the country. On 6 August 2008, members of the Joint Committee for Monitoring, Calculating and Sharing of the Oil Revenue provided an update on the current state of transfers to GoSS and oil producing states in a meeting with the AEC Wealth-Sharing Group. The Committee indicated that the total amount received by GoSS had exceeded US\$1 billion.

88. With regard to the Abyei issue, it is important to note that the parties agreed to refer their dispute over the Abyei permanent boundaries to "final and binding arbitration under the Permanent Court of Arbitration Optional Rules". On 28 October 2008, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague announced the appointment of the Presiding Arbitrator of the Abyei Arbitration Panel, as per the Abyei Roadmap of 8 June 2008. The Court is expected to issue its final decision by June 2009.

89. Council will recall that the CPA mandated the Sudanese Presidency to establish a Technical Ad hoc Border Committee to demarcate precisely the 1/1/1956 North/South borderline. The Committee started its work in January 2007, and efforts are being made to have this exercise completed.

90. In the period under review, my Special Envoy for the CPA implementation, Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji, visited the Sudan, where he undertook extensive consultations with members of the GoNU, the GoSS and representatives of the international community. Earlier on, in July 2008, he travelled to Pretoria, where he met with the Foreign Minister of South Africa, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, in her capacity as Chair of the AU Ministerial Committee on the Post-Conflict Reconstruction of the Sudan. Similarly, he held consultations with Kenya's Special Peace Envoy for the Sudan, former President Daniel arap Moi, in Nairobi, in June 2008, as well as the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Amre Moussa, also in June 2008, in Sharm El-Sheikh, on the margins of the AU Summit. I am pleased to report that the AU Liaison Office in Khartoum, with an Office in Juba, is now fully operational. The Office is working closely with the United Nations and other international stakeholders in the CPA implementation process.

91. While the CPA implementation process has made significant strides, it is also evident that many challenges still lie ahead. These relate, among others, to the completion of the preparations for the conduct of the 2009 election and the 2011 referendum, the

demarcation of the North/South boundary and the crucial issue of reconstruction and development in the South. Against this background, I cannot but emphasize the need for continued political commitment and mutual confidence and trust between the parties to the CPA in order to meet their obligations and bring about lasting peace and stability in South Sudan.

ii. *Darfur*

92. During the period under review, efforts have continued to be made to reactivate the political process in Darfur. On 1 July 2008, the United Nations Secretary-General and I, jointly, announced the appointment of Djibrill Yipèné Bassolé, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, as the AU-UN Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur, to be based in El Fasher. The Joint Chief Mediator took up his appointment on 1 August 2008. Since then, he has undertaken extensive consultations with the GoNU, including President Omar Hassan Al Bashir, the armed movements leaders, as well as with representatives of the IDPs and other Darfurian stakeholders. Based on these consultations, it is clear that most of the stakeholders are longing for peace, despite differences of approaches and reservations vis-à-vis the peace process.

93. As part of the efforts to reactivate the peace process, a Ministerial Committee on Darfur was also established under the joint chairmanship of the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al Thani, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Mr. Amre Moussa, and myself. The Committee, known as the “Qatar Initiative”, has met with the Chadian and Sudanese authorities, some Darfur movements and UNAMID leadership, to discuss ways and means of resuming negotiations among all stakeholders in Darfur. While the Government of the Sudan expressed its readiness and commitment to proceeding with talks in Doha, the rebel movements continue to have reservations.

94. In October 2008, the Sudan People’s Forum (SPF) was launched by President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir, constituting an important step in the efforts to find an inclusive and durable political solution to the Darfur crisis. The SPF was attended by senior leaders of most of Sudan’s main political parties and included numerous representatives from Darfur, although not from the non-signatory armed movements. The AU was represented at the SPF. The outcome document of the meeting addresses the main elements of the conflict as a basis for further negotiations. The subsequent announcement by President Al-Bashir, on 12 November 2008, of a unilateral ceasefire, provided that it is fully implemented by the Government and embraced by armed movements, has significant potential to move the peace process forward. At the request of the Government, UNAMID is developing a ceasefire monitoring mechanism.

95. The period under review also witnessed an important development in the relationship between the two Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) signatories, namely the GoS and the Sudan Liberation Movement-Minni Minawi (SLM/MM). Following a meeting between First Vice President Ali Osman Taha and SLM/MM leader, Minni Minawi, on 19 September 2008, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the SLA/MM signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Political and Military Coordination, referred to as

the “El Fasher Declaration”, on 13 October 2008. In line with the MoU, President Al-Bashir issued a decree directing the incorporation of the DPA into the Interim Constitution, which is currently being examined by the National Constitutional Commission.

96. Another major development during the reporting period relates to the announcement, on 14 July 2008, by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) of his application for a warrant of arrest to be issued against President Al-Bashir. On 21st July 2008, the PSC reviewed the situation in the Sudan in light of this application. On that occasion, the PSC requested the UN Security Council, in accordance with the provisions of Article 16 of the Rome Statute of the ICC, to defer the process initiated by the ICC, taking into account the need to ensure that the ongoing peace efforts are not jeopardized, as well as the fact that, in the current circumstances, a prosecution may not be in the interest of justice and the victims. While in its resolution 1828(2008) of 31 July 2008, the Security Council took note of the PSC communiqué, having in mind concerns raised by some of its members regarding potential developments subsequent to the application by the ICC Prosecutor, no action has so far been taken to defer the application. The Commission has made sustained efforts to mobilize international support for the deferral. In its communiqué, the PSC also requested the Commission to establish a High Level Panel to examine the situation in-depth and submit recommendations on how best the issues of accountability and combating impunity, on the one hand, and reconciliation and healing, on the other, could be effectively and comprehensively addressed. As a follow-up to this request, I have written to former President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa to request him to chair the Panel, which will comprise a number of distinguished African personalities. The Commission is currently taking steps for the early convening of the first meeting of the Panel and the commencement of its work.

97. On their part, the Sudanese authorities, while rejecting the application by the ICC, have taken some steps to address the issue of impunity in Darfur. Thus, on 3 August 2008, the Ministry of Justice announced the appointment of a Special Prosecutor to investigate allegations of human rights abuses committed in Darfur since 2003. I urge the Sudanese authorities to spare no efforts to ensure that impunity is effectively addressed, bearing in mind that without justice, there will be no lasting peace and reconciliation in Darfur.

98. The security and humanitarian situation continues to be of concern. Humanitarian aid workers as well as UNAMID personnel and assets have been at increasing risk during the reporting period. On 8 July 2008, seven peacekeepers were killed and 22 wounded as a result of a deliberate and well-organized attack on a UNAMID patrol near Shangil Tobaya. This is the most serious attack against UNAMID since the Mission assumed its responsibilities on 31 December 2007. The prevailing insecurity has also led to the shrinking of humanitarian access, thus increasing the hardships of the affected people.

99. UNAMID continued its build-up and, with the assistance of the Government of the Sudan, it has achieved its targeted strength of 60 per cent deployment of uniformed personnel (military and police) by end-year. The establishment of a Tripartite Committee, consisting of the Government of Sudan, the AU Commission and the United Nations, along with the appointment of a full-time Government liaison officer to El Fasher, has contributed significantly to the deployment of the Mission, with a number of key arrangements having

been concluded. As at 31 December 2008, the total strength of UNAMID stood at 12,374 military personnel and 2,757 police personnel.

h. Relations Sudan -Tchad

100. In Sharm EL-Sheikh, I informed Council of the break-off of diplomatic relations between Chad and The Sudan and the subsequent closure of their common border following the attack perpetrated in May 2008 by the Movement for Justice and Equality (JEM) against Omdurman and the outskirts of Khartoum. The two countries then traded accusations of subversive activities.

101. I am pleased to note that the Contact Group established by the March 2008 Dakar Agreement met at ministerial level and at the level of defence, security and intelligence experts tasked to study and plan the rapid establishment of peace and security force at the border between the two countries. Meetings were successively held in Brazzaville in June 2008, Dakar in July 2008 and Asmara in September 2008. The AU took part in all these meetings. Among other recommendations, the Contact Group at its Brazzaville meeting called on the two countries to refrain from any press declaration likely to worsen their differences and to renew their diplomatic relations. In Dakar, the Group was informed of the acceptance by President Omar Hassan Al Bashir of the resumption of diplomatic relations with Chad, and decided to sensitize the international community on its activities as well as the logistical and financial problems it was facing.

102. Following the reestablishment of diplomatic relations between Chad and The Sudan which was formalized by the exchange of their respective Ambassadors on 9 November 2008, the sixth meeting of the Contact Group took place in N'Djamena on 15 November 2008. It was preceded from 12 to 14 November by the 4th Defence, Security and Intelligence experts' Planning Meeting, the conclusions of which were adopted by the Contact Group together with the budget for the deployment of the peace and security force amounting to USD 21 million. Lastly, the Group decided to hold its 7th meeting in Khartoum.

103. Pursuant to the decision on the relations between Chad and The Sudan adopted by the 138th meeting of the PSC held in Sharm El-Sheikh on 29 June 2008, the Commission dispatched a delegation led by the former President of Burundi, Mr. Pierre Buyoya, to Chad from 10 to 16 October and from 25 to 28 November 2008, and to The Sudan from 2 to 9 November 2008. The delegation was received in audience by President Idriss Deby Itno and had working sessions with high Sudanese and Chadian government officials as well as with the representatives of the international community and other stakeholders. The authorities of the two countries retreated their commitment to normalizing their diplomatic relations and ensuring that no hostile action is carried out against their respective territories from either side of their common border. I urge The Sudan and Chad to persevere in their efforts. I commend the Contact Group for the remarkable work done and encourage it to pursue its efforts.

104. In Chad, the security situation is generally calm. However there have been a few skirmishes between the Chadian National Army and the rebel groups. In the eastern part

of the country the situation is mainly characterized by the proliferation of acts of banditry with attacks targeting humanitarian convoys and even EUFOR. As regards the Government – Opposition political dialogue, the latter continues through the 13 August 2007 Agreement Follow-up Committee. It is worth noting that a Protocol for the Implementation of the 25 October 2008 Sirte Agreement was signed between the Government and a faction of the “Rassemblement des forces pour le changement” (RFC) in Iriba on 18 October 2008. Some factions of the “Mouvement pour la démocratie et la justice au Tchad” (MDJT) also signed a Protocol on 2 December 2008.

105. Furthermore, the Commission of Enquiry set up to investigate the events that took place in the Republic of Chad from 28 January to 8 February 2008 and their consequences submitted its report to President Idriss Deby itno on 5 August 2008. Concerning Ibni Oumar Mahamat Saleh, spokesperson of the “Coordination des partis politiques pour la defense de la constitution” (CPDC), and a political opponent about whom there is no news until now, the Commission concluded that “of the political opponents kidnapped on 3 February 2008, he is the only one who has not reappeared and is presumed dead”.

i. Central African Republic (CAR)

106. The reporting period was marked by the pursuit of peace efforts in the Central African Republic under the mediation of President El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Committee on Central African issues in the CEMAC zone. It is worth recalling that the Government and the “l’Armee populaire pour la restauration de la democratie” (APRD) and the “l’Union des force democratiques pour le rassemblement” (UFDR) had reached a Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Libreville on 21 June 2008. In December 2008, the “Mouvement des liberateurs centrafricains pour la justice” (MLCJ) and the “l’Union des forces republicaines” (UFR) also signed the said Agreement in Bangui on the fringes of the All-Inclusive Political Dialogue (IPD). However, the le Front democratiique du peuple centrafricain (FDPC) has yet to sign the Agreement. The security situation has improved significantly save the recurrent problem of highway robbery and a few sporadic clashes between the Central African Republic Armed Forces (FACA) and armed groups.

107. It was against this background and following the promulgation of an amnesty law in September 2008 by President Francois Bozize that All-Inclusive Political Dialogue (IPD) took place in Bangui from 8 to 20 September 2008. President El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba participated in the opening and closing sessions of the IPD. The dialogue brought together almost all the political actors of the Central African Republic and leaders of the armed groups, notably former President Ange-Felix Patasse, Mr. Jean-Jacques Demafouth of APRD, Abdoulaye Miskine of FDPC and Zakari Damane of UFDR. The deliberations were chaired by the former President of Burundi, Mr. Pierre Buyoya. The participants among other recommendations agreed to form a government that includes all the entities which took part in the IPD, review the electoral code, establish an Independent Electoral Commission, as well as putting in place a demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programme and a time table for the reform of the security sector.

108. The AU participated in the IPD. My Special Envoy for CAR, Sadok Fayala went to Bangui to reiterate AU support to the Central African parties. The Commission also made a second contribution of USD 50,000, thus bringing to USD 100,000 AU's total financial contribution to the success of the IPD. My Special Envoy also participated in the meeting of the Special Envoys/Representatives for CAR of the United Nations, the African Union, the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF) and of President El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba. The objective of the meeting was to ensure a better coordination of efforts aimed at promoting peace and stability in the Central African Republic.

109. The Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa Mission (MICOPAX 1) which replaced CEMAC Multinational Force (FOMUC) has been operational since July 2008. MICOPAX is expected to help stabilize the security situation and support the authorities of the Central African Republic in their efforts to promote political dialogue and peace, as well as national reconciliation and economic recovery. In this regard, the Commission gave its backing to the request submitted by the General Secretariat of CEEAC soliciting funding for MICOPAX 1 activities for 2009 to the tune of Euro 15 million within the context of the Africa Peace Facility.

110. The United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) completed its deployment in N'Djamena and Abeche (Chad) and in Bangui (CAR), and is in the process of deploying in Goz Beida, Farchana (Chad) and in Birao (CAR). The EU military operation in CAR and Chad (EUFOR CHAD/CAR) which has been ongoing since 2008 comes to an end on 15 March 2009. In view of the vacuum that might be created following the withdrawal of EUFOR, the United Nations Secretary General recommended to the Security Council to strengthen MINURCAT mandate and to envisage the creation of a force of about 5,000 men to take over from EUFOR.

j. Liberia

111. The Commission has continued to follow closely the situation in Liberia, in particular the post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building efforts in the country. The reporting period was marked by significant progress in the implementation of the security sector reform, with the completion of the recruitment of the elements of the new Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and the activation of the force, the elaboration of new military training programmes and the adoption of a new National Defence Act. The Government is also developing a national security plan as part of its SSR strategy to guarantee adequate security internally and at its borders. Furthermore, the final phase of the DDRR programme was launched on 6 October 2008 by President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, with the aim of filling initial gaps in the DDRR programme and addressing the residual case-load of disarmed and demobilized ex-combatants who have not accessed their reintegration benefits in the programme.

112. On 29 September 2008, the Security Council adopted resolution 1836(2008) in which it decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) until 30 September 2009. In that resolution, the Security Council endorsed the recommendation of the UN Secretary-General for a reduction of an additional 1,460 personnel from the Mission's military component. At the same time, it authorized an

increase in the strength of UNMIL's police component, in order to provide strategic advice and expertise in specialized fields, as well as provide support to regular policing activities and react to urgent security incidents.

113. In August 2008, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf signed into law an Act establishing the Liberian Anti-Corruption Commission. At the same time, the Government, together with its partners, developed a comprehensive anti-corruption strategy. The Government has also launched a three-year civil service reform strategy to ensure the revitalization of the civil service after years of devastation. Furthermore, the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is expected to complete its final report by 21 December 2008 for subsequent submission to the National Legislature as provided for in its mandate.

114. Efforts continue to be made towards the economic revitalization of the country. On 26 June 2008, a Liberian Poverty Reduction Forum (LPRF) was held in Berlin, during which President Johnson-Sirleaf presented the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) initiated in April 2008. Although the implementation of the PRS is facing several challenges, the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has registered a significant increase, while its external debt has substantially reduced. Infrastructure and basic social services continue to see some improvements, though at a slow pace.

115. In conclusion, I would like, once again, to pay tribute to President Johnson-Sirleaf for her leadership and efforts. I appeal to the international community to continue to support the ongoing efforts at peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction. On its part, at the time of finalizing this report, the Commission was making preparations to dispatch a multi-disciplinary team of experts to assess the post-conflict reconstruction needs of Liberia and make recommendations on how the AU and its member States could best support the country. At the request of the Sierra Leonean authorities, the scope of the mission has also been extended to cover Sierra Leone.

k. Cote d'Ivoire

116. At its 11th Ordinary Session held in Sharm El Sheikh, the Assembly of the Union hailed the progress achieved in the implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and its Supplementary Agreements. The Assembly encouraged the Ivorian parties to do all they can to respect the deadline of 30 November for the holding of the presidential election, and to take all the necessary steps for issues pending in the peace process to be resolved.

117. The deadline could not be respected due to technical, logistics and financial difficulties that delayed the identification operation which, coupled with voter enrolment, could not kick off until 15 and 29 September 2008 in 7 areas of the country and Abidjan district. Yet, according to the initial calendar, the provisional electoral register had to be published on 31 August 2008 and the final one on 15 November 2008. Not until mid-November was the identification and census of voters launched in Bouaké, before being extended to the rest of the country in December 2008.

118. Once the identification operation was launched, logistic and organizational difficulties surfaced. It should be pointed out that the operation is taking place in 11,000 registration points spread throughout the country; they send their data to 70 regional collection centres which, in turn, forward the data compiled to the central processing point in Abidjan. “Sagem Sécurité”, the technical operator, put in service 6,000 computerized records kits, some of which are fixed while others are mobile.

119. At the same time, from 27 August to 25 September 2008, the catch-up mobile court hearings were conducted, while the recompilation of civil status registries that had disappeared or were partially or totally destroyed continued. Finally, meeting in Ouagadougou on 10 November 2008, the Permanent Concertation Framework (CPC) asked the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to propose a new calendar for the identification and census of voters so that a new date can be fixed for the holding of the presidential election.

120. Meanwhile, the various political parties have designated their candidates for the presidential election. They are President Laurent Gbagbo for the FPI, Alassane Dramane Ouattara for the RDR, Henri Konan Bédié for the PDCI-RDA, Dr. Mabri Toikeusse for the UDPCI and Dr. Francis Wodié for the PIT. For their part, the New Forces, during a seminar held in Bouaké on 11 October 2008, made several recommendations, including the postponement of the date of the presidential election.

121. There has been little progress in the implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and its Supplementary Agreements with respect to the components regarding to the disarming of former combatants, the disarming and dismantling of militia, as well as the restructuring of the Defence and Security Forces. Moreover, while the implementation of the Community Reintegration and Rehabilitation Programme (PNRRC) and the National Civic Service Programme is underway, there has not been enough funding enabling them to fully realize their ambitions. Similarly, the redeployment of the Administration and the restoration of State authority are not yet complete.

122. Lastly, it is worth mentioning the conclusion, in Ouagadougou, on 22 December 2008, between the presidential side and the New Forces, of the Fourth Supplementary Agreement to the Ouagadougou Political Agreement. It provides solutions to issues pending, relating notably to quotas for integration of FAFN units in the new army and the military ranks of FAFN servicemen who were members of the Defence and Security Forces, the disarming of former combatants and the dismantling of militia, the effective restoration of State authority as well as the redeployment of the judicial, tax and customs services throughout the country.

I. Republic of Guinea

123. Shortly after the announcement of the death of President Lansana Conte, on 23 December 2008, by the President of the National Assembly, constitutional heir, in the presence of the Prime Minister and the Chief of General Staff of the Army, a group of officers, grouped within a National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD), stated in a communiqué that it had taken power in Guinea. In the communiqué, the CNDD

also announced the dissolution of the Government and of all institutions, and the suspension of the Constitution as well as of the activities of political parties and trade unions. The announcement was followed by contradictory statements made by the Prime Minister, the President of the National Assembly and the Chief of General Staff, thus creating a state of confusion and giving the impression that it was an attempt rather than an effective coup d'état.

124. Against this background, the PSC, meeting on 24 December, condemned what still seemed to be an attempted coup d'état, and demanded respect for Guinea's Constitution, including the provisions relating to succession at the helm of State. In this regard, it should be recalled that Article 34 of the Guinean Constitution stipulates that in the event of vacancy of power, the President of the National Assembly shall assume the interim.

125. Thereafter, the situation gathered momentum. Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, who until then was the spokesman of the CNDD, became head of the structure, and then proclaimed himself President of the Republic, Head of State. Since then, he has pledged to organize free, credible and transparent presidential elections at the end of December 2010. No member of the CNDD would be candidate.

126. As the situation unfolded, the PSC once more met, on 29 December 2008, to consider recent developments. Council, among others, and in conformity with relevant AU instruments, decided to suspend Guinea from participating in AU activities until constitutional order is restored in the country. The PSC urged me to carry on, in close collaboration with countries of the region, with the efforts I had initiated towards the restoration of constitutional order. In this respect, I wish to point out that I was able to hold talks with the authors of the coup d'état in Conakry, on the fringe of the funeral ceremony of President Conté which I attended, alongside other leaders of the region. On that occasion, I reiterated the AU's position on unconstitutional changes of government and the need to rapidly restore legality.

m. Guinea Bissau

127. Efforts aimed at consolidating peace and enhancing the democratic process in Guinea Bissau recorded significant progress, following the organization, on 16 November 2008, of legislative elections. All international observers, including those of the AU, deemed that the process was satisfactory. Of the 100 seats at the People's National Assembly, the provisional results proclaimed on 21 November 2008 gave 67 to the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), 28 to the Social Renovation Party (PRS), 3 to the Republican Party for Independence and Development (PRID), 1 to the Party for New Democracy (PND) and 1 to the Democracy Alliance (AD), a coalition of small parties.

128. It was against this background that the residence of President Joao Bernado Vieira came under attack. It should be pointed out that the attack was staged at a time when the political atmosphere was marked by high tension among the country's main political leaders. When informed of the situation, I immediately condemned the attack and reiterated the fact that the AU rejects any attempt to take power by force. Thereafter, I sent

an emissary, in the person of Mr Francisco Madeira, Minister in the Office of the President of Mozambique, to Guinea Bissau to convey to President Vieira the support and solidarity of the AU and to assess the situation. The emissary also went to Dakar and Ouagadougou where he held consultations with the Senegalese and Burkinabe authorities on how the AU could get more involved in efforts already undertaken at regional level.

129. The 163rd meeting PSC held on 22 December 2008 gave its support to President Vieira and invited him and the entire political class to proceed, on the basis of the definitive results of the 16 November 2008 legislative elections, to forming a new people's National Assembly and a new Government, so as to permit a return to normal political life in the country. The PSC also expressed concern over the persistence and aggravation of drug trafficking in the country, and called on the authorities of Guinea-Bissau to cooperate with the international community to reduce this scourge. The PSC further launched an urgent appeal to Member States and the AU's bilateral and multilateral partners to assist Guinea-Bissau to reorganize its security services.

130. In conclusion, Guinea-Bissau must overcome several challenges at the political, security and socio-economic levels. I would like to seize this opportunity to reiterate my support to the authorities of Guinea-Bissau and to assure them of the AU's commitment to make every effort to contribute to the consolidation of the democratic achievements and to the social and economic recovery of the country. I urge the international community to lend increased assistance to this country.

n. Mauritania

131. On 6 August 2008, another coup d'état took place in Mauritania, overthrowing the democratically elected government of President Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi. This coup was led by General Ould Abdel Aziz, who hitherto was the head of the Presidential Guard. It occurred shortly after the President decided to relieve the latter, and other general officers, of their duties. The Council will recall that the election of President Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi had crowned the exemplary transition supported by the AU and other members of the international community. Pursuant to relevant AU instruments, the PSC and I have strongly condemned this coup; furthermore, the PSC suspended Mauritania from AU activities.

132. Nearly five months following the coup d'état, and in spite of sustained efforts by the AU, with international partner support and including visits the Commissioner for Peace and Security and I made to Nouakchott, no progress was recorded in respect of a return to constitutional order. During its 151st meeting held in New York, on 22 September 2008, the PSC, among others, called for a return to constitutional order and the reinstatement of President Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi to his office by 6 October 2008 latest; it also declared null and void all measures of a constitutional, institutional and legislative nature which had been taken by the military authorities; and instantly demanded all AU Member States and the entire international community to consider as illegitimate and illegal all actions and initiatives of the perpetrators of the coup d'état that seek to foil attempts to restore constitutional order.

133. In a letter they sent to me on 28 September 2008, the authorities emanating from the coup d'etat indicated that they had taken note of PSC's decision and stated their willingness to pursue the dialogue. On 7 October 2008, I received, in Addis Ababa, a delegation from these authorities emanating from the coup d'etat. On that occasion, once more, I asked these authorities to reconsider their attitude and to consider the full import of the determination of the AU and its Member States to reject the *fait accompli*. On 26 October 2008, President Jakaya Kikwete, in his capacity as Chairperson of the Union, received emissaries sent by the authorities emanating from the coup d'etat. He seized that occasion to reiterate the AU's position and underscored that no African Government will recognize the current authorities, if they choose to maintain the status quo. At the beginning of the month of November 2008, a delegation from the authorities emanating from the coup d'etat arrived in Addis Ababa, this time, submitting proposals for the post-crisis stage. These proposals have since been judged inadequate by the international community.

134. I would also like to indicate that the Commission has maintained close contacts with Mauritanian parties opposed to the coup d'etat. In that connection, on 26 November 2008, I received a delegation of the *Front national pour la défense de la démocratie* (FNDD), led by the President of the National Assembly, Mr. Messaoud Ould Boulkheir. On that occasion, I reaffirmed the AU's policy stance, as well as its determination to take all steps to turn a new leaf on coups d'etat in Africa.

135. Meanwhile, pursuant to Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, the consultations initiated in Paris from 18 to 20 October 2008, between, on the one hand, the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of Countries and the EU and, on the other hand, Mauritania, failed to produce the expected outcomes. In that regard, the EU proposed to the Mauritanian party to keep open the consultations for a period of one month. During that period of time, if there were no new elements, the consultations would be closed and appropriate measures would be proposed to EU policy organs.

136. In managing the crisis generated by the coup d'etat of 6 August 2008, the Commission strove to mobilize the international community in support of the AU's stance. It is within that framework that several consultative meetings were held at the initiative of the AU between the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the OIF, the Arab League, the United Nations and the EU. As a follow-up to these meetings, a delegation led by the AU travelled to Mauritania from 5 to 7 December 2008 and, on that occasion, met with President Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi and General Ould Abdel Aziz. However, no progress was recorded in the search for a solution consistent with elements for the post-crisis stage, as stated by the international community, namely the unconditional release of President Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi, his right to make contributions in his capacity as President to the search for a solution, the involvement of all stakeholders and the full compliance with the Mauritanian Constitution.

137. On 24 December, the *de facto* authorities announced the release of President Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi, who had hitherto been under house arrest in his native village, Lemden, where he had been transferred to on 13 November 2008, after several weeks in detention in Nouakchott. Since then, President Sidi has several times reaffirmed his

determination to foil the coup d'état and called on the international community, particularly the AU, to restore constitutional order in Mauritania. On 27 December, the authorities emanating from the coup d'état declared that they had convened the States General on democracy, for the purpose of discussing modalities for a return to constitutional order. The political forces opposed to the coup d'état have decided to reject that meeting on grounds that the intention was to legitimize the coup d'état.

138. During its 163rd meeting held on 22 December 2008, the PSC noted that President Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi had been released from detention, but deemed that such a development was not a sufficient factor for a return to constitutional order. In that regard, the PSC decided that, if by 5 February 2009, constitutional order had not been restored, measures, including restrictions on travel and the freezing of assets, would be imposed on all persons, both civil and military, whose activities sought to maintain the anti-constitutional status quo.

o. Western Sahara

139. In the reporting period, no progress has been made towards the resolution of the dispute over Western Sahara. As Council is aware, the period over the last one and half years has witnessed the adoption, by the UN Security Council, of three important resolutions - 1754 of April 2007, 1783 of October 2007 and 1813 of April 2008, on the basis of which direct negotiations were launched between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO. The purpose of the talks is to achieve *a just and mutually acceptable political solution, whose objective would be to 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.*

140. Four rounds of direct negotiations have since been held in Manhasset, New York, under the chairmanship of Ambassador van Walsum, the Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Western Sahara, but without any progress. However, the two parties have agreed to meet for a 5th round, at the same venue and at a time to be determined through consultations.

141. The delay in the convening of the 5th round of the negotiations is largely due to the fact that the position of Personal Envoy had suddenly fallen vacant, as a result of Ambassador van Walsum's exit from his responsibilities as mediator. It will be remembered that, during the sitting of the Security Council last April, at which the report of the UN Secretary-General on Western Sahara was considered, the-then Personal Envoy submitted a note to the members of the Council containing what, he had said, were his assessment of the peace process and his conclusions thereon. It subsequently became apparent that the suggestions proposed as a solution for the dispute by the Personal Envoy did not conform to established UN principles pertaining to the disposal of non-self-governing territories. The upshot arising out of that controversy was indeed the loss of confidence in the integrity of the Personal Envoy by one of the protagonists in the dispute, which, subsequently, declared its unwillingness to participate in any future talks that he would convene. The subsequent appointment of a new Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General was delayed seemingly due to the desire of the other party to reach

prior understanding on the way forward. After further consultations with the parties, the UN Secretary-General has now announced the appointment of a new Personal Envoy for Western Sahara in the person of Ambassador Christopher Ross of the United States.

142. It is the ardent hope of the AU that the negotiations between the parties can resume forthwith. The talks must not be turned into yet another illustration of a missed opportunity but rather one of resolve in the challenge to achieve progress that is in full accord with international legality.

p. Zimbabwe

143. In Sharm El-Sheikh, the Assembly of the Union discussed extensively the situation in Zimbabwe, in light of the elections that took place in March and June 2008 and other related developments, including the conclusions of the observer missions deployed by the AU, SADC and the Pan-African Parliament. At the end of its deliberations, the Assembly adopted a decision in which it encouraged President Robert Mugabe and the leader of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T), Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai, to honor their commitments to initiate dialogue with a view to promoting peace, stability, democracy and reconciliation of the Zimbabwean people; echoed the call for the creation of a Government of National Unity; and expressed support for the SADC facilitation, recommending, in this respect, the continuation of SADC mediation efforts and the establishment of a mechanism on the ground in order to seize the momentum for a negotiated solution.

144. As a follow-up to this decision, I travelled to Harare and Pretoria, in mid-July 2008. During my consultations, the Facilitator, President Thabo Mbeki, agreed to establish a Reference Group consisting of representatives of the AU, SADC and the United Nations to assist the mediation efforts. On 23 July 2008, I appointed Amb. Seydina Oumar Sy, former Foreign Minister of Senegal, as my representative to the Reference Group.

145. To facilitate the negotiations, Mr. Thabo Mbeki appointed a three-member mediation team. After protracted negotiations focusing on the nature of a new Constitution, the duration of a transitional arrangement, the rule of law, and the establishment of state organs and a new executive authority, the parties, namely, the ZANU-PF, the MDC-T and that of Mr. Arthur Mutambara (MDC-M), signed, in Harare, on 15 September 2008, a Global Peace Agreement (GPA). I attended the signing ceremony, along with the Chairperson of the Union, President Kikwete, the Facilitator and other regional leaders.

146. However, to date, no progress has been made in the implementation of the power sharing agreement, due mainly to differences among the parties on the allocation of ministerial portfolios, including the Ministry of Home Affairs. Indeed, while the GPA addressed the number of cabinet portfolios and other related issues, it remained silent on their allocation. As part of the efforts to overcome this stalemate, the Extraordinary Summit of the SADC Heads of State and Government, held in Sandton, South Africa, on 9 November 2008, decided that the inclusive Government be formed forthwith and that the Ministry of Home Affairs be co-managed between the ZANU-PF and the MDC-T, with the understanding that the efficacy of the arrangement would be reviewed after six months.

The MDC (T) rejected this proposal. In addition, the MDC-T continues to complain about persistent violence and other human right violations, including detention of its members.

147. At its meeting referred to above, SADC noted that the delay in the formation of a Government has made it impossible for Zimbabwe to address the challenges facing its people. On its part, the Panel of the Wise, at its meeting held in Nairobi at the end of November 2008, expressed concern at the prevailing humanitarian and socio-economic situation in the country, and called on SADC and the AU to instil a new sense of urgency to their efforts aimed at overcoming the current obstacle in the implementation of the power sharing agreement. I would like to echo these concerns and stress the need for renewed efforts to assist the Zimbabwean parties overcome their differences. In this respect, I welcomed the efforts being made by SADC and its Facilitator to move forward the process of implementation of the Global Peace Agreement. I also welcome the agreement reached by the parties, in early December 2008, on Amendment 19 of the Zimbabwean Constitution to accommodate the new changes accruing from the power sharing agreement, and its gazetting on 18 December 2008, a step which will then be followed by the constitutional change, once it is tabled in Parliament when it sits in early 2009.

4. Prevention and combating of terrorism

148. The Commission has continued its efforts aimed at preventing and combating terrorism, based on the relevant AU instruments. During the period under review, the focus was on the elaboration of an AU Model Law, within the framework of the AU Plan of Action on the prevention and combating of terrorism, which was adopted in 2002. Steps are underway to convene a meeting in April this year to review the Draft Model Law.

149. The Commission has also continued to monitor related developments in the world. In this respect, mention should be made of the Mumbai attacks in November 2008. I sent a message of condolences and support to the Indian Prime Minister. I would like to reiterate AU strong condemnation of this terrorist attack and to stress the need for more concerted action at international level to address this scourge.

150. As noted previously, the Commission has initiated the process of establishing an appropriate modality for operationalization of Article 20 of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) Protocol that provides for civil society support for the work of the Peace and Security Council of the Union. The Commission has been working on the practical modalities in this respect in consultation with all stakeholders. A final CSO review meeting was held in Lusaka, Zambia, from 27 to 29 November 2008 to work with the Commission to consolidate a framework document that was submitted to a Peace and Security Council (PSC) retreat in Lusaka, Zambia, on 4-5 December 2008. The outcome document is to be presented for consideration by the policy organs of the Union so as to enable effective civil society participation in the peace and security agenda of the Union.

151. In the area of Peace and Security, the Washington Office monitored the reaction and approach of various stakeholders to developments in the continent. Of particular interest were the situation in Mauritania in the aftermath of the coup d'état, the prevailing

situation in Zimbabwe in the aftermath of the run-off election, African Union's mediating role, as well as the situation in Darfur, Somalia and Eastern DRC.

152. In its engagement and interactions with various stakeholders, the Office defended AU positions contained in the Decisions of the African Union Summit held in Sharm-El-Sheik as well as those of the African Union Peace and Security Council, all of which were widely disseminated. These engagements and interactions were both instructive and useful in clarifying African Union positions as well as shaping US policy options. Particularly noteworthy is a meeting, facilitated by the Washington Office, between the Chairperson of the Commission and the Deputy Secretary of State which provided an important forum and opportunity, at the highest political level, to clarify AU positions and also address the concerns of the US Administration pertaining to specific conflict situations in the continent.

153. The Washington Office participated in the Inaugural Ceremony for establishment of the Africa Command (AFRICOM) held in Stuttgart, Germany. Prior to that and during the conception process of AFRICOM, the Office seized every opportunity by way of bilateral consultations and other platforms to raise concern about the unilateral character of the consultations around AFRICOM. Other concerns which were also communicated to the Commission related to the lack of clear understanding of the objectives, as well as the relationship between AFRICOM and the Regional and Continental Security Architectures as well as the mechanism for coordination with other actors on the ground.

154. The Washington Office, through its Policy Forums, will continue to engage various stakeholders in matters of peace and security in the continent. Regular interaction and dialogue at the highest policy and decision-making levels of the AUC and the US Administration would be of strategic importance to align AU positions with US Policies.

155. The Washington Office will continue to monitor developments on AFRICOM against the backdrop of strong reservations from a number of civil society and non-governmental organizations. These groups continue to carry out advocacy campaigns against AFRICOM borne out of their conviction that AFRICOM is a "militarization and re-colonization of the continent."

Peace Process in Palestine and the Middle East

156. Working directly with its Permanent Mission in Cairo, the Commission has continued to carry out enlightenment activities in close cooperation with the relevant Departments of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, Arab diplomatic missions accredited to the League of Arab States with African Union support to the Palestinian Question and the efforts deployed to find a just solution to this issue, in accordance with the decision of the Assembly of the Union on support to Arab peace initiatives.

157. Arab Foreign Ministers meeting in its 130th session, welcomed African Union position and the efforts deployed by the Chairperson of the Commission in this direction.

158. The AU Mission in New York also continued to monitor UN efforts, particularly those of the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which organized the United Nations International Meeting on the question of Palestine in Malta in June 2008. The meeting reiterated the need for a peace agreement that would result in the end of the occupation and conflict, and the creation of a Palestinian State living side by side in peace with the State of Israel. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People further organized the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 24 November 2008 to voice their unrelenting support for the aspirations of the Palestinian people, including the rights to self-determination and sovereignty and to the return of Palestinian refugees.

159. The Commission, through its Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) which is located under the Office of the Chairperson and which acts as an interface between the Commission and CISSA Secretariat, undertook and participated in the following activities:

- (i) Analysis and advise on crisis situations in Somalia, Darfur, Côte d'Ivoire, DRC, Genocide Ideology and activities of some rogue NGOs produced by the CISSA Secretariat;
- (ii) Support to election observer teams in some Member States and analysis and prognosis of their outcomes and post election scenarios;
- (iii) Attendance to a Workshop on the Octopus Interface Conference on Cooperation against Cyber Crime held in Strasbourg, France, in April 2008;
- (iv) Attendance at the Workshops on Cyber Crime legislation and capacity building for West and Central African States, and for East and Southern African States held in Cotonou, Benin, in July and in Nairobi, Kenya, in December, respectively, organized by the US Department of Justice in conjunction with the Council of Europe;
- (v) Attendance at the 77th INTERPOL General Assembly held in Saint Petersburg, Russia in October 2008 and preparation of an analysis on the implementation on the MoU between the AUC and INTERPOL;
- (vi) Participation in the meeting of the ECOWAS experts and the Ministerial conference on drug trafficking (narcotics) in West Africa held in Praia, Cape Verde in October 2008.
- (vii) Participation in the fact-finding mission led by former President Pierre Buyoya to Khartoum (The Sudan) and Ndjamena (Chad) in October and November, for implementation of Decision 138 of the PSC (Sharm-el-Sheikh) on the relationship between The Sudan and Chad;

II. REGIONAL INTEGRATION, DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION

III.1 INTEGRATION AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

1. EDUCATION

160. The Commission has pursued its efforts to implement the Plan of Action of the Second Decade of Education for Africa and the recommendations of COMEDAF as endorsed by Assembly Decision *Assembly/AU/Dec. 174(X)* on the Establishment of the African Education, Science and Technology Fund.

a) Education Management Information Systems (EMIS)

161. Education Management Information Systems (EMIS) is perhaps the most strategically important area of focus in the second decade of education for Africa, since it is impossible to plan appropriately for what cannot be measured. Furthermore, as information is power, Africa needs to take charge of its own statistics in every area, including the area of education. Accurate, quality, timely data and information are essential for knowledge based planning and programme interventions. It is through a robust continental EMIS linked to RECs and country levels that Africa will assess its progress and ensure attainment of its vision for the end of the Second Decade of Education, and beyond. For this reason, the Commission has begun building the capacity of the Pan-African Institute of Education for Africa (IPED), to function as Africa's Education Observatory. The Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) is a key partner, providing technical support in this area of EMIS.

162. In order to build the capacity of Member States in Education Management Information Systems, it is necessary to first assess the current capacity. In this regard, the "African EMIS Assessment Tool" was developed and a pilot study launched in May 2008 to assess the capacity of Member States in the area of education statistics from a sample of 13 Member States, comprising two from each of the five geographical regions of the continent and COMEDAF Bureau member countries. The response has been slow. ADEA will support the analysis of the surveys and produce the final report. Meanwhile, the same study was done with all SADC Member States and the responses are currently being analyzed.

163. Indicators for monitoring the performance of member states in the second decade of education for Africa (and beyond) were also developed with intensive liaison with key partners including ADEA, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and UNESCO Pole de Dakar, and the RECs. The document was presented for validation to experts in a workshop convened in Addis Ababa in August 2008, with participants from 18 member states, three RECs, relevant specialised agencies of the AU; strategic partners ADEA, UNICEF, UNESCO and other institutions namely the Conference of Ministers of Education of Countries having French as a Common Language (CONFEMEN) through its Program for the Analysis of the Educational Systems (PASEC) and the United Nations Economic Community for Africa (UNECA) African Centre for Statistics (ACS). Technical input from

the workshop has been incorporated into the Indicators document. There is need to prioritise the indicators and identify which will be used in the immediate term, which need to be tested first and which will be used only in the longer term, based on known capacity of member states, and the need to have the first “Africa Eye on Education Report” at the COMEDAF IV scheduled to be held in November 2009. An EMIS tool for producing the continental education report has been customised by ADEA, and endorsed by experts at the above-mentioned workshop. The tool has been named “Africa Eye on Education”, and is based on the freeware InfoDev designed by UNICEF.

164. The capacity building process for IPED has begun. Currently, a senior finance officer from the Commission is stationed in Kinshasa to establish resource management systems and begin renovating and equipping the institution.

165. In the same vein, a new structure for the International Centre for the Education of Girls and Women in Africa (CIEFFA) has been proposed for approval, pending which, short term consultancy contracts with existing and other relevant staff will be used in the interim.

b) Higher Education

166. Following the validation workshop for the African Quality Rating Mechanism and Harmonization Strategy for Higher Education held in Accra, Ghana, March 2008, the Commission sent out the Arusha Convention as revised by UNESCO, to all member states for their comments. The Arusha Convention is an instrument for recognition of degrees and certificates in higher education across African countries. It will be finalised after Member States provide their inputs, to engender ownership and ensure that the new Convention meets their aspirations to facilitate its early ratification and implementation.

167. The Commission has finalised contracts with successful students for the first batch of Mwalimu Nyerere African Union Scholarship Scheme. Contacting the students and institutions, and getting the appropriate information and documentation has been particularly challenging. It is expected that first payments will be completed before end of 2008, before the second call is made. After a series of teleconferences, terms of reference have been produced in collaboration with the European Commission, to carry out a feasibility study on the collaboration between MNAUSS and the European Erasmus Mundus Scheme. This is necessary to ensure harmony in the different modalities of operation.

c) The Pan-African University (PAU)

168. To contribute towards revitalisation of higher education in Africa, as spelt out in the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa, the Commission has developed a concept paper on the establishment of Pan African University networks. The PAU aims at promoting Science and Technology in the continent and linking scientific research and innovation to economic development.

169. In essence, the PAU will be networks of thematic universities and satellite campuses linked up to central campuses located in each one of the five geographical regions of the continent, based on regional interest and comparative advantage. Thematic priorities have been selected from the Africa's Consolidated Plan of Action for Science and Technology, namely science, technology and innovation; water and energy; life and earth sciences; space science; and human and social sciences.

170. A meeting of experts was held in October 2008 to refine the concept document, which was subsequently presented to the Deans of African Ambassadors to the AU, and to the Bureau of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF). The Commission will carry out a feasibility study and engage more intensively on the concept before implementation.

d. Gender and Culture

171. A continental situational analysis of gender and culture in education was commissioned by the Commission. Based on the situational analysis and the POA, an implementation strategy will be drafted and presented for technical validation at an experts workshop to be hosted by the AU's International Centre for the Education of Girls and Women in Africa (CIEFFA) in April 2009, in Burkina Faso. The strategy will be the basis for CIEFFA's programme of activities and the establishment of the partnership with the Foundation for African Women Educationists (FAWE).

172. The Commission has carried out an audit visit in November 2008 to CIEFFA, which will inform the action plan for building CIEFFA's capacity to play its role as specialised institution of the AU, including establishment of appropriate resource management systems, compatible with those of the Commission. In this regard, a new structure for CIEFFA has been submitted for approval to the policy-making organs. Meanwhile, a Memorandum of Understanding with the Foundation for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) has been signed.

e. Teacher Development

173. An experts' workshop, co-hosted by the AU's New Partnership for Africa's development (NEPAD) in Pretoria, was held in June 2008. This meeting brought together African experts from Member States, RECs, teacher development institutions as well as Civil Society. The outcome of the meeting was an implementation strategy for addressing the African teacher challenge in Science, Mathematics and Technology; as well as a strategy for teacher development through Open and Distance Learning. Collaboration was initiated with a number of institutions, including the African Council for Distance Education, Commonwealth Secretariat, Pan African Teachers' Centre, Centre for Mathematics and Science Education in Africa, and Education International, among others. It was agreed that the Commonwealth Protocol on Teacher Mobility be used to prepare a continent-wide framework for enhancing teacher mobility from countries that have excess to those that are in need. The continental framework will cover issues of recognition of certification, welfare and security of the teachers.

174. Discussions have been held with the Ambassador of Japan in Addis Ababa and with the Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEА) on collaboration in the area of strengthening the teaching of Science and Technology, which will be pursued in 2009. The Commission participated in a CEMASTEА conference and assessed its programme as useful for implementing the Second Decade of Education for Africa.

f. Curriculum and Teaching and Learning Materials

175. The First Pan African Conference on Literacy, Curriculum and Book Centre Development in Africa, sponsored by the East African Book Development Association, will be held in March 2009 and will bring together key players in African educational publishing to develop a continental Book Policy and framework for national and regional book policies. It will also come up with practical strategies for strengthening African production and publishing of educational materials, which should reflect African values; reviving academic journals in African universities; enhancing intra-African collaboration in the educational book sector; strengthening African languages in the education system and enhancing access of quality reading material. The British Department for International Development (DFID) has expressed support for the conference. UNICEF has requested its country offices to support participation of experts.

g. Other activities

176. The Commission convened the second ordinary session of the Bureau of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF) in November 2008. The Bureau considered the progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa and made recommendations on capacity building and partnerships. COMEDAF IV will be held in November 2009 in Kenya. The Ministers committed themselves to follow up regional domestication and implementation of the Plan of Action and to report on progress and challenges at the next Bureau meeting.

177. Following a decision by the January 2008 AU Assembly, the Bureau of Ministers of Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) has merged with the Bureau of Ministers of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF). This will facilitate full alignment of the work of ADEA with the education programme of the African Union, as called for by the same Assembly Decision. ADEA co-ordinates networks of high level of African expertise in education, and is therefore a strategic partner. The Commission has continued to forge new partnerships in the area of education. Twice in 2008 the education plan of action was presented to the Pan African Parliament's Committee on Education and Culture.

178. There is a need to strengthen the Commission's capacity to implement the EMIS and other education programmes within the Second Decade for Education in Africa and to increase collaboration with RECs in this area. Likewise, cooperation with development agencies should aim at promoting the attainment of goals of AU programmes, as the lead institution that ought to be setting the agenda for the continent. In this regard, there is need

for enhanced publicity and ownership among Member States, who should be the chief advocates for the Plan of Action. Involvement of Pan African Parliament in key education meetings of the Commission would also help popularise and communicate the POA in Member States.

2. SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

a) Science and Technology

179. Guided by the cluster programmes of Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA), the decisions of the African Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology and the AU Assembly on promoting public participation and understanding in Africa's S&T programmes, the Commission has undertaken several activities to raise community awareness of the central role that science and technology play in the pursuit of economic and social development goals, including the celebration of Science and Technology Day (30 June 2008) in AU Member States, the launch of the African Union Best Scientist Award for the 2009 Competition at national, regional and continental levels; and the formulation of training programmes towards journalists in science and technology.

180. The Commission also continued to support the activities of AMCOST, namely the holding of two meetings in May and December 2008 of the Bureau of AMCOST in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and Abuja, Nigeria, which made important recommendations, namely: the establishment of the African Cluster on Science and Technology as mechanism to coordinate the activities of the CPA with a view to eliminating duplications and resource wastage; the inclusion of UNESCO as a member of AMCOST Steering Committee being a UN lead agency on science and technology in Africa; the development of a common science and technology policy framework as well as the expeditious establishment of the Education, Science and Technology Fund. The Commission would be submitting a report on science and technology partnerships and international cooperation at the next Bureau meeting.

181. The Commission engaged intensive consultations in July 2008 with UNESCO focusing on joint efforts aimed at facilitating speedy implementation of Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action. In this respect, the two parties agreed to revisit the MoU with a view to reinforce their cooperation. A Joint Working Group is being established to drive the work on policy thematic areas such as the:

- S&T policy Framework;
- S&T national policy reviews on the AU Member States;
- S&T Indicators programmes;
- STI Observatory (institution); and
- The African Virtual Campus for S&T.

182. As per the recommendations of the Bureau of AMCOST, an African Cluster on Science and Technology was operationalized through joint efforts of the Commission, the

ECA and UNESCO in July 2008. The second meeting was held on 2 December 2008 in Abuja, Nigeria.

183. In order to foster the implementation of the CPA, the book of the lighthouse projects was developed by the Commission with the support of the European Commission. The book is composed of 19 projects addressing the African challenges in Science, Information Society and Space. The Commission recommends that this book be a reference for all the partnerships it will engage into in the future.

184. On the World Intellectual Property Organisation, the AU Office in Geneva sustained its support to the African Group during the negotiations which took place within WIPO (the World Intellectual Property Organisation). The CDIP (Committee on Development and Intellectual Property) continues its activities allowing for the implementation of the recommendations aimed at developing intellectual property at global level. Conversely, the developed countries did not exert much effort, nor did they make any compromise during the thirteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee on Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Traditional Cultural Expressions in drawing a working schedule aimed at accelerating the work of the said Committee, hopefully leading to the elaboration of legally binding international instruments to protect African interests.

b) Bio-Safety

185. The Technical Advisors Committee on Biosafety held a meeting and discussed a five-year strategic framework of the AU Biosafety Programme. The programme which is aimed at supporting Member States in the implementation of the Biosafety Protocol and the African Model Law will be circulated to them for consideration. This document was presented at an All African Congress on Biotechnology held in September 2000 in Nairobi, Kenya to raise their awareness to African Strategy on Biosafety and the Model Law. In the same vein, the Commission convened the Northern African Regional Meeting on Biosafety to discuss issues of harmonization of regional initiatives with a view to promoting the African Strategy on Biosafety and the African Model Law. Other regional meetings with the same objective are planned to be held in the first semester of 2009.

3. INFORMATION SOCIETY

186. Following the 2nd session of CITMC Ministerial Conference held on 11-14 May 2008, which endorsed the ARAPKE flagship projects, the Commission is working on the establishment of an African Cluster on ICT to serve as a coordination mechanism to join the activities of the ARAPKE and all ICT programmes and activities.

187. Regarding the African incubators programme, the Commission held in Addis Ababa, on 10 September 2008, a meeting with the World Bank-InforDev with a view to securing its support to the programme. In this regard, an MoU is being developed between the two parties. Moreover, the Commission invited representatives of African Incubation Network from various regions to share their experiences and expertise.

188. As is now the established practice, the Commission organized various activities during the annual ICT week organized this year from 17 to 23 November 2008. The ICT week contributed to raise awareness amongst the Member States and the staff on the Paperless Day in particular and the importance of ICTs in general.

189. In joint efforts between the Government of Cote d'Ivoire and the Francophonie Organization, the Commission co-organized the African Conference of Cybersecurity which was held from 17 to 20 November 2008 under the auspices of H.E. President Laurent Gbagbo, President of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire with the participation of the Prime Minister of Guinea Bissau and a number of African Ministers.

i. HEALTH AND SANITATION

a) HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria (ATM)

190. It will be recalled that the Special Summit of the AU on HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (ATM) was held on 2-4 May 2006 in Abuja, Nigeria. At the Summit, the Heads of State and Government adopted the following important policy documents and Decisions where the Leaders rededicated themselves and their countries to the following major priorities:

- Leadership at National, Regional and continental levels
- Resource Mobilization
- Protecting of Human Rights
- Poverty Reduction, Health and Development
- Strengthening Health Systems
- Prevention, Treatment and Care
- Access to Affordable Medicines and Technologies
- Research and Development
- Implementation
- Partnerships
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting.

i. Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism for the Implementation of the 2006 Abuja Commitments on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (ATM) Services, (2007-2010)

191. At their Third Session in Johannesburg, April 2007, the Conference of AU Ministers of Health adopted a Mechanism for Reporting on the Implementation of the outcomes of Abuja 2006. The reporting Mechanism provides a strategic operational framework for the Abuja 2006 Special Summit. It defines broad responsibilities for each stakeholder and provides outlines of implementation activities for the programme priorities adopted by Leaders at the Abuja Summit. The Mechanism also identifies Agencies or Organizations that will support Member States in the implementation process of the Abuja outcomes. The document also includes benchmarks and timelines that will guide the implementation of the Abuja Commitments by Member States.

ii. *Progress Report on the Implementation of the Outcomes of the 2006 Abuja Special Summit on HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria: Special Session of the AU Conference of Minister of Health (CAMH) 17 May 2008 Geneva, Switzerland.*

192. A Special Session of the Conference of AU Ministers of Health was held on 17 May 2008 on the fringes of the World Health Assembly in Geneva. Among other things, the Session deliberated on the Progress Report on the Implementation of the Commitments of the May 2006 Abuja Special Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (ATM). Among the findings, bilateral and multilateral Organizations had increased their support to HIV, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. A majority of the countries reported having policy or guidelines on Antiretroviral (ART) provision resulting in more than 2.1 million receiving ART, as well as on prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV and established HIV testing and counseling services (HTC).

193. Additionally, about 65% of the Member States had a policy that allowed lower level health workers, once trained, to provide second level services, such as managing patients with HIV and AIDS. In short, Member States had made big improvement towards universal access to HIV prevention, care and treatment. Among documented achievements include increased access to ART, PMTCT and HTC. Nevertheless, Africa still faces challenges in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Some of the challenges include low efforts and funding for an accelerated research for a vaccine. Additionally internal conflicts and civil wars create internally displaced persons and refugees hence making it difficult to provide needed and sustainable services to such vulnerable groups.

iii. *Progress Report on Malaria*

194. During the Special Session of CAMH in Geneva, it was indicated that Member States have made tremendous efforts in the fight against Malaria. 74% of the countries had waived taxes on anti-malarials, 64% had removed taxes or introduced waivers on Insecticide Treated Nets (ITNs), while about 50% had waived taxes and tariffs on nets, netting materials and insecticides in 2006-2007 period. Nevertheless, distribution of nets to families was still less than 40% in most countries. It is encouraging to know that all countries except two had adopted Artesian Combination Therapies (ACTs) as first line treatment for malaria. In general, several initiatives to increase access to malaria control commodities have emerged. Partners have supported such efforts. The Affordable Medicines Facility for Malaria (AMFm) was established to bring down the cost of ACTs and to help phase out the monotherapies in order to avoid the development of resistance. All countries have established partnerships at the country and regional level.

195. More importantly, during the 3rd Session of CAMH in Johannesburg in April 2007, AU launched the “Africa Malaria Elimination Campaign”. The specific objective is to reach global, continental, regional and national targets by 2010 by reducing malaria morbidity and mortality by 50% compared to the 2000 level and to reach Midge by reducing malaria

morbidity and mortality by 75% compared with 2000 levels in all endemic countries through universal access to malaria prevention and control interventions.

iv. Progress Report on Tuberculosis in Africa

196. TB prevalence, incidence and death rates continue to increase in most countries while case notification rates have risen from 82 per 100,000 in 1990 to 160 per 100,000 in 2006. At such a rate, the MDG target for TB incidence and prevalence is unlikely to be achieved by 2015. It should also be noted that drug resistant TB, especially the multi-drug resistant TB is widely prevalent than previously known. Its co-habitation with HIV infection brings about a difficult challenge in treatment, care and support of those infected. One of the approaches to dealing with TB is for Member States to allocate sufficient resources to ensure uninterrupted supply of first line anti-TB drugs at central and peripheral levels, including adequate buffer stocks at the various levels in the countries.

v. African Regional Nutrition Strategy (ARNS) 2005-2015.

197. The Commission is in the process of revitalizing the African Task Force on Food and Nutritional Development (ATFFND). Revitalization of ATFFND is a collaborative effort between AU, WHO, UNICEF, World Food Programme, UNECA, ADB, World Bank, NGOs and CSOs. Being aware of the high cost of food and related inputs into food production; realizing the increasing trends of malnutrition and especially among the children, women and other vulnerable groups, the main objectives of the ATFFND are:

- To advocate and to sensitize Africa's policymakers about the basic role of food and nutrition security in the socio-economic development of Africa.
- To support Member States in their efforts to achieve Health related MDGs.

198. A technical meeting between the partners met on 5 November 2008 and recommended that the first meeting of the ATFFND be in early February 2009. ATFFND will meet twice a year or more depending of the status of food and nutrition situation on the continent.

vi. The Africa Health Strategy

199. The Africa Health Strategy was adopted during the 3rd Session of the African Union Conference of Ministers of Health held in Johannesburg South Africa in April 2007 under the theme "*Strengthening Health Systems for Equity and Development*". It provides a comprehensive framework to guide harmonized development and/or revision of National Health Strategies and programmes. It has the overall goal of contributing to Africa's social economic development by promoting access to essential healthcare for all, especially the poorest and marginalized. The Commission, in collaboration with the South African Government, has printed the document for dissemination to all Member States. The Plan of Action for the implementation of the Africa Health Strategy was developed and considered during the Special session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Health held in May 2008 in Geneva and is currently being printed for dissemination to Member States.

200. From 12 to 14 November 2008, a conference of the Chairs of African Parliamentary Committees of Health, HIV, Gender and Finance on Financing the Africa Health Strategy, Health MDGs, the ECA CHGA report and Global Health Partnership Plans was organized by the Commission in collaboration with the ECA and the Africa Public Health Alliance. Parliamentarians were reminded of their role in the implementation of AU's policy frameworks.

201. It is also worthy to note that the 3rd Session of the Intergovernmental Meeting on Pandemic Influenza Preparedness took place in Geneva in mid December 2008. Areas of significance for the African region is capacity building to effectively and rapidly detect and contain outbreaks of pandemic influenza and other diseases as well as equitable and timely sharing of viruses and derived benefits. The Commission participated in it through its Office in Geneva.

vii. Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa

202. The Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa was developed in line with the AU Assembly Decision adopted in Abuja in January 2005 and also in accordance with the Gaborone declaration. In April 2007, the African Union Conference of Ministers of Health mandated a technical committee composed of five Member States and some experts from the continent coordinated by the Commission to study the detailed implications of local production of essential medicines on the continent. In the framework, some regions are already embarking on local production of pharmaceuticals, notably the East African Community (EAC) and Southern African Development Community (SADC).

203. Furthermore a project proposal has been drafted for use in mobilizing funds for the implementation of the Pharmaceutical Plan for Africa. The Pharmaceutical Plan is among the project proposals submitted for execution under the Africa- EU Joint Strategy and First Action Plan (2008-2010).

viii. Health Systems Strengthening

204. Since early this year 2008, the Commission, in collaboration with the WHO, has embarked on implementation of the Africa Health Infoway, an ICT based initiative aimed at strengthening health information management for evidence based decision making and the deployment of e-health solutions, such as telemedicine and e-learning in African Countries. Member States of the Eastern, Central and Southern African health Region have already endorsed the AHI programme during their 46th Ministerial Conference held in the Seychelles in February 2008. Work is being done to mobilize funds and technical expertise in order to extend the program to a wider scope to cover the rest of the African continent.

ix. AU Decade on African Traditional Medicine

205. Since the Alma Ata Declaration on primary health care 30 years ago (1978) which recognized the role of traditional medicine and its practitioners as important allies in achieving health for all, important progress has been made in the area of traditional

Medicine. The OAU Decision on the decade of Traditional Medicine was made in 2001. The first AU Conference of African Ministers of Health held in April 2003 in Tripoli, adopted the plan of action and implementation mechanism endorsed by the AU Assembly in Maputo in 2003. The main objective of the plan of action is the recognition, acceptance, development and integration/institutionalization of Traditional medicine by all Member States into the public health care system by 2010. A mid-term Review of the Decade was conducted early this year and was considered by the Conference of AU Ministers of Health on the occasion of the commemoration of the African Traditional Medicine Day, the 31st August in Yaoundé. Recommendations made during the conference have been distributed to all Member States and the preparations for a comprehensive report at the end of the decade are underway in collaboration with WHO-Afro.

x. Population and reproductive health

206. With the aim of sharing information and best practices on population, development and reproductive health, the Commission has been publishing and disseminating the biennial State of African Population Report since 2004. So far, two issues had been produced (2004 and 2006) under different themes. The third (2008) issue has been produced end of December 2008 under the theme “*Population Dynamics and Climate Change in Africa: Implications for Africa’s Sustainable Development*” and is being distributed to Member States, RECs, and development partners.

207. On reproductive health, the Commission organized, from 11 to 13 December 2008, a “Regional Forum on Safe Motherhood for East Africa and Consultative Meeting on the Implementation of the Maputo Plan of Action on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights”, Nairobi, Kenya. One of the objectives of the Forum was “to assess the magnitude of Safe Motherhood and maternal mortality problems in the sub region”. The Meeting was attended by national reproductive health experts, policy/decision-makers, representatives of family planning associations, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), African Population Commission (APC) Bureau Members, the Pan African Parliament, UN agencies, NGOs/CSOs.

ii. HUMAN AND SOCIAL WELFARE

208. The overall social development Agenda of the African Union is based on improving the lives of the African people within the principles of the Constitutive Act and the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights. The programmes are, therefore, geared towards addressing the human rights and best interest of the various sectors of the population, especially the vulnerable and marginalized groups. In this regard, it is important to create a society for all in which the rights of every social group are respected and each group is given a chance to contribute to the development of the country.

a) Promoting the Welfare of the Older Persons and Ageing

209. The Commission has continued to follow-up on the implementation of the AU Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing adopted in 2002. In this regard, a proposal to establish a Steering Committee pending the setting up of an Advisory Council on Ageing

as called for in the Plan of Action was endorsed by the 1st Session of the AU Conference of Ministers in charge of Social Development held in Namibia end of October 2008. The Commission is in the process of implementing the recommendation.

b) Disability Issues

i. The African Rehabilitation Institute (ARI)

210. The African Rehabilitation Institute (ARI) which was established to coordinate disability and rehabilitation issues on the continent continues to face administrative and financial problems. As requested by the ARI Governing Board, the Commission contracted a Consultant to carry out a study on the restructuring, revitalizing and strengthening of the Institute. The Consultant completed his work and the report was subsequently submitted to the ARI for the latter to convene the Extraordinary Governing Board meeting to consider the Report. The ARI is yet to convene the Extraordinary Governing Board meeting.

ii. African Decade of Disabled Persons

211. It will be recalled that 1999-2009 was proclaimed as the African Decade of Disabled Persons and a Plan of Action was adopted in 2002 to implement the Decade's objectives. The decade is ending next year and not much progress has been achieved in improving the lives of people with disabilities on the continent. It is for this reason that the 1st Session of the AU Conference of Ministers in charge of Social Development recommended that the African Decade be renewed from 2010-2019 and that an evaluation be conducted for the previous decade. It was also recommended that the programme of ARI be linked to the UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons and that disability should not be limited to rehabilitation but be included in development issues. The Commission would follow-up on the recommendations and carry out the evaluation.

c) Family and Development

212. With a view to monitoring achievements made in implementing the AU Plan of Action on the Family which was adopted in 2004, the Commission developed a questionnaire on the priority areas spelt out in the Plan of Action. The questionnaire was forwarded to all Member States for them to fill in and return to the Commission. To-date only about 12 Member States have sent back their replies. The Commission has re-sent the questionnaire to those Member States which did not reply and requested them to return the duly filled questionnaire latest by the end of February 2009. The replies will be consolidated in a Report to be considered by an Experts' meeting to be convened during 2009.

d) Social Security

213. Social protection, which is part of social development, has gained momentum over the past years and contributed in lifting many people, especially the marginalized and vulnerable, out of poverty. Between April and June 2008, the Commission, in collaboration with HelpAge International, convened three Regional Meetings on Social Protection on the theme: "*Investing in Social Protection in Africa*" to share views and experiences and be

informed of effective national social protection programmes and policies in each region. The Commission also contracted a Consultant to carry out a study on Social Security in Africa to supplement the conclusions of the regional meetings. The outcome of the meetings as well as the study were presented to the 1st Session of the AU Conference of Ministers in charge of Social Development held in Windhoek end of October 2008. Among others, the Conference highlighted the importance to mainstream social protection in all social development programmes including poverty alleviation and structural adjustments programmes. The Commission was requested to sensitize Member States on the need to invest in social security, as it is an important element in strengthening a country's human capital. The Commission will continue to work with the relevant stakeholders in implementing the recommendation.

e) Social Policy Framework

214. The Draft Social Policy Framework for Africa was considered and adopted by the 1st Session of the AU Conference of Ministers in charge of Social Development held in Windhoek, Namibia from 27 to 31 October 2008. The document provides an overarching policy framework to assist Member States to strengthen and give priority to their national social policies and promotes human empowerment and development. It spells out 18 key thematic social priority areas and provides broad recommendations to assist Member States in the formulation of their national social policies and social development programmes. Member States are, therefore, urged to utilize the Social Policy Framework when developing their national social development policies. The Commission will work with the RECs and other partners to disseminate the Social Policy Framework as widely as possible and ensure that it is effectively utilized at all levels.

215. The 1st Session of the AU Conference of Ministers in charge of Social Development took place in Windhoek, Namibia from 27 to 31 October, 2009 on the theme: *"Towards a Sustainable Social Development Agenda for Africa."* The conference was convened in implementation of Decision EX.CL.290 (IX) adopted by the 9th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and endorsed by the 7th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2006. The Conference adopted the following key documents: the Social Policy Framework for Africa, the Windhoek Declaration on Social Development; and the African Common Position on Social Integration which would constitute Africa's contribution to the 47th UN Commission on Social Development to be held in February 2009 on the theme social integration. The Conference agreed that the Chairperson of the Conference, the Republic of Namibia, presents the Common Position to the UN Social Commission on behalf of Africa. Among others, the Conference also recommended that the AU Conference of Ministers in charge of Social Development be institutionalized and meet every two years.

f) Drug Control and Sport

i. Human and Social Welfare: Drug control and related crimes

216. The Commission has established coordination with RECs and other Partners to facilitate their institutional strengthening for the implementation of the AU Plan of Action on Drug Control and Crime Prevention (2007-2012). An Inter-departmental Coordinating

Mechanism was established in the Commission to monitor the implementation of all the priority areas of the Plan of Action at regional and national levels. The Commission intends to submit draft policy directives for consideration to the 4th AU Ministerial Conference of Ministers in Charge of Drug Control and Crime Prevention, due to take place in Bamako, Mali, in November 2009.

ii. Sport

217. A major breakthrough has been achieved in the Social Development Agenda by the development and endorsement of the Policy Framework for the Sustainable Development of Sport in Africa. The 2nd AU Conference of Ministers, held in Accra, Ghana, in October 2008, furthermore adopted a Code on the Relations between Governments, National and International Sport Organisations. Coordination and implementation of the mentioned measures by the Commission, in cooperation with RECs and Member States over the next years, shall indeed underline the role of sport in social development and peace building. The added advantage of the 2010 FIFA World Cup taking place in the Continent, will lead to increased economic opportunities for entrepreneurs linked not only to sport excellence and capacity building, but also to harnessing the positive forces of sport enthusiasm, tourism and spectatorship.

g) Labour, Employment and Migration

i. Labour and Employment

218. At the Ouagadougou 2004 Extraordinary Summit, the Heads of State and Government expressed their concern over widespread poverty, unemployment and underemployment which compromise the basic human rights and dignity of individuals and communities. The current world economic trends emphasize the imperative need to implement the Ouagadougou 2004 Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment Promotion and Poverty Alleviation. In order to facilitate the effective, coordinated and harmonized implementation of these instruments, the Commission has elaborated a Four Year Priority Programme 2008-2012 (4YPP).

219. The 4YPP seeks to make substantial progress under five strategic pillars, namely (i) improving the labour market governance by enhancing and modernizing the labour market institutions and the social dialogue; (ii) promoting an Inclusive Growth to improve the status of the vulnerable groups in the labour market; (iii) increasing the Productivity in the Continent; (iv) developing the cooperation with international partners and ensuring effective follow-up, monitoring and evaluation.

220. According to the ILO report on the 2007 labour market indicators, which measures the value per hour worked, Africa is the least productive Region in the World. The African Union has been showing its concern about Productivity Promotion in the Continent long time ago, through many decisions. In close collaboration with the Pan African Productivity Association, the social partners and the ILO, the Commission will define and realize a Programme to promote productivity in the Continent.

221. The Commission undertook fact-finding and labour market needs assessment mission in two post-conflict countries, Sierra Leone and Liberia. The purpose is to accelerate the Ouagadougou Plan of Action implementation in post-conflict countries, in support to peace consolidation, reconstruction and development. In this regard, a Quick Impact Programme for Employment Promotion 2009-2012 (QIPEP) will be elaborated and implemented.

222. The Commission organized a Workshop in Dakar, October 2008, on the Informal Economy. On the basis of the outcomes of this workshop, the Commission will develop a support programme for the informal economy for more and better job creation in this labour intensive segment of the labour market. In line with the Extraordinary Summit requirement, the Commission is preparing a Strategic Document on Resource Mobilization in support to the implementation of its strategies.

223. The Biennial Reports of 2006 and 2008 evidences that still many Member States of the Union and Regional Economic Communities have not put in place the follow-up institutions. The SADC has established operational structures that contributed largely to some achievements, which could be shared with the other RECs. The Commission will increase its efforts to assist Member States and the RECs in assuming their functions and roles vis a vis the Ouagadougou Extraordinary Summit outcomes.

ii. Migration

224. With regard to Migration and Development, the Commission has initiated and is implementing several projects in line with the four AU policy documents on migration and development, namely Migration Policy Framework for Africa, the Tripoli Joint Africa-EU Declaration on Migration and Development, the African Common Position on Migration and Development, and Ouagadougou Plan of Action on Human Trafficking, Especially Women and Children. In this regard, the progress so far in the Follow-up, Monitoring, and Implementation include the dissemination of the core contents of these policies through missions. Regional Consultative Process and Consultative Visits to Regional Economic Communities have been carried out (Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Senegal and Algeria) and joint projects identified. Moreover, an IGAD Workshop on *Inter-state and Intra-regional Cooperation on Migration Management*, May 12-14, 2008, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia was conducted which led to the launching of the IGAD-Regional Consultative Process on Migration (RCPM) and three follow-up training workshops for officials of IGAD Member States. The Commission, IGAD and International Organization jointly organized the initiative for Migration.

225. Similarly the Commission attended and also presented position paper to the conference of the Yemen International Conference on Refugee Protection and International Migration in the Gulf of Aden, Sana'a, Yemen, 19-20 May 2008 which was organized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This conference was very important to explore possibilities for the AU and the Arab League to develop joint declaration similar to that of Africa-EU Tripoli Joint Declaration on Migration and Development as well as enhance the capacity of IGAD to work with the Member

States and countries of destination and transit in the East African migration route particularly the Gulf of Aden.

226. Furthermore, an inter-departmental Consultation on establishment of an African Institute for Remittances (AIR) was conducted in August 2008. A Consultation Note for AIR was prepared which seeks to build capacity of the African Union in forging institutional relationships and partnerships among the African Union, the Member States and other stakeholders (African financial and economic institutions, Regional Economic Communities, the African Diaspora and local investment and commercial banks, micro finance institutions sender and receivers of remittances, multilateral and bilateral donors, foundations, private sector, and institutions of higher education and research). Similarly, the Commission has taken an initiative for the establishment of Africa Migration Fund. Both initiatives are being discussed with partners, particularly the EU.

227. The Commission has also participated in the Second Meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development. Briefings were also given to Member States, and Regional Economic Communities on the EU Blue Card, and the Handling of Illegal Migrants.

228. It should be mentioned that the above activities took in consideration the Ouagadougou Plan of Action on Human Trafficking. A draft strategy to combat traffic is under preparation for submission to AU Policy Organs.

iii. CHILDREN, YOUTH AND SPORT

a) Child Survival, Protection and Development

i. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

229. Mobilizing Member States to ratify the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child has been the main focus with regard to children's issues. The Charter which was adopted in 1990, has so far been ratified by 43 Member States. Efforts have continued to urge those Member States which have not yet done so to expedite the ratification process of the Charter.

230. The African Committee of Experts on the Right and Welfare of the Child has started the consideration of the State Party Report on the implementation of the Charter. Only few countries have sent their report and Member States have been constantly urged to send their report in a timely manner.

(ii) Call for Accelerated Action for Implementation of the Plan of Action Towards Africa Fit for Children

231. The Commission has continued to follow-up on the implementation of the Call for Accelerated Action on the Implementation of the Plan of Action Towards Africa Fit for Children adopted by the 2nd Pan-African Forum on Children held in Cairo, Egypt in October/November 2007. A first step towards raising awareness on the Call for

Accelerated Action was its presentation to the African Group in New York and the United Nations General Assembly Commemorative High-Level Plenary Meeting, devoted to the follow-up of the 2002 UN Special Session on Children, held in New York in December 2007. The Report of the meeting, the Call for Accelerated Action as well as other relevant documents have also been put on a CD for wide distribution to Member States, development partners and other stakeholders. The Commission will continue to monitor the implementation of the Call for Accelerated Action based on the roles and responsibilities to be undertaken by various stakeholders as spelt out in the document and a progress report will subsequently be elaborated. In line with the mandate given to the Commission, a Report on the State of Africa's Children will also be developed.

b) Youth policy - Development and Cooperation Framework: African Youth Charter and Related Activities

232. Within the framework of the Youth development Policy and following the 2nd ordinary session of the African Union Conference of Ministers in charge of Youth, recommendations were made to accelerate the popularization, signature, ratification and implementation of the Youth Charter in Member States. The Member States were requested to develop and review their national youth policies and harmonize them with the Charter, in order to formulate actions plans and promote networking on youth development issues. The Ministers in Charge of Youth also adopted the 2007-2015 Plan of Action proposed to accelerate the Ratification of the Charter. They specifically instructed that the Plan of Action be tightened up with clearly defined timelines in order to expedite its implementation by the Commission, Member States and other actors.

233. It will be recalled that the year 2008 was declared "Year of African Youth" (Banjul Decision EX.CL/Dec.292 (IX)), focusing on the theme: "African Youth for Peace and development". On the part of the Commission, about 70% of the planned activities have been implemented. All activities could not be undertaken due to unavailability of adequate resources. A full report on the year 2008 has been submitted to the Bureau of the Conference in December 2008 for review. The Commission developed and dispatched several documents to Member States to assist them in implementing the Plan, thereby promoting the Youth Charter and giving it more visibility among the people. The African Youth Anthem (lyrics and music, CD and DVD), posters, pins, T-shirts, TV and radio interviews, banners, etc. are being used to raise the awareness not only on the African Youth Charter, but also to enhance programme and youth development issues in Africa.

234. Moreover, the Commission mobilized support from partners towards the Youth agenda and undertook advocacy activities towards the Civil Society and African Youth organizations, youth in the Diaspora to enlist them in support to the implementation of the programme of action. In that respect, important support was received from UNICEF and UNHR in promoting the Charter and other Youth development policies. "Speak Africa", as a youth network advocating and communicating for change, was also involved in the implementation process of the youth programme and various events celebrating the African youth. The African Youth Day, in this Year 2008, was celebrated with the involvement of youth and host authorities.

235. Similarly, the Permanent Delegation of the African Union to the League of Arab States carried out the following activities in collaboration with the United Africa Alliance and the African Association in Cairo :

- A seminar on drought and desertification in Africa (28/10/2008) ;
- Food Security in Africa (27/11/2008) ;
- Administrative Training Session (1-3/11/2008) ;
- Building of internet websites (14-18/12/2008).

236. As of now, out of the 31 Member States that have signed the Charter, 11 have ratified it, namely: Rwanda, Mali, Gabon, Mauritius, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger and Uganda. The objective of the Year was to have the Charter enter into force with the minimum 15 ratifications required.

c) Capacity Building: Youth Development and Empowerment for their effective and meaningful Participation in Development Process:

237. Within the adopted strategy for revitalizing the Pan African Youth Union (PYU), in line with the Banjul Decision EX.CL/Dec.292 (IX), the following activities were considered in the area of institutional capacity building process:

- i. The holding of the PYU Congress, in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, from 29 July to 1st August 2008 with the participation of 27 Member States and with the following outputs;
 - Adoption of the revised Statutes of the PYU in line with the guidance and provisions of the African Youth Charter;
 - Adoption of the new structure of the PYU and
 - The election of the new PYU Bureau Members for a 3 years term (President -Nigeria) and 5 Vice-Presidents: Algeria (North Africa) ; Gabon (Central Africa) ; Ethiopia (East Africa) ; Mali (West Africa); and South Africa (Southern Africa). An operational structure was equally set as consisting of a Secretary General (Angola) and 5 Deputy General Secretaries: Libya (North Africa) ; Congo Brazzaville (Central Africa) ; Djibouti (East Africa) ; Zimbabwe (Southern Africa).
- ii. The first Executive Committee meeting under the leadership of the new elected President met in November 2008 to set up operational modalities and to identify areas of focus in the development of the training programme to support building capacity of the Bureau of the PYU;
- iii. The Commission set up training programmes for 2009;
- iv. A Memorandum of Understanding between the PYU and the AUC is being prepared and will be signed early 2009. The MoU would govern the working relationships and collaboration between the two parties.

238. Under the post conflict reconstruction process, the Commission is advocating for the technical vocational training and education to empower the youth involved in or affected by conflicts. The main objective is to support programmes for skills development and rehabilitation and to facilitate the youth involvement in the rehabilitation and reconstruction process. Following the recommendation of the COMY II to implement the adopted pilot projects in the three selected pilot countries (Liberia, Congo and Burundi), the Commission assisted these countries to launch the projects through technical, material and logistic support.

239. Following the MoU signed between the Commission and the 3 countries, the launch of the projects in question took place in Monrovia (Liberia), Brazzaville (Congo) and Bujumbura (Burundi) in November and December 2008. Necessary resources were provided to the three pilot countries with the agreed equipment, in accordance with the needs assessment conducted in 2007 and the pilot projects adopted in February 2008 with their identified targets. A consultant-coordinator is in charge of coordinating the implementation in all 3 countries and will be regularly reporting to the Commission on the progress. About 600 youth (young victims of the recent armed conflict, abused girls/child-mothers, former child-soldiers, former combatants and young victims of conflict-related abuses) will benefit from the projects in the various areas of training with the ultimate goal that those young people will efficiently participate in the reconstruction processes, and be skilled for entrepreneurship, job creation and self-employment.

240. The Commission will pursue its resource mobilization efforts to support and pursue the training courses, provision of equipment and tooling development. Enlargement of the initiative is envisaged through linking to pilot projects and volunteers programme. Given the resource allocated by the 2008 budget to the above activities and the challenges faced, strong partnerships are still needed for the pilot-projects, which include adult literacy. The satisfaction of the needs concerning youth capacity building and rehabilitation in normal socio-economic life is most urgent.

241. The African Youth in the Diaspora remains an important target to reach. The AU internship programme and the Volunteer Programme are also a preoccupation for the Commission at programmatic level. Contacts are being made with partners with a view to developing strategies aimed at ensuring involvement of the youth in African youth activities and programme. Moreover, a Concept paper is being developed on a comprehensive internship programme.

242. Regarding the establishment of the African Union Volunteers programme, the Commission intends to organize a workshop in 2009 in partnership with UN Volunteers programme and the European Union. This initiative focuses particularly on young people in Africa, based on the good practices in some ECOWAS countries and in particular the expenses of the former volunteers of Nigeria.

243. Consultants are under recruitment process to develop a 10-year consolidated plan of action for youth empowerment and development, with the involvement of Member States, Youth Organizations and Partners.

244. It will also be recalled that one of the recommendations of the 2nd Ordinary Session of the Conference of the AU Ministers in charge of youth held in February 2008 requested the Commission to conduct a study of feasibility for the Trust Fund for youth development projects and to identify the mechanism of management for such a Fund. The main objective of the Fund is to reinforce the capacity of the AUC to provide on a more flexible, pragmatic and efficient basis, the needed financial and technical assistance to Member States and to youth organizations in implementing youth development initiatives and projects. In this regard, a consultant has been recruited to conduct the study which is now completed and would be soon submitted to the Bureau of the COMYII. The study focuses on the following:

- Justification and main objectives of the establishment of the Fund ;
- Mechanism for the mobilization and management of the Fund;
- Main phases for the creation of the Fund;
- General regulation for the Fund;
- Application template for the Fund's applicants; and
- Reporting template for the Fund's beneficiaries.

245. In order to sustain the youth development programmes, it will be necessary to establish a coherent co-operation or partnership framework and mechanism of collaboration with a view to promoting a better exchange of experience with international organizations and countries that have good knowledge and practices in the areas of Capacity building through TVET and other issues regarding youth empowerment (Internship, Volunteers programme, Working relationship with the Diaspora, etc.). Mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and reporting should be equally developed in order to measure progress and impact of the youth programmes on Africa's development efforts.

III.2 INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCONNECTIVITY

246. In the field of transport, energy, Telecom/ICT and Post, the activities of the Commission focused attention on the implementation of the decisions of the First Conference of African Ministers of Transport (CAMT) held in Algiers, Algeria in April 2008 and the Second Conference of African Ministers of Information and Communication Technologies held in Cairo, in May 2008 as well as the implementation of specific projects.

247. The specific projects whose implementation was initiated and/or continued during this period included the pre-feasibility study on the Dakar – Djibouti and Djibouti-Libreville transport corridors, the Pan-African e-Network project for Tele-education and Tele-medicine in cooperation with the Government of India and the study on the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) a joint initiative of the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank (ADB) and the NEPAD Secretariat. Also, the Commission embarked on preparations for the Infrastructure Theme of the January 2009 Summit of the African Union.

1. TRANSPORT (ROAD, RAIL, AIR, WATER)

248. The Washington Office facilitated the visit and participation of the African Union Commissioner for infrastructure and Energy in a Private Sector Conference organized by the Corporate Council on Africa which provided a good platform to articulate the African Union's vision for Infrastructure and Energy. Visits to the Center for the Association of Blacks in Energy at the University of North Carolina as well as interaction with officials of the US Department of the Energy were also facilitated by the Office. These encounters aimed at establishing the much needed entry points for future collaboration between the African Union Commission and these key entities. The Commission will undertake follow-up action and concrete activities to further enhance this collaboration.

249. The Commission focused its attention on the implementation of the Declaration and modal Plans of Action adopted by the First Conference of African Ministers of Transport (CAMT) held in Algiers, Algeria in April 2008 and endorsed by the decision of the Thirteenth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council held in Sharm-El-Sheikh, Egypt in July 2008 [Decision EX.CL/Dec.432 (XIII)].

a. Air Transport

250. In air transport; the major activities under implementation covered the 1999 Yamoussoukro Decision on the liberalisation of air transport markets in Africa and putting in place Guidelines for Negotiation of Air Services Agreements between African Union (AU) Member States and Economic Commission (EC) / European Union (EU) Member States

i. *Guidelines for Negotiation of Air Services Agreements between AU Member States and the EC / EU Member States*

251. It would be recalled that the Conference of African Ministers of Transport held in Algiers, Algeria, in April 2008 decided to adopt non-binding guidelines for Member States' in their negotiation of air service agreements with the European Union. The Commission dispatched the Guidelines to Member States, RECs and concerned stakeholders for implementation with advice on ensuring their judicious application for the benefit of the entire African aviation industry.

252. The Commission in collaboration with the Government of Namibia is in the process of organizing jointly with the European Commission an EU-Africa Aviation Conference whose agenda would cover matters of cooperation in civil aviation including external air transport policies of the two regions. The Conference is scheduled for April 2009.

ii. Implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision

253. The Commission is accelerating the process of putting in place the appropriate legal and institutional framework for implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision in line with the decision of the Ministers responsible for air transport taken in May 2007, to entrust the functions of the Executing Agency to the African Civil Aviation (AFCAC). To that end, the Commission initiated a study whose draft report was presented to the Conference of

African Ministers of Transport in Algiers in April 2008. Following substantive comments and views expressed at the Conference, the study report is currently under revision. As well, the Commission has been holding consultations with the African Civil Aviation Commission with a view to ensuring proper conclusion of the task.

254. Consultations are under way with the Government of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, which offered to host the Fourth African Union Conference of Ministers responsible for Air Transport to examine the matter.

b. Rail Transport

255. Development of railway transport remains a major challenge in Africa. The mode is essential for conveyance of bulky commodities, making up most of Africa's exports, over long distances between the hinterlands and the seaports of the continent. Yet, due to the huge investments required and long payback period for capital invested, the mode remains less attractive to investors. Moreover, the multiplicity of railway gauges makes it rather difficult to have smooth and economic railway operations across the continent.

256. The Commission convened a working meeting of experts to discuss strategies for implementation of the Plan of Action on railway transport in Africa which took place at its headquarters on 21 and 22 October 2008. The meeting agreed on key priorities to restore the position of railway transport as the most economic mode of land transport. Some of the main activities to be initiated in 2009 include:

- Elaboration of an African Railway Vision 2025
- Study on the creation of a railway development fund for Africa
- Evaluation of the privatisation of African railways
- Harmonisation of standards for railway infrastructure and rolling stock
- Capacity building

c. Road Transport

257. The major activities currently underway in road transport include the initiation of pre-feasibility studies on two transport corridors. These are Dakar-Djibouti and Djibouti-Libreville corridors. They are the outcome of a roundtable meeting held in Saly-Portudal, Senegal, in January 2008 under the leadership of the President of Senegal, as the coordinator of the infrastructure component of NEPAD, to discuss priorities as well as ways and means of speeding up the implementation of major infrastructure projects in Africa.

258. The Commission has already secured funding from the NEPAD Infrastructure Project Facility (NEPAD-IPPF) under the African Development Bank (ADB) for pre-feasibility studies of those corridors for the purpose of identifying missing links and elaborating an infrastructure development programme along the corridors with a view to bringing about seamless transport services between West, Central and East Africa.

259. Preparations for the execution of the pre-feasibility studies are currently underway with the objective of launching the studies in early 2009.

d. Maritime Transport

260. In maritime transport, the Commission has made headway in defining a policy framework and is also initiating action towards putting in place an appropriate institutional mechanism for coordinating maritime activities in the continent. The current challenges in securing fair treatment by major international shipping liners as well as guarding against piracy, illegal fishing and marine pollution, among others, are the major pre-occupation of the Commission.

i. Revising and updating the African Maritime Transport Charter

261. A meeting of Experts was held from 14 to 15 October 2008. At that meeting, the final draft of the Charter, which had been revised according to observations and recommendations of the Conference of Ministers of Transport held in Algiers in April 2008, was examined and adopted by the experts.

262. The final draft Charter was forwarded to Member States for comments and opinions, and will be submitted for approval to the Conference of Ministers responsible for Maritime Transport

ii. Establishment of an entity to ensure better continental-level coordination of maritime transport

263. The Commission finalized the terms of reference for the establishment of an entity to ensure better coordination at continental level. The aim is to propose the appropriate institutional framework within which development issues in the maritime sub-sector will be treated at the continental level, following a coherent approach. The structure envisaged should coordinate strategies to permit Africa adapt to the new maritime order which is increasingly founded on principles of globalization, safety requirements and on sustainable development requirements.

264. It is envisaged that the African Development Bank will finance this study which will start in early 2009.

iii. Assistance to Member States for implementing international maritime transport conventions

265. Owing to human and financial resource constraints, the Commission has not yet been able to provide the RECs and Member States with the assistance for implementing international conventions on maritime security and safety. That assistance will be provided in 2009.

2. ENERGY (ENERGY CRISIS)

a. *Legal and institutional study on the establishment of a Continental Structure to coordinate the development of major integrating hydroelectric projects in Africa*

266. It should be recalled that the First African Union Conference of Ministers in charge of electric energy, which was held from 20 to 24 March 2006, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, made the following recommendations:

- Work together to develop Africa's energy resources, especially hydroelectricity, as a major option for renewable energy to ensure sustainable development, regional integration, and energy security, as well as for eradication of poverty;
- Establish a Coordination Committee for development of major integrating hydroelectric projects.

267. It is within that context and in a bid to also address the recommendations emanating from various development partner seminars and round tables on the financing of major integration projects that have been organized over the last two years, that the Commission undertook a legal and institutional study on the management of major hydroelectric integration projects in Africa, with a view to establishing a Continental Coordination Structure for these projects.

268. The aims of the study are to:

- a. make an inventory of best practices in the field of major integration projects;
- b. define the legal system for African major hydroelectric integration projects;
- c. elaborate a most appropriate institutional framework for implementing predefined legal rules in order to ensure better management of these integrating projects.

• *Validation workshop for the study on major hydroelectric projects*

269. Upon completion of the study, the Commission organized, from 26 to 28 November 2008 in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, a validation workshop to inform the main actors, to examine, analyze and amend the study so as to make it a consensus document and to permit ownership of the Study by the participants as a means of facilitating its implementation afterward. The workshop conclusions will be submitted to the next Conference of African Ministers in charge of energy. The workshop elected a bureau composed of Ethiopia (President), Togo (Vice-president) and Egypt (Rapporteur). It was attended by experts from AU Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Energy Pools, Specialized African and International Energy Sector Institutions, river and lake basins organizations, as well as by development partners.

270. The workshop made the following recommendations to the Commission :

- Deepen the reflection on the issue of an institutional framework and the competence of the coordination structure in order to consider all the parameters

of the Commission's institutional framework and to avoid an overlap between that structure and other existing institutions (AFREC, NEPAD Secretariat) as well as to provide for collaboration modalities and mechanisms for synergy between them.

- Broaden the Study's perspective both in terms of space and content by adopting an inclusive method which considers all existing stakeholders and library resources and leads to an extension of the scope of investigation, with a view of producing a full and legally informed Study on integrated management of water resources and the inclusion of all Regional Economic Communities (RECs), specialized African electricity sector institutions, River Basin Development Organizations, AfDB and NEPAD in the array of structures and institutions to be consulted;
- The extension of the Coordination Committee's area of competence to include other energy sub-sectors (gas, oil, renewable energies, etc.).

271. If this Structure is successfully established, it could readily offer inspiration for other types of major infrastructure projects of an integrating nature.

b. AUC/AfDB joint Studies on the hydrocarbons sector (Oil and Gas) in Africa and particularly on the impact of petroleum price fluctuations on African economies as well as on the modalities and mechanisms of the African Petroleum Fund

272. Oil prices witnessed considerable fluctuations over the past years. The increase in oil prices was like manna to producing countries, but rather constituted a major problem to oil importing countries, especially the poor ones. This has a negative impact on the balance of payments, on inflation, on employment, on growth, on investments, on debt servicing, on the populations' standard of living, etc.

273. In that connection, the Commission and the African Development Bank jointly launched a study, on the one hand, on "the impact of high oil and natural gas prices on African economies" and, on the other hand, on "the mechanism for the establishment and functioning of an African Petroleum Fund" for the purpose of assisting oil importing African countries to contain oil shocks and to facilitate the financing of their oil imports. It should be recalled that the initial findings of that study had been presented at the First African Union Conference of Ministers in charge of hydrocarbons (oil and gas) held in Cairo (Egypt), on 14 December 2006. The recommendations from that ministerial conference had been endorsed by the January 2007 Assembly of the African Union, which requested the Commission to finalize the studies and submit the final conclusions to Member States.

274. The studies have just been finalized and a workshop to validate the findings of these studies was organized by the Commission from 10 to 12 December 2008 in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia).

275. The main objective of the workshop was, on the one hand, to familiarize participants with and help them take ownership of the simulation model for oil price fluctuations on African economies, on the other hand, to adopt a road map for the establishment and functioning of the African Petroleum Fund intended to assist oil importing countries to contain oil shocks.

276. This workshop was attended by experts from Member States of the African Union in charge of policies and strategies in the areas of hydrocarbons; of economic and financial policies and strategies; from Specialized Institutions in the sector: the African Energy Commission (AFREC), the African Petroleum Producers' Association (APPA), the African Non-Petroleum Producers' Association (ANPPA), etc., as well as experts on energy matters from Regional Economic Communities, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the NEPAD Secretariat.

277. The main outcomes of this workshop were:

- Ownership of the simulation model of oil price fluctuations on African economies to be used continually;
- Adoption of operational mechanisms and modalities of the African Petroleum Fund;
- Adoption of a road map for the operationalization of the African Petroleum Fund.

c. *Report on the First Africa-EU Joint Experts Working Group Meeting on the Implementation of the Energy Partnership, 15-16 October 2008, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*

278. The First Africa-EU Joint Experts Working Group Meeting on the implementation of the Action Plan of the Energy Partnership was held on 15-16 October 2008, at the Headquarters of the Commission, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

279. The meeting was held following the successful talks of EU Commissioners for Development, Mr Louis Michel, and Energy, Mr Andris Piebalgs, with AU Commissioner for Infrastructure & Energy, Dr Elham M.A. Ibrahim, in Addis Ababa on September 2008.

280. On the EU side, the participants were Experts from the EU Presidency (France), the European Union Delegation to the African Union, the European Commission, and some EU Member States of the implementation team (Germany, United Kingdom, Austria, The Netherlands, Sweden and Czech Republic). On the African side, the participants were experts from the Commission), the REC's (COMESA, ECCAS, UEMOA, and CEMAC), the Regional Power Pools (EAPP, PEAC and WAPP), the Specialized Institutions (AFREC, UPDEA and AFUR), and Experts of five AU Member States representing the Bureau of the AU Conference of Energy Ministers: South Africa, Congo, Egypt, Uganda and Senegal.

281. The objective of the meeting was among others to discuss the governance structure of the Energy Partnership, the mandate, composition, role, responsibilities and working methods of the Joint Experts Group Meeting. The meeting heard the

presentation of ongoing major activities by AU-EU institutions in energy sector and the Road Map for the implementation on the Action Plan of the Energy Partnership.

282. In the current context of increasing global energy demand and high-energy prices, both parties underlined the importance of reinforcing existing forms of energy cooperation between the EU and Africa. In this regard, the experts identified the following priority areas of the Road Map:

- Energy security, energy access and Regional Integration;
- Renewable energy and energy efficiency;
- Increased access and increased private sector investment,
- EU-Africa energy policy dialogue and other issues including capacity building, policy, know how and technology transfer.

283. The next Joint Experts Meeting is proposed for the end of February 2009. Its main objective will be to adopt the Energy Partnership implementation Road Map as well as to prepare the High Level Africa-EU Energy Dialogue Meeting (Ministerial) and the Africa-EU Energy Partnership Forum, involving civil society, research institutes and the private sectors in both continents. Both meetings are scheduled to take place in the second semester of 2009 to take stock of progress made in the implementation of the Africa-EU Energy Partnership, to agree on further priorities up to 2010 and to launch discussions on priorities for the period 2011-2013.

3. TELECOMMUNICATIONS, POSTS AND ICT

284. Since the election of Mr Hamadoun TOURE as Secretary General of the ITU, (International Telecommunications Union), in 2006, the cooperation between this international Organisation and the African Group has been tremendously enhanced through the endeavours of the Geneva Office. A tradition has thus been established whereby meetings between the African Group and the ITU Secretariat are regularly organised in order to foster communication and update the Group on highly technical issues currently under discussion within ITU. In the course of this semester, a workshop attended by Mr TOURE together with his main collaborators also took place. Following this workshop, support of African countries to the ITU-led initiatives was requested, which were consequently invited to submit projects to the ITU secretariat for funding. Mr. TOURE's dynamism is seen to be a catalyst to implementation of to the Memorandum of Understanding between the ITU and the Commission, which was signed in November 2005, in Tunis. Its implementation will definitely be instrumental in developing telecommunications in Africa while contributing to the reinforcement of integration, at continental level, through agreed projects and activities.

285. The 24th Congress of the UPU (Universal Postal Union), held in Geneva during the summer of 2008, saw the adoption of a strategy called the Nairobi Strategy which will be implemented in the course of upcoming four years, allowing Africa to derive benefit from a set of projects and programmes that will contribute to the development of the postal sector in Africa. Kenya assumed the chair of this Congress which was to be held in Nairobi,

along with that of the governing body of this organisation during the 2009-2012 cycles. Kenya also agreed to host the strategic UPU Conference in 2010, in Nairobi. However, it would be judicious for African countries to develop closer ties with this organisation in order to identify mutually beneficial partnerships.

a. Pan-African e-Network Project for Tele-Medicine and Tele-Education

286. It would be recalled that the Pan-African e-Network project is an initiative of the Government of India, with the main objective of establishing a Pan-African telecommunications network by satellite and fibre optics to provide tele-medicine and tele-education and diplomatic communications services to the 53 Member States of the African Union.

287. India offered to fund the project to the tune of US\$501 million, to be used for the supply and installation of equipment and software, renting of the satellite bandwidth and underwater fibre-optic cable, as well as for the operation and maintenance of the network for a period of five (5) years. In addition, India will be responsible for strengthening the staff-training capacities of participating States and the payment of fees to the Indian universities that will offer courses to 10,000 students, 500 doctors and 1,000 nurses.

288. The responsibilities of the African Union, the Government of India and the Member States – all stakeholders in the implementation of the project – are defined in the various agreements signed to that end.

289. The signing of the agreements in 2006 marked the beginning of the effective implementation of the project whose main achievements as of 31 October 2008 were as follows :

- i) Commitment of Member States to participate in the project: the African Union raised awareness among Member States and monitored the signing of the agreement to participate in the project. As of 31 October 2008, this agreement had been signed by 60% of the Member States of the Union, that is, by 33 Member States listed as follows: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroun, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Chad, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- ii) Installation of the Hub Earth Station: the installation of the Hub Earth Station (Main Station) in Gandoul, Dakar, has been completed. The station was linked to India by fiber optics in July 2008 and the pre-commissioning technical testing was conclusive;
- iii) Installation of very small aperture terminal (VSAT) stations and other equipment and software in Member States:

- Installation and testing of VSATs completed in 12 Member States ;
 - Installation of communication and information technology (CIT) equipment completed in 9 Member States;
 - Installation and testing of tele-medicine and tele-education equipment completed in 8 Member States;
- iv) Installation of VSAT stations and other equipment and software;
- v) Choice of leading African regional universities and five super specialized African regional hospitals. One university and one hospital per geographical region should be chosen on the basis of an invitation to tender. As of 31 October 2008, the following choices have been made:
- Two Hospitals: Ibadan Hospital in Nigeria and *Centre Hospitalier Universitaire (CHU)* of Brazzaville in Congo;
 - Three universities: the Kwame Nkrumah University and the University of Ghana in Ghana (considered for this purpose as one unit), Makerere University in Uganda and the University of Yaounde I in Cameroon.
- vi) Choice of Indian hospitals and universities: India has signed agreements with 5 universities and 11 hospitals;
- vii) Ongoing studies relating to service rates and the modalities and structures for the management of the network by Africa after the five-year support from India;
- viii) The choice of courses by Member States is ongoing. In this regard, India had proposed syllabuses for five courses to which it has just added complementary options;
- ix) Commissioning target planning: Every effort will be made to ensure that the Pan-African e-Network is commissioned between January and March 2009;
- x) Start-up of the tele-education services by late March 2009 and tele-medicine consultations between February and March 2009. Priority will be given to such services as internal medicine, cardiology, radiology, neurology and infectious diseases/HIV-AIDS.

b. Harmonisation of the policies and regulatory frameworks governing telecommunications and information and communication technologies (ICT), and the postal sector in Africa

290. The second Conference of African Ministers of Communications and Information Technologies (CIT), held on 14 May 2008, in Cairo, Egypt, adopted recommendations on the following points:

- The governance of CIT Ministers;
- The reference framework for harmonisation of Telecommunications/ICT policies and regulations in Africa;
- The plan of action for development of postal services in Africa;
- The eleven pilot projects of the African Regional Plan of Action on the Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE);
- The establishment of an information and communications techniques fund (ICT Fund) before 2010.

291. At Sharm El Sheikh, in July 2008, the following Executive Council approved the findings of the second Conference of CIT Ministers by Decision EX.CL/434 (XIII).

292. Within the framework of the implementation of the findings of the Conference of Ministers and the decision of the Executive Council, an implementation plan was prepared and submitted to the Bureau of the Conference of Ministers.

293. Pending the consideration and adoption of the Plan of Action by the Bureau of the Conference of Ministers, the Commission embarked upon the following activities emanating from the Plan of Action:

- i) Translation and forwarding of all relevant documents to the States, RECs and partners, with the indication of their expected contribution;
- ii) Drafting of the terms of reference for the implementation of priority actions, including the study of regional model guidelines for telecommunications and ICT regulations and laws;
- iii) Participation in the process of establishing the Assembly of African Telecommunications and ICT Regulators;
- iv) Preparation of the first meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of Ministers now scheduled to be held in the first quarter of 2009.

III.3 INTEGRATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

1. IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENERAL ISSUES OF CONCERN

a) Disaster Risk Reduction

294. Taking recognition of the risk of disasters in the continent, the Commission has followed with keen interest the development and implementation of the Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy through capacity building at both regional and national levels. The support rendered by the International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction is noted with deep appreciation and it is hoped that this partnership will be strengthened in the years ahead.

b) African Monitoring of Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD)

295. The Commission is hosting the African Monitoring of Environment for Sustainable Development, funded by the European Union through the EDF9. This project seeks to provide decision makers with reliable and timely and accurate monitoring information on availability and quality of resources, by detecting water and food stress earlier and better assessment of the impact of policies and other intervention measures on environmental sustainability

c) The Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel Initiative

296. The African Union programme on the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel is being implemented with renewed commitment with full appreciation of the potential benefits of this endeavour in terms of both sustainable environmental management and the improvement of livelihoods in the rural areas across arid and semi zones of Africa. A harmonized draft action plan has been elaborated in collaboration with the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) and with a contribution from Senegal.

297. The objectives of the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and Sahel are being complemented by the implementation of two thematic programme networks (TPN3 and TPN6 executed respectively by AU/IBAR and AU/SAFGRAD) in the context of combating desertification. These are (TPN3) the Dry land Livestock Wildlife Environment Project (DLWEIP) being executed by the African Union – Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU/IBAR).

298. A separate document on this important issue is submitted at the present Session of Council.

d) Fouta Djallon Integrated Management programme

299. The AUC Fouta Djallon Coordination Office in Conakry, Guinea, is working with Member States, African Institutions, the civil society and development partners to promote awareness and pilot activities that will reverse the degradation process in the Fouta Djallon Highlands and other water towers of Africa, in order to improve the livelihoods of African peoples through sustainable management of Africa's land and water resources. Regional expert consultations on the establishment of a regional observatory for the monitoring of the Fouta Djallon Highlands natural resources has reached an advanced stage. The Office is also collaborating with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and other partners to develop new initiatives for the protection of natural resources in the Fouta Djallon Highlands.

300. A Regional Workshop was planned for mid December 2008 to enhance coordination and creation of synergies among the various actors operating in the Fouta Djallon Highlands and in surrounding areas. It is expected that a formal framework for collaboration and cooperation in the Fouta Djallon Highlands and their extensions will result from this event.

e) Mainstreaming the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN) and the African Ministerial Conference on Water (AMCOW) into AUC Structures

301. The roles and status of the African Ministerial Council on Water and its sister body, the African Ministerial Council Environment, need to be strengthened with a view to ultimately transforming these bodies into Specialized Technical Committees of the Commission.

302. The Commission's resolve in strengthening Africa's capacity to mitigate and adapt to climate change is embodied in the Climate for Development Programme in Africa (CLIMDEV-AFRICA) that is being developed in collaboration with the African Development Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. ClimDev-Africa is an essential step on the way to ensuring that adaptation to climate change in Africa is both timely and effective, and fully integrated into the development process. Comprehensive preparations are being undertaken to ensure that there is an effective participation of the African Group in all climate change negotiations for the 2009 Climate Change Summit in Algiers and beyond.

303. The above efforts will be complemented by the implementation of EU Multilateral Environment Agreement Capacity Building Programme to be hosted by the Commission. This Programme aims specifically at enhancing the capacities of the ACP countries at environmental negotiations.

f) Forest Resources Management

304. The sustainable utilization of the continent's vast water resources continues to engage the attention of the Commission. Efforts are underway to strengthen the existing River and Lake Basin Organizations and support the creation of new ones. The capacities of the Basin Organizations are being reinforced with support from the Commission in collaboration with the other multilateral and bilateral partners.

g) Water Resources Management

305. Pursuant to the Sharm El-Sheikh Decision on Water and Sanitation adopted by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Egypt in July 2008, the Commission has in concert with AU major partners, including the African Development Bank, Economic Commission for Africa and the United Nations Environment Agency taken the necessary measures to expedite the implementation of the Decision.

III.4 INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF FINANCIAL MARKET AND ASSETS

a) The Financial Crisis

306. The entire world is today experiencing an unprecedented financial crisis since the 1929-1930. The present crisis, generated by mortgage financing in the United States, as a result of the phenomenon of globalization, spread like wild fire to all corners of the planet. This crisis was initially financial before turning economic and social. Africa was comparatively spared by the financial facet of the crisis due to its weak link to financial globalization.

307. However, it could not escape the economic and social crisis generated by the financial crisis. And with good reason, Africa is linked to production and commercial globalization through the exportation of raw agricultural, energy and mining products. In fact, by inducing an economic recession in industrialized countries, the economic crisis will, *ipso facto*, lead to a reduction in the demand for raw materials, which the African continent appears to be a main supplier of. In the coming months, this will undoubtedly produce tangible effects on real economies of African countries, to be measured in terms of the drastic reduction in investment, consumption, savings, the general level of employment, etc.

308. Furthermore, Africa will certainly experience a reduction, even a drying up of the main sources of external financing it receives and of its capacity to service its foreign debts, and to face the challenges in attaining the MDGs. Africa could therefore not remain indifferent to this crisis whose advent it did not contribute to, but which it is bound to contend with. Thus, to enable our countries to stem the harmful effects of this crisis and to equip them to anticipate, in future, crises of this nature, the Commission, in close collaboration with the AfDB and ECA, organized in Tunis (Tunisia) on 12 November 2008 an Extraordinary Conference of African Ministers of the Economy and Finance and of Governors of African Central Banks. This Conference, after examining all the theoretical and empirical aspects of the crisis, highlighted its negative effects on African economies and, lastly, identified the main courses of action to be explored, not only to contain exogenous shocks arising from the crisis but also to anticipate, in future, the advent of crises of this nature. The main recommendations of the Tunis Conference are contained in a Communiqué which Member States have been provided with.

309. Furthermore, we all noted that Africa was absent from the G20 meeting held in Washington on 21 November 2008. The reason for that absence, it appears, lies in its low level of involvement and influence in global economic trends. On the one hand, this argument is true since the variables underpinning the very existence of institutions which are supposed to regulate the functioning of the international monetary and financial system are essentially economic. On the other hand, one could advance this other argument which states that Africa is an integral part of the groups which constitute the planet, and as such has the right and duty to contribute to fixing the new rules of the game in the reform of the international monetary and financial architecture, even if its economic weighting remains still low. The management of planetary affairs requires everyone's participation in compliance with the principle of equality and solidarity between peoples and nations.

310. Ahead of probable participation by Africa in the next G20 meeting scheduled to take place in London in April 2009, the Commission, in close cooperation with the AfDB and the ECA, organized on 16 January 2009, a meeting of the Committee of Ten (5 Ministers of the Economy and Finance and 5 Governors of African Central Banks) recommended by the Tunis Conference, in South Africa. At the end of the meeting, the Committee of Ten adopted a report to be submitted for consideration by the Conference. This document could serve as a reference to the African delegation as it defends the interests of our countries and our continent at the next G20 meeting.

311. The current financial and economic crisis summons all African leaders and represents a call for them to:

- Speed up the economic and political integration process of our regions and of our continent;
- Rehabilitate the role of public authorities in the management of our economies, a role which was made obsolete since the 80s by the structural adjustment programmes of Bretton Woods Institutions;
- Re-examine the development assistance policy because it is currently ineffective;
- Speed up the establishment of the financial institutions provided for in Article 19 of the Constitutive Act ;
- Support the Commission in its efforts towards the establishment of the Pan-African Stock Exchange;
- Recapitalize, if necessary, national, regional and continental banking and financial institutions, in order to shield them from the harmful effects of financial products.

b) Establishment of a Minimum Integration Programme

312. The Minimum Integration Programme (MIP) is an approach adopted by the Commission, not only to speed up the regional and continental integration process, but also to confer greater visibility to this process. The minimum programme covers a period of four years, which is the same period as for the AU's Strategic Plan. This link to the Strategic Plan facilitates a simultaneous assessment of the implementation of both the Minimum Integration Programme and the Strategic Plan, as well as make the necessary adjustments in light of the results obtained and new constraints from trends in the international environment. The Minimum Integration Programme comprises three stages as follows:

- i) The first stage comprises all regional or continental projects whose implementation addresses urgent integration imperatives, such as:
 - free movement of persons, capital, goods and services
 - establishment of regional customs unions or a common market
 - harmonization of the statistics of economic and monetary unions
 - advent of a democratically selected single African currency
 - establishment of a continental telecommunications system
 - construction of regional and continental physical infrastructure, etc.

- ii) The second stage involves all priority projects of each REC, according to the progress made with respect to the six stages contained in the Abuja Treaty.
- iii) The third stage is composed of inter-RECs projects aimed at harmonizing the policies of these institutions within the framework of the continental integration architecture. The Tripartite Summit between the East African Community (EAC), COMESA and SADC held on 22 October 2008 in Kampala, Uganda, is an instructive illustration of the activities of this third aspect.

313. This Programme, which has been adopted by competent organs, is being elaborated in close collaboration with RECs. When finalized, it will thereafter serve as a road map for the conduct of the regional and continental integration process. The projects or programmes identified under each stage will be binding on all stakeholders in the implementation of the regional and continental integration architecture, namely: Member States, RECs, the Commission, AfDB, ECA and all development partners of our continent.

c) **Establishment of the African Investment Bank (AIB), the African Monetary Fund (AMF), and the African Central Bank (ACB)**

314. It should be recalled that these three financial institutions are being established pursuant to Article 19 of the Constitutive Act. Since the launching of the AU in 2002 at the Durban Summit in South Africa, and the adoption of its organs in 2003 at the Maputo Summit in Mozambique, the Commission has been at work to give concrete expression to the provisions of Article 19. Although tangible progress has been recorded, much is still left to be done. Most hurdles or even obstacles recorded to date reside with Member States designated by Heads of State and Government to host the financial institutions.

i) **African Investment Bank (AIB)**

315. As concerns this institution, the Commission wishes to observe, with much satisfaction, that significant progress has been recorded as a result of the political will constantly displayed by the authorities of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in support of the AU Commission. Following the signing of the Protocol Agreement with the Commission, the competent authorities of that country wasted no time in making a brand new building and appropriate equipment available to the Technical Steering Committee, as stipulated by the Protocol Agreement, to enable the Committee to perform its duties. The Commission immediately recruited experts who assumed duty since June 2008. Chaired by the Governor of the Central Bank of Libya which oversees the management, the AIB Technical Steering Committee has already completed the draft Protocol which will govern the day-to-day running of the future AIB. The draft Protocol was considered by African Ministers of Economy and Finance during an extraordinary Conference held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 14 January 2009. Other AIB founding instruments are in elaboration. The Commission intends to submit them for consideration by AU decision-making organs during the July 2009 Summit.

316. The Commission further wishes to urge the authorities of the Great Libyan Jamahiriya to continue lending support to the Steering Committee so that it can discharge its mandate within the time frame stipulated in its terms of reference.

ii) African Monetary Fund (AMF)

317. There was commendable enthusiasm for implementation of the AMF as witnessed by the political will showed by Cameroon, the country hosting the AMF, in initialing the Protocol Agreement on 24 April 2008, and then signing it in July in the margins of the Sharm El Sheikh Summit. However, since the signing of the Protocol Agreement in Sharm El Sheikh, the Cameroonian authorities have not, to date, replied to the many correspondence sent to them by the Commission calling their attention to the urgent need to implement the Protocol Agreement. In the said correspondence, the Commission underscored the urgent need to endow the AMF Technical Steering Committee with offices and facilities to enable it to produce all the draft constitutive instruments of the said institution within the specified timeframe. The Commissioner for Economic Affairs held informal talks with the relevant Ministers whom he urged to take all appropriate action on this issue which has since not made any progress. I take this opportunity to urge the Cameroonian Authorities to honour their commitments as contained in the Protocol Agreement.

318. The Commission therefore wishes to call on all Member States desiring to host AU institutions to put together all the necessary requirements to facilitate the establishment thereof within the stipulated time frames.

iii) African Central Bank (ACB)

319. The process for establishment of this other institution is also faced with difficulties. After several requests had been addressed to the competent authorities of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Protocol Agreement on establishment of the Technical Steering Committee was initialed only on 25 November 2008. The document is still awaiting signature by the two parties (Nigeria and the Commission). The Commission looks forward to receiving from Nigeria information on the date of signature of the Protocol Agreement.

320. It is to be noted, however, that the Nigerian authorities have identified a building which the delegation of the Commission visited at their request, and which they pledged to make available to the Technical Steering Committee. Here also, the Nigerian authorities are fervently requested to facilitate the process for the establishment of the African Central Bank whose main duty will consist in minting the African single currency, a symbol par excellence of the sovereignty and unity of our Continent.

d) African Charter on Statistics

321. In conformity with its mission to support the African integration process, the Commission, through its Statistics Unit, has strived to define, in collaboration with the other stakeholders of the African statistics system, a framework to regulate statistical activity in Africa and to provide coherent, harmonized data that will be available in real time.

322. The Commission is happy with the fact that following arduous work, the African Charter on Statistics has been approved by all African statisticians and development partners. It will serve not only as a tool to regulate statistical activity in Africa, but also as a strategic guiding framework for the development of statistics and a code of reference, professional ethics and best practices for the exercise of the profession of statistician in Africa. The draft charter was then adopted by African Ministers of the Economy and Finance in April 2008 before being submitted for review by African Ministers of Justice in November 2008. The African Charter on Statistics is now tabled before the current session of the Assembly for consideration. Once adopted, it will undoubtedly constitute a legal instrument for the promotion of statistics for all members of the African statistical system.

323. The Commission has prepared a mechanism for the implementation of the Charter in order to lay down conditions for appropriate coordination of statistics in Africa and to have harmonized, quality statistics. The mechanism catalogues actors of the African statistical system and defines their respective roles, determines the statistics coordination organs in Africa and spells out their terms of reference, and finally develops a harmonious strategy for operationalization of the Charter. The Charter implementation coordination mechanism sets the foundations for appropriate coordination of statistical activity and the beginnings of a genuine process for harmonizing statistics in Africa.

324. The definition of the implementation mechanism of the African Charter on Statistics was associated with the conducting of a feasibility study on the establishment of an African statistics fund. Since the issue of funding is vital for the development of statistics, it was necessary to envisage ways and means of over-coming financial obstacles in order to facilitate the implementation of the Charter and measure the significant positive impacts on Africa's statistical system. The statistics fund will help to enhance the standard of statistics in Africa.

325. The Commission plans to launch, in January 2009, a statistics directory of economic and financial data on African countries. The document will provide information not only on prime convergence indicators, but also on other macroeconomic and financial indicators needed to guide the conduct of the integration process and the creation of the African single currency. A database known as AUSTAT was designed; it is based on more than 700 indicators covering all dimensions of African integration.

326. The primary objective of statistical activity is to make available statistics prepared, validated and certified by Member States to serve AU policies and programmes. Pending the conclusion of the process, and in order not only to address daily needs but also to remedy the exploitation of disparate data that do not take Africa's common standards/norms and statistical ethics into consideration, the Commission proceeded with the gathering and evaluation of additional data compiled by the RECs. Some data on demography, external trade and finance are already available. The Commission was involved in all activities organized at continental level by Pan-African institutions (ACBF, ECA and AfDB in particular), as well as in those carried out by regional organizations (AFRISTAT, ECOWAS). It also established relations with technical and financial partners,

notably the European Union (through EUROSTAT) and the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21).

e) Alternative Sources of Funding the AU

327. The financial institutions provided for in the Constitutive Act of the African Union reflect the magnitude of new needs, and consequently call for much more substantial and regular financial resources to be mobilized for the implementation of regional and continental programmes. Yet, the current mechanism for financing AU activities, which is largely dependent on statutory contributions by Member States and other contributions from development partners, presents many difficulties. The magnitude of the challenges calls the need to review the whole financial set-up inherited from the OAU, in the quest for a more effective system that is more autonomous in respect of international assistance and less linked to the budgetary constraints of Member States. This entails the need to explore alternative funding sources that can guarantee for the AU consensual, realistic and reliable resources whose realization will provide the AU with finances commensurate with its ambition. This action is aimed at enabling the AU to be autonomous in respect of its usual funding sources; this should allow it to efficiently and effectively implement its regional and continental programmes.

328. As indicated in the document on that issue submitted to the current session, several studies have been conducted, and have proposed alternative sources for funding the African Union on a sustainable basis. They include (i) import taxes ; (ii) levy on insurance policies ; (iii) international travel tax ; (iv) export levies based on the structure of State exports; (v) tax on hydrocarbon exports; (vi) tourism tax and (vii) mobilization of resources through the private sector. The various proposals were submitted to experts from Member States for consideration, and then to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government which asked for a more thorough study on the issue in order to determine the impact of each proposal on the economies of Member States as well as to evaluate the viability and sustainability of each proposal as an alternative source of income for the African Union. An updated report was submitted to a meeting of experts from Ministries of the Economy and Finance held on 11 and 12 January 2009. The resolutions adopted by Ministers of the Economy and Finance at their extraordinary meeting held on 14 January 2009 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, have been submitted to the decision-making organs for consideration.

329. The outcomes of the last study reveal that six of the eight proposals are viable and have a limited impact on Member State economies. They include (i) import levies; (ii) levy on insurance policies; (iii) international travel tax; (iv) export levies based on the structure of State exports; (v) tax on hydrocarbon exports and; (vi) mobilization of resources through the private sector. However, the import tax can be applied only in the long term once the implementation conditions are met.

f) Plan of Action for the Development of Micro-Finance in Africa

330. Access to financial services through micro-finance will help to strengthen the capacities of the poor segments of the society in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) using their own means and in a sustainable manner. It will enable the poor to increase and diversify their income in order to improve their living standards. This micro-

finance objective is in tune with one of the objectives of the AU which is to promote cooperation and development in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples. This action is therefore in keeping with the AU's efforts to develop micro-finance in a broad-based context of economic growth in the continent and efforts to reduce poverty and misery in Africa. The action is aimed at enabling the AU to adopt a roadmap and a plan of action for the development of micro-finance in Africa.

331. A study on the preparation of a roadmap and a plan of action for the development of micro-finance in Africa was conducted during the first half of 2008. The report of the study was validated at a workshop bringing together 27 micro-finance experts, notably representatives of micro-finance institutions and regulatory bodies from the five regions of Africa. The recommendations of the workshop should be considered by the Ministers of the Economy and Finance during their extraordinary meeting scheduled for 14 January 2009 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

332. The next stage of activities to be carried out under this action will be the presentation of the roadmap and the plan of action for the development of micro-finance in Africa to the decision-making organs of the African Union.

III.5 INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PRODUCTION CAPACITIES

1. AGRICULTURE (CAADP, FOOD CRISIS)

333. With the mandate to promote agricultural development of the African continent, to ensure sustainable growth and improved livelihoods for the population underpinned by sound environmental and natural resources management, the Commission implemented the various programmes and activities under its purview and in conformity with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Importance of the agriculture sector to African countries cannot be overemphasized. Agriculture dominates the economies of most African countries in terms of its contribution to GDP, employment and exports. For the foreseeable future, agriculture will continue to have the greatest impact on food security and poverty reduction and will remain the primary engine of economic growth.

i. High Food Prices

334. Over the past 10 years, there is evidence of a more sustained and faster growth in the agriculture sector with about a dozen countries that grew at annual rates of 5 % or more between 2003 and 2005. However, the current global high food Price crisis threatens to reverse the gains made over the past 10 years. In 2006, the FAO Food Price Index rose by 8 percent and by a further 24 percent in 2007. In the first three months of 2008, the Index average was 53 percent higher than for the same period in 2007. This food price increase has been rapid, sustained and across all major agricultural commodities. Its impacts could be felt both at a macroeconomic as well as at household income and food security levels.

335. Africa is one of the regions most affected by the global food crisis. African countries are generally net food importers, suggesting that higher food prices have led to a significant loss of their terms of trade. In addition, food typically accounts for a large share of the consumer price index in most African countries; hence rising food prices will lead to increasing inflationary pressure. Overall inflation is expected to increase in Africa from 6.3 percent in 2007 to 7.5 percent in 2008 with over 10 countries expected to have double-digit inflation rates. Due to increasing food prices, the balance of payments situations have drastically worsened in many African countries.

336. Higher food prices will also jeopardize the fight against hunger, as they make it more difficult for households to access food. The population groups that are most vulnerable to higher food prices are those that are net food buyers, spend a large share of their income on food and have very little means to cope with the situation. These groups include the urban poor, rural landless, pastoralists and many small-scale farmers and agro-pastoralists. For vulnerable households, higher prices will have an immediate impact on the quantity and quality of food consumed. They will reduce the number of meals, reduce the size of meals and reduce expenditures on health care and education and sell assets.

ii. Addressing the food crisis through CAADP implementation

337. AU Member States are addressing the high food price crisis through implementation of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP). The CAADP framework addresses long-term growth options and short-term emergencies such as the high food price crisis. In response to the food crisis, the AU/NEPAD formed a joint taskforce with partners such as the FAO, WFP, IFAD and the World Bank for joint missions to address the food crisis in a coordinated manner. To date there have been joint missions to 12 countries.

338. As part of the implementation of CAADP, more than two dozen countries, under the leadership of two of the RECs, i.e. COMESA and ECOWAS, are actively involved in refining sector policies, developing investment programs, and establishing the necessary partnerships and alliances to successfully implement the CAADP agenda and achieve its targets of 6% annual agricultural growth rate and 10% agricultural budget share. In advancing the CAADP agenda, the Commission convened two high level meetings on the margins of the UN General Assembly meetings and in the margins of the World Bank/IMF Meetings in September and October 2008 respectively. These meetings included the Chairperson of the Commission, AU Ministers of Agriculture and other high level officers from development partners. The Member States at these meetings committed to accelerate completion of the CAADP Roundtable process and sign the CAADP compacts in their respective countries. The meetings called for a continent-wide meeting of Heads of State and Government to launch global partnerships and adopt funding mechanisms for accelerated implementation of the CAADP agenda, including the establishment of a Trust Fund to finance the Pillar level activities and urged donors to provide financial resources to meet the financial gaps for the 2008/2009 farm inputs of fertilizers and seeds to mitigate the impact of the food crisis.

iii. Land Policy Framework

339. The right and access to land is fundamental in ensuring food security and it is in this respect that the Commission, in a joint initiative with the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the African Development Bank (ADB) is developing a Pan-African Land Policy Framework and Guidelines to assist Member States to undertake and harness land policy reforms for strengthening land rights, enhancing productivity and securing livelihoods. In this regard, regional assessments and consultations were conducted in each of the five sub-regions of Africa highlighting existing initiatives and lessons that would enrich the framework. A Draft Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa has been developed.

iv. The Pastoral Policy Initiative

340. Recognizing the importance and the special needs of the pastoral communities in Africa, the Commission, in partnership with UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) is spearheading the Pan-African Pastoral Policy Initiative. The objective is to develop a policy framework that will help in promoting development processes that address the unique needs of pastoral communities in Africa in partnership with pastoralists, their organizations and other stakeholders.

v. Control of Avian Influenza (bird flu)

341. Since the 1st outbreak of bird flu in Africa, the African Union – InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (IBAR) has spearheaded a continental effort to control the disease through the **Support Program for Integrated National Action Plans (SPINAP)**. The SPINAP project seeks to provide financial and technical support to enable African countries to establish and strengthen their national emergency preparedness and response plans. The sum of €22.6M has been mobilized through this project targeting all ACP countries. Funds have already been released to 12 countries that had fully complied with project requirements. A further 20 countries have now met the requirements and the funding has been approved, and is awaiting disbursement.

vi. Rinderpest Eradication and other livestock diseases

342. The AU-IBAR is implementing **Somali Ecosystem Rinderpest Eradication and Control Unit (SERECU)**. This project is dedicated to the final eradication of the disease from Africa. The last pockets of the disease were suspected to be in the Somalia ecosystem. Efforts are now focused on proving the absence of the disease, guarding against resurgence and achieving OIE accreditation of freedom from the disease, which will mark the final end to Rinderpest in Africa.

343. The AU-IBAR is also implementing **North Eastern Pastoral Development Program (NEPDP)** funded by USAID in Northern Kenya. The NEPDP program seeks to identify ways of increasing household incomes of pastoralists by addressing three key constraints to pastoralists' access to markets and veterinary services. The program has through targeted intervention on these constraints achieved tangible benefits and learned

useful lessons on pastoralist programming. Through the provision of mobile laboratories and facilitating linkages between private and public sector animal health services providers at the grassroots, disease reporting and response to outbreaks has improved significantly.

vii. Control of parasitic weeds

344. To enhance food security, the AU/Semi Arid Food Grain Research and Development (SAFGRAD) in Burkina Faso has been collaborating with regional and international research institutions and partners in making accessible research results in several West African countries on the control and eradication of parasitic weeds especially *Striga hermonthica*. The main achievements of this programme include widespread dissemination of tolerant maize varieties and agronomic technologies for mitigation of *Striga* effects on maize and other grains productivity in semi-arid areas of participating countries. Other activities include the up scaling of best crop, water and nutrient management strategies in the Volta Basin through a more efficient information and methodology dissemination mechanism.

viii. PATTEC

345. The role of the PATTEC Coordination Office in mobilising, organising and coordinating action aimed at the eradication of trypanosomiasis is getting consolidated and appreciated. Under the coordination of the Commission and with assistance from development partners, various activities are being undertaken to enhance the efforts of affected countries towards the goal of eradicating trypanosomiasis. The implementation of the African Development Bank - supported PATTEC programme in six countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali) has entered the third year and is now fully under way and progressing well.

346. Extensive consultations with governments in countries of the Central African region (Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon) on the implementation of PATTEC were undertaken. Several technical planning workshops to discuss the details of project proposals in various countries in the region were organised by the PATTEC Coordination Office. Four multi-national tsetse eradication project proposals for identified areas in the region were developed and these will be used to mobilize the necessary resources from affected countries and their partners. In a special partners conference on PATTEC for the Central African Region, which was held in N'djamena, Chad, 3 – 4 December 2008, the technical plans, investment possibilities and requirements for tsetse and trypanosomiasis eradication in different countries were discussed and pledges and expressions of commitment were made in support of the implementation of PATTEC.

347. The PATTEC Coordination Office has recently developed an advocacy plan to guide efforts aimed at addressing the information gap that exists at various levels, including political leaders, decision-makers, the general population and development partners. Focal points and contact persons nominated by governments in several tsetse affected countries (Angola, Central African Republic, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Guinea Conakry, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania) were introduced to the strategic plan and invited to develop their own strategies

for initiating activities in support of Africa's war against trypanosomiasis. Arrangements are being made to organize a technical workshop in Addis Ababa, 19 – 20 January 2009, to appraise the proposals from the different countries and discuss the possibilities and modalities for supporting the initiation of the planned activities. A concept for a joint project proposal between Ethiopia and Sudan on tsetse eradication in areas of the common tsetse belt along the border between the 2 countries has been prepared and efforts are under way to prepare a bankable project proposal for use in resources mobilization. An inter-ministerial meeting to discuss the plans for the implementation of PATTEC in countries along the West African Coast (Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire) will be held in July/August 2009 in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

348. The work of mobilising the support required in the execution of projects from the affected countries and development partners has been initiated. The governments of Angola and Zambia have confirmed the availability of funds pledged in support of the regional tsetse and trypanosomiasis eradication project in the Kwando/Zambezi region. Angola has transferred US\$5.1 million to the Regional PATTEC Bank Account in Katima Mulilo. Zambia has completed the process of awarding tenders and contracts for aerial spraying operations and related services and supplies. The aerial spraying operations will begin in March/April 2009 and cover a combined total area of about 15,000 km² in both countries.

349. The African Development Bank has indicated that the second phase support of US\$75 million pledged during the partners' conference held in Addis Ababa in February 2007 will be release in 2010. After a break of a few months the mission to the 6 Gulf Arab States, led by the 1st Lady of Sudan, to mobilise support for PATTEC, resumed with a visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A positive response to the recent approaches and requests for support to PATTEC made to BADEA was received, indicating that BADEA has approved US\$170,000- to support management training for personnel involved in the execution of PATTEC projects. In collaboration with a Non-governmental organization based in Washington D.C., plans are under way to activate the Trypanosomiasis Vector Research and Control (TVRC) Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charity organization set up and registered in the USA to mobilise support for trypanosomiasis control in Africa and Latin America. A Memorandum of Understanding between the Commission and the World Health Organization (WHO) on cooperation and support in the implementation of PATTEC is due to be signed on 19th December 2008.

350. The preparation of a monitoring and evaluation protocol to facilitate the supervision of project implementation has been processed and is now being tested. The process of establishing a PATTEC electronic network is on-going and in connection with this a dedicated PATTEC website is being developed. A comprehensive range of regional training courses designed to provide the technical capacity and cadres necessary to execute PATTEC projects to be held during 2009 have been planned and funding for the courses is being discussed with various partners.

351. In light of the Assembly Decision in Khartoum, in January 2006, the Commission will endeavor to boost the structure of the PATTEC Coordination Office to enable it fulfill its expanding activities and scope of coverage with adequate human resources. The

Commission should also be mandated to seek and obtain information, in trypanosomiasis-affected African countries or international partners, relating to the use of any funds committed to addressing the problem of trypanosomiasis and report the findings to the Summit.

352. In view of the increased and anticipated increase in the scope and activities of the PATTEC Initiative, and in the interest of enhanced efficiency in coordinating activities in the implementation of PATTEC, Regional PATTEC Coordination Offices or Focal Points should be established at the Secretariat of Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

353. The Commission expresses its gratitude and recognition to the efforts being made by the 1st Lady of Sudan, who assisted it to mobilize support for PATTEC.

ix. Monitoring of the Avian Influenza

354. In order to better monitor the Avian Influenza and other communicable diseases and also to be closer to countries and Regional Economic Communities, AU/IBAR has established, under SPINAP, Regional Animal Health Desks in Mali, Botswana, and Kenya. Another desk will be established in Tunisia in due course. These desks work in collaboration with Technical counterparts from the OIE and FAO in order to harmonize strategies for the monitoring of Avian Influenza as a first step, and later on for other diseases within the region. This collaboration between the three organizations takes into account the mandates and inherent experience of each institution and their respective capacities.

x. Fisheries Resources Management

355. In light of its grave concern over the depleting of the fisheries resources of the continent, the Commission, in a strategic partnership with Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), has put in place the Sustainable Fisheries Investment Fund in the Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) of Africa. This initiative aims to support country-level strategic investments to combat the depletion of fisheries in the LMEs of Africa and assist the individual coastal countries bordering these LMEs to meet the fisheries targets and poverty eradication goal of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In order to achieve these objectives, the GEF has created a Sustainable Investment Fund of US \$60 million to be disbursed as grants over a ten-year period

xi. Meeting with Partners on Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)

356. Through the facilitation of the Washington Office, the Commission held a Meeting on the Implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) on the margins of the 2008 Annual Meetings of the Boards of Governors of the IMF and the World Bank Group. The Meeting brought together Ministers of Finance and Agriculture of "CAADP Champion Countries"(Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia),

Heads of Partner agencies and Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The purpose of the meetings was to galvanize global efforts towards the development of a roadmap to expedite the implementation of CAADP and, at the same time address the immediate needs arising from the high food prices.

357. The meeting was successful in creating global awareness about the disproportionate impact of the global food crisis on the Continent and, also drew attention to the need to accelerate the implementation of CAADP as the most viable framework for increased agricultural growth and food security. The Commission will promote a coordinated response working in collaboration with development partners and the private sector and, especially the RECs as a concrete step forward, with the close involvement of the NEPAD Programme and relevant Representational Offices.

xii. Alive Partnership

358. Within its mandate of promoting livestock productivity in Africa AU/IBAR is involved in the implementation of **ALive Partnership**, which is a Multi-donor African Livestock platform established in 2005. The project aims to improve the whole livestock sector and thus make an impact on sustainable livelihoods especially of the pastoral communities.

2. INDUSTRIAL AND MINING DEVELOPMENT

i. Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Mineral Resources Development, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 16-17 October 2008

359. The First Ordinary Session of the African Union Conference of Ministers responsible for Mineral Resources Development was held at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 16 to 17 October 2008. The main objective of the Conference was to propose to African leaders a strategic vision for the responsible management of Africa's Mineral Resources in order to promote growth, reduce poverty, and ensure sustainable development in Africa.

360. The Conference considered and discussed the African Mining Vision 2050, which aims at ensuring transparent, equitable and optimal exploitation of Africa's mineral resources to underpin broad-based sustainable growth and socio-economic development. The main objective of the African Mining Vision 2050 is to have a common African position on how to use mineral resources for growth and development with the hindsight that the current commodity boom provides a new window of opportunity for Africa.

361. The Ministers adopted their Declaration and decided:

- To postpone the adoption of the Mining Vision to February 2009 during the African Mining Partnership (AMP) Meeting in Durban, South Africa, in order to allow enough time for Member States to study the document in greater depth;

- That appropriate steps should be taken to institutionalize the Conference of African Ministers Responsible for Mineral Resources Development to become part of the regular meetings of the African Union policy organs and that the Africa Mining Partnership (AMP) be associated with the Conference.

ii. *The Eighteenth Conference of African Ministers of Industry (CAMI-18),
Durban, South Africa, 27-28 October 2008.*

362. The Eighteenth Ordinary Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry (CAMI-18) was held in Durban, Republic of South Africa, on 27 and 28 October 2008. The main objective of the Conference was to develop a strategy for implementation of the Plan of Action for accelerated industrial development of Africa as instructed by the 10th Ordinary Session of the Assembly.

363. Given the wide interest that the issue of industrial development of Africa generates among partners and stakeholders, a Forum involving African and non-African Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and a meeting of the Association of the African Investment Promotion Agencies (AfriPaNet) was organized in Durban in parallel with CAMI-18. The overall objective of the side meetings was to solicit the inputs of the private sector into the implementation strategy and to provide a platform for dialogue on policy issues surrounding industrial development in Africa.

364. The Ministers adopted their Declaration and directed the Bureau of CAMI to ensure that their observations are incorporated in the implementation strategy, especially regarding the inclusion of a monitoring and evaluation mechanism both at country, regional, and continental levels.

III.6 INTEGRATION AND TRADE CAPACITY BUILDING

1. **MARKET ACCESS CAPACITY- BUILDING**

365. The Commission carried out the following activities to build the coordinated implementation capacities of customs unions:

i. *Customs capacity building: Second workshop of the Technical Working Group
on capacity building, 14 and 15 July 2008.*

366. In conformity with the conclusions of the first Conference of African Ministers responsible for Integration held in 2006, relating to the rationalization and harmonization of activities at regional level, as adopted by the Executive Council the same year, the Commission launched an initiative on the rationalization and harmonization of customs capacity building at continental level. Although capacity building features on the agenda of all customs services in the continent, the scarcity of resources calls for the harmonization of initiatives and the pooling of resources.

367. The workshop gave rise to the preparation of an African Union draft strategy in customs capacity building which will be submitted for validation at the next session of the Sub-Committee of Directors General of Customs to be held in Yaounde, Cameroon in May 2009.

ii. Rules of Origin: Second Workshop of the African Union Working Group on EPA Rules of Origin, held in Addis Ababa from 1 to 2 December 2008

368. During the first Workshop of this Working Group (TWG) held in Addis Ababa from 21 to 22 April 2008, it was recommended, among others, that the Commission should convene a second meeting of the TWG in order to review new developments that will enable the preparation of recommendations on the way forward.

369. In conformity with the recommendation, the Commission organized the second workshop on 1-2 December 2008. The aim was to enable African experts to:

- consider the latest developments emanating from the last meetings held on Rules of Origin;
- make a critical analysis of rules of origin contained in interim agreements signed;
- agree on the elements of a negotiating strategy on rules of origin to be proposed to chief negotiators.

370. The conclusions of the workshop will be the subject of the brainstorming by the meeting of EPA experts on a draft model EPA.

iii. AUC/RECs customs coordination: Second meeting of the AUC/REC Coordination Committee on Customs – 4-5 December 2008, Addis Ababa

371. The first meeting was held in Addis Ababa from 23-25 April 2008. The purpose of the Committee which comprises representatives of the Commission and of RECs is to facilitate the establishment of the Continental Customs Union as provided for by the Abuja Treaty. The aim of the second meeting of the Coordination Committee was to review the conclusions of the first and to treat certain issues that could not be discussed at the first meeting because of the low level of participation. It also made a strategic brainstorming on the theme "Towards a Continental Customs Union".

iv. Market Access Capacity

372. The Industry, Trade and Market Access Cluster (ITMA) is a United Nations System effort in support of the African Union and NEPAD programme in the areas of industry, trade and market access for African commodities. The main objective of the cluster is to reinforce and add value to ongoing efforts in enhancing the UN System-wide coordination and collaboration in support of the AU and NEPAD. The cluster aims at building synergies in the programmes and activities of the UN system and fostering joint efforts so as to

maximize coordinated action, coherence and effectiveness of its support to the AU and its NEPAD programme.

373. Since its inauguration in Vienna, Austria, in 2007, the cluster has held several regional consultative meetings (RCMs) with a view to aligning and developing a work programme of action to be undertaken by the United Nations system within a specific time frame. The cluster consists of programmes in industrial development, trade and market access. A draft matrix of activities covering the period 2009-2010 has already been developed and consists of programmes and projects in the following broad areas of trade and industrial development: Knowledge Sharing and Networking, Research and Policy Analysis, and Capacity Development. The implementation of these programmes is expected to start during the first half of 2009.

v. The Pan-African Competitiveness Forum (PACF)

374. Increasingly, African stakeholders from industry, business, academia and government have recognized the role of a competitive private sector to growth and poverty reduction initiatives in Africa. This initiative offers a unique opportunity for African stakeholders involved in cluster-based competitiveness initiatives to make a significant contribution to re-energizing and re-thinking private sector development activities. A number of key stakeholders from Member States, representing business academia and government have in 2008 met at regional and international seminars to discuss how to effectively initiate and implement cluster-based competitiveness initiatives in Africa.

375. The Commission has played an important role in facilitating a number of these activities in order to ensure synergies with related competitiveness initiatives in Member States and has contributed to existing African platforms for collaboration on competitiveness.

376. The Competitiveness Institute (TCI) and other international development partners involved in cluster-based initiatives in Africa organized these activities. In addition, the Pan-African Competitiveness Forum (PACF) established some major objectives for Pan-African collaboration on innovation and cluster-based competitiveness.

vi. Programmes with the EU

377. Witin the context of the African-EU Troïka, cooperation with the European Commission made it possible to identify areas which require capacity building. These areas concern :

- a. Development policies and management, transfer and sustainability of know-how as well as institutional capacities for the implementation of regional trade agreements ;
- b. Strengthening and development of regional regulation frameworks, with special emphasis on strategies to harmonize business law ;

- c. Priority actions to be launched in the field of standards (SPS and industrial) and standardisation ;
 - d. Aid for trade : the European Party undertook to pursue its initiative on a joint determination (that could include other donors) of regional programmes on aid for trade. Such regional programmes will be the primary support instruments of the EU for regional integration and EPA attendant measures. However, the EDF alone will certainly not be enough to cover these commitments.
- vii. Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Ministerial Conference on Aid for Trade, 19-20 November, 2008, Cambodia

378. The Commission participated in the Ministerial Conference of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) organized by UNIDO and held in Siem Reap, Kingdom of Cambodia, from 19 to 20 November 2008. The overall objective of the Conference was to deliberate on how the industrial agenda of the LDCs can be supported using the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) instrument and Aid for Trade (AfT) in general. The Aid for Trade programmes constitute important elements of coordinated responses by the international community to facilitate and expedite trade-driven integration of LDCs into the global economy. At the end of the Conference, Ministers adopted a Declaration in which the responsibilities and commitments of both LDCs and the international community were clearly defined.

viii. Phytosanitary and Sanitary Issues

379. In its efforts to address the phytosanitary concerns and to promote regional trade, the AU/Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU/IAPSC) in Yaoundé, Cameroon, carried out a scoping study of impact of fumigation and inspection issues on the Safe trade of plant and plant products in the economy of west and central African countries. A survey of fumigation and inspection procedures was conducted at identified plant protection and quarantine stations or major point of entry with potential volume of exchange of plant and plant products in five countries in Central and West Africa.

380. AU/IAPSC continues to encourage the rational use of pesticides and other chemicals used in crop and animal production to protect foodstuffs in storage. In pursuant of this objective, AU/IAPSC is closely monitoring national legislations on pesticides in several African countries to see what could be learned from these countries and support in policy harmonization where necessary in order to stimulate trade across national boundaries and regions.

381. In order to maintain ideal sanitary and phytosanitary conditions and upkeep adherence to international standards throughout Africa, the AU/InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (IBAR), with support from the ACP Secretariat, is implementing the project on the Participation of African Nations in Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standard-setting Organizations (PAN-SPSO). This project 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 international standards

setting organizations and improve capacity building in the implementation of food safety standards and measures.

viii. Control of Fruit Pests

382. To facilitate trade in African agricultural products, AU/SAFGRAD in collaboration with Burkina Faso, the African Development Bank, the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and other countries in the West African sub-region has embarked on a regional initiative for the biological control of mango pest in West Africa. Arrangements are in advanced stage for the speedy implementation of this project.

ix. Promotion of efficient Veterinary Services

383. To enhance livestock production and productivity and safeguarding the standardization of veterinary vaccine production, the AU/Pan African Veterinary Vaccine Centre (AU/PANVAC) is promoting the availability of safe, effective and affordable veterinary vaccines, facilitating the development and the introduction of improved or new vaccines and strengthening Africa's capacity in these areas.

xi. Biotechnology for Agriculture and Food Security

384. The Commission for some time now has been engaged in the contentious issue of biotechnology for agriculture and food security. It is important that Africa has a common position on this matter and the activities of the Commission have channeled along that line and attempts to the maximum utilization of the benefits offered by biotechnology while minimizing the risks associated with it. The Commission co-organized the 1st All African Congress on Biotechnology, from September 22-26, 2008, in Nairobi, Kenya, in which over 400 scientists, policy makers, media experts, farmers, researchers, development partners, representatives regulatory bodies and entrepreneurs from all over the world participated to discuss the future of biotechnology in Africa. An important insight made transparent from this event was that despite Africa's need to apply modern biotechnology to boost agricultural productivity, it has been affected primarily by prolonged delays in enacting requisite biosafety laws and fear of jeopardizing trade with the European Union.

385. The conference recommended (i) the establishment of an African Biotechnology Trust Fund to be managed by the Commission for the implementation of regional programs and projects in biotechnology; (ii) that the Commission work closely with the stakeholders in the organization of the 2nd All-Africa Congress within 2-3 years; (iii) the need to implement the Nairobi and the Tripoli recommendations and declarations effectively through the creation of practical programs on biotechnology; and (iv) the establishment of an African Biotechnology Outreach Program (ABOP) for the coordination of biotechnology activities at the African Biotechnology Stakeholder Forum.

2. MULTILATERAL TRADE RULES AND NEGOTIATIONS (EPA, WTO)

i. Multilateral Trade Negotiations at the World Trade Organisation (WTO)

386. Following the collapse of the July 2008 WTO mini-Ministerial meeting, discussions have resumed on the Doha Round negotiations in Geneva. However, due to the dampening of enthusiasm and the loss of confidence, engendered by the failure, discussions have accordingly been skeletal. Only work programmes for the rest of 2008 have been drawn while activities have mainly taken place at informal consultation levels.

387. Key drivers of the process remain Agriculture and Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) negotiations, with the respective Chairmen of the Negotiating Groups holding informal consultations with small groups of members at intervals, to gauge the mood and readiness for full scale negotiations on modalities. Reports indicate that positions continue to differ on a wide range of issues. On Services, the current global financial meltdown appears to be sending signals for members, particularly developing countries, to do reality checks on their level of ambition and hence the kinds and levels of commitment they should undertake.

388. The assessment is that not much would be achieved while members await the incoming United States Administration to settle into office, a very crucial factor that cannot be ignored, in the WTO processes. While Africa is looking forward to a timely conclusion of the negotiations, the positions are that the ongoing processes must take account of adequate flexibilities for developing countries, in particular African countries, with respect to principles of less than full reciprocity in reduction commitments, meaningful market access commitments, predictable, effective and additional sources of aid for trade and other developmental concerns.

389. In respect of the negotiations at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), a Mini-Ministerial took place in July 2008, with the purpose of making clear political choices, which would subsequently allow technically and legally fine tuning the modalities discussed within WTO. No agreement however was reached on a variety of topics including the reduction in agricultural subsidies, greater opening of the markets to agricultural and non-agricultural products, greater competition for agricultural products exports, an opening into the markets of services, the disclosure of the origin of genetic resources and knowledge contained in the patents, the extension of the protection of geographic indications to other products as well as the issue of the access of banana to European Union markets.

390. Following the failure of the Mini-Ministerial Talks, discussions later resumed on these key issues. Africa is very active in these negotiations, enjoying the full support of the Geneva Office. Indeed, in order to strengthen the capacities of the Group, three workshops were organised on WTO issues. In the course of the last workshop, which was held on the eve of the Ministerial Conference, eight African ministers took part and were kept informed on the issues debated and on the common positions adopted by the Group. The Geneva Representation also worked with the African Group in preparing the Declaration on the WTO negotiations.

391. Concerning the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, (UNCTAD) the African Group, supported by the Geneva Office, highlighted the need, in all the forums, for an effective implementation of the conclusions agreed by UNCTAD XII in Accra, in particular that on commodities. In addition, the African Group reaffirmed that UNCTAD's task was not only to contribute efficiently, through their technical analyses, in finding sustainable solution to the food and financial crises plaguing the world, in particular African countries, but also to contribute to the genuine insertion of African countries into the Multilateral Trade System, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals as well as ensure the requisite provisions pertaining to the application of paragraph 183 of the Accra Accord, pertaining to the establishment of a stand-alone unit on commodities, on which African countries are still largely dependent for their own development.

392. The International Trade Centre collaborates intensively with the African Union Office in Geneva to elaborate programmes supporting endeavours to increase the potential of African countries by improving exports, developing the private sector and the productive capacities, in order to allow Africa to integrate the World Trade System. In this respect, the ITC launched the (PACCIA II), a capacity building programme aimed at upscaling the capacity of relevant national and regional institutions, export competition, links with the market, and export revenues of African SMEs in high-potential sectors. Endowed with a budget of US\$ 20,2 millions, for a duration of five years, PACCIA II will emphasise regional integration and the institutional capacity building; it was launched during the third quarter of 2008.

ii. Negotiations of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)

393. The negotiations for full and comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between the African negotiating groups and the European Commission are continuing. During this period, Zambia initialled an interim EPA with the EU thus bringing the number of African countries that have done so to date to nineteen. It is expected that countries that initialled interim agreements will sign them within the first half of next year, which should be followed by notification of the agreements to the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

394. The African Union Conference of Ministers of Trade and of Finance held in Addis Ababa in April 2008 identified a number of contentious issues in the interim agreements which need to be adequately addressed in the context of the negotiations for full and comprehensive EPAs. However, in their ongoing engagements with the EC, the negotiating regions in Africa are facing strong challenges on these issues, especially those relating to the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) principle, export taxes and non-execution clause. Divergences still exist on the issue of the provision of adequate and additional resources beyond European Development Fund (EDF) for the financing of EPAs. There are also differences in the treatment of trade-related issues.

395. The Commission, in collaboration with UNECA has completed work on the zero draft of the model/template EPA. It is expected that the template, which was mandated by the joint Conference of AU Ministers of Trade and Finance and the AU Summit will assist African negotiating groups in their EPA negotiations. It will also help in the harmonisation

and coordination of African positions on EPAs and in ensuring that EPAs serve as instrument for the achievement of development and the promotion of regional integration in Africa.

396. The unity and solidarity of Africa as well as mobilisation of support in Europe for the African common position on EPAs remain critical for a successful outcome of the EPA negotiations.

iii. 7th AGOA Annual Forum

397. With the facilitation of the Washington Office, the Commission participated at the 7th AGOA Forum held in July 2008. This Forum provided unique opportunities, building on the conclusions of the AU Summit in Sharm-El-Sheikh, to articulate the position of Africa on issues of trade in general as well as the need for negotiations around the new AGOA Bill to take into consideration that position.

III.7 ROLE OF ALL ACTORS IN STRENGTHENING THE INTEGRATION PROCESS

398. The Commission pursued its activities aimed at strengthening its relations with the African Citizens, Civil Society Organizations, Public and Private Sector as well as the Diaspora. Progress has been registered in the following areas during the period under review: the launch and institutionalization of the Permanent General Assembly of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the Union (ECOSOCC) and capacity building for CIDO, support for international partnerships and consolidation of the Diaspora Initiative and the development of the African Volunteers Programme.

a) Capacity-Building for CIDO

399. The Commission has begun work on the need to strengthen the African Citizens and Diaspora Directorate as recommended in the Audit Report and approved by the Executive Council at its Extra-Ordinary Session in Arusha, Tanzania, in May 2008. To this end, a modified structure for the Directorate has been prepared for consideration and finalization by the Commission and the PRC Sub-Committee on Structures to enable a new structure to be submitted for consideration to the competent Policy Organs.

b) Support for International Partnerships: Africa-Turkey CSO Pre-Summit Forum, Ankara, August 2008

400. The Commission has also been active in enabling civil society participation and support for the programme of international partnerships. As part of this process, the Commission in concert with TASAM in Turkey organized an Africa-Turkish CSO Pre-Summit Forum in Ankara from 14-16 August 2008 to provide grassroot inputs for the process of cooperation between Africa and Turkey. The Forum adopted a Declaration and agreed on a common action plan that would, among other things, enable an effective communication network and establish study groups that would support the cooperation process. It also agreed on the need for a platform for International Civil Society

Organisation and Networks (USTKIP) to support the process of collaboration between Africa and Turkey.

c) Consolidation of Diaspora Initiative through Preparations for the African Diaspora Summit

401. In accordance with Assembly Decision Assembly AU/Dec. 203 (XI), the Commission and the Government of South Africa have continued to work closely together to organize the African Diaspora Summit. Accordingly, in July 2008 they convened the Technical Workshop in Sun City, South Africa, to consider short-term actions, develop a consolidated implementation and prepare a draft Declaration as directed by the previous Ministerial Conference. The outcome document was subsequently distributed to all AU Member States, CARICOM and concerned States in South and Central America as part of the preparations for the anticipated Summit. Preparations for the Summit itself continued apace with the negotiation of host agreement and consultation and agreement on the draft work programme and arrangement for reception and meeting facilities. Arrangements were on track until it was interrupted by political developments that led to the postponement of the meeting. Thereafter, consultations have continued between the Commission and the Government of South Africa with a view to rescheduling the dates for the Summit. It is expected that the consultations would be concluded as soon as possible so that the new dates and arrangements will be communicated to all concerned.

d) The Role of the Diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbeans

402. Building Diaspora Relationships in the Americas (North and Latin America) and the Caribbeans with a view to involving the African Diaspora in the development of the continent is high on the list of priorities for the AU Washington Office. The following are compelling reasons for cooperating with this important group of individuals:

- Studies have shown that the African Diaspora in North America is one of the most highly educated, skilled and resourceful.
- It is further estimated that African immigrants in the US range from 881,300 to 1 Million US 2000 Census and US Community Survey 2002). More than 282,600 live in Canada. West Africans (36%); East Africans (24%) North Africans (22%); Southern Africa (8%) and Central Africans (3%).
- According to statistics, there has been a 142% increase in African-born residents in the US between 1990 and 2000.
- Remittances from African Immigrants in the US constitute a significant percentage of African countries' GDP. Nigerians and Ghanaians are in the lead having remitted more than US\$1 billion to their respective home countries in 2006.
- African-Americans have historically played a pivotal role in the emancipation of the continent. This constituency continues to assist in championing Africa's development and political agenda through effective advocacy within both the Legislative and Executive Branches of the US Government, Civil Society and Non Governmental Organizations, the Academia as well as Think Tanks.

- There is high presence of Afro-descendant populations in Latin America and the Caribbean. Brazil tops the list while presence in Colombia, Peru, Panama, Guadeloupe and Martinique as well as other parts of Asia is quite significant.

403. Through efforts of the AU Washington Office, an Institutional Development Fund (IDF) Facility in the amount of US\$487,900, was signed between the Commission and the World Bank on 15 July 2008. The Facility is earmarked for strengthening the capacity of the Office to support the African Union Diaspora Initiative and to create an enabling environment for engaging the African Diaspora in the economic development of the African continent.

404. The major focus of the Washington Office's capacity building activities include:

- Development of reliable Database of African Diaspora networks and individuals;
- Facilitating deployment of Diaspora professional networks, especially in the areas of health and education;
- Equipping the AU Mission to be a Diaspora Policy Coordination Center for African Diaspora Mobilization;

405. The key activities to be carried out by the Washington Office include:

- Engaging international, multilateral and bilateral institutions in the Americas (e.g. the Inter-American Development Bank, IADB). The IADB has a rich background in Latin American economies and their Diaspora. The IADB could assist African Governments to develop policies for banking reforms and value-added services to recipients and senders of remittances, as well as issuance of Diaspora bonds, and securitize future remittances.
- Initiating African Diaspora Business Roundtables – These periodic Roundtables to be held both in the Americas and the Caribbean with participation of Diaspora capital and investment fund managers will focus on opportunities for investment in Africa.
- Developing fund-raising strategies to mobilize resources for Diaspora Engagement in public sector service delivery (education, health)

406. Another landmark achievement during the period under review was the launching, on Friday September 25, 2008, by the Chairperson of the Commission, the "African Health Diaspora Initiative" as part of the annual Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series organized by the Constituency for Africa. The African Health Diaspora Initiative is a pilot project aimed at implementing the African Union Health Strategy.

407. The Commission's strategy to engage the African Diaspora in the development of the Continent is ambitious but forward looking. However, the limited human resource capacity is a serious impediment for translating into practical reality any of the above activities/programs. Urgent attention is to be given to the staffing needs of the Commission and its Representational Offices. The Commission will also ensure and facilitate a

coordinated and coherent African Diaspora Strategy that takes into account the pivotal role of the Representational Offices in the framework of its mandate.

III.8 PARTNERSHIPS AND RELATIONS WITH THE WORLD

1. ON GOING PARTNERSHIPS

408. Council will recall that by Decision EX.CL/Dec.428 (XIII) the Commission was requested to take all necessary measures to facilitate the successful conduct of the various strategic partnerships of the African Union.

a) Conduct of the First Africa-Turkey Partnership Summit

409. The First Africa-Turkey Partnership Summit took place at Ciragan Palace, Istanbul, Turkey, from 18 to 20 August 2008. The Summit was held at three distinct levels – the Senior Officials, Ministers and Heads of State and Government. Importantly, the format of the Summit did not conform to the model that was approved by the Assembly during the Banjul Summit on Africa's representation at Summits with a single-country partner. This was because Turkey invited all African countries and most of the countries that were not covered by the Banjul Summit Decision, did attend the Summit.

410. The Summit was attended by seven (7) African Heads of State and Government, Vice Presidents, Prime Ministers and Ministers. In all, fifty (50) African countries were represented at the meeting, which also had in attendance the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union. It was decided that an Africa-Turkey Partnership Summit would meet every five (5) years in Africa and in Turkey, on a rotational basis, and that a follow-up mechanism should be established at several levels. In this context, a second Africa-Turkey Summit will be held in Africa in 2013.

411. It should be noted that a detailed report of the Summit has already been circulated by the Commission to Member States. Suffice it therefore to indicate that the Summit adopted two outcome documents, namely, the Istanbul Declaration and the Framework for Cooperation.

412. Among other things, the Summit agreed that the Partnership should meet at Summit level every five years with meetings at Ministerial and Officials levels in between. The Framework of Cooperation spelt out the areas in which Africa and Turkey could cooperate but the details are to be worked out in a plan of action. This is to be done within one year, which the Multilateral Cooperation Sub-Committee and PRC will work together to achieve. On the whole, the Summit was a success in that it clearly showed the genuine desire by Africa and Turkey to further intensify and deepen their relations. The success of the Summit, on the African side, could be attributed to the excellent working relationship that exist between the Multilateral Cooperation Sub-Committee and the Commission, both of which worked tirelessly in the preparatory process and during the summit. It is hoped that the same candor will continue to prevail in the future both in this process and in similar other engagements that Africa is involved in.

413. Nevertheless, two important issues that were experienced during the Summit need to be highlighted. The first relates to the issue of participation of Member States in a single-country partnership. Whereas India strictly followed the Banjul format as communicated to it by the African Union, Turkey did not, because it invited all Member States and went further to even invite all Africa's Permanent Representatives to the UN while it did not specifically invite Members of the PRC in Addis Ababa. This issue was discussed at the level of the PRC and the consensus was that, in the final analysis, it was the responsibility of Member States to respect and implement decisions they have taken at the highest level. A review of the partnership policy of the Union can help deal with this thorny issue.

414. The second issue concerns the fact that during the last meeting of officials with Turkish officials in Istanbul, the African side re-opened many issues on which a final position had already been agreed in Addis Ababa by the PRC. Regrettably, this portrayed Africa in a very bad light in view of the fact that there were ferocious arguments between African delegations. This happened also in New Delhi during the Forum with India. The Commission recommends very strongly that every effort should be made to avoid such in the future. This will require, perhaps, more consultation and communication between Addis Ababa and Headquarters so that decisions reached by the PRC after extensive preparations should not be re-opened when meeting with partners.

b) The Second Africa-South America Summit

415. The Second Africa-South America Summit (ASA) was to have been held on 28 to 29 November 2008 but was postponed to early 2009. However, a number of preparations had taken place as a prelude to the Summit. These include the conduct of the First Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) of ASA Summit that was held at the Itamaraty Palace, Ministry of External Relations of the Republic of Brazil, in Brasilia on 10-11 June 2008. The Third Coordinators' Meeting of ASA that took place on 9 June 2008 preceded the Senior Officials Meeting. The outcomes of these two meetings have already been reported to the PRC. However, since far-reaching decisions were taken during these meetings, they are briefly reiterated here.

416. These decisions include agreement on ASA terminology; ASA structure; the follow-up mechanisms and the establishment of eight (8) Working Groups. It also defined the role of the Pro-Tempore Secretariat and the Focal Points in the work of the Working Groups. Other areas that were agreed upon were the composition of the Consultative Committee of Ambassadors, the official languages, symbols and flag of ASA.

417. In the implementation of the decisions of the 1st SOM, the African and South American sides had taken steps to constitute the 8 Working Groups including the designation of their co-chairs. Upon their establishment, the African Working Groups have commenced work in preparation for the 2nd ASA Summit. Some of them have already held meetings in order to consider the project proposals that were received from Brazil, Venezuela, Nigeria and the Commission, for each area of cooperation in order to come up with concrete proposals for the African side. This process was ongoing before the

announcement of the postponement of the 2nd ASA Summit. It is hoped that the Summit will now take place towards the end of the first quarter of 2009. It should be stated that the Venezuela Summit was postponed at the request of a number of African Heads of State and Government who wished to participate in the UN-organized Follow-up Conference on Financing for Development in Doha, Qatar, which coincided with the ASA Summit.

418. However, in order to ensure the success of the Summit, it is important for the African co-chairs and members of the Working Groups to accelerate the process of determining Africa's concrete project proposals in order to discuss them with the South American side ahead of the Summit and to participate actively in the preparations for the meeting.

419. Finally, it should be pointed out that the 4th Meeting of the Coordination Group of the ASA Summit was held in Caracas, Venezuela, from 8 to 9 January 2009. During that meeting, Venezuela offered to host the 2nd ASA Summit in the last week of May 2009.

c) The Africa-India Forum Summit

420. As earlier reported to the Executive Council in report EX.CL/421(XIII) in June 2008, the First Africa-India Summit that was held in New Delhi, India, from 8 to 9 April 2008 was a success in terms of the large attendance by African Heads of State and Government and the economic package that was unveiled by India during the Summit.

421. The Commission has since met with Indian officials towards developing a plan of action, which would underline the concrete benefits that Africa wishes to derive from the partnership. The proposed plan of action will be presented to the Multilateral Cooperation Sub-Committee and the PRC before it is finalized with the Indians.

d) China-Africa Forum (FOCAC)

422. Council would recall that at its last January Session in Addis Ababa, it decided, among other things, that the Commission should play a coordinating role with respect to all partnerships between Africa and others, including single country partnerships. This decision EX.CL/374(XII) should therefore have applied to the China-Africa Forum (FOCAC).

423. However, this has not been implemented as the Commission has been left in the dark about any activities on FOCAC since the Summit took place in Beijing in 2006. A specific instance was a meeting of experts that took place in Cairo, Egypt in October 2008 where the Commission was not involved in the preparation for the meeting and was in fact invited as an observer. This means that the Banjul and Addis Ababa decisions are not being respected with regard to FOCAC even though they were officially communicated to China, and Egypt as the next host of the Ministerial meeting. In light of the aforesaid, the Commission had a meeting with a Chinese delegation in Addis Ababa, on 24 November 2008, with a view to finding ways and measures of assisting the Commission play a coordinating role in the FOCAC process, in order to implement the Addis Ababa decision.

424. With respect of Iran, it should be noted that the Iranian Government has extended an invitation to the Multilateral Cooperation Sub-Committee and the Commission to attend a meeting in Tehran from 21 to 26 February 2009 in order to begin preparations for the proposed Africa-Iran Summit. This proposal has been sent to the Sub-Committee for consideration. It will be recalled that officials of the Commission undertook an exploratory mission to Tehran in February 2008 and the report of that visit had been conveyed to this Sub-Committee.

e) The Global Review Process

425. Council will recall that it had directed in January 2008 (Decision Ex.CL/Dec.397 (XII)) that action be taken to conduct a global review of all existing partnerships in order to effectively implement strategies and action plans agreed upon between Africa and its international partners, rationalize the number of summits, identify the criteria for such partnerships and make necessary recommendations to Council and Assembly. In this regard, the Commission was invited to submit its recommendations on the aforementioned study before initiating any new strategic partnership.

426. In the implementation of Council decision, the Commission has concluded a preliminary study on the process of the global review and the outcome will be submitted to the appropriate organs of the Union as a measure of informed assessment that would guide policy decisions. The Commission will analyze its findings with the Multilateral Cooperation Sub-Committee and the PRC in order to formulate a common position for onward submission to the Council for consideration and adoption.

427. It should be pointed out that Africa's Strategic Partnership with the rest of the world is on the upward move within the framework of the African Union. However, there is need to harmonize this institutional framework with a view to ensuring synergy and a coordinated approach to the partnership. By so doing, these partnership arrangements will attract benefits and concrete outcomes to Africa and its people and further elevate the profile and prestige of the African Union in an ever-globalizing world. There is therefore an explicit need for Africa to take maximum advantage of the partnerships in order to accelerate the growth and development of the continent.

2. AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION

428. The African Union and the League of Arab States (LAS) have initiated the Afro-Arab Cooperation Framework on Agricultural Development and Food Security. Discussions and meetings have been held over the past two years on this initiative and a study on the Joint Action Plan for Agricultural Development and Food Security was conducted and completed with the holding of a High Level Expert's Meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on November 9-11, 2008. That meeting endorsed a Joint Action Plan (JAP) that would focus on 4 main areas for joint action including (i) Agricultural Intensification (inputs, irrigation, value addition); (ii) Strategic Food Reserves Initiative; (iii) Trade and Market Access; and (iv)

Agricultural Research and Development and Technology Transfer Initiative. Two cross-cutting areas were identified as Climate Change and Capacity Building.

429. As part of efforts to strengthen Afro-Arab cooperation, the Permanent Delegation to the League of Arab States in Cairo participated in several meetings and activities, and hosted a number of them:

(a) High Level Experts Meeting on Agricultural Development and Food Security in Africa and in the Arab world

430. Three (3) preparatory meetings were held in Khartoum, Damascus and Cairo. These preparatory meetings particularly helped in the drafting of a working document and to mobilize additional funds from the Arab Bank for Development in Africa (BADEA). The meeting was held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from 9 to 11 November 2008. It adopted an Afro-Arab Plan of Action on Agricultural Development and Food Security, as well as recommended the execution of joint activities in various areas, including:

- Increase in use of agricultural inputs to improve agricultural production, productivity and food security, irrigation systems and the judicious use of water resources through joint programmes between Arab and African countries.
- Establishment of emergency and strategic food reserves, by setting up, at national level, an Afro-Arab network of strategic food reserves to ensure food availability and accessibility in a sustainable manner to the whole population.
- Enhancement of Afro-Arab cooperation in development, financing and implementation of rural infrastructure programmes, promote Afro-Arab private investment in agro-processing as well as in trade in agricultural produce.
- Promotion of cooperation in agricultural research, technology transfer, exchange of expertise and research results. Creation of joint research Centres of Excellence, with private sector support.

431. The meeting of experts also adopted recommendations for implementing and closely monitoring the following joint activities:

- Creation of a joint Afro-Arab Unit or Organs for facilitating the implementation of the Plan of Action: This unit will be responsible for implementing detailed programmes concerning the joint Plan of Action, sensitization campaigns for their implementation by the private and public sectors, the identification of appropriate sources of investment, the facilitation of the interaction between Arab and African country parties to the Plan of Action, and the presentation of periodic reports to the African Union and the League of Arab States.
- Creation of an Afro-Arab Agricultural Investment Fund. This Fund will be for the purpose of mobilizing financial resources and Afro-Arab investments in agriculture. The African Union and the League of Arab States will conduct a feasibility study for this fund, which will mobilize African and Arab investments in the area of agricultural development and food security.

(b) Establishment of working relations between African and Arab Chambers of Commerce, 29 and 30 November 2008

432. The Permanent Delegation, in collaboration with the League of Arab States and the Union of African and Arab Chambers of Commerce, and the participation of the African Import-Export Bank, organized a workshop on the role of chambers of commerce in developing trade relations between Africa and the Arab world. This meeting, among others, examined the status of Afro-Arab trade, the role of chambers of commerce in the promotion of Afro-Arab inter-African trade relations. The workshop adopted the following recommendations:

- need to set up a framework for regular working relations between the two Unions of African and Arab Chambers.
- development of a data base on trade and investment in Africa and the Arab world.
- effective private sector participation at African and Arab trade fairs.
- organization of special trade fairs (timber, agricultural and industrial produce, etc.)

(c) Organization of a workshop on “the Role of African and Arab Women in the Global Food Crisis: Challenges and Solutions”, 14 December 2008 in Cairo

433. As part of the campaign to disseminate the strategic vision of the African Union in curbing the global food crisis and to sensitize Arab and African parties on the issue, the Permanent Delegation organized, on 14 December 2008, the abovementioned workshop, with the collaboration of Cairo University’s Institute for Research and Strategic Studies on Africa. The main themes of the seminar were:

- The food crisis: causes and consequences.
- The economic and social role of women in food supply.
- The role of non-governmental organizations and charities (African and Arab level experiences).
- The role of African and Arab women in underprivileged areas in curbing the food crisis.

(d) Fourth African Union/League of Arab States Inter-Secretariat Meeting (1 – 4 December 2008)

434. The Permanent Delegation made preparations for the abovementioned meeting, in collaboration with the Secretariat General of the League of Arab States. The meeting’s agenda included the following main points:

- Peace and security (Darfur, Mauritania, Somalia, Middle East and Palestine);
- Arrangements for holding the second Afro-Arab Summit and the 13th Session of the Standing Committee on Afro-Arab Cooperation and the Seventh Afro-Arab Trade Fair;
- Establishment of direct relations between African and Arab counterpart organs and institutions: Peace and Security Council of the AU and the Arab Peace and

Security Council, broadening the level of participation at the consultative meeting between the African Union Commission and the Secretariat General of the League of Arab States (college-to-college);

- Proposals on the Afro-Arab cooperation programme in 2009: organization of a ministerial meeting on agricultural development and food security, high-level meeting of experts on investment prospects in Africa and the Arab world as well as organization of sports tournaments, by turns, in African and Arab countries.

(e) Work programme of the Permanent Delegation for 2009

435. The Permanent Delegation intends to achieve the following:

- Contribute to preparations for the second Afro-Arab Summit.
- Contribute to preparations for the seventh Afro-Arab trade fair.
- Elaborate joint programmes with specialized Arab institutions/organizations that maintain institutional relations with it.
- Organize a high-level meeting on investment prospects in Africa and the Arab world.
- Organize a ministerial meeting on agricultural development and food security in Africa and the Arab world.
- Organize regular sports tournaments between organizations of African and Arab countries.
- Publish a quarterly news bulletin on the popularization of the African Union.

3. REPRESENTATIONAL OFFICES

a) New York Office

i. Political Issues

436. With the view to implementing the Assembly/AU/Dec.199(XI), the issue of abuse of the principle of international jurisdiction was considered by the African Group at its meetings on 27 August 2008 and on 10 September 2008. The Mission also facilitated and participated in the engagement with UN officials and transmitted to the UN Secretariat and the General Assembly related AU decision and Reports, to be considered as official documents of the United Nations. A briefing on the issue by the AU Legal Counsel to the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement took place in December 2008.

437. The Mission closely monitored the ongoing discussions at the UN on the Security Council Reform. Notable developments included the decision 62/557 of 15 September 2008 by which the General Assembly asked “to continue immediately to address within the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) the framework and modalities in order to prepare and facilitate intergovernmental negotiations”. In this regard, the OEWG met on 11 and 17 November 2008, prior to the General Assembly debate on 17 November 2008 on the “Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council”. It was then agreed that the

OEWG will continue to address the issues of framework and modalities of the Intergovernmental Negotiation which should start not later than 28 February 2008. The Mission continued to support the African Group, in its determination to engage in the negotiations as mandated by the AU Summit in its decisions Assembly/AU/Dec.184(X) and Assembly/AU/Dec.204(XI).

438. The Mission joined the initiative of International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) which organized at the United Nations a Panel Discussion on the Joint Activity Plan (JAP) in support of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance on 31 October 2008. The Mission also organized a Panel Discussion on “African Shared Values of Democracy, Good Governance and Human Rights within the AU-UN Ten-Year capacity Building Programme” held on 9 December 2008, with the participation of the Commissioner for Political Affairs and Officials from the United Nations, International IDEA and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, based in Washington.

439. On the issues of non-proliferation, disarmament and counter-terrorism, notable developments at the UN included the Report of the Special Rapporteur on “the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism” released on 6 August 2008; the [1540](#) Committee second report ([S/2008/493](#)) to the Security Council on the status of implementation of resolution [1540](#) on terrorism and weapons of mass destruction; the adoption of [resolution 1823](#) (2008) by the Security Council which ended the prohibition on the supply of arms and weapons for use in Rwanda and dissolved the committee tasked with monitoring compliance with the sanctions.

ii. African Candidatures in the International system

440. The Mission facilitated implementation of AU Executive Council Decision EX.CL/Dec.453 (XIII) and various decisions of the African Group in New York with respect to African candidatures in the international system. The Office reported the high level of success for endorsed candidates, such as the election of Uganda as non-Permanent Member of the Security Council for the period 2009-2010, that of Dr. Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf (Somalia) to the International Court of Justice for a 9- year term commencing on 6 February 2009, and election of three of the four endorsed candidates (Algeria, Egypt, Mauritius) for election for membership of the United Nations Human Rights Committee for the period 2009-2010. Violet Awori (Kenya) was also elected to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for four-year term beginning on 1 January 2009. We mention with appreciation the General Assembly’s approval during its 116th Plenary Meeting held on 28 July 2008 of the decision of the UN Secretary-General to appoint Judge Navanethem Pillay (South Africa) as the new United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, an appointment that did Africa proud.

iii. Economic and Social Issues

441. During the period under review, the Mission attended the **Substantive Session of ECOSOC** (30 June - 24 July 2008) which focused on the state of the world economy and

its implications for the achievement of the United Nations development agenda; on progress made towards the goals and targets of the United Nations Development Agenda; on integrated approach to rural development, taking into account the global food crisis and recent discussions on the role of bioenergy.

442. The Mission fully participated in the preparation of the High-Level Meeting on "Africa's development needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward" held on 22 September 2008, in the margins of the General debate of the 63rd session. The Mission facilitated the participation of the Chairperson of the Commission who delivered a statement during the opening session. The meeting concluded by Heads of State and Government adopting a Political Declaration which highlighted the need for further efforts, including the mobilization of resources, debt forgiveness, efforts to tackle HIV/AIDS and other diseases, conflict resolution, as well as addressing the impacts of climate change and the global food crisis. The declaration aimed at reinvigorating existing commitments, such as those made in the Millennium Declaration, the 2002 Monterrey Consensus on financing development and the 2002 Johannesburg Declaration on sustainable development.

443. The Mission also facilitated the participation of the Chairperson and his delegation in the High-level event on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) jointly convened by Secretary-General and General Assembly President on 25 September 2008. One of its highlights was the adoption of a political declaration on Africa's development needs, which recognized poverty as the continent's greatest challenge, while underlining the need to establish economic growth to overcome it. The validity of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) was also reaffirmed as the overarching framework for sustainable development in the region. The meeting was concluded by announcing that new pledges were made during the meeting and other 50 side events totaled over US\$16 billion.

444. The Mission attended the mid-term review of the 2003 Almaty Programme of Action held at the UN on 2-3 October 2008. The meeting aimed at forging global partnerships to address the special needs of landlocked countries by tackling their continued marginalization from the world economy. The Almaty Programme of Action outlined a set of priorities for action in transit policy issues, infrastructure development and maintenance, international trade and trade facilitation, and international support measures. It was recognized during the meeting that considerable progress has been achieved since the Almaty Programme of Action was adopted five years ago.

445. The Mission also monitored the **interactive Panel discussion on financial crisis**, convened by the President of the General Assembly on 30 October 2008. Member States admitted that the United Nations must intervene as the one institution that was inclusive and political legitimacy to address the world financial crisis, that the crisis requires a global response which must be consistent with justice and social solidarity for all countries, reflecting an understanding of the necessary balance between Government and markets, and respecting the principles of democratic due process, including full transparency.

446. The Mission closely followed the preparation for the **follow-up of the International Conference on Financing for Development** to review the implementation of Monterey

consensus to be held in Doha. This Conference included, inter alia, six substantive informal review sessions on the whole on the six thematic areas of the Monterrey Consensus. The General Assembly mandated the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to "assess progress made, reaffirm goals and commitments, share best practices and lessons learned and identify obstacles and constraints encountered, actions and initiatives to overcome them and important measures for further implementation, as well as new challenges and emerging issues". A draft resolution was prepared on the international financial system and development which stressed the impact of the financial crisis on financing for development.

447. The Mission monitored the 41st session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) held from 30 June – 18 July 2008 in New York. For this session, Nigeria and Tanzania's reports were considered and the Committee also adopted the provisional agenda for its 42nd session which was scheduled from 20 October to 7 November 2008 in Geneva. The reports to be dealt with were from 13 state parties, two of which are from Africa, namely, Cameroon and Madagascar. The Committee, in addition, decided to send reminders with specific timelines for report submissions to state parties, whose initial reports were five years overdue, namely, Djibouti in Africa; and to those periodic reports which were 10 years overdue; Senegal and Zimbabwe appeared in this category.

448. The Mission hosted an interactive forum to celebrate the Africa Youth Day 2008 organized by the Friends of Africa International on 3 November 2008. The event was marked with an interactive panel discussion on the theme: "African Youth Promoting African Positive Values". The outcome of this forum was the Action Plan which will be presented in the upcoming third Pan African Youth Leadership Forum in Madagascar in June 2009.

449. The Mission also participated in the 1st AU Conference for African Ministers in charge of Social Development on 27-31 October 2008, in Windhoek, Namibia. The main Outcome of this conference was the adoption of the Social Policy Framework for Africa CMSD/EXP/4 (I), the Windhoek Declaration on Social Development and the African Common Position on Social Integration. The meeting requested the Minister of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Namibia, as Chairperson of the 1st Session of the AU Conference of Ministers in charge of Social Development, to present the Common Position to the 47th Session of the UN Commission for Social Development to be held on 4-13 February, 2009 in New York.

450. The Mission also followed the High-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on Culture of Peace held on November 12-13, 2008 in which the President of the General Assembly had invited Member States to participate at the highest level possible. This meeting will be followed by the Second Alliance of Civilizations Forum to be held in Istanbul in April 2009.

iv. African Group Activities

451. During the period under consideration, the Mission facilitated a total of 18 meetings of the African Group at Ambassadorial level. The Group also heard a number of briefings by several representatives from the UN system, governments and member states. The Group was mainly seized with the Preparation for High Level Meeting on “Africa’s Development Needs” and the Doha Conference on “Financing for Development”. The Group also considered the Agenda of the 63rd session of the UN General Assembly. The Group was seized with a number of issues, namely, the Acceleration of achievement of MDG’s, UN system wide Coherence, Human Trafficking, UN Security Council Reform, Global Food Crisis, Global Financial Crisis, Abuse of the principle of Universal Jurisdiction, and Human Rights. The Group, among others, invited the PR of Haiti to brief it on the recent tragedy in this country on 19 November 2008, and made a symbolic donation as an expression of its Solidarity. Furthermore, the Group dealt with matters relating to African candidatures within the UN system and the pertinent strategies for success. The Mission also facilitated 30 meetings of African Experts of the various UN Committees.

v. Multilateral and Bilateral Interaction

452. The Mission facilitated the participation of the African Union Commission in various meetings and consultations in the margins of the General Debate of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly from 23rd September to 1 October 2008. The general debate was attended by several world leaders, among them 27 African Heads of State and Government. It was mainly focused on the strengthening of the coalition towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals and addressing Peace and Security, Climate Change, Food, Fuel and Financial crisis.

453. The Mission also facilitated the more than 24 bilateral consultations held by the Chairperson of the Commission, and those of members of his delegation on the margins of the opening of the 63rd Session of the General Assembly. These included the meeting with the United Nations Secretary General on 19 September 2008, and his participation as the Guest Speaker at the 2nd Annual International Peace Institute African Leaders Series on 19 September 2008, and as Guest of Honor at the luncheon for Head of African delegations hosted by Foreign Minister of Germany. The Mission also maintained active engagement with various officials of the UN system in New York and with relevant civil society and expert Organizations.

vi. Communication and Documentation

454. During the period under review, the Mission serviced all meetings of the African Group and various meetings/seminars at the United Nations, and appropriate documents were made available to the meetings. The Assembly Decisions of July 2008 were transmitted to the General Assembly as official documents to the 63rd Session and particular attention was given to the Decision on the Abuse of the Principle of Universal Jurisdiction. The Communiqués of the Peace and Security Council were also transmitted to the UN Security Council and disseminated to the UN organs and the UN media as soon as they were available. The Mission continued to develop its Website in order to enhance

the visibility of its work and the popularization of the AU as a whole. The process to establish a Documentation Centre is underway. The equipment for Video Conference for communication purposes with the AUC and its regional offices was installed, but was not yet operationalized due to technical hitches.

b) Washington Office

i. Relationship with the World Bank

455. The Washington Office facilitated the signing on September 26, 2008 of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two Organizations by the Chairperson of the Commission and the President of the World Bank.

456. The MoU provides a framework for strengthening institutional working relations between the World Bank and the Commission in concrete areas: Peace and Security, Regional Integration, Post Conflict Reconstruction, HIV/AIDS/Malaria and Diaspora.

457. The Washington Office will continue to engage the World Bank to accelerate action in these identified areas with a view to ensuring tangible deliverables to the African Union.

458. In this regard, the Commission is in the process of identifying concrete activities in the relevant areas agreed upon by the two institutions respective comparative advantage.

ii. Relationship with the Organization of American States(OAS)

459. The Office has continued to engage the OAS in the framework of the “Letter of Intent” signed between the latter and the Commission in July 2007.

460. The Commission is working together with OAS on a Draft MoU to be agreed upon on possible areas of cooperation. The Government of Brazil will assume the rotating Chairmanship of the OAS next year and has expressed its intention to follow up this matter to its logical conclusion.

iii. Developments in the United States of America

461. The election of Barack Obama as the first African-American President in the United States is an extraordinary historical event with geo-political implications that goes beyond the confines of American politics. This election also generates great expectations both domestically and globally. Managing these expectations will be the first test for the new US President. For Africa and the rest of the developing world, President Barack Obama can be nothing less than a Key Ally as a result of his African roots and having lived in a developing country (Indonesia). Africa cannot therefore afford to be passive. A proactive and united approach for immediate engagement will plant early seeds for a win/win US/Africa Relations with the new Administration and the Democratic majority in Congress.

462. AU Policy Organs may wish to consider a US/Africa Conference, similar to that of EU and TICAD, as a first step in the construction of a new paradigm for US Africa

Relations. The establishment of the AU Office in Washington could not have come at a better time. However, the Office can only play its role effectively if provided with adequate financial and human resource capacity as well as upholding the image, legitimacy and credibility of the AU Representation to the USA.

c) Geneva Office

463. In the course of the second semester of 2008, the Commission, through its Geneva Representation, has conducted several activities (meetings, workshops and seminars) in support of the African Group, with the latter defending interests of the continent in the negotiation within the Geneva-based International Organisations as well as in fostering closer relationships with the latter.

464. In order to sustain that dialogue and establish communication and exchange channels with our partners, the Geneva Representation established dialogue and consultation with the various international organisations based in Geneva, inviting the participation of heads of agencies and senior executives of these agencies and international organisations to the meetings and activities organised with the active participation of the African Group. The outcome of these meetings is published on the website of the African Union Commission, with a view to sharing information with the international community at large.

i. UNAIDS

465. An Extraordinary Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) was convened on 2 October 2008 in Geneva, to discuss the process of nomination of the next Executive Director (ED) of UNAIDS. Two African candidates have been short listed for the position, namely, Dr. Michel Sidibe (Mali) and Dr. Debrework Zewdie (Ethiopia). While the PCB cannot vote on or elect the ED of UNAIDS, its endorsement of a particular individual may influence the final outcome of the nomination process. At the end of this process, the Secretary-General appointed Dr. Michel Sidibe Executive Director of UNAIDS.

ii. World Health Organisation (WHO)

466. The elaboration of a protocol to control illicit trade in tobacco products, within the framework of *the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body on a Protocol on Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products (INB2)* is of utmost importance to Africa, which is increasingly being infiltrated by illicit and counterfeit tobacco products. The impact of such illicit trade is multi-dimensional, thus requiring international cooperation and a coordinated multi-Sectoral approach to combat it. Following the inputs made by delegations at the first session of the INB held earlier this year, the Chair of the INB worked on a draft protocol, which was presented to the second session of this Intergovernmental Negotiating Body which held its meeting in Geneva, from 20 to 25 October 2008.

467. For the African Region, the major weakness of the draft text is that its implementation requires institutional capacity currently not present in many developing countries. The disparity in capacity between developed and developing countries needs to

be adequately addressed if a protocol, based on international cooperation, is to function effectively across borders. The work of the INB is as yet incomplete and requires further intercessional meetings and expert inputs on a number of key issues highlighted at the meeting.

468. The Geneva Representation took part in several meetings, sessions and conferences of partner organisations in Geneva, some of them attended by High-ranking Officials of the Commission from Headquarters.

iii. International Labour Organisation (ILO)

469. The 303rd Session of the ILO Governing Body (GB) was held in Geneva from 6 to 21 November 2008. An issue of significance to the African Group is the composition of the GB. Historically, the Africa region has been equitably represented in the GB. In this regard, the Africa Region adopted a resolution at its 11th ILO African Regional meeting in Addis Ababa in April 2007, calling for a balanced geographical distribution of seats on the GB. After deliberations at previous GB sessions, in particular the 301st Session in March this year, the Africa Group requested that the Director General present a concrete proposal to address this imbalance. As a result, the session considered a proposal by the ILO on expanding the number of Permanent Seats in the GB from the current ten to twelve, to specifically include African countries within the list of non-elective states of key industrial importance. While the African Group was in agreement on the need to rectify the historical imbalance in representation at the GB, it was unable to reach consensus on the above proposal, as some countries indicated a preference for the reinvigoration of the 1986 Instrument of Amendment to the ILO constitution, which, inter alia, calls for the elimination of non-elective or permanent seats. In the absence of consensus, the GB deferred the issue to its next session in March 2009.

470. In facilitating consensus within the African Region, it is necessary to begin consultations both within the region as well as with other regions and Member States. The 303rd GB revealed that other regions have divergent positions on the current proposal as well as the 1986 Instrument of Amendment. In order to facilitate consensus on this issue, it may be necessary for African Ministers of Labour to meet to deliberate on a Common African Position, for presentation to the 304th GB in March 2009 or to discuss the matter at the 7th Session of the AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission in April 2009.

iv. International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

471. The African Group has been active in its support for the establishment of an IOM Mission with Regional Functions (MRF) in Central Africa and Capacity Building Centre (CBC) for the continent. This issue has been on the agenda of the African Group since 2007 and has been reiterated at the IOM governing body meetings and African Group Ambassadorial meetings with the former Director General (DG) of IOM, as well as the newly elected DG, Ambassador William Lacy Swing. With the election of a new DG, it remains important to assess the vision of the new leadership in terms of African needs as well as for the African Group to be more proactive in outlining its objectives for a CBC, in particular.

d) Cairo Office

472. The African Union's Permanent Delegation to the League of Arab States continued closely to follow up the activities of the Arab League, particularly as part of the efforts to strengthen and consolidate relations of cooperation in the political, economic and socio-cultural sectors.

473. The period under consideration was characterized by continuous coordination between the Secretariat-General of the League of Arab States and the African Union Commission, especially on issues relating to peace and security. In this regard, consultative meetings were organized between the Chairperson of the Commission and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, aimed at boosting cooperation between the two organizations and coordination on security issues, particularly in Darfur and Somalia.

474. The joint activities also concerned Afro-Arab cooperation in the economic and socio-cultural sectors. It is necessary to give an overview all decisions taken by the League of Arab States concerning issues of interest to the African Union, especially those relating to peace and security.

475. The Permanent Delegation was in charge of coordination between African Union and the League of Arab States on the situation in Darfur, Somalia and Mauritania. In this regard, and on the invitation of the Secretariat-General of the League of Arab States, the Commission, represented by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, participated in the proceedings of the meeting of Arab Ministers for Foreign Affairs, held on 8 September 2008 in Cairo. The Commissioner presented a report on the situation in Darfur, Somalia and Mauritania.

476. Concerning Darfur, it was decided that an Arabo-African Ministerial Committee should be established, chaired by the Qatar Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. This Committee, which also includes Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Libya and Egypt, is responsible for organizing peace negotiations between the Sudanese Government and the armed movement in Darfur. The idea is to achieve, as soon as possible, comprehensive peace in Darfur, in close cooperation with the joint representative of the African Union and the United Nations.

477. The ministerial meeting of the Arab League expressed its solidarity with Sudan in this country's efforts to ensure respect for its sovereignty, territorial integrity and stability, reaffirmed the competence and independence of the Sudanese judicial system and rejected any attempt to politicize the principle of international legality. It once again affirmed the non-acceptance of the biased stance of the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. The meeting appealed for the coordination of the positions of the League of Arab States, the African Union, the Islamic Organization and the Non-

Aligned Movement in order to put an end to the case before the International Criminal Court.

478. The meeting also welcomed the measures concerning the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed between the Sudanese Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in order to end the Abby crisis. This Agreement comprises a road map for resolving this crisis and a request for Arab countries to provide the necessary financial support for development and investment in Southern Sudan.

479. With regard to Somalia, the meeting of Arab Ministers welcomed the Agreement concluded on 8 August 2008, in Djibouti, between the Government of Somalia and the Alliance for the Liberation of Somalia. The Agreement contains a provision calling for support for the African Union Delegation in Somalia, condemning all military operations against African forces and supporting the African Union's request for the deployment, as soon as possible, of United Nations forces to replace the African forces.

480. Concerning Mauritania, the meeting of Arab Ministers of Foreign Affairs adopted a declaration calling on the current Mauritanian authorities to release President Sidi Mohamed Ould Cheikh Abdallah and find a compromise solution that would quickly restore constitutional legality and pave the way for resolving the political crisis, preserving the democratic process and maintaining stability in Mauritania. In this regard, the Council also called on the League of Arab States, the African Union and the United Nations to continue their ongoing consultation and coordination efforts.

e) Brussels Office

481. During the period under review, the Permanent Mission of the African Union in Brussels undertook the following main activities in the areas mentioned hereunder:

i. Implementation of the Joint AU-EU Strategy

482. The Mission was mobilised to contribute to the implementation of the Joint AU-EU Strategy and the related Plan of Action which were adopted by the 2nd Africa-EU Summit in December 2007. It thus actively participated in the following meetings held in this regard:

- the EU-Africa Ministerial Troïka Meeting that was held from 12 to 16 September 2008 in Brussels, as well as the preparatory meetings of experts and senior officials that preceded it;
- the College-to-College meeting between the European Commission and the African Union Commission, held on 1 October 2008 in Brussels, as well as the preparatory meetings that preceded it;
- the EU-Africa Ministerial Troïka Meeting that was held from 20 to 21 November 2008 in Addis Ababa.

ii. Implementation of the Cotonou ACP-EU Partnership Agreement

483. The Mission continues to follow up on the implementation of the Cotonou ACP-EU Partnership Agreement on a daily basis. In this connection, it devoted its attention particularly to observing the progress of ACP-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations and ensuring the implementation of the decisions and declarations that the AU Assembly and Executive Council adopted on the issue.

484. It is in this context that the Mission organised a retreat from 5 to 6 December 2008, to enable the African Group of Ambassadors based in Brussels to ponder over the problems of EPA negotiations and the 2nd review of the Cotonou Agreement. This retreat was attended by the Commissioner for Trade and Industry, among other personalities.

485. With regard to the Cotonou Agreement for which negotiations will be taking place from March 2009 to February 2010, the Mission took the opportunity offered by the retreat to call for the concrete formalisation of the AU role in the Agreement so as to build greater coherence into the instruments governing cooperation between the EU and Africa, especially the Joint Strategy and the related Plan of Action. Accordingly, the Mission prepared a concept paper on the role of the AU in the process of reviewing this Agreement to serve as a common position for the African component of the ACP Group.

486. Also in attendance at the retreat were a delegation of the PRC (Sub-Committee on Trade and Industry), the African Group of Ambassadors in Geneva and the representatives of some RECs and International Organisations.

iii. Participation in the Activities of the ACP Group and other Development Partners

487. The Mission took part in the following activities of the African, Caribbean & Pacific Group of States (ACP):

- The 6th Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government held from 2 to 3 October 2008 in Accra, Ghana, on the theme "Human Security and Development". The Summit discussed a number of issues as well as the challenges facing the ACP Group with regard to development, particularly poverty, peace and security, the sharp rise in food and oil prices, economic partnership agreements with the EU, attainment of the MDGs and climate change;
- The 13th session of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly that was held from 8 to 12 September in Brussels. The Mission took the opportunity to help in harmonising the positions of African Member States with those adopted by the AU, especially with regard to political issues, in particular issues relating to conflict resolution in Africa;
- The ACP Education Ministers Meeting (22 to 23 October 2008 in Brussels), the main objective of which was to consider the ways and means of promoting

in ACP countries development oriented education, capable of helping in building the capacities of the educational systems in these countries;

- The 2nd meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development was held from 27 to 30 October 2008 in Manila, Philippines, of which the ACP Group was co-organiser. The Forum discussed the interrelation between migration and development and, thus, the ways and means of further promoting the rights of migrants especially in host countries.

488. The Mission also participated in the meetings of the various development partners such as:

- the 15th Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, held from 29 to 30 July 2008 in Teheran on the theme “Solidarity for Peace and Justice”. On that occasion, the African Ministers made an appeal for special attention to be accorded to Africa to enable it to take up the challenges of peace, and for the continent to be accompanied in its efforts at attaining the MDGs;
- Africa Industrialisation Day, celebrated on 20 November in Brussels by the UNIDO Office on the theme: “Processing Raw Materials for Industrial Growth and Development”. The Mission carried out advocacy of AU action to speed up the continent’s industrialisation through local processing of its raw materials, among other measures;
- the “European Development Days”, held in November in Strasbourg, during which cooperation and indeed EU/Africa partnership in general, and EU/AU in particular, were discussed at length;
- the Symposium on the theme “Culture, Economy, Regional Integration: Culture, a lever for development in Africa”, co-organised, on 16 December 2008 in Paris, by UNESCO and the African Network of Cultural Promoters and Entrepreneurs (RAPEC), an African diaspora association in France. At the meeting, the Mission presented the measures undertaken by the AU to promote the vital role of culture in development and ensure greater focus on the development of African cultural industries.

iv. Establishment of Working Relations with AIDCO

489. The Mission jointly initiated with AIDCO (EuropeAid Co-operation Office) a consultation meeting to enable both parties to gain deeper insight into their respective roles and mandates. The meeting was held on 12 December 2008 in Brussels. The two institutions agreed to strengthen their working relations. It is noteworthy that AIDCO is responsible for the African Peace Facility in addition to other issues pertaining to AU/EU cooperation.

v. Popularisation of the Union

490. The Mission actively participated in the African Week, organised from 8 to 12 September 2008 in Brussels, by the European Parliament as part of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. This important activity took place in the presence of a Pan-African Parliament delegation led by its President, numerous African artists and writers including the Nobel Prize laureate for literature, the Nigerian Wole Soyinka, among others. It was an opportunity for fruitful exchanges and dialogue from the cultural and political perspective, for better mutual understanding among European and African partners.

491. The Mission co-organised with a Belgian communication agency, Echo Communication, and the Association United Cities and Local Governments of Africa in collaboration with the European Commission, a mega event under the theme “Harubuntu – There is value here (in Africa)”. The objective was to showcase an Africa of creators and producers of wealth, as well as the enormous development potentials of the continent. It was also designed to project for Africa an image other than the bleak picture in which it has so far been portrayed. The event was crowned with such success that it was decided to hold one every year.

vi. Purchase of a New Building

492. The Mission actively contributed in the proper implementation of Decision EX.CL/Dec.403(XII), by which the Executive Council authorised the Commission to purchase a new building to accommodate the Permanent AU Mission to Brussels. The Commission decided that REC Representational Offices in Brussels that so wished, could be accommodated under the same roof as the AU Mission in Brussels.

493. The acquisition process which formally began last June, under the supervision of the Directorate for Administration and the Office of the Legal Counsel, culminated, in October 2008, in the signing of the deed of acquisition of a building identified in accordance with relevant AUC procedures.

494. Similarly, under the supervision of the Directorate for Administration, the Mission is in the process of finalising the measures required to refit the premises (meeting room) and equip (interpretation booths) the acquired building before relocating.

495. As the building currently housing the offices of the Mission belongs to the AU, the Mission, following the Commission’s directives, will take appropriate measures to put it on the market, in strict compliance with relevant AU procedures.

f) Lilongwe Office

496. In August 2008, SADC, in the framework of its Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP), launched its Free Trade Area which was a major step in the deepening of its integration process. The implementation by the member states would lead to the expansion of trade among them. Also, it would lead to greater employment opportunities and economic growth and development.

497. The COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Summit of Heads of State and Government of 22 October 2008 was an important development in regionalism in the region and Africa. It was driven by a vision for a single market for Southern and Eastern Africa. The three Regional Economic Communities (RECs) resolved to merge into a single REC, with the objective of fast tracking the attainment of the African Economic Community. The decision of the Summit to develop joint financing and implementation mechanisms for infrastructure development would go a long way in the deepening of the RECs. Also, the establishment of the legal and institutional framework of the new arrangement would strengthen the political will of the member states and enhance integration.

498. AU-SARO carried out a number of activities to promote integration and development in the region during this period. The Office participated at the Southern Africa Development Forum on Progress in the Implementation of Protocols in Southern Africa, 29 – 30 May 2008, in Lusaka, Zambia, and the Fourteenth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts for Southern Africa, on 2 June 2008, in Lusaka, both organized by UNECA-SA. The AU Regional Delegate delivered Keynote Address in the first. He underscored the challenges in regional integration to among other things include, political stability, sovereignty, weak involvement of non-state actors, and feeble infrastructures as well as institutions.

499. AU-SARO in collaboration with UNECA-SA and AfDB organized two Seminars in Lusaka, from 10-13 December 2008. The first addressed the theme “Water and Sanitation in Southern Africa Development Community (SADC): Innovative Approaches for Resource Mobilization and Policy Implementation”. The aim of the Seminar was to facilitate the implementation of the various AU and SADC declarations on water and sanitation. The seminar resulted in robust recommendations for all stakeholders. Recommendations that would assist member states take appropriate actions to achieve the MDGs on water and sanitation and alleviate poverty by 2015.

500. The second seminar was consultative in preparation of the position paper for Africa towards the 5th World Water Forum scheduled for 16-22 March 2009 in Istanbul, Turkey. Significant recommendations emerged from the consultations in the region. They provide the structure which other consultations in other regions would build on at the seminars to be later organized by AfDB.

501. In the effort to create more awareness on African Union, the Office carried out public lectures at the following Universities; Mzuzu University, Mzuzu, Malawi (17 October 2008), Catholic University, Nguludi, Malawi (22 October 2008), and Chancellor College, Zomba, Malawi (4 November 2008). The theme of the lectures was “African Union and Africa’s Development”. The lectures dwelt on the structures and modalities of operations of the AU. The development problems of Africa were analyzed and the role of AU and continental integration in the process highlighted. The lectures being very informative generated excitement and interests. These consequently led to demands for more in the future in other specific areas of African integration and development as well as international development.

502. Advocacy is important to the promotion of better understanding of AU in the region consisting of 15 countries. The promotion should occur at all levels, including, in particular, the private sector and the civil societies. But these could only be carried out with additional financial resources. Financial resource limitations represent a major hindrance in the promotion of AU activities in other countries in the region.

503. Also, advocacy should be further enhanced with AU participation and support for grass root development projects especially in the rural areas in Member States. This will again entail additional budgetary resources and technical skills at the regional office. With these, the AU will be contributing directly to poverty alleviation and grass root support for the ideals of African integration towards the United States of Africa.

504. Other advocacy activities of the Office were embodied in the publication of the AU-SARO Bulletin and organization of African Group and SADC meetings in Lilongwe. The Bulletin provides current news on the activities of AUC and AU-SARO and is widely distributed through the internet and email.

505. The African Group and SADC meetings provide the fora for the exchange of views on political, economic and social development in the region, the continent and the international community.

4. AFRICA'S SHARE IN THE GLOBAL EXCHANGES

World Expo 2010 - Shanghai, Chine

506. The Commission agreed to participate, for the first time in its history, in the World Expo 2010 which will be hosted by the city of Shanghai, China, following its selection by the Bureau of International Expositions. The central theme is "Better City, Better Life". The exposition will run from 1 May to 31 October 2010. As of 13 November 2008, 45 international organizations and 182 countries had signed up, including 48 African countries. The Commission appointed a General Commissioner for this Expo and signed a participation contract on 13 November 2008. The Commission's pavilion, covering an area of 252 m², is situated inside the African pavilion. The Chinese party will offer financial assistance to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Financial assistance is still being negotiated to enable the Commission to set up its pavilion.

507. The participants have already held three meetings during which discussions focused mainly on issues concerning logistics, the items to be exhibited, customs and security. Participation of the Commission and African States in this exhibition will boost Africa's visibility and enable the continent to take advantage of different experiences in such areas as urbanization, town planning and the management of various services designed to provide citizens with more decent living conditions.

a. SHARED-VALUES

IV.1 DEMOCRACY, ELECTIONS AND GOVERNANCE

1. DEMOCRACY, ELECTIONS AND GOVERNANCE

508. In pursuance of its mission of promoting and consolidating Governance and Democracy in the Continent, the Commission undertook a series of project and programme activities. These activities, aimed at implanting the democratic and governance principles and ethos embodied in the Constitutive Act of the African Union, comprise of i) popularizing the *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance*; ii) *Entrenching Constitutionalism in Africa*; iii) *Developing an Architecture of Governance Interventions*; iv) *Combatting Corruption*; v) *Enhancing State Capacity*; vi) *Conducting Elections Observation and Monitoring*; vii) *Promoting Human Rights*; viii) Africa Regional Preparatory Conference on Durban Review Conference; and ix) *Pursuing African Union-European Union Human Rights Dialogue*. It should be noted that these key project activities are intrinsic features of the African Union reoriented shared values framework and the manner in which such values are communicated and popularized across Member States.

a. African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance

509. In the ongoing campaign towards the process of popularisation and ultimate ratification of the Charter, three regional meetings organised in Lesotho, from 20th–22nd December 2007; Bujumbura, from 17th–19th March 2008; and Rwanda, from 29th–31st May 2008, brought together representatives of Member States from Southern, Eastern, Central, Western and Northern Africa regions as well as representatives of partner and civil society organisations.

510. The meetings served to sensitize representatives towards the Charter's popularisation and ratification amongst Member States as well as to further strengthen the collective action plans that emerged from the experts meeting in Namibia.

511. The success of the regional meetings, vis-à-vis the Charter popularisation and ratification is reflected in the momentum towards ratification amongst Member States. Prior to the meetings, only two Member States had signed the Charter. Today, a total of 25 Member States have now signed the Charter and 2 have ratified it.

512. Whilst the signing of the Charter goes some way in building the requisite momentum, actual ratification is fundamental to the collective commitment of Member States. Indeed, ratification is essential and 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 established governance and human rights practices.

b. Constitutionalism In Africa

513. At a workshop on African Constitutions in November 2007, increased awareness and understanding of the state of democratic practices in Africa was established. This

workshop served as basis for enhanced reflection on the state of African Constitutions and developed strategies for enhancing constitutionalism in Africa. It also concluded that further work should be done to strengthen the application of constitutions across Member States.

514. As a prelude to the Constitutions Conference held in November 2008 in Cotonou, Benin, a brainstorming session was held on the margins of the Charter meeting in Kigali, Rwanda, at which experts established a momentum for the planned Constitutions Conference and outlined the programme. These efforts provided the foundational strategies needed for reinforcing the authority of constitutions and consolidating electoral processes on the Continent.

515. The Conference on African Constitutions held from the 25th to 27th November 2008, paved the way for further collective work on African Constitutions and provided a basis for establishing benchmarks on constitutions that could serve to enhance integration across the Continent. Within the ambits of the Conference, emphasis was placed on the challenge of establishing shared values through effective people-to-people engagements, which would provide the basis for ensuring that shared values are based on values amongst the people of the Continent.

c. Architecture of Governance Interventions

516. In the drive to enhance cooperation with development partners and other organizations active in 'governance', the Commission has completed an initial study on governance interventions in Africa and how these could be brought together, as well as what the leadership role of the African Union would be in this context.

517. Against this background, a workshop will be organized in the first quarter of 2009, aimed at enhancing dialogue on the role of the Commission and relevant partners. In this respect, the Commission will develop a proposal for the possible establishment of a governance structure in the Peace and Security Council. Such a structure would provide a channel for bringing to the attention of the Council, all matters relating to governance challenges amongst Member States.

518. It is expected that the Governance Architecture project will also serve as a basis for ensuring coordinated approaches to matters of governance and to ensure that all actions and activities fulfill the mandates that have been established through the Assembly of the African Union. In particular, the process is directed at ensuring better coordination with organizations such as UNECA and the APRM Secretariat.

d. Anti-Corruption

519. Within the framework of the AU Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, the process for appointing the members of the Anti-Corruption Advisory Board has been initiated and nominations received. The appointment of members of the Advisory Board is subject to approval by the Assembly during its current session.

520. Over the past few months the Bureau of the 2nd Anti-Corruption Bodies Meeting has been active and is in the process of developing a five-year 'action-plan' on the implementation of the Convention and other anti-corruption efforts. A checklist and self-assessment tool to support Member State implementation of the Convention has been developed and will be sent to Member States, which have ratified the Convention, for utilisation, after the appointment of the Board.

521. As a further demonstration of the AUC's commitment on anti-corruption, the 3rd Anti-Corruption Bodies meeting will take place in the first quarter of 2009. This meeting will serve to further expedite ratification and enhance dialogue on the state of corruption amongst Member States as well as measures being instituted to prevent and combat corruption. Through the Convention, we have demonstrated that we are willing to act against the corruption; the next step is for the Commission and Member States to demonstrate the commitment through actual actions.

e. State Capacity Development

522. The Commission has been active in the area of state capacity development through the 5th Conference of African Ministers of Public Service. Through the Addis Ababa Declaration of the 5th Conference, the Ministers of Pubic Service have crafted a number of initiatives and have collectively championed them in a very direct manner. The work of the Ministers reflects the value that can be derived when Member States take ownership and responsibility for the initiatives they establish.

523. As indicated in the separate Report of the Ministers submitted to the Executive Council, the 6th Conference of Ministers held in October 2008 in South Africa adopted a Charter for Pubic Service and Administration and agreed to a broad action plan for support and knowledge exchange between Member States. Whilst Member States have led the process on the 6th Conference, it is proving increasingly imperative that the Commission establishes further capacity for this area of work.

f. All-Africa Public Sector Innovation Awards

524. The All-Africa Public Service Innovation Awards established to recognise good Public Service practices across Member States and serve as a framework for the exchange of experiences and best practices, held its maiden edition during the 6th Conference in October 2008, under the leadership of Mauritius as Champion. Nominations were received in all of the established categories and the adjudication panel decided on the winners in each category, prior to the 6th Conference. The winning projects will be documented for knowledge sharing across Member States.

g. The Charter For The African Public Service

525. A meeting was held in Algiers in August 2008, under the leadership of Algeria, as champion, to consider the draft Charter for Public Service and Administration. This meeting served to reaffirm the commitment of Member States towards enhancing the state of their public services and ensuring that common standards are established across

Member States. The Algiers meeting concluded that the Charter should be revised to ensure that it becomes a binding instrument of the African Union, as per the Addis Ababa Declaration.

526. In keeping with the Executive Council decision, the Charter for the African Public Service was refined to ensure its harmonisation in all the AU languages. The revised document was adopted by the 6th Conference and will be submitted at a meeting of Member States legal experts for finalisation and submission thereon to the relevant policy organs of the African Union, for adoption.

h. Africa Public Service Day

527. Africa Public Service Day, established by African Ministers of Public Service, was celebrated on 23rd June across Member States and provided us all with the opportunity of enhancing the role of public service in the Continent and within African organisations, such as the African Union Commission. The importance of this day has been communicated to all Member States and it is essential that further efforts be established to ensure that it is also celebrated at a continental level to enhance the prestige of public service within our communities and the broader society.

528. The theme for the 2008 Africa Public Service Day, as determined by Ministers of Public/Civil Service was: “From Policy to Results Based Implementation”. In addition to celebration across Member States, a meeting for exchanging information was organised by Namibia.

2. ELECTIONS OBSERVATION AND MONITORING

a. Elections observed

529. In pursuance of the democratization process initiated in the early 1990s, the Commission embarked on elections observation. Over the years, the Commission has continued to observe elections across the Continent. The major goal of this activity is to contribute to the establishment and consolidation of emerging democracies in the African Continent. As a result, for 2008 the AU dispatched multi-disciplinary teams of observers to observe the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Zimbabwe, Angola, Rwanda, Swaziland, Zambia, Guinea Bissau and Ghana.

530. Pre-election assessment missions were also deployed for a ten-day duration between the 17th and 27th of August 2008 to Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire. Guided by the African Union Guidelines for Election Observation and Monitoring and the Declaration of the AU on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa as its terms of reference, the assessment team was to, among others, assess the technical needs of the Election Management Bodies and take account of whether or not the optimal conditions exist, which facilitate uninhibited electoral competition between the contestants in the election. The missions were further mandated to provide guidance to the Commission on the nature and range of the observation missions to be deployed. Following the above-

mentioned pre-election assessment missions, the team reported that Côte d'Ivoire was to postpone its elections to June 2009.

531. The AU election observation mission deployed at the invitation of the Zimbabwe Government observed the presidential run-off election of June 27th 2008. The AU mission had concluded in its report that "whilst the polling itself was conducted in accordance to the Zimbabwean electoral laws, it was their considered view that the pre-election environment was not conducive to the delivery of competitive, inclusive and free and fair elections." Zimbabwe's post-election climate has been rife with tensions, resulting in an impasse in governance. Eventually, after months of difficult talks, led by former President Thabo Mbeki a transitional government was negotiated and a deal has been signed by both parties. The key issues negotiated involved the establishment of a new executive and the nature and duration of a transitional arrangement. The situation, however, remains deadlocked and the African Union together with SADC, as the lead interlocutor, is working closely with the main parties to resolve the crisis, which is now compounded by a cholera outbreak that has claimed some 1000 lives.

532. The Commission deployed an observer mission to Rwanda's legislative elections held from 15th to 18th September 2008. Rwanda's elections were conducted peacefully and were well prepared. The electoral processes observed provided a strong lesson that, with explicit and fair electoral laws, a well-facilitated and impartial national electoral body, as well as with transparent electoral processes, it is possible to hold free and open national elections.

533. In September this year, observer missions were deployed simultaneously to both Angola and Swaziland to observe legislative elections. The African Union Observer Mission to Angola noted with satisfaction that there were areas that Angola should be commended for. Despite these achievements, the AU mission pointed out some electoral shortcomings, which contributed to the disorganization experienced during the polling. Similarly, Swaziland's elections were held in a peaceful and orderly atmosphere. Some shortcomings on polling procedure however, were observed as well as other weaknesses pertaining to the wider political and pre-electoral environment that will need to be addressed to strengthen the democratic culture in Swaziland.

534. Zambia went to the polls on October 30th 2008, called to elect a new President following the death of Zambia's 3rd President, Dr. Levy Patrick Mwanawasa on August 19th 2008. The Commission deployed a mission to observe the Presidential by-election. Although it was the view of the AU mission that the election was conducted in conformity with the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Zambia and in accordance with relevant AU instruments, the election results were nonetheless contested by one of the opposition parties.

b. Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit (DEAU)

535. The Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit is now fully operational and has the responsibility of not only coordinating and organizing the participation of the African Union

in the observation of elections but also implementing the Commission's programme for the promotion of democracy and democratic elections in the Continent.

536. With the operationalisation of the Unit, the Commission is mobilising further support and resources for its optimal functioning, to enable it to conduct credible election observation and provide high quality technical assistance to election management bodies of Member States.

537. Furthermore, the Commission has identified core priorities based on its strategic activities relating to the electoral needs in the AU as contained in the "Feasibility Study on the establishment of a Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit". The identified priorities, which would drive the road map and way forward for the Unit include: developing more effective observation systems; developing in a timely manner standards acceptable to stakeholders with respect to electoral processes; mobilizing increased resources from existing supporting institutions and from new ones for the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Fund; and assisting in the building of capacity of national electoral institutions. The technical assistance scheme will seek to further the enhancement of the Unit's efforts to raise standards in conducting election processes by national EMBs.

c. Democracy and Electoral Assistance Fund (DEAF)

538. In line with the Declaration approved at the Durban Summit of Heads of State in July 2002 on the need for adequate resourcing for elections, the Electoral Assistance Fund is now operational to support exclusively African Union activities relating to the promotion and establishment of democracy and the conduct of democratic elections in Member States. Specifically however, the purpose of the Fund is to lend support to the activities of the Electoral Assistance Unit.

539. In spite of the stumbling blocks, our continent has come a long way on its march towards democracy. Elections are now held regularly and political alternation has taken root, thereby throwing up new leaders and new institutions in the continent. Moreover, elections are no longer a mere formality. They have now become a real competition. It is true that recent developments in the electoral game in the continent have shown that this competition has, in some cases, turned into a source of conflict; reason for which at the level of the Commission, and in view of the number of elections that will take place this year, we are setting preventive diplomacy in motion, to ensure that the processes are conducted in a transparent manner and without violent protests. Besides, we are in favour of the idea formulated by President Bouteflika to create a continental mechanism for elections management. This idea is in line with the initiative of the Peace and Security Council, an initiative that the Commission is implementing, to have the Panel of the Wise intervene in the prevention and management of post-electoral conflicts. Naturally, we shall be pursuing the global reflection we had initiated to tackle the whole range of electoral issues and, thereby come up with an appropriate response commensurate with the issues and challenges involved.

IV.2 HUMAN RIGHTS

540. The promotion and protection of human rights remains an integral part of the agenda of the African Union, which it continues to implement in collaboration with its diverse partners both within and outside the Continent. During the period under review the Commission undertook the following activities:

a. Reinforcing the Resource Centre for Democracy, Governance and Human Rights

541. The Centre for Democracy, Governance and Human Rights continues to make progress in the areas of acquisition of publications, cataloguing, official visits from potential donors and interested organizations. On October 28th, 2008 the Center organized its first Public Lecture on Human Rights on the theme 'Institutional Strengthening of Human and Peoples' Rights', during which presentations were made by the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The Lecture was attended by representatives of: Embassies of Member States, African Union Commission, UN Agencies, Educational Institutions, and International and Non-Governmental Organizations.

542. These developments and initiatives are geared towards attaining the Center's set goals of providing multi-sectoral audience with first hand information, contributing to the building and consolidation of the African Union institutional capacity; and serving as a training center in the field of human rights, governance and democracy in Africa.

b. Commemoration of International Human Rights Day

543. The Commission participated in the International Conference on "*The Universal Declaration on Human Rights, 60 Years after: Between Rhetoric and Reality*", which was co-organized by UNESCO and the National Council for Human Rights of Egypt, from 1st–2nd December 2008, in Cairo, Egypt.

544. On International Human Rights Day, 10th December 2008, the Commission organized an exhibition and cultural event with support from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, African Child Policy Forum, Educational Institutions and other partners. The event was especially dedicated to the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, since its adoption on 10th December 1948.

545. It should be pointed out that whilst progress has been made in the human rights landscape since the adoption of the Universal Declaration, such as the development of international and regional human rights instruments, there are still enormous human rights challenges, including poverty, HIV/AIDS, Gender Based Violence, and Discrimination etc, which require our collective efforts. The African Union therefore needs to continue working closely with partners in advancing its human rights agenda on the continent.

546. On its part, the Mission in New York fully participated in the preparation of the commemorative plenary meeting devoted to the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights held on 10 December 2008, the 53rd session of the Commission for Social Development which will be held from 4 to 13 February 2009, and the 53rd session of the Commission on the Status of Women – follow-up to Beijing and Beijing +5 due to be held from 2 to 13 March 2009. The modalities for convening these meetings are still discussed among the UN member states.

c. Africa Regional Preparatory Conference on Durban Review Conference

547. The Commission participated in the Africa Regional Preparatory Conference on Durban Review Conference, which was hosted by the Government of the Republic of Nigeria from 24th to 26th August 2008. The Conference is part of the preparations leading to the upcoming Durban Review Conference from 20th to 24th April 2009, in Geneva, Switzerland, as a follow-up to the 2001 UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance (WCAR). The African Union needs to be part of this process, which should take into account initiatives by the Union, including the Commemoration of the Abolition of Slavery and the Expert Group Meeting on Slavery and Follow Up to the World Conference against Racism, held in Banjul, The Gambia, in June 2008. In this process and through its Geneva Office, the Commission is constantly following up the current debates in Geneva on this important matter.

548. In addition, the Commission's commitment in favour of racial equality materialised through its contribution to the financing of the elaboration of Complementary International Standards which were negotiated in December 2008. As a matter of fact, the African Group in Geneva intends to elaborate a Draft Protocol which, once adopted, will come as a complement to the Code of Conduct for Mandate-holders which is one of the institutional text of the Human Rights Council and brainchild of the African Group in Geneva, supported and financed by the Commission.

d. African Union-European Union Human Rights Dialogue

549. Africa's partnership with the European Union in the field of human rights is intensifying and we are exploring ways of consolidating this initiative. The AU-EU Human Rights Consultations/Dialogue are in pursuance of the decision of the 6th EU-Africa Ministerial Troika meeting in Vienna, in May 2006 to hold an expert level human rights dialogue that was confirmed at the subsequent 7th meeting in Brazzaville, in October 2006.

550. The AU-EU Human Rights Dialogue is also to implement the AU-EU Action Plan and Joint Strategy (2008-2010) in regard to Democratic Governance and Human Rights, which are key values for sustainable development, and for cooperation between partners. The first Dialogue took place on 19 September 2007, the second on 26 May 2008 in Brussels, Belgium, and the third was held on 27 October 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

e. Human Rights Council (HRC)

551. The seventh, eighth and ninth sessions of the Human Rights Council (HRC) held in Geneva were particularly marked by the participation of the Commissioner for Political

Affairs. During these sessions, the human rights situations in Sudan, Somalia and DRC were examined. In addition, the endeavours of the African Union along with its various thematic programmes and actions in these countries were brought to the knowledge of the international community, constituting an important negotiation argument in favour of the relevant countries and the African Group.

552. In addition, the various sessions of the HRC gave rise to the establishment of operating rules in relation to the Universal Periodic Review, the selection of countries to be examined as well as the Troikas in charge of the review reports. The reports of the African countries which were examined during the first and second cycles were adopted without any difficulty. The third cycle was held in December 2008 and involved the following member countries: Botswana, Burundi, Burkina Faso and Cape Verde. The Permanent Delegation of the African Union in Geneva organised a seminar on the UPR, allowing the members of the African Group to become more conversant with this process. As a result, the African countries to be reviewed were able to engage into this process with greater confidence.

IV.3 HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

553. Council will recall that at its 13th Ordinary Session, it reviewed the situation of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons in Africa. Decision EX/CL.Dec.423 (XIII) was therefore adopted, which, among other things, urged Member States to participate actively in the meetings of Experts and Ministers in charge of forced displacement as well as the forthcoming first African Union Special Summit on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, now scheduled to take place in Kampala, Uganda, in April 2009.

554. Africa continues to host the largest number of refugees and IDPs in the world, in spite of the return of thousands of them. The recent serious challenges worldwide do not help the Continent to cope with these occurrences, which have devastating impact on already vulnerable populations of forced displacements. I am mainly referring to climate change, global food crisis, natural disasters, population growth and rapid urbanization, competition for scarce resources as well as international migration and mixed movements of people of which, some of these factors were noted by Council in July 2008.

555. Having drawn attention to all these scenarios, it is crucial and of utmost urgency to deal with the problem of forced displacement in a concrete manner which calls for strategies to strengthen our partnership with the international community, in particular with our partners within the existing cooperation agreements. It should be reported that we are on the right track as our commitment and dedication in tackling the root causes of forced displacement in many different ways is evidenced in our active participation in various meetings, conferences and seminars. For example, in October last year, I undertook a mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo where I met with President Mr. Joseph Kabila and some of our partners as well as other stakeholders to discuss the country's crisis which has affected millions of people not only in the country but in the region as well.

556. I appreciated the concern which the international actors showed which was followed up when the Leaders of the Great Lakes region met in November 2008 in Nairobi, Kenya. There are of course other pressing humanitarian situations prevailing in other countries, such as Somalia, Chad, Darfur in Sudan and Central African Republic.

557. Some of the important meetings and conferences which took place in close cooperation with AU partners included: the Experts and Ministerial Meetings on Forced Displacement Issues held in November 2008 in preparation for the AU Special Summit of Heads of State and Government on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa; the 59th annual Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (EX-COM), in October 2008; the Oslo Conference in Oslo, Norway in October 2008 in commemoration of ten years of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internally Displaced Persons.

558. Furthermore, the AU partners were co-opted to take an active role in the missions of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees together with the Commission to the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. Similar missions would also be undertaken in 2009, to other Member States most affected by the problem of forced displacement.

559. Obviously, the African Union cannot possibly tackle the numerous challenges alone in the area of humanitarian affairs. That is why much more needs to be done in terms of burden sharing with the international community for the realization of the elimination of the problem of forced displacement.

560. At this juncture, I would like once again to remind Council of the various decisions taken for Member States to participate actively in the anticipated first ever African Union Special Summit on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced. The Heads of State and Government among other things will commit themselves to address the root causes of forced displacement and also endorse and sign the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, which will be the first of its kind in the world.

IV.4 GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

561. The Commission had reported on the activities undertaken during the first part of 2008 in my last report in Sharm El Sheikh. In this second part, the Commission organized a WGDD Staff Retreat and an Inter-Directorate Retreat to discuss the AU Gender Policy and contribute to gender mainstreaming of the Gender Action Plan. It should also be mentioned that the Commission organized the Pre-Summit on gender in Sharm El-Sheikh and carried out follow up activities on Implementation of Assembly Decision Dec.134-164 (VIII) of January 2007 on the African Women Trust Fund, involving AU Organs, RECs and Member States. An amount of US \$ 1 Million was mobilized to support the WGDD July-December 2008 activities from extra budgetary sources, jointly with the African Center for Gender and Social Development of the Economic Commission of Africa. During this period, a Meeting of Ministers of Women's Affairs and Gender was organized by the Commission. It is also important to report that the 6th African Development Forum (ADF VI) in which the Commission actively participated, was held in October under the theme

“Action on Gender Equality, Women Empowerment and Ending Violence against Women in Africa.”

562. The Commission is actively pursuing the finalisation of the AU Gender Plan together with its Action Plan. In this regard, it convened an Extraordinary Meeting of Ministers of Gender and Women Affairs on 18 December 2008. This important Policy Document will be submitted to the Executive Council once it is finalized for consideration.

IV.5 CULTURE

563. Propelled by the strong commitment and leadership shown by Member States to give culture its rightful place in your continental development agenda, the Commission has been undertaking a number of activities to implement Assembly Decisions in the different aspects of African culture. The following activities need to be mentioned, among others:

- Efforts are underway to strengthen the capacity of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) based in Bamako, Mali. The Commission convened the Second Meeting of the Interim Governing Board of ACALAN in Bamako in June 2008. The ACALAN Secretariat also organized a series of events aimed at promoting African languages and popularizing the institutions.
- As part of its initiative to strengthen regional pillars in the field of culture, the Commission convened a Roundtable of Pan-African Cultural Institutions, on 17 October 2008, in Algiers, Algeria. Among others, the Roundtable identified key priority areas for collaboration between the Commission and regional cultural institutions. This exercise is based on the AU's emphasis on culture as a tool for continental integration, African renaissance and sustainable development.
- The Commission also organized, from 19 to 23 October 2008, the Second Session of the Conference of African Union Ministers of Culture in Algiers, Algeria which deliberated on a number of existing and emerging issues of great significance for the development of African culture. The Report and the Algiers Declaration are herewith submitted to the Summit for consideration and adoption.
- The Commission is working very closely with EU partners on the issue of return of cultural goods illegally trafficked into Europe. A conference on the inventory of cultural goods will be held in the course of 2009.
- The Commission is also following up and facilitating major Pan-African and international cultural events planned for 2009 and will report on its activities at the next July Assembly Summit.

IV.6 SOCIAL VALUES AND SOLIDARITY

The Development of the African Volunteer Corps

564. On shared values, one of the major emphases of the Commission has been the preparations for development of the programme of the African Volunteers Corps. This is an intersectoral endeavour led by the African Citizens and Diaspora Directorate in active collaboration with other Department of the Commission, particularly the Directorates of Peace and Security, Human Resources, Science and Technology. This is in line with the recommendation of the Audit Panel of the Union that stresses the need for a programme that spreads the objectives of Pan-Africanism among the various sectors of society on the continent in order to inculcate Pan-African perspectives. The Volunteer Corps programme is conceived accordingly as a process that will instill pan-African ideals, and create a next cadre of African professional leadership that will constitute a pool of human resource for integration. The programme has attracted support from UNDP, the United Nations Volunteer Program (UNV), the Japanese Government, DED and other international agencies. The Commission is in the process of finalizing the framework document for consideration of the policy organs of the Union.

IV.7 LEGAL MATTERS (LEGAL ARCHITECTURE OF THE UNION)

a) Depositary Functions

565. Since the submission of the last report in January 2008, Member States have continued their efforts to sign and ratify OAU/AU treaties. At the time of reporting, out of the thirty five (35) treaties adopted under the aegis of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African Union (AU), the most recent being the Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights adopted in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, on 1st July 2008, only twenty-one (21) of these Treaties have entered into force while two (2) additional treaties namely: the Constitution of the Association of African Trade Promotion Organizations (1974) and the African Maritime Transport Charter (1994) are in force provisionally. Additionally, the only two (2) treaties that have been ratified or acceded to by all Member States remain the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) and the Constitutive Act of the African Union (2000).

566. During the reporting period, thirty-six (36) new signatures were appended and thirty-three (33) additional instruments of ratification/accession were deposited. However, even though giant efforts have been made to sign and ratify or accede to OAU/AU Treaties, a lot remains outstanding. Indeed, as the African Union continues with its set objectives of political and socio-economic integration, it is crucial that the operationalization of the institutional framework of the Union is completed as soon as possible.

567. In this regard, the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community (Abuja Treaty) (1991) which forms part of the basic legal instruments of the Union as indicated in the Constitutive Act of the African Union is yet to be ratified or acceded to by all Member States. It is therefore important for me to reiterate my call on the four (4) Member States, which have not yet ratified or acceded to the Abuja Treaty, to do so expeditiously.

568. It is also imperative for the five (5) Member States which are yet to ratify or accede to the Protocol to the African Economic Community Relating to the Pan-African Parliament (2001) and the ten (10) Member States which are yet to ratify or accede to the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (2002) to do so as soon as possible.

569. The Protocol on the Statute of the African Court of Justice and Human Rights adopted in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, on 1st July 2008, to date, has only been signed by one Member State (Guinea) and has not been ratified by any Member State. If the operationalization of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights was welcomed as an important milestone in our common endeavour to strengthen the African human rights regime, it is equally important that the African Court of Justice and Human Rights is speedily operationalised in order to strengthen the rule of law and the dispute resolution mechanisms on the continent.

b) Accreditation of Non-African States to the African Union

570. 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 interest of the Union. Since the last reporting period, three (3) non-African States and three (3) international organizations were accredited 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:

NON-AFRICAN STATES		
No.	Name & Title	Country
1	H.E. Mr. Mohammad Javad Zamanian Koopaie, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Ethiopia	Iran
2	Ms. Lisa Filipetto, Head of Mission and Representative of Australia to the Commission of the African Union	Australia
3	H.E. Mr. John A. Simon, Representative of the United States of America to the African Union (with the rank and Status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary)	USA
REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS		
4	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)	
5	World Food Programme Liaison Office (WFP-LO)	
6	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO)	

571. The total number of non-African States and international organizations accredited to the Union is now fifty-seven (57): fifty (50) non-African States and seven (7) Regional Integration and International Organizations.

c) Protection of Names, Abbreviations and Emblems of the AU and NEPAD

572. As was reported previously, the AU paraphernalia (logo, emblem, flag, abbreviations, etc.) has been registered with the World Intellectual Property (WIPO) and is protected in conformity with the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (Paris Convention). However, Member States are yet to enact appropriate national legislations for the protection of the Intellectual Property Rights of the African Union in their various countries.

573. In this regard, the Commission continues to receive reports of attempts at defrauding members of the public, particularly business entities, by wrongfully using the names of the AU and its programme NEPAD or their paraphernalia by fraudsters posing as officials of AU or NEPAD. All Member States are called upon to enact the enabling legislation at national level to protect the AU paraphernalia and to inform the Commission of measures taken. Regrettably, the Commission, to date, has not received information from any Member State on actions taken in this regard.

d) Establishment of the African Union Commission on International Law

574. Council will recall that it had endorsed the proposal for establishment of an African Union Commission on International Law (AUCIL), whose establishment is also provided for in Article 14 (a) the African Union Non-Aggression and Common Defense Pact adopted by the Fourth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union in Abuja, Nigeria, in January 2005.

575. The objectives of AUCIL will include, undertaking activities relating to codification and progressive development of international law in the African continent, assisting in the revision of existing treaties and identifying of areas in which new treaties are required, and preparing drafts thereof as well as conducting studies on legal matters of interest to the Union and its Member States.

576. I would like to inform Council that the Draft Statute of the African Union Commission on International Law was considered by two meetings of Legal Experts and Justice Ministers and/or Attorneys General held from 14 to 18 April 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and from 27 to 4 November 2008 in Kigali, Rwanda, respectively. The Ministerial Conference adopted the Draft Statute as amended and has recommended it to the Assembly of the Union through the current session of Council for consideration and adoption.

e) The Draft African Charter On Statistics

577. Council will recall that by its Decision EX.CL/308 (X) adopted at its Tenth Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January 2007, it mandated the Commission of the African Union in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

(UNECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as well as Regional and National Statistics Offices, to take all the necessary steps to develop an African Charter on Statistics as a regulatory framework for statistics development in the continent.

578. The draft Charter was elaborated and adopted by the First Joint Meeting of the AU Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance and the UNECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, April 2008. The draft was thereafter referred to Legal Experts and Ministers of Justice and/or Attorneys General for finalisation.

579. The Charter which is intended, among others, to serve as a policy framework for statistics development and an advocacy tool and instrument for statistics development in Africa as well as build the institutional capacity of statistics authorities in Africa was adopted by the Conference of Ministers of Justice and/or Attorneys General held in Kigali, Rwanda in October/November 2008 and I would like to inform Council that the Ministerial Conference has recommended it to the Assembly through the current session for consideration and adoption.

f) Treaties Harmonization and Ratification Procedures

580. Council will recall that by Decision EX.CL/Dec. 128 (V) adopted at its Fifth Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in July 2004 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.

581. Council will further recall that the Meeting of Ministers of Justice/Attorneys General held at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 14 to 18 April 2008 was unable to finalise consideration of the recommendations contained in the study, due to time constraints, and decided to defer it to a follow up meeting. Subsequently, a follow up meeting of Ministers of Justice and/or Attorneys General was held in Kigali, Rwanda, from 27 October to 4 November 2008 to consider a number of outstanding legal matters, including the Study on the Procedures for Ratification of Treaties in Member States of the African Union and Measures to Speed Up the Ratification of OAU/AU Treaties and made recommendations on a number of measures: (i) to encourage ratification of OAU/AU treaties; (ii) to harmonize ratification procedures and speed up ratification of OAU/AU treaties; (iii) on the problem of inconsistency between different linguistic texts; and on the implementation of treaties. The measures recommended by the Ministers of Justice and/or Attorneys General are expected to assist in speeding up the ratification processes in Member States and the observance of agreed laws and policies of our Organization.

g) Electronic Voting System

582. The study on the possibility for the Union to use an electronic voting system has been finalized. Council will recall that this proposal was necessitated by the increasing number of elections by the Executive Council and the cumbersome and time-consuming nature of the current system. In view of the fact that Council is expected to conduct elections for some Members of the Commission, the Members of the African Commission

on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Members of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Members of the Peace and Security Council, the Judges of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights as well as the Members of the Advisory Board on Corruption, it is important that elections are carried out in a manner that meets the twin objectives of transparency and fairness not only in fact and in perception but also the equally important objective of speed. In light of this, the Commission has identified the possibility of acquiring an electronic voting system that would speed up the process of elections and at the same time retain the overriding features of fairness and transparency.

583. However, the attention of Council should be drawn to the difficulty in acquiring such a system, which remains the fact that there are no electronic voting systems that allow Member States to vote in various languages. To this end, the Commission is yet to identify a system which will enable elections in the four languages of the Union. What seems available so far is a system that could be tailored to work in two languages. It is hoped that an appropriate system will be identified in the near future and a report shall be made to Member States in due course. The objective of the Commission is to ensure that the next elections are conducted using the proposed system and, in this regard, the necessary funds have been mobilized.

h) Elections of the Members of the Advisory Board on Corruption

584. Council will recall that following the entry into force of the AU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption (the Convention) adopted in Maputo in July 2003, it became necessary to put in place the Advisory Board on Corruption provided for in Article 22 of the Convention. Council will further recall that since the Board is composed of 11 members and only five (5) Member States had submitted candidatures, the elections had to be postponed to the July 2008 session of Council.

585. Only twenty-seven (27) Member States have ratified the Convention as against twenty-six (26) in the last report to Council in June 2008 even though seven (7) nominations from States Parties were received. The current session is expected to elect the first eleven (11) Members of the Board. Member States which have not yet signed and/or ratified the Convention are called upon to do so as soon as possible. The importance of the proposed Board cannot be overemphasized considering that it is intended to promote and encourage the adoption of measures and actions by States Parties to prevent, detect, punish and eradicate corruption and related offences in Africa as well as to follow up on the application of those measures.

i) Visa Requirement by Member States for Officials of the African Union travelling on AU Laissez Passer

586. In accordance with the provisions of Decision AHG/OAU/AEC/Dec.1(II), adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government during its 34th Ordinary Session/Second Ordinary Session of the African Economic Community held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 8 to 10 June 1998, Assembly officials and staff members of the Commission holding AU Laissez-Passer shall not be required to obtain entry visa before travelling in Member States. Despite this Assembly decision, only a few member States have put in

place modalities and mechanisms for ensuring implementation of this decision. Indeed, some of the Member States have in fact refused entry to AU officials upon arrival at their airports and have sent them back.

587. This state of affairs is making it very difficult for officials of the AU and all its organs to function effectively particularly, when travel becomes necessary at short notice. Accordingly, I would like to appeal to all Member States to implement the relevant Assembly decisions and to inform the Commission of actions taken in this regard.

IV.8 COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

a) Formulation of a Communication and Information Strategy

588. The Commission prepared an AU Draft Policy and Strategic Framework for Information, Communication and Advocacy and a 2008 - 2012 Work Plan. These two documents were harmonized with the 2009 - 2012 draft Strategic Plan which was considered during a validation workshop held on 17 and 18 September 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and which included as participants thirty eight representatives from the Regional Offices, AU Organs, the Regional Economic Communities (REC), Departments of the Commission and the relevant partner institutions. They will direct the activities of the Commission for the period concerned. The workshop provided the opportunity for participants to analyze communication policy of AU, make recommendations and devise a systematic and global approach to communication.

b) Organization of a Media and Development Forum

589. The Commission affirmed its willingness to contribute towards the strengthening of the capacities of the African media and to help it fully play the role incumbent on it in the venture to promote the socio-economic development of the continent during the "Media and Development " Forum. This Forum was jointly organized by the Commission and the European Commission in partnership with the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF), the Commonwealth and the Community of Portuguese Language Speaking Countries (CPLP) from 11 to 13 September 2008 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

590. The Forum which was instituted within the framework of the EU-AU strategic partnership adopted during the Europe-Africa Summit in Lisbon in December 2007 ended with the signing and adoption of a road map for action which establishes a series of concrete proposals for the attention of Member States and also for the attention of officials and representatives of the media. These proposals include, in particular, the establishment of a Pan-African Media Observatory.

591. A high level conference on the follow-up on the Ouagadougou Forum, which was organized within the context of the 3rd European Development Days held in Strasbourg, France from 15 to 17 November 2008 made it possible to distribute the introductory note concerning the Pan-African Media Observatory.

592. The road map for action and the Introductory Note concerning the Pan-African Media Observatory were forwarded to the Member States and to the Regional Economic Communities (REC) to inform them about the outcome and to involve them in the process to improve the situation and status of the media in Africa.

c) Elaboration of the Exhaustive Study on the Establishment of a Pan-African Radio and Television Channel

593. In June 2008 a meeting was held in Addis Ababa with the consultant who had been recruited to conduct the study on the establishment of the Pan-African Channel in accordance with the recommendation of the Executive Council. The consultant who is a specialist in radio broadcasting and in the management of radio broadcasting stations and who is qualified and has recognized experience in the establishment of radio and TV stations is supposed to finalize the study at the end of March in collaboration with another technical expert. The study which will clearly state the feasibility of establishing the proposed Pan-African Channel will give explicit directives on the procedure to be followed for establishment of the channel as well as the broad guidelines of the types of expertise required. The document will, in addition, propose a clear programme of action and a strict timetable for the setting up of the Channel.

d) Finalization of the Competition for a New Flag for the African Union

594. The final phase of the process to provide the Union with a new Flag, in accordance with the decision of the Assembly (Assembly Decision/AU/Dec.151 (VIII) Addis Ababa) was marked by the organization of a meeting of the Committee charged with selecting the New Flag of the African Union. Five out of the 116 proposals received were accepted. The Committee has prepared a report on the matter.

e) Establishment of a Permanent Accreditation Service for Journalists

595. The Commission recorded significant progress in the drive to enhance working relations between its services and the representatives of the media by setting up a permanent accreditation unit for journalists in the Commission. This action which follows the provision of the Headquarters of the Union with a Media Centre equipped to handle media activities included in the programme will make it possible for the Commission to give media coverage to its programmes and messages with maximum efficiency and greater rapidity.

V. STRENGTHENING THE INSTITUTIONS

V.1 THE COMMISSION

1. ADMINISTRATIVE AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

a) Human Resource Development

i. Recruitment of Staff to Regular Positions

596. In the follow up to the finalization of the implementation of the Maputo decisions, the Commission has continued to appoint staff to various vacant positions. The objective of having all the approved positions filled for the Commission is to enable it execute its mandate and deliver better services to its stakeholders. The Commission has faced challenges in the recruitment, selection and hiring as this process takes a long time to complete. We will endeavor to reduce the recruitment time by adopting better recruitment procedures, whilst aiming at securing for the institution the services of officials of the highest standard of ability, efficiency and integrity.

597. An administrative review of the conditions of service by the Commission has improved the terms of those officers who have stagnated in their career path positions. The Commission intends to ensure that staff are motivated by ensuring that all evaluation is done and no staff is denied his/her entitlements.

b) Information and Communication & Technologies (ICT)

598. Like all large administrations, the Commission has struggled to meet the ever-growing expectations for better and more efficient cost-effective services. There are opportunities provided by a modern ICT platform for increasing productivity, transparency efficiency and effectiveness. The objectives of the Commission for improving ICT include:-

- Modernization of internal administration,
- More efficient communication with staff and stake holders,
- Better public service to the Member States and other stakeholders.

599. To this end, the Commission has upgraded its IT infrastructure and set up the VLAN cabling in all its buildings. This means that the Commission has embraced change in IT for modernized support systems for its human resources, financial, document and decision management.

600. The Commission has also extended the ICT infrastructure to Member States Embassies here in Addis to have the connectivity to the AUC network. As of today only seventeen (17) member states out of the forty eight (48) Member States Embassies are active users of the AUC's network infrastructure. I would encourage all Member States to ensure that they are connected to the network as this adds to improved knowledge management and information sharing.

c) Progress on the Integrated Management Information System, (IMIS)

601. The strategic objective of IMIS is to foster transparency and accountability through improved and integrated business processes in finance and administration by employing state-of-the-art technology.

602. Moreover, IMIS is believed to uplift the image of the Commission by providing accurate and up-to-date information to all stakeholders including member states and partners. The Commission has employed globally leading software known as SAP to support its vision of enhanced service delivery and fundamentally change the way things are done in the Organization.

603. Implementation of the IMIS project is going on well and the staff in the Directorates of Finance and Administration have already started using the new system.

604. We should note however that that innovative use of ICT is a key contributor to the crosscutting policy issues such as administration burden reduction, transparency, communication and compliance. To meet these challenges, many member states have initiated e- Government strategies. The Commission on its part has initiated the process of developing the e-Commission strategy and this will be in place by June 2009

d) Security Services

605. The Commission is set to review all the emerging security challenges that face any large organization. It seeks to modernize its security systems to counter any threat posed by terrorists and any such threats that emerge from time to time. To this end the Commission is reviewing

- its standard operations procedures to ensure that the current security systems meet current and future challenges;
- Training of security personnel to face the inherent challenges that include surveillance, reporting and improved communication, including various aspects of crisis management and protocol;
- The security demands so as to develop an appropriate security policy.

e) Administrative Services

▪ African Union Staff Passport

606. The Commission is focused on ensuring that the AU staff passport is of the highest quality and meets the international standards set by ICAO. The Commission has secured and installed the equipment required for the production of the AU Passport and will ensure that it is issued before the end of March 2009.

ii, Improvements to the Working Environment

607. With the Commission having increased staff in numbers, the challenge of providing sufficient and conducive working environment has become enormous. The Commission has, thus, embarked on an expansion project to increase the office space. The activities being undertaken are:

- a new ultra modern office block and Conference Centre foundation stone was laid in May 2008 and construction started in earnest November 2008. It is expected to be completed in 2011 at an estimated cost of US\$ 150 million;
- a Peace and Security Centre is to be constructed to address the expanded Peace and Security operations of the Commission. The Commission has secured funding for the construction of an ultra modern building at an approximate cost of US\$ 20 million;
- existing structures have been renovated to create more office space, equipped with the requisite furniture and equipment.

iii. Procurement of Goods and Services

608. The Commission spends considerable resources procuring services and equipment, and facilitates its operations to streamline the procedures for procurements in the Commission. A procurement manual has been developed and staff has been trained to ensure that the procedures in the manual are followed. The procedures will be applied to all the Representational and Regional/Liaison Offices.

2. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

a) Budget Execution

609. It should be recalled that the Assembly in its January session held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia approved a total budget of US\$ 140,037,880.00 for the financial year 2008 out of which US\$ 92.969m represented the operational budget and US\$47.069m was earmarked for programmes.

610. Execution of the operational and programme budgets for the nine months ended September 2008 was as follows:-

Budget Category	Appropriation	Expenditure and Obligations as at September 30, 2008	Percentage of Budget Execution
Operational Budget of Commission	68,506,538	61,637,737	90%
Other Organs	24,462,075	19,437,778	79.5%

Budget Category	Appropriation	Expenditure and Obligations as at September 30, 2008	Percentage of Budget Execution
Sub Total Operational Budget	92,968,613	81,075,515	87.2%
Programme Budget	47,069,267	17,612,567	37.4%
Grand Total	140,037,880	98,688,082	70.5%

611. During the twelve months of operation (before the final closure of accounts) for the fiscal year 2008, USD98,688,082 was executed representing 70.5% of the total budget. Out of the total execution, USD81,075,515 was on the operational budget whilst USD17,612,567 was on the programme budget.

b) Collections

612. The source of funding of AU's approved budget for the year 2008 was from Member States and development partners. An amount of USD79,878,002 was received from Member States as at 31 December 2008 out of the total assessed contributions of USD106,554,635. The Commission also received USD10,393,186 from Member States prior years' arrears and USD876,642 as advance contributions. The total receipts income in 2008 stood at USD91,147,830.

613. A total of USD4,496,644 was received from development partners, out of the total amount of USD32,395,800 pledged to finance programmes approved for the year. In addition, development partners contributed a total of USD28,497,712.62 towards the Peace Fund during the period January to September 2008.

c) Financial Management and Recruitment of Finance Staff for AMISOM

614. The Commission has been working on measures to improve financial management with specific attention to Peace and Security operations. These measures are all the more necessary given the problems encountered by the AU Mission in The Sudan (AMIS).

615. One of the measures the Commission has taken was to put in place full fledged financial and administration structures for Peace and Security Missions and the recruitment for AMISOM has been finalised. More than 50% of the new staff have already reported including the Chief Administrative Officer.

616. The Commission got approval from the Ugandan Government to extend the stay of the Officer who was handling finances in Mogadishu for the past two (2) years, to facilitate proper hand over of the finance functions.

617. Apart from establishing a strong finance and administrative structure in Peace & Security Keeping missions, the Commission has started working on the IMIS Project, which has finance, HRD, Stores and MIS modules. The IMIS Project, under which the new accounting system SAP will be implemented, is being finalised at the headquarters and will

be rolled over to Regional, Representational, Peace Keeping Missions and Liaison Offices starting January 2009.

618. AMISOM will be among the first offices where the rollover will be done immediately after the system is functional at HQ. Before rollover, all the offices will be required to submit weekly reports using an electronic format under the IMIS Project, which will enhance transparency and accountability. Financial information will be updated every month and reports prepared on time.

d. Closure of AMIS

619. Following the taking over of African Mission in The Sudan (AMIS) by UNAMID, the Directorate of PBFA facilitated the closure and the hand over of assets to UNAMID. All assets were officially handed over to UNAMID and the offices in Al Fasher and Khartoum were closed. The financial documents were brought to headquarters and the final report has been finalized.

3. PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

a. Planning Activities

i. Assessment of the previous Strategic Plan

620. The process of developing the new Framework has started with a review of the 2004-2007 Strategic Plan taking into account the Vision of the African Union that was set in motion in 2004 with the following motto: "Build an integrated Africa, a prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena".

621. It was reaffirmed that the mission of the Commission is essentially to build an efficient, effective and value-adding institution, and drive the African integration and development process in close collaboration with Member States, the Regional Economic Communities and African citizens. It has the following core values:

- Respect for diversity and teamwork,
- Think Africa above all,
- Transparency and accountability,
- Integrity and impartiality,
- Efficiency and professionalism.

ii. Preparation of the Draft Strategic Plan 2009-2012

622. The Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012 was developed in July 2008 soon after the new Commission assumed its functions. It was prepared on the basis of five types of analysis:

- a. Analysis of stakeholder expectations;

- b. Assessment of the external global and continental environment;
- c. Assessment of internal environment;
- d. S.W.O.T. Analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats);
- e. Comparative advantages.

623. The Commission finds its niche in the following thematic areas:

- a) The mandate by 53 Member States provides the Commission with the niche to lead in and drive political integration,
- b) The Commission has the advantage of exercising its mandate of political leadership and direction towards economic, social and physical integration of the Continent,
- c) The Commission using the Union platform provides the most practical framework of continental standards and approach on issues of governance,
- d) The Commission is the vehicle through which Member States could build institutions and capacity for Africa's development and integration,
- e) The Commission has a leading role to play in Africa's peace and security agenda.

624. Drawing from its mandate, stakeholders' expectations and SWOT analysis, the Commission has identified four strategic pillars around which its priorities and programmes for the next four years 2009-2012 will be developed. These are:

- a) Peace and Security;
- b) Integration, Development and Cooperation;
- c) Shared Values; and
- d) Institution and Capacity Building.

625. The Strategic Plan 2009-2012 through these four pillars will be implemented in close collaboration with all Member States and other stakeholders, including the other Organs of the Union, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the private sector and the civil society, African citizens in the continent and in the Diaspora as well as strategic and development partners.

626. In this endeavour, the Commission developed clear goals and strategies and built an organizational culture for the Commission that would facilitate the upholding of the above stated core values. All Departments and Offices actively participated in the process.

627. The following strategic objectives were arrived at :

- a. Reduce the conflicts to facilitate development and integration,
- b. Ensure continental stability and security as a prerequisite for development and integration of Africa,
- c. Define a clear path to attaining middle-income status by Member States to Africa's Development agenda.
- d. Draw a clear road map towards political, physical, economic and social continental integration,
- e. Enhance global Cooperation for Sustainable Development and Integration,

- f. Define a common approach/understanding to good governance, democracy and human rights,
- g. Create an Africa-wide humanitarian policy mechanism,
- h. Ensure the entry into force of all outstanding legal instruments adopted by the Assembly,
- i. Create a framework on the promotion of African multi-culturalism and multi-lingualism,
- j. Enhance synergy and collaboration among Member States, RECs and AU Organs for AU's Integration Agenda,
- k. Institute an effective and efficient Commission of the African Union,
- l. Define a framework for sharing Africa's research and development initiatives.

628. However, it should be stressed that the success of implementation of the Strategic Plan would highly depend on the availability of adequate resources. The various programmes to be carried out in the pillars of the Plan will require, for the period 2009-2012, an estimated amount of US\$ 635 million, or an average of US\$ 159 million per year. Funding would be sought from Member States and from development partners. It would also be crucially important that alternative sources of funding be developed to ensure sustainability of the Union's programmes and priorities and enhanced ownership by the Continent as a whole. The estimated expenditure, per pillar, for the four years of the Plan, is as follows:

- Pillar 1 (Peace and Security): US\$ 131 million
- Pillar 2 (Development, Regional Integration and Cooperation): US\$397 million
- Pillar 3 (Shared Values): US\$ 20 million
- Pillar 4 (Institution and Capacity Building): US\$ 87 million.

629. The Draft Strategic Plan is part of this Summit agenda and the Commission is confident that it would attract the utmost attention of Member States.

iii. Monitoring and Evaluation Activities

630. The Monitoring and Evaluation system is in place to assist in the overall implementation of the work programme and monitor the day-to-day implementation of the AUC Strategic Plan, as well as promote best practices in terms of monitoring and evaluation.

631. During the period under review, the Commission produced the 2008 Programme Budget Monitoring and Evaluation Report and a Monitoring and Evaluation Manual which would assist managers to ensure smooth implementation of their programmes, with the support of a computer-based Monitoring and Evaluation tool, called the African Monitoring and Evaluation tool (AMERT) which will be operational in January 2009. A training program on the use of AMERT was also introduced for staff at both AUC Headquarters and Regional Offices from October to December 2008. AMERT includes a component aimed at simplifying program budget preparation. A total of 52 persons attended this programme.

632. The Commission has also developed a Strategic Planning Manual as a key tool to be used by all AUC Departments and Regional offices in their planning activities for short, medium and long terms.

633. The preparation of the 2009 Program Budget was based on a new Strategic plan. In order to ensure that the entire AUC budget was realistic, a Budgeting Workshop involving all Departments and Regional Offices was held at Headquarters and subsequent meetings led by the Office of the Deputy Chairperson followed to ensure smooth coordination of the programme budget for 2009. In this process, all Departments/Offices were required to prepare work plans for their respective Program Budget components, using the same format developed under the Process Facility. The consolidated work plans will be used as internal to-do list, which shows what is to be done, by whom and by when it has to be done. It will also assist in forecasting disbursements of funds as well as laying the basis for Reporting, Monitoring and Evaluation. The consolidated work plans will be issued after the program budget is approved in order to guide Departments in the implementation process.

634. Among the constraints encountered, it would be noted that due to inadequate capacity, the budget calendar was not strictly observed. This would be addressed through the computerization which will facilitate the planning process. Likewise, on-job training will be conducted to build capacity amongst programme managers, and collaboration and the implementation of the new Strategic, Planning and Monitoring and Evaluation / AMERT roles would be of great assistance in this respect. The end result expected is that the new system as applied would increase the reporting and timely accounting of the activities undertaken by the Commission in a transparent manner, thus further building confidence among stakeholders and partners.

b. Policy Analysis and Research

635. In this area, the Commission is striving to assess the results obtained in the implementation of programmes and budgets and to promote Africa's ownership through strategic thinking on its future and setting its own agenda in this respect.

c. Knowledge Management

636. With regard to the transformation of the institution, the management portal has been established and knowledge sharing is now operational within the Commission, thus marking the end of Phase 1. The system developed with the use of a secured freeware, supports all the languages used at the AUC and is capable of storing more than 10 million documents. For beyond 10 million documents, provision has been made for automatic archiving on an "archive" server.

637. The ultimate goal of the portal is to save time and make AUC staff members more productive. Indeed, some studies have shown that knowledge workers spend up to 25% of their working time just looking for the information they need and that 40% of them cannot find it. The portal will give staff members the possibility of quickly finding the information available within the AUC, no matter who created it or where it is to be found. The system is set to be extended in the future to regional offices, Embassies and Regional Economic Communities with the possibility of limited access to development partners.

638. Through the Library and Archives Unit, the collection, conservation and preservation of the cultural memory of the AUC and the African Continent continue to claim all the Commission's attention, with emphasis being focused on their modernisation and adaptation to new tools and techniques and a harmonious and rational management of electronic and documentary resources.

639. However, the limited size of the premises represents a handicap to the realisation of the set objectives. A solution to the problem will hopefully be found with the ongoing construction of the new infrastructure for the Commission.

4. CONFERENCE SERVICES

640. The Commission carried on with its activities of planning and organising African Union conferences and meetings. In this field, the 2009-2012 Strategic Plan underscored the pressing need to modernise the working methods and tools, provide the required human resources and ensure constant refresher courses for them, and to develop conference management and document processing manuals.

641. During the period under consideration, Conference Services covered 231 meetings, 207 of which were held in Addis Ababa and 24 outside the Headquarters. Furthermore, a total of 13,778 pages were translated during the reporting period. The challenges faced the frequent changes of meeting dates and the late planning of meetings. In future, the Commission will ensure better internal coordination to avoid such situations. Similarly, the Commission will see to it that working documents adhere to the deadlines set for the timely transmission of documents to Member States and other concerned role players.

642. With regard to the 2009 meetings calendar, and in accordance with Decision EX.CL/Dec.419 (XIII) adopted by the Council in Sharm-El-Sheikh last July, the Commission made sure that all its Departments are observing the deadlines to enable the Conference Services to consider the 2009 meetings proposals in time. Similarly, the Commission will ensure better coordination among the departments to avoid the overlapping of dates and concentration of important meetings, such as ministerial meetings, over certain months.

643. Concerning the preparation of working documents for the meetings of the January 2009 Summit, 103 documents were submitted and translated during the period under review.

644. Conference Services is still faced with the challenge of insufficient number of interpreters and translators. The Commission is devoting its best efforts to speeding up the recruitment procedures to fill vacant posts and their wider advertisement to attract the best talents in the Continent. At the same time, it would like to strengthen the present structure so as to enable this strategic service to carry out its mission.

645. During the same period, the Conference Services Directorate was also reinforced with the acquisition of various equipments and software, including computers and printers. Equipment was donated by the Turkish Embassy and will soon be made available to the Directorate. Conference Services will also be buying, following an invitation to tender launched in early 2008, a tool known as "Computer Assisted Translation and Terminology Management Suite (CATTMS)" that would greatly improve productivity and the translation process in the Commission. Following evaluation of tenders by the Tender Board of the Commission, Multicorpora Inc., a Canadian Company, won the bid, the text of which is in the process of being finalized.

646. It should be also noted that since July 2008, the Conference Services Directorate has developed a system to register all incoming translation requests in a systematized database. The database is capable of generating different statistical information of the translation request inflow to the Directorate. Last November, a new document codification technique was introduced to facilitate identification of documents in the various working languages of the Union.

647. Regarding documentation and archiving, a server-based web page is under development for in-house easy retrieval of all the working documents and all Assembly and Executive Council Decisions.

648. As mentioned above, the Conference Services Directorate is beneficiary of support from some partners, including the EU (Directorate-General for Translation and Interpretation) and the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*, both in terms of its staff training needs and for the supply of translation tools.

5. AUDIT ACTIVITIES

649. In accordance with Article 70 of the Financial Rules and Regulations of the AU, audit activities were undertaken to review the following operations:

No.	Details	Status
1	Stock-taking exercise	Final Report issued
2	Procurement of Goods and Services	Final Report issued
3	Personnel Records	Final Report issued
4	AU Ouagadougou Office (SAFGRAD)	Final Report issued
5	AU Algiers Office (ACSRT)	Final Report issued
6	EC-Euro 55 million Support Program (2007)	Final Report issued
7	Recruitment Process	Final Report issued
8	Fixed Asset Count and Tagging	Final Report issued
9	AU Nairobi Office (IBAR)	Final Report issued
10	AMISOM-Nairobi	Draft Report issued
11	OLMEE Asmara	Draft Report issued
12	Transport Service Unit	Draft Report issued
13	PAP on the EC €55 Million Support Program	Draft Report issued
14	AU Niamey Office	Work in progress

No.	Details	Status
15	AU Conakry Office	Work in progress
16	AU Lagos Office	Work in progress
17	AU Yaoundé Office	Work in progress
18	AU Brussels Office	Work in progress
19	AU Cairo Office	Work in progress
20	AU New York Office	Work in progress
21	AU Washington Office	Work in progress
22	EC-Euro 55 million Support Program (2008)	Work in progress
23	AMIS - Sudan	Work in progress
24	Operations, Financial and Administrative matters of the Commission – Progress Report to the BCP	Work in progress

650. Beside the above-mentioned audit activities, other missions were performed, such as joint missions to Senegal on AU Dakar Conference and the mission on an organizational audit of CIEFFA Center in Ouagadougou. Furthermore, the Office of the Internal Audit contributed as a Resource Person in the IMIS implementation project as well as staff training on the new Procurement Manual.

651. Other activities included:

- Short-term training of Internal Audit Staff in the areas of Internal Auditing, Performance & Programs Audit, IT Audit and Risk based Audits and attendance to an international conference of auditors organized by the Institute of Internal Audit (IIA).
- Implementation of Audit Software: with support of partners, the process of acquiring audit software is well in advance. Tender Board considered the bids and awarded the tender for supply and implementation of Audit Software to Deloitte and Touché (Kenya). The selected software is a module within SAP (IMIS) applications package. It is anticipated that the selected Audit Software will be fully implemented and operational during the first half of the year 2009.

652. Efforts have been made to fill the vacant posts within the Office of the Internal Audit. The Commission will take necessary measures to fill the remaining vacant positions. In view of the need to audit over 15 AU Offices and Sub-Offices and 12 Field missions, it would be necessary to increase the allocation for audit missions to all these Offices.

653. The Commission will also intensify efforts to ensure effective implementation of all audit recommendations as approved by the competent Organs.

6. INTEGRATION OF NEPAD

654. It will be recalled that the African Union Commission (AUC) was mandated in July 2003, at the Second African Union (AU) Summit in Maputo, to embark upon integration of

NEPAD into the structures and processes of the AU, in consultation with the Chairperson of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC). However, the desired integration did not materialize in spite of numerous efforts, until the 18th HSGIC and 10th AU Summit of January/February 2008, which adopted the Decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.191(X)) to proceed with NEPAD integration, immediately, and in an expeditious manner. The 13-point conclusions of the March 2007 Algiers Brainstorming Summit also formed the basis of the integration process, and included, amongst others, the creation of a NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Authority as the successor entity to the NEPAD Secretariat.

655. In implementing these Decisions, the Commission has achieved the following:

- Created the NEPAD Coordinating Unit, with six meetings having been held to date;
- Finalised the Terms of Reference (ToRs) for the Coordinating Unit;
- Developed a work programme for the Coordinating Unit;
- Completed the signing of the Host Agreement with South Africa which accords the NEPAD the status of an AU office outside of Headquarters;
- Commenced work on the implementation of the Host Agreement with the South African Authorities, which include the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA);
- Creation of a joint implementation team with officers from the AUC/NEPAD Secretariat/DBSA and DFA and its related ToRs to ensure the implementation of the Host Agreement is undertaken and concluded;
- Secured funding for the undertaking of the study on NEPAD integration under the Euro 55 Million Support Programme;
- Finalised the Terms of Reference and European Development Fund (EDF) tender dossier for the study on NEPAD integration into the structures and processes of the AU, for the procurement of Consultants;
- Completed the launch of the EDF tender dossier on the study, evaluated submissions and gained AUC Tender Board approval;
- Commenced work on integration activities pre-finalisation of the study. These include: budgeting/financial harmonisation, asset management and recording, use of AU flag, use of AU emblem, issuing of Laissez-passer, ICT and VSAT communications matters and sectoral programme harmonisation.

656. Regarding the recruitment of the NEPAD Chief Executive Officer (CEO), the following has also been achieved:

- Finalised the CEO job profile and successfully advertised, with a total number of 75 applicants having been received;
- Finalised the ToR for Consultants to undertake the short-list, successfully advertised and have awarded the contract;
- Received from the Consultants the list of the candidates short-listed;
- Created an Internal AUC Recruitment Team to oversee and quality control the recruitment process;
- Completed the initial short-list of 12 candidates; and

- Concluded the interview of the 12 candidates with the participation of the representatives of the Chairperson of the Union, the Chairman of NEPAD/HSGIC and the 5 NEPAD Initiating countries.

657. There are a number of on-going activities to complete the integration of NEPAD into the AU, these include:

- i) Granting of EU 'no objection' to the procurement and evaluation process undertaken by the AUC;
- ii) Awarding of the Contract to the Consultants and commencement of work by week beginning December 22, 2008;
- iii) Undertaking of the study beginning with the submission of an inception report by early January 2009.

658. Concerning the recruitment of the NEPAD CEO, ongoing activities include the following:

- i) Completion of the short-listing and approval by the AUC Internal Recruitment Team on the work of the Management Consultancy firm assigned to undertake the project;
- ii) Appointment of an interview Panel in accordance with Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.191(X) by early January 2009;
- iii) Conducting of interviews by second week of January 2009;
- iv) Selection of the CEO by the Chairperson of the AUC in consultation with the Chairperson of the AU and the Chairperson of NEPAD HSGIC by the third week of January 2009; and
- v) Endorsement of the selected CEO at AU Assembly level in late January 2009.

659. Despite the measurable progress that has been made and the on-going activities scheduled to take place, the work of integrating NEPAD into the structures and processes of the AU has not been without its challenges. These in turn have created bottlenecks and have served to slow down the process. Challenges have mainly concerned the financing of the NEPAD study and the short-listing of candidates for the NEPAD CEO.

660. With regard to the way forward and the revitalisation of NEPAD, there is need for political buy-in to ensure that the integration process is sustained and for the NEPAD Secretariat and its successor entity to be adequately supported with its financial and human resource requirements. In this regard, it is also vital that Member States contribute their view-points on the structure and profile of the new NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Authority in order to help give shape to the new entity.

661. Regarding external support, it will be recalled that the UN Agencies engagement with NEPAD was initially based on the resolution adopted by the United Nations in 2002, acknowledging the position that NEPAD should be the framework within which the international community, including the United Nations, should concentrate their efforts for Africa's Development. However, in view of the Decision of African Heads of State and Government, requesting the integration of NEPAD into the AU the NEPAD Secretariat and

its successor entity must be seen for what it is a programme of the AU and not a separate institution. With the failure to integrate NEPAD early on into the AU, the erroneous concept of both entities constituting two institutions has been apparent. Therefore, once the work on integration is finalized, support towards Africa's Development should be made through the African Union. Further, this reality should be symbolically reinforced in the branding of the NEPAD programme, so as to signify its integrated status within the AU and to avoid confusion.

662. Concerning the study on the modalities for integrating NEPAD into the AU and the creation of the Planning and Coordinating Authority, there is a need to consider NEPAD for what it currently is, its strengths, weaknesses and its potential, particularly in the area of project coordination, a mobiliser of Pan-African institutions and external partners around key African development projects, as well as its potential as a knowledge management/research agent. Fundamentally, roles and responsibilities between the AUC and the NEPAD programme must be clearly delineated so as to avoid overlapping and institutional conflict.

V.2 THE ECOSOCC

The Launch and Institutionalization of the General Assembly of ECOSOCC

663. In light of Decision EX.CL/Dec.422 (XIII) on ECOSOCC, consultations between the Commission and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, have commenced, culminating in the launch of the Permanent General Assembly of ECOSOCC in Dar Es Salaam, on 9 September 2008. President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Chairperson of the Union, presided over the event. In attendance were the representatives of African civil society groupings, members of the Diplomatic Corps, the African Diaspora, the Deputy Chairperson of the Commission, the Chair of Council, the Chair of the Permanent Representative Committee, some representatives of other AU organs, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), partner institutions such as the African Development Bank (ADB), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, the former Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU).

664. The launch of ECOSOCC marked the change of baton of its leadership from the Interim Presiding Officer, Prof. Wangari Maathai to the President of the Permanent General Assembly of ECOSOCC, Mr. Akere Muna. It also saw the election of principal officers of the Union including members of the Bureau and the Credential Committee and its Chairperson, Hon. Saida Agrebi.

665. Since the launch of ECOSOCC, two General Assembly meetings were held in Nairobi, Kenya from 15-18 October 2008 and Abuja, Nigeria from 15-19 December 2008 respectively. The first was to prepare Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and establish a work programme for the preparation and conduct of election in the remaining Member States where elections have not yet taken place as directed by Council. The choice of Kenya was motivated by the desire to honour the former Interim Presiding Officer, Prof.

Wangari Maathai. The second was to consolidate a strategic plan of action for the next 4 years and undertake a review of the ECOSOCC Statutes as proposed in the Audit Panel report and the recommendations of the Executive Council at its Extra-Ordinary Session held in Arusha, Tanzania in May 2008. The Abuja meeting of the ECOSOCC General Assembly was preceded by a meeting of the Credentials Committee of ECOSOCC on 15 December 2008 to continue the process of vetting candidates that are eligible for subsequent elections. The work programme adopted in Nairobi in October 2008 expects that the process of elections will be completed in the first quarter of 2009 and would be followed by a composite election in Yaounde, Cameroon. Subsequently, the Standing Committee of ECOSOCC would be put in place as the executive Organ of ECOSOCC. The election of the Standing Committee would pave way for activation of sectoral clusters that would serve as the main pillars of ECOSOCC.

7. CONCLUSION

666. This report reviews the activities undertaken by the Commission during the past six months, given that it took office on 28 April 2008. Though this review may be modest in terms of concrete achievements, the content of this appraisal clearly indicates the determination of the Commission to go as far as it is possible in the practice of results-oriented management. The Commission is well aware of the challenges to be met if we are to respond effectively to the expectations of Member States and the peoples of Africa. It is therefore bracing itself accordingly, and is irreversibly engaged in the path of dynamic progress so as to be always deserving of the trust of our Member States.

667. The report highlights the four pillars that determine the Commission's day-to-day activities and constitute the mainframe of the draft Strategic Plan 2009-2012 submitted to your august assembly for consideration. These pillars are Peace and Security; Development, Integration and Cooperation; Shared Values and, lastly, Institution and Capacity Building. The Commission is hopeful that, once adopted, this Plan will enjoy the unalloyed endorsement of Member States who will contribute to its implementation by providing all the requisite resources. Provision of such resources will place the Commission under the obligation to attain all the goals outlined in this Plan. Member States will then rightly hold accountable not only the Commission, but also all the other organs of the Union involved in the implementation of the Plan. The Commission remains convinced that the combined effort of the all concerned players will help to significantly move forward Africa's agenda; an agenda anchored basically on continental integration, projection and defence of Africa's interest in the world and strengthening its role on the international scene.

668. The ongoing debate on the Union Government should culminate in the definition of a roadmap that meets the criteria of pragmatism and realism, together with a set of indicators which will facilitate measurement of the progress we have achieved within the framework of an evaluation mechanism. The advantage of such mechanism is that it impels us to action; action which hitherto was characterised by an abundance of the texts adopted since the launch of the Union in Durban in 2002. Generally, the African Continent has a special knack for producing a large number of important legal texts in all areas of strategic interest such as the Peace and Security Architecture, the Charter on Democracy

and Governance, the Rights of Women, Children and Youth; the Conventions on Combating Corruption, Terrorism, Disease and Major Pandemics, Scientific Research and Technology, Culture, Natural Resource Conservation, Environmental Protection and other areas of key interest to Africa. Thus, the challenge now is no longer that of producing further texts. Rather, it is a question of giving concrete expression to those that already exist by making them to truly function as the norms that shape our political, social, economic, cultural and other activities. It is therefore high time to further build our credibility by rounding off our theoretical approaches with concrete actions that impact positively on the lives of our peoples, and by integrating our actions into a process of permanent self-evaluation; a process that would make it possible for us to make adjustments when necessary. It is high time to grant ourselves a break from intellectual exploits which do not reflect our realities. This is the price we have to pay to earn our place in the world; the place for which so many Africans have given their lives and for which the African Union, standing head high in its new-found pride, is waging an unrelenting struggle.

2009

Report of the chairperson on the activities of the commission covering the period July to December 2008

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