

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



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EX.CL/ 233 (VIII)

**REPORT OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE PERIOD
JULY TO DECEMBER 2005**

INTRODUCTION

You will recall that in Sirte I intimated that the Commission would carry out fundamental activities in order to create the conditions for the acceleration of the integration of the Continent. In reading this report, you will notice that most of the activities programmed have been carried out by the departments under often difficult conditions. With a high sense of abnegation, the staff of the Organization were able to find ways and means of realizing the objectives that we set ourselves within the context of the 2004-2007 strategic plan adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in July 2004. Allow me, nevertheless to draw your attention to some aspects of the work of the Commission which will allow our collective action to be much more efficient in the months ahead.

In the area of peace and security, the Commission admittedly made giant strides in the resolution of conflict and the establishment of the stand-by force. However, it is becoming increasingly apparent that we must lay emphasis on conflict prevention. To this end, we must endow ourselves with monitoring and political intervention tools and mechanisms which will enable us to prevent conflicts or at least to contain them quickly when they break out, in our efforts to seek a political settlement of the crises. This is the only viable way for the African Union, more so as the cost of peace keeping exceeds by far the financial and organizational capacities of our Member States.

In this context, we must revisit the Lomé Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government. To this end, the Commission held wide consultations with the civil society and partners with a view to critically examining the issue and formulating concrete and relevant proposals to Member States, taking due account of the historic development of our societies and the exigencies of the contemporary world.

We have also engaged in efforts to promote democracy, good governance, fair and free elections and human rights in Africa. In concert with other organs of the Union, two lines of action have been pursued in this regard. First, is insistence on the letter and spirit of the Lomé Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government to ensure democratic legitimacy of governments as in the case of Mauritania.

Second, are persisting efforts by the Commission to establish a culture of democracy, the rule of law and human rights by promoting broader debates on African Constitutions, fostering partnerships to enable the implementation of AU priority programmes on governance, administration and reform of the public service, preventing and fighting corruption, promoting human rights and realizing women's rights through human rights education, among others.

The Commission significantly enhanced the Resource Centre for Democracy, Governance and Human Rights and accorded strong priority to support the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. The Commission continued to focus on the plight of refugees and displaced persons on the continent, through several field assessment missions and provision of financial assistance to Member States' organisations.

Our Member States have made progress in their ability to speak with one voice at international gatherings, as was the case, from the political and strategic standpoint, with the Ezulwini consensus on the United Nations reform, and recently in Hong Kong during the trade negotiations on agricultural subsidies. The few concessions obtained from the rich countries on agricultural subsidies, notably cotton, were due to our unity and determination to seek an African common position. This is the way that guarantees Africa's respect in the concert of Nations. The Commission will spare no effort, whenever possible, to seek the African common position. In this regard, you will also see in the report the efforts deployed in the area of animal resources, particularly bird flu.

These efforts will be fruitful if the Commission succeeds in mobilizing the energies of the Regional Economic Communities so that they become the pillars of the continental integration. The Commission embarked on a harmonization and coordination work with the Regional Economic Communities and the support of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. We hope that at the next AU Summit in Banjul in June 2006, it will be possible to present to our organs, in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, a proposed integration of NEPAD and a plan to harmonize the Regional Economic Communities. At this juncture, it is worth emphasizing that based on the comparative advantage of each organization and under the political leadership of the African Union, the latter will work in close collaboration with the African Development Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to speed up the integration of the continent, a *sine qua non* for the development of our societies in the on-going globalization. I would like to seize this opportunity to commend our brothers Kaberuka and Abdoulie Janneh for the confidence reposed in them and to reassure them of the total readiness of the African Union Commission to work with them hand in hand for a better future of our peoples.

The African integration should make headway in the area of free movement of persons, goods and services, as well as of information. In this regard, three projects seem crucial to me. The first is the impossible to forge African diplomatic passport which could be introduced without delay if there is the political will. Initially, it will be reserved for officials of the continent and will enable them to travel throughout the continent without visa. The second is, the meeting of airlines to reflect on problems related to air ticket cost, flight interconnection on the continent and air security and safety which will be organized in a not too distant future. I hope that our airlines will find appropriate solutions to these haunting problems. The third is the Africa radio-television project which should make it possible to contribute to the mastery of information on Africa and to forge a Pan-African spirit, particularly in the area of education and culture.

Education and Culture, these are the two key themes of our Khartoum Summit. The Commission painstakingly prepared the common African positions through several preparatory meetings. I hope that the decade of education which will be proclaimed will enable us to make significant inroads in the area of education, especially Pan-Africanist education of our peoples and our youth. On the cultural plane, if 2006 is proclaimed the year of African languages, the Commission will redouble its efforts towards the establishment of the academy of African languages.

I see that the Commission has worked under difficult conditions to implement the programmes and guidelines you approved in 2004. Only 12% of the solidarity budget was

paid to the Commission at the end of the fiscal year. I call on Member States to support the programmes and guarantee their appropriation vis-à-vis our partners, pending a definitive solution to the financing of the African Union.

The Commission will soon finalize its recruitment programme based on regional balance and gender parity. It will be in a better position to implement the integration programmes in strict compliance with the principles of good governance and transparency reaffirmed by NEPAD within the context of the development of the RECs and in the lead up to the United States of Africa.

To this end, the Commission has embarked on a vast Institutional Transformation programme which features prominently in its priorities; the Institutional Transformation is in fact a pre-requisite which will enable the Commission to meaningfully play its role of catalyst of African integration and of an Africa corresponding to the vision which the Heads of State and Government of the continent endorsed at the July 2004 Summit. As the driving force behind the integration project, the Commission is duty bound to improve its capacity to conceive its policies and programmes, implement and evaluate them in a responsible and participatory manner. Hence the need for the Commission to endow itself with tools and a culture of work that make it possible to achieve the expected results; this is the global objective of the Institutional Transformation.

Apart from this, The Commission has continued to pursue its programme for civil society, youth and gender mainstreaming in the African Union. The development of the ECOSOCC Process has occupied a pride of place in this context. The Commission has strongly supported the efforts of the Bureau and Standing Committee of ECOSOCC to establish and consolidate a roadmap for the work of the Interim ECOSOCC. The inclusion of the youths and the African Diaspora in ECOSOCC would be part of this agenda.

The Diaspora Process has also been developing apace. The Commission has been in close consultation with the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) with the view to institutionalizing the process of cooperation with the Caribbean people and developing and consolidating regional Diaspora networks with the ultimate goal of building trans-Atlantic bridges to consummate the relationship. In the course of this period also, the Chairperson of the Union visited the Caribbean and discussed with Caribbean leaders. I also met with H.E. Mr. Gonzalves, the Speaker of CARICOM and the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and The Grenadines in October 2005, in the process of his official visit to Ethiopia, to discuss growing relations between AU, the CARICOM and the Caribbean and to explore strategies for development and consolidation.

A number of proposals and follow-up measures have arisen in this regard including the idea of an Africa-America Summit and the requirement for Africa to celebrate the Emancipation Day as a complement to the Africa Day. Arrangements will also be initiated for a South Africa-AU-Caribbean follow-up Conference in South Africa in 2006 and the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding with CARICOM in the early part of the this year. The Commission also initiated consultation with Brazil on Plans to hold the Second Conference of Intellectuals of Africa and the Diaspora in Brazil in 2006. A preparatory process for this meeting is already underway.

I hope that the Committee of Heads of State led by President Obasanjo of Nigeria which is currently pondering over this issue will come up with happy conclusions that will

enable the African Union Commission to be more effective and to work in perfect harmony with NEPAD and the Regional Economic Communities, as well as with all the other institutions of the African Union whose role and resources should be strengthened: (Pan-African Parliament, ECOSOCC, Court of Justice as well as financial institutions in the offing).

I would like to thank all the Heads of State and all their representatives (Ministers and Ambassadors) for their constant cooperation, their understanding and their support. A special tribute must be paid to President Obasanjo for his leadership. His unwavering commitment and abiding faith have enabled our Organization to make giant strides towards integration and to assert the image and presence of Africa in the world.

Alpha Oumar Konaré

**REPORT OF THE COMMISSION FOR THE PERIOD
JULY TO DECEMBER 2005**

LEGAL MATTERS

1. During the period under review, the Office of the Legal Counsel, on behalf of the Commission, undertook the following activities pertaining to its main functions.

I. DEPOSITARY FUNCTIONS

2. Council is hereby informed that since the submission of the last report in July 2005, there has been a significant development with regard to the status of OAU/AU treaties. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, entered into force on November 25, 2005, thirty (30) days after the receipt of the fifteenth instrument of ratification, in accordance with Article XXIX (1). In this vein Member States are called upon to accelerate the process of ratification for all the other treaties so as to facilitate their early entry into force.

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

3. It will be recalled that in the last report to Council in July 2005, it was indicated that the Office of the Commission had finalized the official request for both the AU and AU/NEPAD to WIPO before the end of June 2005, for communication to State Parties to the Paris Convention. WIPO communicated the Names, Abbreviations, and Emblems of the AU and NEPAD on June 24, 2005 to the countries party to the Paris Convention as well as to the Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which are not bound by the Paris Convention but which are bound or will be bound to apply it by virtue of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement) of April 15, 1994.

4. Each State Party has a maximum of one (1) year to notify WIPO of its refusal to protect AU's intellectual property rights in its territory. Where no such refusal is communicated, it is assumed that the State concerned agrees entirely with the proposal. In effect, the AU, by 24 June 2006, will know the coverage of protection of its intellectual property rights in the various territories.

III. ACCREDITATION OF NON-AFRICAN STATES TO THE AFRICAN UNION

5. 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 received and considered requests for accreditation from various non-African States, bearing in mind the supreme interest of the Union and the concerns of Member States. In an accreditation ceremony held on 20 October 2005, the Chairperson of the Commission accepted the letters of accreditation of fifteen (15) non-African States in addition to those that were accredited earlier in line with the provisions of Part II, Section II (3) of the Criteria. The names of the representatives accredited since the last report and their respective States are listed in the table below

No.	Names of Accredited Representatives	Country
1.	Mr. Jhung BYUNG-KUCK	Republic of Korea
2.	Ms. Kirsti AARNIO	Finland
3.	Mr. A.J.A.J.M.G. HENNEKENS	Netherlands
4.	Mr. Gurjit SINGH	India
5.	Mr. Yves BOULANGER	Canada
6.	Mr. Federic RENARD	Belgium
7.	Mr. Mariusz WOZNIAK	Poland
8.	Mr. Staffan TILLANDER	Sweden
9.	Mr. Mikhail Y. AFANASIEV	Russia
10.	Mrs. Margarita D. ARMAS	Mexico
11.	Mr. Ivan ZIVKOVIC	Serbia and Montenegro
12.	Ms. Mette RAVN	Norway
13.	Mr. Syed Zahid HUSSAIN	Pakistan
14.	Comrade O UI ROK	Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea
15.	H.E. Mr. Renato XAVIER	Brazil

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

6. Pursuant to Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.83 (V) adopted by the Fifth Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Sirte, Libya, in July 2005 which stipulates, inter alia, "[the Assembly]...DECIDES that a draft legal instrument relating to the establishment of the merged court comprising the Human Rights Court and the Court of Justice should be completed for consideration by the next ordinary sessions of the Executive Council and the Assembly", a meeting of Legal Experts from Member States was convened from 21 to 24 November 2005 at the El Mithak Residence in Algiers, Algeria, to consider the Draft Single Legal Instrument.

7. Council is hereby informed that the twenty-two (22) Member States which attended the meeting decided to constitute themselves into a working group as no quorum was achieved, and that the outcome of their deliberations would be submitted to the PRC before submission to the Policy Organs. Council is also informed that the Report of the meeting of the Working Group together with the Draft Single instrument were communicated to all Member States, and were requested to submit their comments and/or observations on or before 10 January 2006. Thereafter the documents were submitted to a meeting of the PRC. The Draft Single instrument on the Merger of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Court of Justice of the African Union is submitted to this session for consideration.

WOMEN, GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

8. The period under review was mostly devoted to planning and mobilizing support for medium-term gender mainstreaming programmes for the AU. Therefore, departmental plans for mainstreaming gender into respective programmes of each department and for building their capacity for gender analysis have been drawn.

9. First AU Conference of Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs and Gender took place from 12 to 15 October 2005 in Dakar, Senegal. The Government of Senegal hosted the Conference. The outcome of the Conference, which is before the Executive Council for endorsement, will facilitate the implementation of the *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa*, which was adopted by the Assembly of Heads of States and Government in July 2004.

10. It will be recalled that in Decision EX.CL/Dec192 (V11), the Commission was requested to "*undertake consultations aimed at revamping PAWO and to submit a report to the Executive Council in January 2006*". The revitalisation of PAWO is of interest to the AU and the Commission is following up on this concern as an observer, to allow African women to shape its future. The role of the Commission is to support and to assist a new PAWO to engage with the African Union in the most effective way. In this regard, the AU has been engaged with PAWO on two separate instances, at a meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa and at PAWO's General Secretariat Meeting in Windhoek, Namibia, in September and November 2005, respectively. These engagements have centred around assisting PAWO to reflect deeply on its role within the broader African women's movement and in the context of a pluralistic Africa.

11. Close consultations still need to be made by PAWO with other regions (North, Central and East Africa), not represented at its last General Secretariat Meeting, so that their views on the transformation could be sought. Also, other countries that are members of PAWO, but have not been active, should also be brought on board. The AUC will continue to be seized with the issue of PAWO especially giving advise on how a new PAWO fits into the structure of the AU. As it is evident that PAWO is still in the process of redefining itself, the AU is planning a consultative meeting between the Commission and PAWO before the PAWO Congress that is scheduled for July 2006. Thereafter, a report on the revamped PAWO will be submitted to the Executive Council in due course.

INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITIES

I. OVERVIEW

12. The Internal Audit gives assurance and advisory services to the management of the Commission, assists top management in the effective discharge of their responsibilities by furnishing them with analyses, appraisal, counsel and recommendations.

II. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

13. During the period under review, the audit activities undertaken included the review of:

- a) Maintenance and Renovation of Buildings;

- b) Semi-Arid Food Grain Research and Development (SAFGRAD) - Ouagadougou;
- c) Center for Linguistic & Historical Studies by Oral Tradition (CELTHO)-Niamey;
- d) Integrated Development of the Fouta Djallon Highlands - Conakry;
- e) Scientific, Technical & Research Commission AU/STRC - Lagos;
- f) African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights - Banjul
- g) Accounts Receivable, Meeting and Seminar Advances and Accounts Payable;
- h) Project and Special Funds;
- i) Contribution and General Fund.

III. CHALLENGES

14. The Office of Internal Audit has an acute shortage of manpower and as a result it could not
- 1. Attain its objectives and
 - 2. Provide the necessary value-added services to the Commission. It is believed that the current recruitment process and the review of the Maputo structure would solve the existing manpower problem.

IV. THE WAY FORWARD

15. The strategic plan of the Commission for the period 2004 - 2007, and enhanced relationship and support of AU partners has placed a serious demand on the work of Internal Audit. There is a need to prepare the Audit Charter, the Audit Manual and the automation of the audit activities.

16. The AUC intends to organize a seminar in order to develop auditing awareness among senior management.

CONFERENCE ON SECURITY, STABILITY, DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION IN AFRICA (CSSDCA)

Introduction

17. The activities of the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation (CSSDCA) for the period under consideration focused upon :
- i) consolidation of a roadmap for the work of the interim ECOSOCC;
 - ii) development of action for practical, effective and sustainable relations between CSOs and peace, security, democracy and governance agenda of the AU and to facilitate the operationalization of Article 22 of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) Protocol;
 - iii) the development of the African Diaspora process; and
 - iv) transformation of CSSDCA into CIDO.

i) **Roadmap for ECOSOCC**

18. After the launching of the Interim ECOSOCC in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 29 March 2005, an inaugural meeting of the Interim Standing Committee was convened in Nairobi, Kenya, from 22-24 April 2005 at the request of the Presiding Officer, Prof. Wangari Maathai. The meeting developed rules of procedures for the operation of the Interim Standing Committee and a draft ECOSOCC Strategic Plan. Between July and December 2005 ECOSOCC concentrated on the finalization and dissemination of this plan and the mobilization of support for its operation. The plan was widely circulated and distributed for comments among members of the Interim General Assembly and the wider civil society community as well as Member States of the African Union. Subsequently, the Plan was refined and finalized and submitted to the African Union Commission.

19. The ECOSOCC Strategic Plan contains general and specific objectives and related activities and budget, particularly as concerns procedures for national, regional and other consultations and elections, as required in the ECOSOCC Statutes approved by the Assembly of the Union (Assembly/AU/Dec.4.2 (III) of July 2004). It also includes a framework for communication and fundraising to support the activities of the organ and to popularize the plan and mobilize support for it among civil society organizations, governments, other segments of the Union and the international community at large.

20. It is important to stress however, that it would be difficult for this important organ to adhere to its set objectives in the period allocated to it within the framework of the ECOSOCC Statutes. ECOSOCC has to be adequately resourced to enable it to carry out this obligation and unfortunately this is not the case so far.

21. In my submission to Council in both January and July 2005, I drew attention to the fact that budgetary allocations for the year did not provide for programme implementation. In her presentation to the Abuja Conference on Union Government convened by the Chairman of the Union, President Olusegun Obasanjo, in Abuja, Nigeria, from 12-14 November 2005, the Interim Presiding Officer, Prof. Maathai, also lamented the fact that absence of resources had arrested the process of programme implementation. The Conference also advised that ECOSOCC must be properly resourced to enable it to fulfill its obligations.

22. The prime objective of the ECOSOCC Bureau and Interim Standing Committee has been to seek funds. The Strategic Plan has been used to approach funders and donor organizations for support. It is imperative however, that relevant organs of the Union should focus on adequate resourcing of ECOSOCC as a sign of commitment to the objective of the Constitutive Act that perceives the Union as a compact or partnership between governments and all segments of civil society. Budgetary allocations of Council and Summit must underscore this commitment. This factor must also impact on considerations of the work of the organ.

ii) **Governance, Democracy, Peace and Security Agenda**

23. The other area of focus was on enhancing AU-Civil Society relationship in terms of the governance, democracy, peace and security agenda of the African Union. Particular

attention in this regard has focused on operationalizing Article 22 of the Peace and Security Protocol of the Union that provides for civil society support for its activities.

24. In this regard, the Commission has embarked on a series of consultations with major civil society networks in the different regions of the continent with support from the Danish Africa for Peace Programme. The purpose of the consultations is to develop guidelines and a programme of action for practical, effective and sustainable relations between CSOs and the Peace and Security Agenda of the AU. It is expected that the outcome will feed into a programme of action for the Commission and/or a Code of Procedure for effective interaction that will eventually be submitted to the Peace and Security Council for consideration and adoption.

25. As part of this process, the Commission organized an initial workshop in Accra, Ghana, from 29-31 August 2005 in co-operation with the African Security Dialogue and Research (ASDR). The workshop identified a range of services and inputs that CSOs could and should provide in support of the governance and democracy agenda, the Peace and Security Council and ECOSOCC. It also proposed a plan of action that would nurture a culture of research, analysis and a framework of practical action that would support this programme. The proceedings of the workshop would be subject to further discussion and refinement through a process of regional consultations to develop a definitive plan of action that would be presented to appropriate organs of the Union. Support for this process is also to be provided by the Danish Africa for Peace Programme.

iii) Development of the African Diaspora Process

26. At the last Summit in Sirte, Libya, in July 2005, a report was submitted on various steps taken by the Commission to advance the Diaspora Initiative including the South Africa-AU-Caribbean Diaspora Conference held in Kingston, Jamaica, from 16-18 March 2005.

27. Since then, the Commission in concert with all relevant organs of the Union and Member States has continued to work strenuously on the development of the African Diaspora process. On the margins of the Conference in Jamaica, the Commission met with a CARICOM delegation led by the Secretary General of CARICOM, Mr. Edwin Carrington. The meeting reflected on the need to establish a suitable mechanism to promote regular dialogue/interface between the two regions, in order to further deepen cooperation, strengthen ties and propose a procedure and structure of collaboration for sustaining this mechanism. It also agreed on the need for the Chief Executives of the two organizations to meet on the margins of the G8 Summit in London or AU Summit in Sirte in July 2005 to agree on the broad agenda and timetable for implementation. The meeting of the two Chief Executives was not held in London for unavoidable reasons and could not be held in Libya because the Summit of the AU and CARICOM coincided.

28. However, the Chairperson of the Commission met with H.E. Mr. Gonzalves, the Speaker of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) and the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines on October 2005, in the process of his official visit to Ethiopia. They exchanged views about bilateral initiatives to support the Diaspora agenda and in particular, the establishment of a visa-free regime between Ethiopia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines and stressed that bilateral agreements of this kind will find a more comfortable home under the multilateral hubris of the African Union. They reflected

on the growing relations between AU, Caribbean and CARICOM and agreed on a number of follow-up actions as follows:

- Establishing institutional arrangements and mechanisms for political dialogue to support the collaborative framework. There was agreement on the need for a meeting of technical experts and representatives of AU Commission and CARICOM to develop a Memorandum of Understanding for this purpose and to prepare a meeting of the two Executives to consider the Memorandum. Within this broad framework, there was also agreement on the need for urgent consultations on how to operationalize the ABC (African Union–Brazil–Caribbean) Commission in the shortest possible time.
- Invitation to CARICOM leaders to attend the AU Summit. The original idea was that they should be invited to this Summit in Khartoum; but it seems more appropriate to invite them to the July Summit when the Memorandum of Agreement will be discussed.
- Creation of a multilateral scholarship exchange programme under auspices of the African Union and creation of opportunities for exchange in sports, arts and culture with emphasis on annual and biennial festivals, using the umbrella nexus of important events such as the Bob Marley celebration.
- Acceleration of the process of facilitating direct airline linkages between Africa and the Caribbean region.
- Establishing May 25th as Africa day around the world.
- Building bridges via communication, including agreement on mutual representation at observer levels for CARICOM and the AU. The issue of mutual representation and observer status is symbolic and critical. Some Caribbean countries such as Antigua and Barbuda have already designated Ambassadors to the AU. Others have requested observer status. This issue needs to be considered closely with the view to identifying the appropriate status to be granted.

29. At the level of the Civil Society, the African Diaspora Civil Society Network of the Caribbean established in September 2004 has intensified its efforts to build transatlantic bridges between the regions. The Network which brings together representatives of civil society organizations across about 20 Caribbean States supported the South Africa-AU-Caribbean Diaspora Conference and has continued to work to mobilize support among the two regions for the process of transatlantic cooperation and participation in the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC). It has also been involved in sensitizing the two communities to each other's needs. In particular, it has concentrated efforts on associating Africa and its leaders with Emancipation Day celebrations in the Caribbean.

30. The Chairman of the Union, President Olusegun Obasanjo also visited the Caribbean in August 2004 and participated prominently in the Emancipation Day celebrations of Trinidad and Tobago. He held a series of discussions on how to consolidate and strengthen ties between the regions and a number of concrete proposals have arisen in this regard.

- (a) First, is an Africa-America Summit to build on and strengthen the grassroots mobilization at the cultural and civil society levels. The meeting will also focus on specific projects for consolidating ties, including political and economic linkages, as well as direct airline movement.
- (b) The second proposal is for Africa to celebrate the Emancipation Day. The proposal was also considered at the Technical Workshop organized by the AU Commission in Trinidad and Tobago in 2003. The meeting recommended that both Africa Day and Emancipation Day be celebrated mutually across the Atlantic and proposed modalities for implementing this programme.

31. The various efforts of the Commission and the Chairman of the Union stress the need to work vigorously to institutionalize, expand and intensify cooperation with the Caribbean and other regions of the African Diaspora. The Conference of African Intellectuals is a pillar of this enterprise and the Commission is engaged in consultations with the Government of Brazil, the host of the next meeting in 2006. Brazil is a critical nexus of the Diaspora project because it has the largest population of African people on earth after Nigeria. The Commission will continue to work hard to consolidate linkages with the Caribbean.

32. Beyond consolidating the linkages, there is need to expand the processes already developed outwards in a series of concentric circles to embrace South and Central America in particular. As such, the next South Africa-AU-Caribbean meeting could extend to the two regions and Asia-Oceania.

33. The Commission is also furthering the process of establishing and coordinating regional Diaspora networks such as the Africa-Caribbean Network in other regions of the world. The objective is to enable Diaspora Groups in the respective regions to be lead-actors in the process to facilitate commitment and ardent mobilization. The process is advanced in UK and Europe and South America and we will report on outcomes at the next Summit.

iv) Transformation into CIDO

34. The Commission is also proceeding with plans for transformation of CSSDCA into CIDO. The proposal has already been approved by the PRC Sub-Committee on Structures and it is expected that this session of Council will approve the proposal to enable necessary organizational adjustments at the level of the Commission.

The Way Forward

35. In the period under review, the CSSDCA continued to work actively with commitment and dedication to pursue the ideals of a people-driven African Union provided for in the Constitutive Act. A key focus has been to support the institutionalization and operationalization of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) as a pillar of this enterprise. However, ECOSOCC must be adequately resourced to perform its obligations and to keep faith with civil society and the spirit of the Constitutive Act.

Consequently, all relevant organs of the African Union have a responsibility to address this question in a sincere and meaningful way.

**STRATEGIC POLICY PLANNING, MONITORING,
EVALUATION AND RESOURCE MOBILISATION**

36. The Commission has started to gradually put in place the machinery which will allow implementation of the activities of Strategic Policy Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Resource Mobilization (SPPM) process. In that respect, a Monitoring and Evaluation System has been established and is now being implemented. Such a system will assist building and developing constructive and productive institutional relationships between AUC departments. In this context, activities such as the work of the Ad Hoc Ministerial Committee on the Scale of Assessment; proposals on alternative modalities of financing the African Union; and discussions aimed at enhancing the partnership between the AU and International Partners have been undertaken. On October 12, the College of Commissioners met with their counterparts in Brussels to discuss the broad partnership and in particular the EU strategy communication for Africa which will constitute the reference document for cooperation between the two continents. The Commission has decided to discuss the document with the RECs and NEPAD when the Group of African Ambassadors in Belgium will finalize their remarks.

I. PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

37. In this area, three main activities were conducted:

A. PLANNING ACTIVITIES

38. The structure responsible for these activities assisted all departments and units of the Commission, through a collaborative interdepartmental interaction, to prepare the 2006 Budget Plan. A planning manual has been prepared for approval. A capacity building plan to develop planning skills of AUC Staff has been finalized which has been proposed to UNDP, approved and proposed to be funded by the UNDP. A project to support the Plan will start being implemented in January 2006.

B. MONITORING AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

39. Due to the fact that many activities are still in progress in the Commission, it has not been possible to finalize the Monitoring and Evaluation Report on the implementation of 2005 Programmes; the preparation of such a Report is in progress and will be finalized in the course of January 2006. A monitoring and Evaluation System, using the Canadian RBM is being put in place. This system will provide the base for improving AUC Staff capacity in the area of Monitoring and Evaluation.

II. RESOURCE MOBILIZATION ACTIVITIES

40. During the period under review, the activities of the Commission in the area of Resource Mobilisation focused on intensifying efforts aimed at securing funding for the implementation of the AU's priority activities for 2005 as reflected in the approved programme budget. In this context, and in line with the spirit of a new and long-term partnership, a series of consultations were initiated with International Partners, project

documents elaborated, and financing agreements developed and signed. In addition, the Commission continued to engage International Partners on ways and means of improving cooperation arrangements as well as the effectiveness in the delivery of development assistance.

41. Several key activities were undertaken as follows:

- Regular and structured dialogue with International Partners aimed at streamlining, simplifying and harmonizing donor procedures with a view to reducing transaction costs. This has been accompanied by discussions on improving the quality and effectiveness of development assistance through exploring predictable and flexible modes of delivery.
- Establishing a database on project information and recommended funding allocation, by AU Strategic Plan Axis, Source of Funding, and by AU Directorate/ Department.
- Designing a format for presenting project profiles to International Partners and preparation of detailed project documents.
- Following-up on pledges made by International Partners and Member States preparing spending plans for such resources.
- Strengthening existing relations with Partners and establishing new ones and scanning the global environment in search for opportunities for mobilizing additional resources.

III. RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

42. Activities relating to Strategic Policy Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Resource Mobilisation have led the Commission to achieve the following:

- Putting in place of procedures, programmes planning, Monitoring and Evaluation with the view to assessing the performances of Departments and Directorates of the Commission;
- Installing a Database of Projects to be prepared and submitted to donors for funding;
- Conducting a number of bilateral meetings with partners to follow-up on pledges made and/or to secure new funding.

IV. DIFFICULTIES AND CHALLENGES

43. During the period under review, the Commission faced some difficulties and challenges in this crucial area of Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Resources Mobilisation; these include among others:

- The need for a full and sustained interdepartmental collaboration and team work;

- Lack of staff skilled in policy analysis, planning and monitoring areas.

V. OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS

44. There is need to put in place an appropriate planning and monitoring system; in that regard, many workshops and training courses will be planned for increase of capacity building for the AU Staff. This will be included in Phase 2 of the Institutional Transformation. The ongoing administrative and financial management systems reforms under the auspices of the Institutional Transformation Project as well as the current efforts aimed at recruitment and staff training will address the existing capacity constraints.

VI. THE WAY FORWARD

45. The 2006 programmes budget has been issued and will be submitted to AU decision making organs for approval. Monitoring and Evaluation system will be approved by AUC management for implementation. The Commission will continue holding regular consultations with International Partners with a view to consolidating the emerging new partnership. The ultimate objective is to receive direct budget support as a means of reducing transaction costs and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of development assistance towards the achievement of the broader goals of continental integration and poverty reduction. Every effort will also be made to address any weaknesses that may be unveiled by the ongoing institutional assessment exercise.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

I. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PAN-AFRICAN RADIO AND TELEVISION CHANNEL

46. The establishment of the Pan-African Radio and Television Channel, the subject of the proposal submitted to the Heads of State and Government by President Mohamed Hosni MUBARAK, was among the major projects pursued by the African Union Commission during the year 2005.

47. Indeed, since July 2005, the date on which the Sirte Assembly mandated the African Union Commission to explore the practical modalities which would lead to the implementation of the project for the establishment of the Pan-African Radio and Television Channel, the Commission set up a Follow-Up Committee, chaired by the Deputy Chairperson of the AUC, charged with ensuring the successful implementation of the project.

48. The Chairperson of the Commission, Alpha Oumar KONARE, received in August 2005, a special delegation sent by the Egyptian President, Mohamed Hosni MUBARAK, to discuss the Egyptian Initiative.

49. This first meeting, chaired by Professor Konaré, provided an opportunity to spell out the philosophy and objectives of the project, establish its components and define the different options for its realization.

50. After this meeting, a delegation of the African Union Commission travelled to Cairo in September 2005 to examine in greater detail with the Egyptian party, the timeliness of

organizing a meeting of radio and television experts in order to fully involve specialists in the decision-making process, exchange views on the vision and orientations of the Pan-African Channel and reach the broadest agreement possible, on the project.

51. The meeting whose opening session was chaired by Professor Konaré, took place in Cairo, from 21 to 23 November 2005 and brought together to discuss the issue, representatives of about thirty Member States of the African Union as well as experts from Africa and the Diaspora, representatives of Regional Economic Communities, national and international organizations and media enterprises.

52. The deliberations of the meeting led to a series of specific and practical recommendations which are included together with the Final Report of the meeting in the Agenda of the present meeting of the Permanent Representatives' Committee (PRC) and focus on the legal, institutional, technical, policy and financial aspects as well as the programme content and languages.

53. The Bureau of the meeting that was elected comprised five members and representatives of the AUC, and was mandated by the meeting to follow up any future actions necessary for the establishment of the Pan-African Radio and Television Channel.

II. PUBLICATION OF THE « AUC NEWSLETTER » IN ARABIC

54. As part of its new communication strategy, the African Union Commission (Communication and Information Division) undertook the dissemination of its news bulletin, the "AUC Newsletter", in Arabic.

55. After the first two editions published only in English, the Newsletter which gives a monthly account of the activities of the African Union and constitutes a preferred means of internal as well as external communication, is currently being posted on the African Union website in both English and Arabic. The plan to disseminate the same Newsletter in French is currently being finalized.

ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

56. In the context of Institutional Transformation, during the period under review the Directorate of Administration and Human Resources Development carried out the following activities.

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT

I. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

a) Recruitment

57. The major challenge for the Directorate of Administration and Human Resources Development under institutional transformation was to recruit staff in accordance with the approved Maputo Structure. The approved Maputo Structure gave the African Union Commission an additional 160 posts, which therefore needed to be filled.

58. We experienced delays in the translation of the job descriptions for the approved posts into the four official AU working languages, as in-house capacity was not adequate to process the volume of work involved. Freelance translators were contracted to assist.

59. Further, a Team of independent Consultants from all over Africa, with a variety of specialised skills was contracted to carry out the screening, short listing and also to interview and evaluate all short-listed candidates.

60. A total of eight thousand eight hundred and fifty applications were received for the positions advertised for deadlines between 31st January and 28th November 2005. Of these applicants, 2,346 or 26.5% were female while, 5,961 or 66.5% were male. The remainder of 546 or 7% of the applicants did not state their gender in their curriculum vitae.

61. The pre-selection of the candidates is still underway.

b) AU Staff Regulations and Rules

62. The AU Staff Regulations and Rules have been drafted and translated into three out of the four official languages of the Commission. The version in the fourth language will be ready by January 2006. Thereafter, the AU Staff Regulations and Rules will be presented and discussed for adoption by the Commission, before being recommended for consideration and approval by the AU organs.

c) AU Staff Regulations and Rules' Procedures Manual

63. Following approval of the AU Staff Regulations and Rules, a procedures manual to facilitate their proper, effective and consistent application across the whole Commission, will need to be developed.

II. SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEME

64. Institutional transformation also called for the review of some of the existing social security and welfare programmes in the Commission. The review involves four social security and staff welfare programmes. These are the following:

- (a) The AU Medical Scheme;
- (b) The AU Pension and Insurance Scheme;
- (c) Study on Internal Harmonisation of the AU Salary Scales; and
- (d) The AU Education Allowance Scheme for locally recruited staff.

a) AU Medical Scheme

65. Under the AU Medical Scheme, the Commission wants to review the existing arrangements and have a more comprehensive Medical Scheme that would have two components: (i) A Group Medical Insurance component, and (ii) A Group Medical Evacuation component;

66. Several Companies were invited to give presentations to the Commission in accordance with the Terms of Reference issued for this purpose. Van Breda International, an Insurance Firm and Consultant provided the most comprehensive and suitable scheme

on the required services. This firm's proposal will be considered by the Commission for possible recommendation to the AU Organs for approval.

b) Pension and Insurance Scheme

67. Under the AU Pension and Insurance Scheme, the Commission is seeking to improve the existing arrangements that are more like a provident fund, to a scheme where staff members are covered by pension and insurance benefits for their lifetime. The latter arrangements are what apply to staff working in the United Nations system. It was hoped that the AU Commission scheme could easily be absorbed into and join the United Nations Joint Pension Fund.

68. The Directorate arranged a presentation by a staff member of the United Nations Joint Pension Fund. Following the presentation, it was found difficult for the Commission to join the UNJSPF Fund because of differences in the salary structures. The Directorate is in the process of considering other options through which the improvements being sought can be achieved.

c) Study on Internal Harmonisation of the AU Salary Scales

69. The existing AU salary scales have been found to be overlapping, and have made it difficult to award appropriate levels of annual increments to staff. The AU salary scales therefore need to be harmonised internally so that these implementation problems are resolved.

70. The Directorate has invited five Companies of reputable standing to provide proposals for the Study to internally harmonise the AU Salary Scales.

d) Educational Allowance for Locally Recruited Staff

71. The Third Ordinary Session of the Executive Council meeting in Maputo directed that a token education allowance be offered to locally recruited staff of the Commission. The Directorate undertook a study to assist in determining the level at which this token education allowance should be put. Under the study, it was estimated that the average number of dependent children involved is about 300.

72. The various AU representative, scientific and technical Offices made submissions. A study of education costs was also carried out in 10 selected schools in Addis Ababa, where the majority of the locally recruited staff are located. The average cost of school fees per year was found to be US\$2,885. A token education allowance of 75% of this figure will be US\$2,163.75. This token education allowance has now been included in the 2006 budget estimates.

III. STAFF DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

73. In September 2005, a Human Resource Development Consultant was recruited to develop an AU Training Policy for the continuous training of staff and to carry out a Training Needs Analysis and develop strategies for staff development, career development and staff motivation.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

74. The AU Commission has been allocated a four-storey building in Nairobi by the Government of Kenya, to accommodate the AU offices and their projects in the region. The partitioning works are in progress and are scheduled to be completed in January 2006. The AU Commission has also identified a building in Washington DC, to be rented as office for the Commission. It should be fully operational in 2006.

New Construction

75. Following the acquisition of three plots for the AU Commission office expansion; construction of residential premises, and the African Village, preliminary works are on-going. Terms of References for international bids for selection of Architectural firms have commenced.

76. The upgrading of the AU Cafeteria is in progress, and the work is scheduled to be completed by February 2006.

V. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

Evaluation of VSAT Tender

77. The Division has carried out the evaluation of the e-government VSAT project for the AU Commission and is finalising the requirements for the Tender Board.

78. The Division has also achieved the following:

- (i) Connectivity of the AU Brussels Office to the AU network; and
- (ii) Upgrading of the AU Network and Server Room equipment.

PROGRAMMING, BUDGETING, FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING

I. ENHANCED PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

79. During the period under review, the Commission continued to improve its performance in the area of Programming, Budgeting, Finance and Accounting by focusing on the implementation of the recommendations contained in Ernest and Young Report as well as those of the Board of External Auditors.

II. SPECIFIC PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

A. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION SYSTEM

80. The consultants retained by the Commission to review the existing business processes and remodel them in line with best practices successfully completed the assignment in August 2005. The following deliverables were met:

- User requirements defined
- Chart of accounts re-designed

- Business processes re-modeled
- Request for proposals drawn and translated, ready for posting on the AU web site

81. Subject to availability of funds, the first phase of installing an Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS), beginning with the Head quarters, will commence early March 2006.

B. STAFFING MATTERS

82. The staff strength of the department has significantly improved at both the Headquarters and Regional Offices. The Commission presented a revised structure based on the recommendations of Ernst and Young consultants and that of the Board of External Auditors and the PRC endorsed it in Sirte but the approval by Council was deferred to the Extra-ordinary Meeting. When adopted by relevant Organs of the Union, it will be promptly implemented to bring the Department to full strength to meet the current and emerging challenges.

C. OPERATIONS

83. The Department issued budget guidelines followed with induction workshops extended to the Programme managers and staff of the commission early this year to promote full participation and ownership of the budgeting process. Meanwhile, the department continues to routinely produce monthly reports on the budget performance and this has greatly helped to minimize unauthorized expenditures and promote budget discipline in the implementation of programmes.

D. ACCOUNTING FOR PEACE KEEPING FUNDS.

84. In the recent past, the Commission has continued to receive sizeable amounts of contributions from donors and partners of the Union in response to its appeal for financial and logistical support towards peacekeeping efforts in the continent. In response to the accountability and reporting demands posed by this new development, a new unit within the Department of PBFA has been created. The Finance Unit in the Peace & Security Department will soon be integrated into the PBFA in order to streamline the accounting and reporting procedure for peace funds.

E. AUDIT REPORTS

85. The Department continues to draw support immensely from constructive oversight role and recommendations of the Directorate of Internal Audit and Board of External Auditors. The Department is following very closely the implementation of their recommendations.

F. REVISION OF FINANCIAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

86. The draft Financial Rules and Regulations proposed by Ernst & Young have been submitted to the Advisory Sub-Committee for review and commended by the PRC. We are hopeful that the new Financial Rules and Regulations will be adopted by the Executive Council at this sitting in Khartoum, Sudan.

III. CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MEMBER STATES

87. The Commission has recorded some improvements in the collection of assessed contributions from Member States. The status of receipts is as follows:

Arrears as at 01 /01 2005	US \$ 40,308,663.44
Receipts	US \$ 8,780,265.77
Balance as at 30 /11/ 2005	US \$ 31,528,397.69
Assessed contributions for 2005	US \$ 60,221,700.00
Receipts	US \$ 35,925,806.89
Balance outstanding	US \$ 24,295,893.11
Total outstanding arrears	US \$ 55,824,290.80
Total Receipt for 2005	US\$ 45,190,814.78
Advance Payment	US\$ 484,742.12

IV. EXPENDITURE

88. The contributions from Member States were only sufficient to cover the staff costs and some operating costs, but nothing for programmes was received until very late towards the end of the year.

89. To date only Ethiopia and South African contributed to the solidarity budget. A total of over US\$ 11million (US Dollar eleven million).

90. The Commission is hopeful that the status of contributions of Member States will improve greatly from 2006 given the new scale of assessment that was adopted in Sirte that is based on capacity to pay.

PEACE AND SECURITY

I. **Introduction**

91. The period under review was marked by increased efforts to implement the AU Peace and Security agenda as outlined in the Vision and Strategic Framework adopted by the General Assembly of the Union in July 2004. On the one hand, the Commission tasked itself to speed up the establishment of the continental peace and security architecture, with particular emphasis on the African Standby Force (ASF), the Continental Early Warning System and the Memorandum of Understanding between the AU and the regional mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution. On the other hand, sustained efforts were made toward conflict prevention and the resolution of current crisis facing the continent.

92. Other peace and security-related issues were also closely monitored during the same period. This was especially the case with the problem of light and small arms proliferation, efforts around which were centred on articulating an African common position in anticipation of the Conference, which, in 2006, will evaluate progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference held in New York in July 2001 on illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects. Also of concern was the fight against terrorism and efforts to steadily strengthen the Algiers Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism and the drafting of a model antiterrorist law for Member States.

93. Lastly, the Commission continued to consolidate relations with its various partners. It is in this light that the following activities were held: the annual technical meeting with the G8 and other partners held in Addis Ababa on 26 October 2005 as part of the G8 plan of action on African capacity building in peace keeping operations; discussions with the European Union (EU) in the context of the 5th Ministerial Troïkas in Bamako on 2 December 2005, and other activities with partners.

II. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONTINENTAL PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

94. Efforts have been underway since July 2005 to complete the establishment of the African peace and security architecture in accordance with the Peace and Security Council protocol. During the period under review, emphasis was laid on the Continental Early Warning System, the Memorandum of Understanding between the African Union and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution as well as the African Standby Force.

(i) Early Warning

95. The Commission held a meeting at the end of July 2005 with some experts to draft a roadmap for the implementation of the Continental Early Warning System as per the PSC protocol. The document which deals with, among other things, the modalities for data collection and processing, as well as the commitment of the competent decision-making organs of the African Union, was the subject of preliminary discussions between the African Union and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), during their second periodic meeting in Addis Ababa on 24 and 25 October 2005. The meeting noted the measures taken to develop a draft roadmap and lauded the idea of an upcoming technical meeting that will involve RECs and other stakeholders to discuss the draft roadmap, including early warning indicators.

96. Simultaneously with the elaboration of the roadmap, measures were taken to strengthen the capacities of the Peace and Security Department, notably with the procurement of new equipment for the Situation Room; the provision of greater access to online information and the training of the staff of the Department in the area of analysis and preventive action. Efforts are equally underway to boost communication in the Situation Room.

(ii) Memorandum of Understanding between the AU and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution

97. Efforts were equally sustained towards the drafting of a Memorandum of Understanding between the AU and the Regional mechanisms in accordance with the PSC protocol. During the period under consideration, the Commission sponsored missions to the RECs to exchange views on the various aspects of the memorandum. The second periodic meeting between the AU and the RECs mentioned above, commended the progress made and the calendar drawn up to finalize the drafting of the Memorandum in early 2006.

98. In addition to the efforts, it is gratifying to note the strengthening of relations between the AU and the RECs in the area of peace and security. It is in this connection that both the holding of the second periodic meeting in late October 2005, as well as the active participation of RECs in all activities organized by the Commission to successfully complete the establishment of the continental peace and security architecture, should be viewed.

(iii) **African Standby Force (ASF)**

99. Council will recall that the ASF Policy Framework Document, adopted by the AU Summit in July 2003, called for the establishment of the ASF in two phases, namely, Phase 1 up to 30 June 2005 and Phase 2 from 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2010. Thereafter, the Commission and the RECs/Regions elaborated a roadmap for the Operationalisation of Phase 1, as follows:

- the development of the AU strategic level management capacity to conduct political and military observer missions, while the RECs/Regions work towards establishing regional standby brigades to conduct traditional peacekeeping missions ; and
- the conducting, by 30 June 2006, of Workshops to produce the working tools of the ASF in the areas of Doctrine, Command, Control, Communications and Information Systems (C³IS), Logistics, Training and Evaluation and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

100. However, due to the delay experienced in implementation, Phase 1 had to be adjusted to terminate at the end of 2006. This notwithstanding, it is gratifying to report that, since July 2005, significant progress has been made towards the attainment of the above objectives. At the AU level, the recent appointment of the Chief of Staff of the Planning Element (PLANELM) has contributed to the improvement of the planning and operational capacity of the Peace and Security Department (PSD). It is hoped that this capacity will be further strengthened by the appointment of five (5) senior military officers for the PLANELM, in early 2006.

101. The establishment of regional brigades has also made encouraging progress. While SADCBRIG (Southern Africa), ECOBRIG (West Africa), and EASBRIG (Eastern Africa) have developed relevant structures, including PLANELMs, ECCAS has formulated a Protocol and Framework for its regional brigade and plans are underway to staff the regional PLANELM (Etat-Major régional), as well as populate the roster of the earmarked units. In the Northern Region, the series of meetings that were held under the leadership of Libya have resulted in the production of relevant framework documents for the establishment of NASBRIG. It is expected that the strengthening of the political initiative will hasten the establishment of NASBRIG in 2006.

102. Significant achievements have also been recorded in the review period towards the holding of the ASF Workshops in 2006. The Preparatory and Experts Meeting held from 17 to 19 November and 28 November to 2 December 2005, respectively, have produced the workplans, timeframes and budget for the smooth conduct of the five ASF Workshops in 2006. Given continued commitment and availability of funds, the final products of the Workshops will be ready by December 2006.

103. The above-mentioned achievements will be consolidated in 2006. Priority will be given to the enhancement of AU leadership in the development of the regional standby forces, through continued dialogue and assessment visits. The Standby Arrangement System at the AU and regional levels will also be established to ensure the accomplishment of the Phase 1 objectives by the set deadline. To foster integration, concrete steps will be taken to incorporate the civilian police and civil affairs components into the ASF structure. These, along with other initiatives to be taken in the areas of training and capacity building, will hopefully provide a conducive environment for the commencement of Phase 2 of the ASF Roadmap by 2007.

III. CONFLICT SITUATIONS AND POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION

104. As indicated above, sustained efforts have been made since last July to resolve the conflicts on the Continent. In this regard, the Commission pursued its efforts in the Darfur region, both on the military and operational fronts, with the strengthening of the AU Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) pursuant to the PSC decision of 28 April 2005, and on the political front, with the continuation of the Abuja peace talks. The reconciliation process in the Comoros, the evolution of the situation in Somalia following the transfer of the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs), the persistent impasse in the Ethiopia-Eritrea peace process, the situation in DRC and the follow-up of the PSC decision on the neutralisation and disarming of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe, as well as the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement and Declaration by the Ivorian parties were, among other things, issues that also preoccupied the Commission and, whenever necessary, other instances of the AU, especially the PSC.

105. It is especially noteworthy and commendable to mention the end of the transitional period in Burundi, which was marked by the holding of a series of elections to end the transition and establish new institutions for the country. In Liberia, significant progress was also made, crowned by the holding of elections. In both of these countries, as well as in the Central African Republic (CAR) and in Guinea Bissau, what remains to be done is to begin the arduous task of post-conflict reconstruction and consolidation of the peace.

106. It is in this context that the Commission's efforts to elaborate an African post-conflict reconstruction and development framework fall, in accordance with the decision adopted by the Executive Council in Sirte. Progress has been made on this point, as explained below.

(i) Comoros

107. Despite the significant progress made towards national reconciliation in the Comoros, many difficulties are still to be overcome. These difficulties are linked to the persistent suspicion existing between the authorities of the Union and those of the autonomous Islands, as well as to the differences in views between the parties on the laws

adopted within the framework of the new institutional dispensation of the archipelago, namely, the law relating to the modalities of the application of article 9 of the Constitution dealing with the sharing of constitutional powers between the Union and the autonomous Islands, and the law relating to statutes of the internal security forces in the autonomous Islands.

108. It is in this regard that a joint AU-South Africa Commission (South Africa in her capacity as coordinator of efforts of the countries of the region and the AU Troika) went to the archipelago, from 28 November to 5 December 2005, with the aim of assessing the reconciliation process, as well as the conditions necessary for the smooth holding of presidential elections scheduled for April 2006, which would enable the Anjouan Island to assume the rotating presidency of the Union, in accordance with the Comorian constitution. During the discussions held by the Commission on its visit, all the Comorian parties reaffirmed their determination to work towards the holding of presidential elections within the scheduled time. They also agreed on the need for the deployment, within the three autonomous Islands, of an international military and civilian force, which would have the exclusive responsibility to secure and observe the coming elections; and on the need to confine the armed and security forces of the Union and the autonomous Islands throughout the electoral process. The parties requested the international community to provide material, logistic and financial support for the electoral process.

109. At the time of completing this report, the Commission was in the process of examining the report of the evaluation mission so as to submit the appropriate recommendations to the PSC. In the meanwhile, I would like to reiterate my call to all the Comorian parties to respect the commitments made and work for the consolidation of the gains already achieved in the reconciliation process.

110. The consolidation of the reconciliation process requires the mobilisation of appropriate technical assistance, especially to update the electoral lists; and substantial economic and financial support to facilitate the socio-economic improvement of the archipelago. It is in this context that a conference of donors to assist the Union of the Comoros, was held on December 8 2005 in Mauritius, under the auspices of the AU and co-chaired over by the Prime Minister of Mauritius and the President of South Africa in the presence of the President of the Union of the Comoros. At the conference, pledges amounting to US\$ 200 million were made for the financing of the 2006-2009 five-year economic and social action plan. I call on all partners of the Comoros to concretise the pledges made during the Round Table.

(ii) Somalia

111. Since the last Summit, the transition in Somalia has made a steady progress, albeit some obstacles to the accomplishment of reconciliation among the political stakeholders and the security challenges continue to face the TFIs, particularly in Mogadishu, the capital city.

112. At its meeting held on 12 May 2005, the PSC made a request to the UN Security Council for an exemption on the arms embargo against Somalia in order to facilitate the deployment of the IGAD Peace Support Mission to Somalia (IGASOM). In response to that request, the Security Council issued a Presidential Statement on 14 July 2005, in which it urged the TFIs to conclude without delay a national security and stabilisation plan, to

include a comprehensive and verifiable ceasefire agreement leading to final disarmament. The Council also expressed its expectation of the AU and the IGAD to work out, among other aspects, a detailed mission plan (for deployment), in close coordination with the broad consensus of the TFIs and consistent with a national security and stabilization plan. On a related issue, the Council adopted resolution 1630 (2005) on Somalia, on 14 October 2005, in which it, inter-alia, stressed the obligation of all Member States to comply fully with the measures imposed by resolution 733 (1992) on the arms embargo. Also, the Commission met with the Chairman of the Security Council Committee on Somalia, to discuss issues relating to the arms embargo.

113. During the August/September period, I dispatched delegations to Nairobi and Jowhar, led by Amb. M. A. Foom, my Special Envoy, to undertake follow-up consultations on possible AU security sector support for Somalia, particularly the training of the police. The delegations also consulted with the EU Commission, to discuss steps towards the establishment of the AU Advance Mission approved by the PSC in early January 2005 and which comprises of an AU Office in Nairobi and a forward structure in Jowhar, the Transitional Operational Headquarters of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). In this respect, I am pleased to report that the structure in Jowhar was commissioned by the Deputy Chairperson of the Commission, on 8 September 2005, and is awaiting personnel and equipment for it to function more effectively.

114. For their part, the countries of the region, which played a leading role in the Somali National Reconciliation Conference, have remained seized with the situation in Somalia. In this respect, it is worth indicating that the 26th Ordinary Session of the IGAD Council of Ministers, convened in Jowhar, on 29 November 2005, recommended the deployment of an IGAD Military Observer Mission of an appropriate size, as an advance mission of IGASOM.

115. Furthermore, the United Nations and the World Bank convened the Somali Joint Needs Assessment Inception Retreat in Nairobi, from 23 to 27 November 2005. The Retreat, which focused on reconstruction and development initiatives for Somalia, with a view to formulating a "Reconstruction and Development Plan" for the country, came as a preparatory step towards the convening of a donors' conference on Somalia in 2006.

116. Finally, I wish to inform the Council about the parliamentary elections that took place in the region of Somaliland on 29 September 2005, which were contested by three political parties. The elections took place in an atmosphere of calm and the respect of the rule of law and the regulations governing elections by all those contesting for seats in Parliament.

(iii) Ethiopia-Eritrea

117. During the period under review, no progress was made in the Ethiopia-Eritrea peace process, with respect to the demarcation of the border, as determined by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) in its Delimitation Decision of April 2002. Alongside the lack of progress in the demarcation process, some disturbing developments have taken place, affecting the operations of the UN Mission (UNMEE). In this respect, the imposition of a ban by Eritrea against UNMEE helicopter flights into the Eritrean air space resulted in the significant reduction of the monitoring capacities of UNMEE. Furthermore, there has been mobilization of troops, with heavy military equipment and forward deployment, by both sides, along the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ), as well as irregular activities within the TSZ. The overall evolution of the situation has raised the risk of a resumption of hostilities.

118. On 23 November 2005, the UN Security Council passed resolution 1640 (2005), in which it deplored Eritrea's continued imposition of restrictions on the freedom of movement of UNMEE and demanded that the Government of Eritrea reverse, without further delay or pre-conditions, its decision to ban UNMEE helicopter flights, as well as additional restrictions on the mission's operations, and provide UNMEE with the access, assistance, support and protection required for the performance of its duties. The Council also called on both parties to show maximum restraint and to refrain from any threat or use of force against each other and demanded that both parties return to the 16 December 2004 levels of deployment, beginning with immediate effect and completing this redeployment within 30 days, in order to prevent aggravation of the situation. The Security Council expressed its determination to consider further appropriate measures, including under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, if one or both of the parties fail to comply. The Council further demanded that Ethiopia accept fully and without further delay the final and binding decision of the EEBC and take immediately concrete steps to enable, without preconditions, the Commission to demarcate the border completely and promptly and expressed its determination to monitor closely the actions of both parties in relation to the demarcation of the border and to keep this matter under consideration.

119. On my part, and given the then deteriorating situation along the border, I issued, on 4 November 2005, a statement, urging the parties to exercise restraint and to refrain from any action that could have the effect of further aggravating the situation. I also reiterated AU's full support to UNMEE, and stressed the need for the parties to extend full cooperation to the Mission to enable it carry out its mandate.

120. While efforts by the international community were under way to assist the parties reduce tension in the border area, the Eritrean authorities took a decision, on 6 December 2005, to expel the nationals of some countries, who are part of UNMEE, from the Eritrean territory. The UN Security Council reacted immediately, by asking the Eritrean authorities to reverse their decision. Also, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations undertook a visit to the region to consult with the Ethiopian and Eritrean authorities, as well as the Commission, from 11 to 13 December 2005.

121. During the period under review, I had consultations with representatives of the Witnesses of the Algiers Agreements of June and December 2000, namely the United Nations and the USA. In the course of those consultations, we exchanged views on how best to assist the parties overcome the current obstacles to the peace process in pursuit of the implementation of the Algiers Agreements and consider the possibility of convening a meeting of the Witnesses.

(iv) Sudan

(a) Southern Sudan

122. During the period under review, significant progress was made in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 9 January 2005. In this respect, it should be stressed that the new Sudanese Presidency came into effect on 9 July 2005, while the Interim National Assembly was formed in August 2005. The formation of the Government of National Unity (GoNU) followed in September 2005. The Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) has also been put in place, while the Interim Southern Sudan

Constitution was ratified on 5 December 2005. In addition, the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC) has been formed, and has held its first meeting on 20 November 2005.

123. At the same time, the Sudanese people face tremendous challenges as they strive to consolidate peace and reconciliation in their country and embark on a path of recovery and sustainable development. At the national level, the Abyei Border Commission's (ABC) report has not been implemented because of differences between the parties on the final ruling of the ABC. As a result, the Abyei region is left without an appropriate administrative structure, as prescribed within the CPA. Moreover, the parties are yet to form the North/South Border Commission, which shall be charged with the responsibility of delineating the north-south border of 1 January 1956. On the other hand, the GoSS is faced with the enormous task of reconstructing the South. Furthermore, as large numbers of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees arrive in Southern Sudan, fresh insecurity is arising due to the constant attacks waged by the faltering Lord Resistance Army (LRA).

124. The AU Ministerial Committee on Post-Conflict Reconstruction in the Sudan has remained engaged in the efforts to consolidate the gains made in the peace process. In this respect, and as part of the preparations of the Ministerial Conference on Africa's Contribution to the Post-conflict Reconstruction of the Sudan, to be convened on the margins of the present ordinary session of the Executive Council, a meeting of experts was held from 5 – 6 December 2005, in Addis Ababa, with the participation of a number of key players, including the GoNU, the Joint National Transitional Team (JNTT), Member States, the United Nations and its agencies, the World Bank, and the EU. The meeting provided an opportunity to further sensitize Member States on the challenges facing the Sudan and the specific areas in which they could provide support.

125. Finally, I wish to inform Council that, in all my interactions with the Sudanese authorities, including the President, I have stressed the need for the faithful and scrupulous implementation of the CPA. I reiterated this position, on 6 December 2005, during my meeting with the First Vice-President of Sudan and President of GoSS, Lt. General Salva Kiir Mayardit. This meeting provided an opportunity to discuss progress being made in the implementation of the CPA and the challenges ahead, as well as the ongoing Darfur crisis.

(b) Darfur

126. During the period under review, sustained efforts were made towards the early conclusion of a comprehensive peace agreement in Darfur. Council would recall that the 5th Round of the Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on the Conflict in Darfur, convened in Abuja, from 10 June to 5 July 2005, concluded successfully, with the signing, on 5 July 2005, of a Declaration of Principles (DoP), thereby paving the way for substantive discussions on power and wealth sharing, as well as on security arrangements.

127. The 6th Round of the Talks was held in Abuja, from 21 September to 20 October 2005. During this Round, the divisions within the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLM/A) and the leadership battle between its Chairman, on the one hand, and its Secretary-General, on the other, contributed, to a large extent, to the lack of progress in the Talks. Intensive consultations by the Mediation Team and international partners to narrow the differences within the SLM/A did not achieve the desired outcome. Notwithstanding these problems, the Talks eventually started on 3 October 2005, after the conclusion of a week-long Workshop for the parties on wealth sharing, power sharing and security arrangements.

Due to lack of capacity by the Movements to undertake parallel negotiations on the three issues involved, substantive discussions began only in the Power Sharing Commission. The agenda for wealth sharing was also adopted, and preliminary discussions on security arrangements commenced towards the end of the Round. The 6th Round eventually ended with the parties signing a joint communiqué expressing their collective will to make the 7th Round a decisive one.

128. In preparation for the 7th Round, the AU Mediation and its international partners deployed considerable efforts to assist the SLM/A to overcome its divisions, and to ensure that it can participate in the Talks as a united and cohesive Movement. Consequently, the two factions, together with the JEM, agreed to participate in the Talks with a common agenda. The talks opened on 29 November 2005, with the objective of arriving at a comprehensive settlement of the conflict in Darfur during this 7th Round. At the time of finalizing this report, discussions on power and wealth sharing were proceeding, and the parties had also agreed on the agenda for the discussions on security arrangements. Overall, progress has so far been modest, except in the Wealth Sharing Commission where the parties are engaging in constructive negotiations on most of the items on the agenda. I would like, therefore, to appeal to the parties to show renewed commitment to the search for peace in Darfur and to extend the necessary cooperation to the AU Mediation.

129. Regarding the operational aspects, Council would recall the decision of the PSC, at its 28th meeting held on 28 April 2005, to increase the strength of AMIS from a total of 3,320 to 6,171 military and 1,560 civilian police personnel. Since then, sustained efforts have been deployed to reach this newly authorized strength, as well as to enhance the overall operational capability of the Mission. At the time of this report, the military component had reached a level of 5,590, while the civilian police component stood at 1,323. Furthermore, seven additional helicopters and 105 Armored Personnel Carriers (APCs) have also been deployed, providing AMIS with an increased operational capability and increased capacity for self-defense and, where necessary, protection of the civilian population. However, AMIS faces serious logistical and financial constraints which threaten to disrupt its operations and have rendered the sustainment of the Mission very difficult. As it stands, unless additional financial assistance is received from Member States and partners, the funds currently available will only make it possible to run the Mission up to early April 2006.

130. In spite of these constraints, the increased presence of AMIS in Darfur has helped to create an environment of improved security and stability in the areas where it is deployed. However, the overall security situation remains very volatile. This volatility is manifested in the increased levels of banditry and violence targeting the civilian population, humanitarian organizations and even AMIS personnel. Clearly, the effectiveness of AMIS is directly linked to the level of cooperation it receives from the parties to the conflict. Thus far, that cooperation has been extremely inconsistent. AMIS is still faced with obstacles that limit its ability to operate freely and the Government has yet to meet its commitment to disarm the Janjaweed/armed militia. The SLM/A and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) also bear an important responsibility for accepting and supporting the presence of AMIS. The ongoing obstruction of AU activities by the rebels, principally the SLM/A, has included obstruction of movement, threatening patrols, harassment, theft of equipment and repeated incidents of abduction of personnel. Like the Government, the SLM/A and JEM must honour their commitments in respect of AMIS, as well as provide the mission with information on the location of their forces, as required by the N'djamena Humanitarian Cease fire Agreement.

131. The situation in Darfur can only be further complicated by the ongoing tension between Sudan and Chad, especially following the attack on the Chadian border town of Adre, on 18 December, 2005, by some Chadian rebels. Chad accused Sudan of involvement in this attack aimed at destabilizing the country. These accusations have been rejected by the Sudanese authorities. This development has the potential to escalate the tension between the two countries, thereby destabilizing the entire border region and further complicating the already complex conflict in Darfur. I, therefore, dispatched a fact-finding Mission to both countries to urge for restraint, while efforts are made to defuse the tension between the two countries.

132. This development must be linked to some worrying events that took place in Chad. On the night of Sunday 14 to Monday 15 November 2005, the camp of the National Nomad Guard in N'djamena and the training camp of Koundoul, in the South of the capital city, were attacked. These attacks occurred after soldiers of the Chadian national army deserted in early October 2005. These soldiers have entrenched themselves along the border of the Sudanese Darfur region and have established a movement called the Base for Change, National Unity and Development.

133. In a communiqué released on 16 November, I condemned these attacks, and underscored their potential regional implications. I reiterated the AU's commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes within the respect of country's institutions.

(v) Burundi

134. The transition provided for in the August 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement on Burundi has come to an end, with the setting up of new institutions following a series of elections: constitutional referendum, council, legislative, senatorial and presidential elections. The CNDD-FDD of Pierre Nkurunziza, newly elected as President of the Republic, dominate the post-transition institutions (Municipal councils, National Assembly, the Senate and the Government). However, all components of Burundi's population are represented in these institutions in the proportions set by the constitution.

135. The political new deal, as well as the prospect for change, which is represented by CNDD-FDD, give reason for much hope. However, the long-expected change comes with great challenges.

136. In this regard, the Government of Burundi has tackled the issue of post-conflict reconstruction and development from two angles: the first, of a socio-economic nature, is symbolised by the decision to institute free primary education and fight against corruption; the other, political in nature, is to institute the rule of law and consolidate the new-found peace. The efforts here concern justice and reconciliation, the addressing of the problem of political prisoners and the guarantee of security for all.

137. On this last point, it should be noted that several decisions have been taken, especially the one to fight the Palipehutu-FNL, which has so far not yet come to the negotiating table. This fight takes the form of increasing pressure to weaken Agathon Rwasa's movement. Simultaneously, the international community, including the AU, continues to pursue its diplomatic efforts aimed at persuading the Palipehutu-FNL to accept

peace talks with the government of Burundi. In the meanwhile, criminality continues to rise, occasionally targeting elected officials.

138. In conclusion, sustained efforts are necessary to consolidate the remarkable progress made in Burundi. It is necessary, in particular, to mobilise necessary resources to help Burundi on the socio-economic front. The AU, which has been involved in the search for peace in Burundi since the 90s and which contributed to the smooth conduct of the electoral process thanks to the presence of the protection force from South Africa operating under the AU mandate, will continue to support the government and the other stakeholders in the new phase just beginning.

(vii) Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

139. During the period under review, significant progress was made towards the electoral process, which will mark the end of the transition on 30 June 2006. The identification and registration process which started on 30 June 2005 and supported by all political forces in the country except the Union for Democracy and Social Progress (UDPS) of Etienne Tshisekedi, has led to the registration of more than 25 million voters, who overwhelmingly voted in favour of the draft constitution during the referendum of 18 December 2005. It is in this connection that a mission of the United Nations Security Council travelled to the region from 4 to 11 November 2005. Among other things, the mission encouraged the actors of the transition in the DRC to redouble their efforts so that all the elections may be held before the set date of 30 June 2006.

140. On other fronts, and in pursuance of the decision of the PSC on the neutralisation and disarming of the ex-FAR and Interahamwe, I dispatched to DRC, Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi, a multidisciplinary reconnaissance mission. The mission, which was in the region from 12 November to 3 December 2005, assessed the security situation in the Kivus and Ituri regions and studied the conditions for the deployment of an African force in the East of DRC, with the aim of contributing to the disarmament and neutralisation of ex-FAR/Interahamwe and other armed groups present in this part of the country. At the time of completing this report, consultations were underway on following up on the results of the reconnaissance mission.

141. I am pleased to note that, thanks to the support of friendly countries and the entire international community, the training and integration of six brigades of the Congolese Armed Forces has been completed, out of the scheduled eighteen. Out of the six brigades, two are equipped and deployed in the East of DRC, where they are supported by MONUC in punctual security operations.

142. The delicate security situation in the Eastern part of the country and the need to do everything to consolidate the peace process in general have led the United Nations Security Council to prolong the arms embargo up to 31 July 2006, and to impose sanctions on sixteen persons, one of whom is the President of the Forces Democratiques de Liberation du Rwanda (FDLR) and the militia leaders in Ituri.

(vii) The Great Lakes Region

143. Preparations for the 2nd Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region continued with the holding of thematic technical working group meetings (TTG) of

the Regional Preparatory Committee (RPC) and of the Regional Inter-Ministerial Committee (RIC), all with the active participation of the Commission. The RPC met in Lusaka from 18 to 21 July 2005 to prepare the 2nd meeting of the RIC, which took place, also in Lusaka, from 22 to 23 July 2005. At this occasion, the RIC, among other things, examined the draft programmes of action and protocols elaborated by the 1st meeting of Thematic Technical Working Groups, which held in Mombassa in June 2005.

144. TTG experts met again in Nairobi, from 5 to 11 September 2005, to finalise the elaboration of projects that could not be submitted at the 2nd RIC meeting. These documents were submitted to the RPC at its 26 to 30 September 2005 meeting in Luanda, during which it examined projects elaborated in Nairobi and arranged them in order of priority to be validated at the 3rd RIC meeting that will hold in Bangui. During the Luanda meeting, national coordinators (NC) continued discussions on the institutional mechanism to monitor the implementation process of the Pact on security, stability and development that will be adopted by the 2nd Summit scheduled to take place in Nairobi in 2006.

145. These discussions took place in the light of conclusions of the meeting of representatives of “field” countries and of those of the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region, held in New York on 16 September 2005, at which the Commissioner for Peace and Security took part. This meeting made important recommendations which guided the work of the Luanda meeting.

146. The postponement of the 2nd Summit, announced at the extraordinary meeting of National Coordinators (NC) in Nairobi on 7 November 2005, highlights the need to deploy sustained efforts to maintain the momentum of the Conference at national, regional and international levels, until the Summit is held, probably between July and September 2006. The draft programmes of action and protocols which will be adopted by the Nairobi Summit will constitute, together with the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration, the Pact on Security, Stability and Development of the Great Lakes Region.

(viii) Central African Republic (CAR)

147. The holding of legislative and presidential elections in May 2005 has enabled the setting up of new institutions in the Central African Republic. This encouraging political development is however frustrated by the persistence of financial crisis and the degeneration of the security situation in the North and on the borders with Chad and Cameroon.

148. Despite external financial support and the economic reforms introduced, the government is still unable to mobilise the resources necessary to pay civil servants and the military on a regular basis. Negotiations with donors are slow, and the population has become impatient, making the social situation tense and precarious.

149. In the meanwhile, the security situation in the North of the country has degenerated considerably, marked by the increase in attacks since June 2005 by armed groups in the Ouham and Ouham-Pendé divisions, and the displacement of about 15,000 people towards the South of Chad. In this regard, mention should be made of the attack of 27 September 2005 on the Markounda town, as well as that on the town of Kabo, in the Ouham division, on 1st December 2005.

150. Faced with this situation and its consequences on the still-fragile socio-political situation in CAR, I dispatched a fact-finding mission to CAR, Chad and Cameroon, from 25 October to 8 November 2005, to enable the Commission to gather the most exhaustive information possible on the security and humanitarian situation prevailing on the common frontiers of the three countries and to examine, with the competent authorities, what support the AU may provide. On their part, the three countries concerned met in Yaounde, from 25 to 26 August 2005, under the auspices of the United Nations Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA). This meeting was followed with several consultations between the three countries. Military operations are also conducted on the field, mainly on the territory of the Central African Republic. But because of the current financial difficulties of the CAR, the low manpower of the forces of defence and security and their under-equipment, the security situation is far from being resolved and the population continues to flock towards the south of Chad.

(x) Côte d'Ivoire

151. The period following the Sirte Summit was marked by intense efforts to overcome the difficulties impeding the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement and Declaration, concluded in April and June 2005 respectively, under the auspices of the AU Mediator, President Thabo Mbeki. It should be stressed here that these efforts were made in the context of high tensions linked not only to the impasse in the peace process, but also to the expiry of the term of office of President Laurent Gbagbo on 30 October 2005, as well as to the legal and political implications drawn therefrom by the parties.

152. It was in this context, and at the request of the Chairman of the AU, President Olusegun Obasanjo, that the 38th meeting of the PSC held in New York, on 14 September 2005, at the level of Heads of State and Government. At the meeting, the PSC, after noting its satisfaction with the progress made, expressed its preoccupation with the fact that the Ivorian parties had not demonstrated the political will necessary to implement in full the agreements reached on pending questions, especially, the dismantling and disarming of the militia, the DDR and the creation of conditions favourable for the holding of free, fair and transparent elections. The PSC underscored the fact that it was necessary to re-examine the situation in Côte d'Ivoire before 30 October 2005, and requested ECOWAS to convene an emergency summit to evaluate the situation and report to it at a meeting that the PSC will convene urgently, with the participation of ECOWAS leaders, to examine the question and take the necessary decisions.

153. The ECOWAS Summit held on 30 September 2005 at Abuja, and submitted its recommendations at the 40th meeting of the PSC at the level of Heads of State and Government, which held in Addis Ababa on 6 October 2005. Having espoused the observations of ECOWAS on the end of the term of office of President Laurent Gbagbo on 30 October 2005 and the impossibility of organising presidential elections on the set date, the PSC decided that arrangements agreed upon in the Linas-Marcourssis Agreement would be implemented from 31 October 2005 for a period of no more than twelve (12) months. Consequently, President Gbagbo would continue to be Head of State during this period and a Prime Minister acceptable to all parties and having the full authority on his Government would be appointed. The PSC also decided to set up an International Working Group (IWG) at Ministerial level charged with evaluating, controlling and monitoring the peace process, including the road map agreed upon in Pretoria and all subsequent agreements, on the basis of daily mediation efforts. The IWG has met twice : first, on 8

November, to reclarify the powers of the Prime Minister, and on 6 December, to deliberate on the future of the National Assembly beyond 16 December, date on which the term of the present legislature ends.

154. In Resolution 1633 (2005) of 21 October 2005, the United Nations' Security Council approved the decision of the PSC. The Council in particular stressed the fact that the Prime Minister should have all the powers necessary to ensure the proper functioning of the Government, to guarantee the security and the redeployment of the administration and public services on the entire Ivorian territory, to carry out the disarmament programme, to demobilise and reintegrate with regard to the disarmament and dismantling of militia, and to ensure equity in the identification and registration process of voters, all of which would enable the organisation of free, open, regular and transparent elections, with the support of the United Nations.

155. Following a series of consultations conducted by the Chairman of the AU, President Obasanjo, the AU Mediator, President Thabo Mbeki, and the Chairman of ECOWAS, President Mamadou Tandja, Charles Konan Banny, Governor of the Central Bank of West African States, was appointed as the Prime Minister. Following consultations undertaken by the Prime Minister, a transitional government of 32 members was formed. I exhort the Ivorian parties to lend their full support to the implementation of Resolution 1633 of the Security Council and to refrain from any acts that may jeopardise the momentum towards peace and normalisation that has been triggered by the appointment of Charles Konan Banny as Prime Minister. I invite the political class, as well as all the living forces in the country, to show a high sense of responsibility and seize the opportunity now offered to carry the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire to a successful conclusion.

(xi) Liberia

156. During the period under review, there were significant strides in the peace process, making it possible for Liberia finally to emerge from its 14 year-long civil war. The successful completion of the November 8 runoff poll for presidency resulted in the election of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of the Unity Party (UP), who shall preside over the country for the next six years. Mrs. Johnson-Sirleaf's victory in the presidential election on 23 November was a historical achievement, as she is the first female President in Africa.

157. It is worth mentioning that the legislative and presidential elections were held on 11 October 2005, and a runoff poll for presidency took place on 8 November 2005, between George Weah of the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of the UP, both of whom had received the highest number of valid votes cast in the first round, but less than the required 50% +1 of the total valid votes cast, thereby necessitating the holding of a second round. International observers, including AU monitors, described the elections as well organized, free, fair and transparent. I dispatched my Special Envoy, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, to Monrovia, from 6 to 9 November, to assess the political situation on the ground, with a view to determining how best the AU can continue supporting the peace process.

158. The in-coming government will be faced with huge challenges. As it begins to shape the post-conflict agenda following years of instability, war and the destruction of virtually all structures of government, the new government will have to contend with a legacy of mistrust and division, as well as high expectation from its people. To meet these

challenges, it is essential that the new government address the root causes of recurring conflict and deal with a backlog of unmet services and needs. As a first step, it is essential to ensure that the Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) is addressed in a sustained manner; it is imperative to provide education to the youth which missed out on educational opportunities during the war; it is also essential to embark on reform of institutions such as the judiciary, police and civil service.

159. In order to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated, it is essential that there is sustainable security and stability of the government and the State. It is, therefore, necessary that proper implementation of the Security Sector Reform provisions of the CPA is met. In particular, the restructuring of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and the Liberian National Police should be implemented to the letter. In this regard, the governments of South Africa and Nigeria, as well as the European Commission (EC), are to be commended: South Africa contributed the sum of USD 4 million, and the EC, Euro 1.6 million, towards defraying the severance costs of demobilized officers and men of the AFL; Nigeria trained and equipped the 300-man-strong Police Special Squad.

160. Liberia is at the beginning of the long-term phase of post conflict reconstruction. It requires political and financial support to achieve success. It is in realization of this that I call on Member States to offer technical assistance either bilaterally or through the Commission in various areas, including military assistance, law and judicial reforms, civil service reforms and expertise in various fields. As Liberia has embraced the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme, which is aimed at providing a more robust approach to economic governance, I believe it is on track towards economic progress and development. With the optimism that we all share in the future of Liberia, I want to call upon the UN Security Council, in light of these positive developments in Liberia, to begin to review sanctions imposed on Timber and Diamond sales to enable the newly elected government fulfil its obligation to its teeming population, as well as realize its national goals and aspiration.

(xii) Guinea-Bissau

161. The evolution of the situation in Guinea Bissau has been on the whole positive, with the conclusion of the electoral process to return to constitutional order. Presidential elections which took place in July 2005 were won by Joao Bernardo Viera, whose investiture on 1st October 2005, marked the end of the transitional period which followed the coup d'Etat of September 2003. Overall, the situation in the country is marked by polarisation, which is a herald of political instability.

162. In this regard, I exhort the parties concerned to show responsibility and unite on the major challenges which are national reconciliation, reconstruction and the development of the country. Such cohesion of the political class is all the more necessary as Guinea-Bissau continues to face a grave economic and financial crisis which calls for the duty of solidarity. In this connection, I call upon bilateral and multilateral partners of Guinea-Bissau to lend their support towards its reconstruction, development and the consolidation of its political stability.

(xiii) **Mauritania**

163. Following the coup d'état which took place in Mauritania on 3 August 2005, the PSC in its 36th meeting on 4 August 2005, suspended Mauritania from participating in AU activities and dispatched a Ministerial delegation to the country to reiterate to the new authorities the AU position and, in the logic of guidance and support, to commit them on the modalities of a swift return to constitutional order. The AU Ministerial delegation went to Nouakchott on 9 August 2005, followed, from 1 to 3 November 2005, by a delegation of the Commission led by the Commissioner for Peace and Security. The two delegations noted the existence of a consensus in favour of change, as well as the declared intention of the new authorities to respect the commitments made, including the commitment by the members of the Military Committee for Justice and Democracy (CMJD) not to present themselves as candidates in elections and to organise free and transparent elections to restore constitutional order.

164. In implementation of the PSC decision of 8 October 2005 requesting me to take the necessary measures to accompany the process for the return to constitutional order, I appointed Ambassador Vijay Singh Makhan to be my Special Envoy to Mauritania. In this capacity, he went to Mauritania from 24 October to 3 November 2005, and witnessed the work and activities, from 25 to 29 October 2005, of the National Concertation Day.

165. The validation on 8 November 2005, by the CMJD, of the recommendations of the Concertation and its decision to shorten the transitional period to eighteen months, from August 2005 to March 2007, were encouraging developments. I subsequently dispatched my Special Envoy to Mauritania, from 12 to 17 December, to lend AU's support to the electoral process, so as to facilitate the respect of the calendar which is as follows:

- Installation of the Independent Electoral Commission: end of November 2005;
- Census: February 2006;
- Constitutional referendum: 24 Juin 2006;
- Legislative and municipal elections: 9 November 2006;
- Senatorial elections : 21 January 2007;
- Presidential elections (first round): 11 March 2007;
- Presidential elections (in case of second round): 25 March 2007.

(xiv) **Western Sahara**

166. The lack of progress in the efforts to bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Western Sahara has unfortunately continued to persist. As Council would recall, it was in July 2003 that the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1495 by which it declared its support for the Peace Plan for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, presented to the parties, namely the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente Polisario, by James Baker, the-then Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General. The stalemate in the peace process has, over the past months, bred frustrations in the people of Western Sahara following which a number of demonstrators and human rights activists were arrested and detained.

167. It is against this background that the UN Secretary-General appointed Francesco Bastagli as his Special Representative, to head MINURSO, and named a new Personal Envoy, in the person of Ambassador Peter Van Walsum, to succeed James Baker, with the view of exerting renewed efforts to move the peace process forward. For its part, the UN Security Council, having considered the report submitted to it by the UN Secretary-General last October, adopted resolution 1634 (2005) by which it extended the mandate of MINURSO by another six-months, and further called on the parties to provide full cooperation to the UN, towards ending the impasse now afflicting the peace process.

168. I am concerned at the continued stalemate in the peace process, with the resulting growing frustration of the people of Western Sahara. This situation deserves the closest attention of the international community, which should act urgently and decisively to enable the people of Western Sahara to exercise their right to self-determination in conformity with international legality and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

(xv) Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa

169. In its decision on conflict situations in Africa, adopted at its session held in Sirte, the Executive Council stressed the need for peace agreements to be effectively complemented by sustained efforts towards post-conflict reconstruction and peace building, in order to address the root causes of conflicts. The Executive Council further urged the Commission to develop an AU policy on post-conflict reconstruction, based on the relevant provisions of the PSC Protocol and on the experience gained thus far.

170. Subsequently, the Commission convened a Brainstorming Retreat of Members of the PSC and other representatives of Member States in Durban, in September 2005, to assess the magnitude of the post-conflict recovery and reconstruction challenges facing the Continent and examine the key steps that need to be taken to enable the AU contribute effectively to post-conflict recovery and reconstruction efforts in the Continent.

171. The Commission has prepared a draft Framework for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa. This framework addresses the rationale for having an African framework for post-conflict reconstruction, the principles which should underpin all engagement in post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa, the constituent elements, resource mobilization, and coordination of the actors involved. The Commission intends to convene a meeting of technical experts and representatives of the Regional Economic Communities and the AU's international partners, to discuss the draft Framework, after which it will be submitted to the relevant policy organs for consideration and adoption.

IV. OTHER PEACE AND SECURITY RELATED ISSUES

(i) Small Arms and Light Weapons

172. The illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons continue to be a major problem for African countries. Recent estimates place the number of illicit weapons circulating in Africa at over twenty million. In order to address this problem, Africa adopted the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons in December 2000. This formed the basis for Africa's position at the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms

in all its Aspects, which adopted of the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (UNPoA) in July 2001.

173. The UNPoA provides for a mid-term review that will take place in June-July 2006, and which will be preceded by a Preparatory Committee meeting that begins in New York on 8 January 2006. It was within this context that the Commission convened a meeting of experts from Member States, that was held in Windhoek, from 14 – 16 December 2005, and which adopted an African Common Position to the Review Conference on Progress made in the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, that is being submitted to the Executive Council in anticipation of presentation to the UN Review Conference.

174. It is clear that there has been significant progress by African states and regions in the last five years in terms of implementing the UNPoA. At the international level, greater assistance is needed, and the African Common Position calls on the international community to do more to meet their own UNPoA obligations.

175. The African Common Position also addresses the issue of sustained follow-up at the continental level, including mechanisms within the AU. The governmental experts meeting in Windhoek have identified a number of actions to be undertaken in order to ensure that the AU engage the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in a sustained manner. The Commission is now in the process of drafting a work plan to ensure that these commitments are implemented.

(ii) Common African Defense and Security Policy (CADSP)

176. The Second Extraordinary Session of the Assembly in Sirte, in February 2004, agreed on the need for a Non-Aggression and Common Defense Pact. In follow-up on this issue, the fifth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council held in July 2004, adopted the draft Non-Aggression Pact. Subsequently, the Assembly, in January 2005, adopted the Non-Aggression and Common Defense Pact. During the period under review, and as part of the implementation of the CADSP, efforts have continued for the signing and ratification of this instrument. The Pact has been signed by 16 Member States, though none has yet ratified it; 15 ratifications are required for its entry into force.

177. In addition to endeavors aimed at ensuring the entry into force of the Pact, steps have been taken to identify other areas and activities to be undertaken. In this respect, it is planned to hold an experts meeting to develop a roadmap for the operationalization of all the aspects of the CADSP.

(iii) Terrorism

178. The Commission's actions to combat terrorism occur at several levels. Firstly, the Commission has begun the process of drafting a Comprehensive African Anti-Terrorism Model Law, which seeks to promote the domestication by the AU Member States of continental and international instruments for the prevention and combating of terrorism. This Model Law shall serve as a template to guide Member States in developing, strengthening and/or updating their national counter-terrorism laws, as well as harmonize and coordinate

efforts and legal frameworks at the national, regional and continental levels for the prevention and combating of terrorism in Africa.

179. Furthermore, the processes for the operationalization of the African Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) has been continuing, and preparations are underway to convene the next meeting of the National Focal Points of the Center, following the first meeting that took place in Algiers in early June 2005. As part of its activities, the ACSRT has been engaged in activities aimed at building partnership with a number of countries and relevant institutions, including the United Nations and other actors, such as the US African Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS). The ACSRT is playing an active role in the CTC/CTED country visits to monitor the implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001). The Center took part in the CTC/CTED delegation visit in Algeria in mid November 2005, and will participate in the visit to Tanzania scheduled in February 2006. In addition, the Center and the ACSS organized a joint workshop on “Building Counter-terrorism Capacity in African Sub-regional Organizations,” in Algiers from 30 September to 2 October 2005. This workshop reaffirmed the centrality of the AU Plan of Action on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in fighting terrorism on the continent, as well as the role of the ACSRT, in enhancing the capacity of Member States and Regional Economic Communities.

(iv) Pelindaba Treaty

180. The importance of the Pelindaba Treaty establishing Africa as a Nuclear-Free Zone cannot be over-emphasized. Yet the Treaty is the only one that has not come into force among the four regional Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (NWFZ) Treaties. This situation was highlighted during the Conference of State Parties and Signatories to the Treaties establishing Nuclear Weapons Free Zones, held in Tlatelolco, Mexico, from 26 to 28 April 2005. The delayed entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty is seen as a weak link in the planned integrated approach to the Treaty zones towards disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

181. At the time of finalizing this report, twenty African countries had ratified and deposited their instruments of ratification of the Treaty, while 49 countries have signed this instrument. I appeal to all Member States that have not done so to sign and ratify the Treaty as a matter of urgency.

(v) INTERACTION WITH PARTENERS

182. In the past few years, the AU has deployed sustained efforts to strengthen relations with partners across the globe in a bid to forge a strong partnership for the benefit of peace and stability in Africa. These efforts are the outcome of a two-fold concern: on the one hand, the conviction of the AU as expressly stated in the PSC Protocol that stronger relations with partners will greatly facilitate the achievement of lasting peace on the continent; and on the other hand, the need to mobilize, from outside Africa, the huge resources required to carry through the peace and security agenda of the Continent.

183. It is in this light that the relations established with numerous international institutions find their justification. Major progress was recorded in the consolidation of partnerships during the period under review.

(i) **Annual Technical Meeting between the AU, the RECs, the G8 and other partners**

184. A technical meeting bringing together the AU, the RECs, the representatives of the G8, the EU, the United Nations and other important partners took place at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, on 26 October 2005. The meeting took place within the framework of the Joint Africa/G8 Plan to Enhance African Capabilities to Undertake Peace Support Operations and was a follow-up to the Consultation held on 4 April 2005.

185. The meeting recognized the progress made in developing the overall AU peace and security architecture and noted the increased collaboration between the AU, the RECs and the partners. More specifically, the meeting provided an opportunity to discuss issues relating to the ASF, the CEWS, the Memorandum of Understanding between the AU and the Regional Mechanisms, post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa, the establishment of a Peace Facility complementary to the Africa Peace Facility (APF) established by the EU at the request of the AU, and partners' coordination. On the establishment of a Peace Support Facility complementary to the APF, it is worth noting that the objective would be to provide the AU and the RECs with predictable funding to enable them undertake peace support operations in a sustainable way. The meeting agreed to establish a working group to examine this proposal in more detail, as well as the establishment of an AU strategic level capability, including infrastructure and communication.

(ii) **Africa – EU Dialogue – Fifth Meeting of Troikas, Bamako, Mali, 2 December 2005**

186. In the framework of the Africa–EU Dialogue, the 5th Ministerial Meeting of the African and EU Troikas met in Bamako, on 2 December 2005. The meeting reviewed the current conflict situations in the continent, notably the situation in Darfur, Côte d'Ivoire, Somalia, the Great Lakes Region and the peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea, as well as efforts to combat terrorism. Two other issues were also discussed, namely the post-electoral situation in Ethiopia, for which the Ministers agreed that disputes over the elections should be addressed peacefully, democratically and with full respect for the rule of law, and Zimbabwe, for which the meeting encouraged meaningful internal dialogue as the way forward.

(iii) **Seminar on the mid-term evaluation of the Africa Peace Facility**

187. Council would recall that the 250 million Euro Africa Peace Facility (APF) was established in March 2004 by the European Union, using the existing EC allocations from the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) to each African ACP state and the long term development envelop of the EDF. This followed the request of the AU Head of States and Government, at their Maputo Summit, in July 2003. Out of this amount, 200 million Euro were earmarked for peace support operations, 35 million Euro for capacity building and the remaining 15 million Euro to cover audits, evaluations and contingencies. So far, APF funds have been utilized to fund AMIS, the CEMAC peace support operation in the Central African Republic, and part of the initial component of the capacity building programme for the AU. In 18 months of operations, nearly three quarters of the 250 million budget have been committed. In other words, the APF has nearly been exhausted, while it was intended for three and half years of operations. This clearly highlights the relevance of the APF as an instrument to address peace and security issues on the continent.

188. In line with the Peace Facility Financing Agreement, a mid-term evaluation was conducted at the request of the European Commission. The evaluation concluded that the core principles on which the APF was built, namely African ownership, solidarity and partnership, were found to be appropriate. It was also concluded that the APF strategy, which is to support African organizations to run African peace support operations and to build African capacity, is realistic and, without doubt, the right approach. It was further noted that progress regarding capacity building has been disappointing compared to the speed at which the PSO element has taken off.

189. In its recommendations, the mid-term evaluation report proposed that the APF should continue in much the same form as present, with a strong emphasis on the current principles, particularly that of African ownership. It is also proposed that consideration be given to the EU establishing a second level APF designed specifically to large scale and more sensitive PSOs, while the current APF will continue to be used as the immediate peace support facility for PSOs in response to emerging crisis. Another important recommendation is that a longer term and more systematic view should be taken regarding the capacity building needs of the African continental peace and security architecture. Finally, it was felt vital that both the EU and the AU seek ways to approach the APF in a more integrated manner, in conjunction with other relevant programmes.

190. A joint EU-AU Seminar was held in Addis Ababa, on 15 and 16 December 2005, to discuss the preliminary conclusions of the mid-term evaluation report. The outcome of these discussions will be reviewed by the second meeting of the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) provided for by the APF and which will convene in late January/early February 2006.

(iv) Other interactions with partners

191. During the period under consideration, the Commission also sought to strengthen its relations with other partner institutions. In this connection, and at the invitation of the International Francophonie Organization (IOF), the Commissioner for Peace and Security attended a Ministerial meeting of the IOF in Antananarivo from 22 – 23 November 2005. The Commissioner made a presentation at the meeting on the experience of the AU in matters relating to peace support operations.

192. It is equally worth noting that the Commissioner for Peace and Security represented the Commission at the European Inter-parliamentary Assembly Session on Security and Defence (Union of Western Europe) from 5 to 7 December 2005 in Paris. The session falls within the framework of the initiative of the Inter-parliamentary Assembly to prepare a report on peacekeeping in Sub-Saharan Africa.

VI. CONCLUSION

193. Since last July, significant progress has continued to be registered in the efforts to promote peace and security on the Continent. However, much still has to be done, not only in terms of ending the conflicts currently plaguing the Continent, but also in consolidating the gains in countries which have returned to peace thanks to the implementation of sustainable post-conflict reconstruction programmes. It is important to discuss issues relating to the financial contribution of Member States to peace support operations mandated by the African Union. Obviously, the African Union cannot claim leadership or

ownership of the operations where they are exclusively funded by external contributions. Lastly, further efforts have to be made with regard to conflict prevention. That is where the comparative advantage of the African Union lies.

POLITICAL AFFAIRS, DEMOCRATIZATION,
GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RIGHTS,
HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

I. OVERVIEW

194. At its last Ordinary Session, Council was informed about progress made in the Continent in the area of democracy, elections, governance and human rights. Council was further informed that the democratic process set in motion in the Continent continued in the context marked on the one hand by major advancements in some Member States where elections were held transparently, in a peaceful atmosphere, and on the other hand by setbacks, as evidenced by resistance to positive developments brought about by the advent of the African Union, which resistance run is contrary to the standards set by the Lomé Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes.

195. This trend continued during the period under consideration. Although genuine and sustained efforts are being invested by many Member States to promote democracy, particularly through the holding of democratic elections, the phenomenon of coups d'état persists and the tendency to resort to undemocratic use of constitutions is becoming increasingly widespread. Furthermore, although generally, elections were held in a satisfactory manner, tensions sometimes arose in the aftermath of these elections, following the challenging of results by the losers. This experience revealed the need for the Continental Organization to review its methods and possibly its regulations in the area of election observation to ensure assistance for electoral processes both before and after the declaration of results. In order to reflect on these issues, the Commission will be organizing a meeting of National Electoral Commissions next year.

196. The period under review was marked by a coup d'état that was condemned by the international community. The coup d'état was the one that took place in Mauritania, the principal motivation of which, according to its perpetrators lay in the need to end a regime that had lost all legitimacy. This coup d'état, which was said to be « necessary », highlighted the problem of the legality and legitimacy of some regimes, a problem on which the Commission initiated reflection by organizing a meeting of independent experts on the Lomé Declaration to question its pertinence and the possible means of strengthening it. The same meeting prepared a Draft Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance which incorporated the provisions of the Lomé Declaration in order to strengthen them.

197. The issue of African constitutions was the topic of a first brainstorming within the framework of the meeting on « Constitutional and Political Practices in Africa: Recent Trends », organized jointly by the African Union Commission and the International Organization of the Francophony. This brainstorming will continue in the African Union, with a view to attempting to provide a response to the thorny issue of unconstitutional changes.

198. In the area of good governance, the interest shown by a few Member States in promoting good governance was maintained. Membership of the Peer Review Mechanism increased and its evaluations are underway. This is a clear sign of the willingness of our

States to render government activities transparent, thus establishing good governance in the Continent. However, efforts should be redoubled to enlist the largest possible membership and give more credit to the mechanism in which the African peoples place many hopes.

199. Combating corruption is one of the essential links of the action initiated by the Commission in order to promote good governance in the Continent. During the period under consideration, initiatives were taken, notably the organization of the meeting of national anti-corruption institutions and activities to sensitize our States for them to ratify the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption which has still not entered into force.

200. Human rights violations remain a source of major concern in the Continent, particularly in conflict situations. In the last report to the Assembly in Sirte, in July 2005, the significant progress made by the African Union Commission in the implementation of the Kigali Declaration on Human Rights, which was adopted by this august Assembly in Maputo to serve as the Union's roadmap to the realization of the rights and duties enshrined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and its Protocols as well as the entire body of human rights instruments to which AU Member States are a party, was highlighted.

201. Equally highlighted was how the Union through its Vision, Mission and 4-year Strategic Plan is contributing to the actualization of the Kigali Declaration on Human Rights in Africa, in building the delivery capacity of key local actors, such as state organs (independent national human rights commission), ombudsperson, human rights activists, civil society organizations and the media. It also includes mainstreaming human rights in every aspect of the work of the AU Commission, applying a human rights based approach to conflict resolution, handling humanitarian crisis or social matters, and taking deliberate steps to promote gender equality and the rights of the African woman.

202. Council will recall that it had been informed of the appointment of a Special Representative for the protection of the rights of civilians in conflict situations. During the period under review, the Special Representative visited conflict areas, notably Darfur, with the mission of sensitising stakeholders on the need to respect human rights, particularly those of civilians, in conflict situations.

203. Lastly, the peace processes which were so successfully set in motion in the Continent raised new hopes for the return to their countries of millions of refugees, and the return of displaced persons to their homes. In future, emphasis should therefore be placed on the repatriation and resettlement of these persons. The efforts made by the HCR, with the assistance of the AU Commission, were disrupted by the increasingly limited resources made available to it as a result of the donor fatigue phenomenon which is becoming more of a reality each day.

204. During the period under consideration, the Commission carried out the following activities:

II. DEMOCRATIZATION AND ELECTION OBSERVATION

A. ELECTION OBSERVATION IN MEMBER STATES

205. The Commission fielded election observation missions to Burundi, Guinea Bissau, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Liberia and Burkina Faso.

206. At the end of the legislative elections of 4 July 2005 in Burundi, Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza's National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD/FDD) obtained the majority in the National Assembly with 59 out of 100 seats, thus enabling him to attain, in accordance with the pre-established rules for these elections, the highest office of his country.

207. At the end of the second round of the presidential elections of 24 July 2004 in Guinea Bissau, Mr. Joao Bernardo Vieira, former President who emerged from the ranks of the PAIGC, obtained 52,35% of the votes and was declared President of the Republic.

208. In Ethiopia, at the end of elections in May 2005, complaints were submitted by the opposition parties as well as the ruling party, leading to a recount in some districts and new elections in others. The « Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) » of Mr. Meles Zenawi and his allies gained 371 of the 547 seats in the National Assembly, that is 67.82% of the votes.

209. In Tanzania, elections were held on 30 October 2005 in Zanzibar, the Island region of the country, at the end of which Mr. Amani Abeid Karume of the Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party was re-elected President of Zanzibar, with 53.2 % of the votes. Elections in the mainland part of the country were postponed until 18 December 2005 due to the death of the running mate of the opposition candidate for the Presidency. These elections were held on the scheduled date and the CCM Candidate, Mr. Jakaya Kikweté, was elected.

210. At the end of the second round of the presidential elections of 8 November 2005 in Liberia, Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, leader of the Unity Party, was elected as the first African woman President of the Republic with 59.10 % of the votes.

211. In Burkina Faso, President Blaise Compaoré, of the Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP), was re-elected with 80.35 % of the votes at the end of the presidential elections of 13 November 2005.

212. The Chairperson appointed a Special Envoy to Haiti, whose mission is to help the government authorities to organize transparent elections in a peaceful atmosphere with the participation of all the political forces. The Commission will send a delegation in 2006 to observe the elections in this country.

B. DEMOCRATIZATION-RELATED ACTIVITIES

213. Within the framework of the implementation of the provisions of the Durban Declaration of July 2002 on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa, particularly with regard to the establishment of a Democratization and Electoral Assistance Unit as well as the establishment of the Electoral Assistance Fund, the Commission held

consultations, in July 2005, with some international partners, namely, the United Nations Organization in New York, the International Institut for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), in Stockholm, the European Commission in Brussels and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODHIR) in Warsaw, to acquaint itself with their best practices in this area. Feasibility studies on the Unit and the Fund as requested by the Durban Summit are currently being carried out.

214. In compliance with the Maputo Decision, the Commission prepared a Draft Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. This draft was first submitted for critical consideration by Independent African Experts at a meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 21 to 23 November 2005. It will be submitted shortly for consideration and validation by government experts before being considered by the policy organs of the Union.

215. The Meeting of Independent Experts also considered the Report on the Review of the Lomé Declaration of July 2000 on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa. Some aspects of this Declaration were incorporated in the Draft Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. A separate and detailed report on the two issues is submitted to Council.

C. RESULTS AND PERFORMANCES

216. Generally, concerning the electoral process, it should be said that elections were held in a peaceful and serene atmosphere in Member States. It is gratifying to note that these long-awaited processes were successful in Burundi, Guinea Bissau and Liberia, three countries that were emerging from particularly bloody civil war situations. The involvement of the African Union in the peace process in these three countries and the fielding of an observer mission are a result of its commitment to work resolutely for the consolidation of peace, a sine qua non for the success of Africa's harmonious development from the political, economic and social standpoints.

D. PENDING ISSUES

217. As indicated above, the feasibility studies on the establishment of the Democratization and Electoral Assistance Unit as well as the Electoral Assistance Fund are underway. Furthermore, the feasibility study on the production of a manual for observers and the critical review of the results of observer missions carried out to date by the African Union, with a view to their improvement will begin shortly.

E. THE WAY FORWARD

218. The Commission plays and will continue to play its rightful role in promoting democracy and good governance. For this reason it is essential that it be provided with appropriate instruments to enable it to successfully accomplish its mission. The instruments in question are notably:

- The Democratization and Electoral Assistance Unit which will be responsible for, in addition to the coordination and organization of the African Union's participation in election observation, the management of the Electoral Assistance Fund;

- An Electoral Assistance Fund which will certainly be extremely useful for countries emerging from civil war situations;
- The African Charter on Elections, Democracy and Governance, which, once adopted by our policy organs, will constitute an essential tool for the promotion of democracy and good governance, as well as the protection of human rights. It will include elements of the Lomé Declaration of July 2000 on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa;
- Improved election observation methods.

II. GOVERNANCE

A. PROMOTING BROADER DEBATES ON AFRICAN CONSTITUTIONS

219. The Cotonou Meetings on Constitutional and Political Practices provided an opportunity to initiate reflection on current practices in Africa, and while sounding the alarm on the phenomenon of manipulation, made a series of recommendations aimed at consolidating democracy in the Continent, particularly by respecting constitutional provisions.

220. The African Union Commission has planned to build on the outputs of this meeting by expanding the lessons learnt at continental level and enabling African citizens to share experiences on ways and means to improve legitimacy and respect of constitutional principles. A ministerial conference on the issue should be held next year. The recommendations of the conference will concentrate on the strategies of preventing and managing political and constitutional crises to strengthen peace, stability and development.

B. ENHANCING RATIFICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN CONVENTION ON PREVENTING AND FIGHTING CORRUPTION

221. The Commission has continued to disseminate to all Members States the Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption that was adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Maputo, Mozambique in July 2003 and to advocate for its ratification. To date, only ten Members States have ratified the convention since its adoption (Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lesotho, Comoros, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, Mali, Madagascar, Burundi and Tanzania). Members States are encouraged to ratify the Convention to enable it enter into force as soon as possible. In the interim, the Commission has been facilitating cooperation between national anti-corruption bodies in order to enhance their effectiveness.

222. To this end, the Commission organized the First Pan-African Conference of the National Anti-Corruption Commissions in Lusaka – Zambia from 9 to 11 November 2005 with the support of the Government of Zambia. The meeting was well attended by delegates from 28 Countries mainly from the National Anti-corruption Bodies, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Justice in Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Ethiopia, Gabon, Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

223. The National Anti-Corruption Commissions appreciated the opportunity given to them to discuss the various negative effects of corruption and impunity on the stability, and socio-economic development of African people, and highlighted the need to sensitize, train and educate the people to uphold justice, transparency and accountability in all spheres of life.

224. They called upon the African Union Commission to officially communicate their recommendations, to the Heads of State and Government, and urged them to ratify the African Convention on preventing and combating corruption and to take the appropriate legislative measures to ensure its implementation.

C. PROMOTING GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK IN AFRICA

a. Forum on governance in Africa

225. The Forum on Governance in Africa held in Addis Ababa from 24 to 26 November 2005 is a new innovative approach of partnerships to foster the implementation of the AU priority programmes on Governance. The objective is to disseminate the AU governance Agenda, to increase the level of participation and dialogue with civil society, to seek positive feedback and consensus on concepts, approaches and practices of governance from structured governance actors operating both at the national and regional levels, and to better involve local actors in the AU process to improve governance in Africa. Such entities include various actors such as local authorities, public institutions, regional specialized organizations, civil society, trade unions, pan African networks, private sector, traditional authorities and academia.

226. The Forum recognized the importance to build a strong and dynamic governance partnership with the African Union Commission at all levels – local, national and regional - and to coordinate all innovative initiatives, to systematize experience-sharing and facilitate the harmonization and integration process. Such a Forum will improve effective partnerships and scale up the contribution of civil society actors in the ratification and implementation processes of the AU instruments and programmes in line with the African Union vision of “a peaceful, integrated and prosperous Africa driven by its peoples”.

b. Governance and Public Administration

227. The Commission endeavoured to implement its programme on public administration, which constitutes one of the key elements of its governance programme. During the period under consideration, Ministers of Public Service held their Fifth Pan-African Conference in Addis Ababa, from 14 to 15 December 2005, preceded by an Experts Meeting from 12 to 13 December. This event was the first of its kind in that it was held under the auspices of the African Union and paved the way for the ever-increasing involvement of the continental organization in the process initiated a few years ago outside the organization by the same Ministers, and which was marked by the adoption of the Charter for the Public Service in Africa, in Windhoek, Namibia, in February 2001 and the Stellenbosch Declaration, in South Africa, in May 2003; this meeting highlighted the need to implement a continental programme on public service under the auspices of the African Union. Hereafter, the major challenge resides in the appropriation by Member States of the African Union not only of the process, but also and above all of the Charter as an essential instrument for strengthening the effectiveness of public service in the Continent.

III. HUMAN RIGHTS

228. During the period under review, the African Union Commission, continued to make efforts in the aforesaid direction as highlighted in the activities below:

A. WORKSHOP ON REALIZING WOMEN'S RIGHTS THROUGH HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

229. The African Union Commission, in collaboration with its partners, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, organised a Workshop on Realising women's Rights through Human Rights Education, in Kigali, October 2005, for the Eastern African Countries.

230. The aim of the Workshop was to assess and assist member States comply with their obligations in the Beijing Platform for Action with a specific emphasis on the education of women's rights.

231. The workshop was attended by policymakers in the area of education, human rights, women's organizations involved in building human rights capacities, experts and representatives from international organizations and institutions that provide essential human rights education as well as technical support and services.

232. The workshop noted various initiatives undertaken for achieving gender equality, but also recognized that gender inequality still exists coupled with the lack of comprehensive programs on Human Rights Education in general and on women's rights in particular. A roadmap was developed in a bid to reinforce the achievements and ameliorate the weaknesses, in the Eastern African Countries.

B. OPERATIONALISATION OF THE RESOURCE CENTRE FOR DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

233. Following the inauguration of the African Union Commission Resource Centre on the occasion of the 2004 Africa Human Rights Day, through the support of its traditional partners, such as the European Union and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other partners both in and out of Africa, the Council and Assembly are hereby informed that the Centre is now operational and providing first-hand information and training modules in the field of governance, democracy and human rights to diverse users, including representatives of Member States, Civil Society organizations, etc. The African Union Commission deeply appreciates every support that has contributed to the operationalization of the Centre. Efforts are underway to further reinforce the Centre by equipping it with more publications, Internet facilities, to meet the needs of the increasing users.

C. SUPPORTING THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS (ACHPR)

234. The support to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights as the continent's main human rights mechanism still remains a priority. The process of consultations between the ACHPR and other organs of the African Union has started with a view to improving their relationships and strengthening the capacity and the role of the

ACHPR. There has been close collaboration with the Commission, including preparation of joint reports, such as the “*Thematic Death Penalty and Press Freedom reports*”.

235. The African Union Commission facilitated the holding of the 38th statutory session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights and also attended the Session. In view of the importance of the mandate of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the African Union Commission will continue its support aimed at increasing the resources and building capacity of the ACHPR.

D. CELEBRATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DAYS

a) Africa Human Rights Day, 21 October 2005

236. This Day was celebrated in Kigali, Rwanda with the participation of government officials, civil society organizations and members of the public. The African Union Commission issued a press statement on the occasion as part of the commemoration ceremony.

b) International Tolerance Day, 16th November 2005

237. The African Union Commission joined the international community in celebrating this important event, through a press statement to generate public awareness, emphasise the dangers of intolerance and react with renewed commitment and action in support of tolerance promotion and education, especially to call for the promotion of political, religious and ethnic tolerance in Africa.

E. PROMOTING THE WORK OF AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

238. In the last report, it was indicated that, in accordance with the Union’s 2004 – 2007 Strategic Plan, 2006 will see the first edition of the African Human Rights Defender’s Award, on the occasion of the African Human Rights Day, on 21st October, with a view to raising the profile and providing protection for human rights defenders on the African Continent.

239. The Commission has worked closely with its partners to actualize this Award. The implementation of this activity could not materialize due to financial and other constraints. The Commission is now considering organizing the Award in October 2006. The Commission deeply appreciates the role played by Member States, the Civil Society and other partners in their efforts and wishes to appeal to them for their continued efforts to make this Award a reality.

240. The Commission participated in the consultative meeting for human rights defenders in the Mano River Union, geared towards developing mechanisms for the protection of human rights defenders in the Mano River Union.

F. REGIONAL SEMINAR ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN COUNTRIES IN OR EMERGING FROM CONFLICTS

241. The plan to organize this seminar in 2005 could not materialize due to the postponement of other programs that did not allow ample time to implement this activity. This workshop, which is intended to contribute to the respect of human rights and

constitutions by countries in or emerging from conflicts in Africa, is now scheduled to take place in 2006, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

G. PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UNITED NATIONS

242. The AU Commission continued to enjoy the increasing technical support from its partnership with the United Nations in the field of increased technical support, through the Addis Ababa Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and through collaboration on the ground in the Darfur region, in Burundi, in Cote d'Ivoire and in Liberia.

243. In accordance with the pertinent resolutions of the UN General Assembly on the relationship with the African Union, the Commission is exploring ways of consolidating its relationship with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

244. The African Union Commission contributed to the Great Lakes Initiative for the maintenance of peace and stability in the region, through contributing to mainstreaming human rights in the programs of the project.

H. FUTURE PLANS

245. The Commission's human rights-related activities for the next semester, will include the second AU Conference of National Human Rights Institutions; Regional seminar on human rights in countries in or emerging from conflict; a Workshop on realizing Women's Rights through Human Rights Education; consultation between the ACHPR and other organs and institutions of the African Union.

IV. HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

246. The Commission would like to inform Council that whereas, generally the situation of displacement remains disturbing, some hopes were raised which will pave the way for the return of almost two million refugees in some countries by way of organized or spontaneous repatriation operations mainly in the East, West and Southern regions.

247. However, at the same time, it should be stressed that the hopes for the return of refugees and internally displaced persons should not take away the fact that the Continent still has the largest number of refugees, about 3 million and internally displaced persons estimated at over 15 million who live in very harsh conditions. To this end, following the July 2005 Summit held at Sirte, Libya, the Commission has been involved in regional and continental efforts and processes related to displacements with AU traditional partners mainly the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Organization for Migration (I.O.M.). A series of meetings were held to develop a joint programme of work that would be used to implement the decisions that emanated from the Summit. These meetings identified areas of mutual interests and concerns as well as prioritised activities that were undertaken jointly in the reporting period such as a joint AU/ICRC calendar for 2006, restructuring of the Coordinating Committee on Assistance to Refugees, AU participation to the EXCOM and the Visit to the AU Headquarters of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. These joint coordination meetings have been instrumental in the strengthening of the relationship between the AU and its partners

at the programme level while ensuring that the decisions taken by the Executive Council and Heads of States and Government are implemented in a systematic manner

248. Furthermore, the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees initiated a number of activities that were carried out with the Commission and partners, in particular, assessment missions to Member States affected by the problem of refugees, returnees and displaced persons. From 24 August to 3 September 2005, the following countries were visited: the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania. The missions met with Government Officials, Representatives of the African Union's Office, UNHCR and other UN and Humanitarian Agencies and exchanged views on the humanitarian situation, particularly as it relates to refugees, returnees and IDPs in these countries. In all the places that were visited, inadequate resources as well as security concerns were highlighted as the major problems aggravating the suffering of the victims of forced displacements. In solidarity with the Governments sacrificing their meagre resources in the protection and care of victims of forced displacements, the African Union granted a financial contribution of US\$ 150,000 US to Uganda Red Cross Society to support the efforts of the Government and UNHCR in protection and assisting refugees. Additionally, between end October and early November, due to the serious security problems prevailing in Central African Republic, (CAR), the Commission fielded a mission to CAR, Chad and Cameroon. The missions indeed collected reliable information, which contributes to policy formulation and in the thinking that is taking place on displacements in Africa.

249. I wish also to report that the Commission organized a meeting of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees on 20th October at which AU Partners, namely UNHCR, World Food Programme (WFP) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) briefed the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees on their Activities in addressing forced displacement in Africa. It is clear from the briefing that donor fatigue is being felt at the level of partners, which presents a need to consolidate joint efforts in resource mobilization. The next Ministerial meeting on matters relating to forced displacement will take place in Burkina Faso in June 2006; the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees also highlighted the need for close coordination in order to make the meeting a success.

250. Since there is no legal instrument that caters for the specific protection of internally displaced persons whose number is almost three times more than the refugees, this group therefore does not enjoy the assistance of international community. Following the decision of the Executive Council in July 2004, the Commission has spearheaded the task of elaborating a legal framework for the protection and assistance of internally displaced persons in Africa. While going through the exercise, it is important to stress the need for the international community to devote greater attention to internally displaced persons in Africa, as they do not benefit from its assistance.

251. In field assessment missions conducted to several countries, host to victims of forced displacement, it was noted that refugees and IDPs generally lacked access to post-primary education. This situation was as a result of the lack of resource and policy bottlenecks in some Member States, which hindered the provision of post-primary education. The Commission will be developing a policy to ensure provision of post primary education for victims of forced displacement. Approaches will be made to partners and non-traditional donors to raise resources to ensure that victims of forced displacement also access post-primary education.

V. FREE MOVEMENT IN AFRICA

252. The attention of the Executive Council is drawn to the efforts of the Commission to implement its Decision 211 at Sirte, Libya, on Free Movement in Africa. The Commission made several efforts to convene the Committee of Experts foreseen in this decision to no avail. Given the importance of the elaboration of a free movement regime in Africa as agreed to at the last Summit, it is imperative that Member States designated to represent their respective regions actually participate in the process with the seriousness called for in Decision 211. Therefore the Commission calls on guidance on how to proceed with implementation of this decision. It is important to launch the African diplomatic passport in 2006 which will be reserved to some VIP's and made infalsifiable.

VI. UNITED NATIONS (UN) REFORM

253. The 4th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union endorsed Decision EX.CL/Dec.186 (VI) of the 6th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, that established an open-ended Committee of 15 "to consider all aspects of the recommendations contained in the Report of the High Level Panel on the Reform of the United Nations system, particularly the Reform of the Security Council with a view to elaborating a Common African Position".

254. The Committee of 15 met from 20th – 22nd February, 2005, in Ezulwini, Swaziland, at the kind invitation of the authorities of the Kingdom of Swaziland and adopted the Ezulwini Consensus embracing a Common African Position on the proposed reform of the United Nations (UN).

255. The Ezulwini Consensus elucidated the African perspective on collective security and the challenge of conflict prevention, on collective security and the use of force and the institutional reform of the UN. In particular, it also spelt out what Africa would like to see happen with regard to the proposed UN Security Council reforms.

256. The Ezulwini Consensus was reviewed and adopted by the 7th Extra-ordinary Session of the Executive Council held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 7th – 8th March, 2005, upon delegation of power by the Assembly. The Executive Council also established a Follow-up Mechanism on the Reform of the United Nations comprising the Core Group of Three, including the Chairperson of the Executive Council, Chairperson of the Ezulwini Meeting, and the Chairperson of the Commission and a Committee of 10 members (made up of two representatives from each region).

257. The Follow-up Mechanism met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 13th May 2005 to examine the Report of the Secretary-General on UN Reform entitled "In larger freedom; towards development, security and human rights for all" in the light of the Ezulwini Consensus and subsequently in Abuja, Nigeria, on 9th June, 2005, to examine the Report of the President of the UN General Assembly on proposals of UN Reform and again in Sirte, Libya, on the eve of the Assembly meeting to consider its report to the Assembly and the way forward.

258. The Report of the Mechanism was presented by its Chairman and Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Ambassador Olu Adeniji, to the Fifth Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Sirte, Libya, on 4th – 5th July, 2005. The Assembly re-affirmed its strong

commitment to the Ezulwini Consensus and its determination to ensure its success in the Sirte Declaration on the Reform of the United Nations. It also authorised the submission of a draft Resolution to the UN General Assembly reflecting the common African position. Furthermore, it expanded the Mechanism to include an additional representative for each region. It also mandated the Follow-up Mechanism as expanded to negotiate with other regions of the world and stakeholders and to take necessary measures that would permit the attainment of Africa's aspirations as enunciated in the Ezulwini Consensus, bearing in mind the necessity for reciprocal support from other interested groups and within the framework of achieving the provisions of the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration.

259. The Mechanism submitted a report on its efforts in this regard to the Fourth Extra-Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 4th August, 2005. It recommended that the African Union should co-sponsor a common and harmonised resolution with the G4 that will have a reasonable chance of getting support in order to sustain the momentum for the reform of the UN Security Council. The harmonise resolution will drop the demand for veto for new members and include the creation of a 26th non-permanent seat which will be rotated among Africa, Asia and South America and the Caribbean to ensure non-alienation of support from the two developing regions especially Asia.

260. The Assembly did not approve the proposal of the Follow-Mechanism for a common and harmonized Resolution with the G4. The Assembly re-affirmed its commitment to the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration and Draft Resolution to the General Assembly on the Reform of the United Nations. It also re-affirmed the need for equal attention to be given to various aspects of the UN Reform agenda including issues of development, reform of the General Assembly, Ecosoa, the Human Rights Commission and democratization of Breton Woods Institution.

261. Finally, the Assembly decided to establish a Committee of Ten (10) Heads of State and Government (two per region) to be co-ordinated by the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, with the mandate to present, advocate and canvass support for the African Draft Resolution to all other regions of the world as well as interested groups with a view to achieving the provisions of the Ezulwini Consensus as well as the Sirte Declaration and Resolution and submit a Report and appropriate recommendations thereon to the Chairperson of the Assembly. It also requested the Chairperson of the Assembly, thereafter, to submit a Report to an Extra-Ordinary Session of the Assembly to be held on the margins of the UN General Assembly in September, 2005.

262. The Committee met for the first time together on 13th September, 2005 at the African Union Secretariat in New York. The Co-ordinator, Alhaji Dr. Tejan Kabbah, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, outlined the various measures he had taken to implement the mandate of the Committee as well as the difficulties encountered in the process that prevented an earlier meeting. The Committee agreed that it required more time for the implementation of its mandate and that the need to hold a 5th Extra-Ordinary Session of the Assembly as envisaged in Addis Ababa was no longer appropriate. It decided that it would be necessary to consult with the Chairperson of the Assembly, through the Co-ordinator, on how to proceed and in this regard to recommend that the tenure of the Committee be extended, to enable it to fulfil its mandate within the framework of an appropriate timeline for effective implementation. The Committee also resolved to employ all means at its disposal at three levels, including Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives in New York,

responsible Ministers and the Heads of States and Governments to support the implementation of the mandate given to it in Addis Ababa so as to enable it to report back to the Chairperson of the Assembly and to contribute to the Extra-Ordinary Session of the Assembly as envisaged in Addis Ababa on 4th August, 2004.

263. Following consultations with the Chairperson of the Assembly, agreement was reached on the extension of the period of the mandate of the Committee to enable its effective implementation. Thereafter the Committee submitted its report to the Fifth Extra-Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 31st October, 2005.

264. In his report to the Assembly, the Co-ordinator informed Summit colleagues that consultations have shown that the United States of America, the Peoples Republic of China, the United Kingdom and France supported the African positions and that there was therefore sufficient grounds to give a mandate to Foreign Ministers to continue the negotiations, including the tabling of a resolution to the General Assembly.

265. The Assembly took note of the Report and commended the Committee of Ten for the work it had done so far. It then mandated the Follow-up Mechanism as expanded to submit, at the appropriate time, a Resolution on the Common African Position as embodied in the Sirte Declaration and Resolution to the General Assembly of the United Nations for adoption and to continue to present, canvass, advocate and seek support for the Common African Position with all other regions of the world within the framework of the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration and Resolution. It also requested the Follow-up Mechanism to keep the Chairperson of the African Union informed of its progress.

266. The next meeting of the expanded Follow-up Mechanism on the Reform of the UN was held in Bamako, Mali, on 2nd December 2005 on the sidelines of the Africa – France Summit to discuss the implementation of the Decision of the Fifth Extra-Ordinary Summit of the Assembly of the Union on 31st October, 2005. The meeting decided to submit the African Resolution to the UN General Assembly immediately. The Commission received a directive from the Chairperson of the Union to do so and it complied forthwith.

267. Subsequently, the Draft Resolution was submitted to the UN General Assembly in the spirit of the directives of Bamako and the AU Commission. However, it is yet at the tabling stage and no date has been fixed for the General Assembly decision on it.

VII. CONCLUSION

268. The democratic transformation, which was set in motion a few years ago by Africa, continues with great difficulty, with its ups and downs. What should be emphasized is the declared will of our leaders to make the process irreversible. That was the task the Commission focused on and pursued during the period under review. The involvement of States through the promotion of democracy and good governance, and above all the peoples of Africa, through the appropriation of the process has proven to be particularly decisive in this regard.

269. In the area of human rights, democratic advances observed in the Continent allowed significant progress to be made. However, there is still a lot left to be done, particularly with regard to the respect of human rights in conflict situations as evidenced by the atrocities committed against civilian populations in Darfur and in the East of the Democratic Republic

of Congo. Generally, despite efforts made here and there, progress still has to be made in the area of human rights, which should not be perceived simply from a political and security, but also the socio-economic, angle.

270. The humanitarian situation remains a source of concern in the Continent in spite of the respites brought about by the successful completion of peace processes. Efforts made by the governments and organizations concerned towards repatriation and resettlement have not received the desired material and financial support. There is a need for greater commitment to assist the populations that are victims of intolerance, conflicts and natural or man-made disasters.

HUMAN RESOURCES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

271. The mandate of the Human resource, Science and Technology activities of the Commission includes the following 3 main core programmes: Education for sustainable development and African integration; Youth empowerment and capacity building development; Development and popularization of Science and Technology.

I. EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND AFRICAN INTEGRATION:

A. DECADE OF EDUCATION FOR AFRICA

272. The first Decade of Education in Africa was declared in Yaoundé in 1996 to ensure universal access to primary education to African children that should promote African Human resource and the right to education. Evaluating the Decade after some years of implementation became a necessity for Africa in order to improve its capacity and prepare itself to meet the EFA goals in 2015. Thus, with financial support from UNESCO, and expertise of two consultants, the Department carried out an evaluation of the Decade of Education for Africa. The process involved literature review and mailing questionnaire to every Member State, and eight Economic Communities. A Technical Committee of the Decade of Education critically discussed the outputs of the evaluation exercise, in a meeting held in Addis Ababa from October 20-21 2005.

273. According to the evaluation report, much has been done towards increasing access to basic education in Africa. Nevertheless, enrolment in primary education has increased tremendously at the expense of quality, and without commensurate investments in secondary and tertiary education, and teacher training. The proposal for a Second Decade of Education for Africa takes into account the gains made so far and seeks to avoid the pitfalls of the first Decade. A draft plan of action for the Second Decade has been developed.

B. REVITALISING HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA

274. Quality education at higher level is an unavoidable avenue to African access to higher technology and highly qualified human resource. Due to lack of means, regional integration and innovative programmes, most African higher education systems are lagging behind in the context of international innovation and sustainable development and has to be revitalized. A situational analysis of higher education in Africa, as a background document for discussion has been prepared by the Commission. The document provides an

understanding of the current debates in Higher Education in Africa and identifies activities that can be immediately implemented. The document was discussed at the Experts Meeting on Revitalization of Higher Education in Africa in Midrand, South Africa, from 27-28th October 2005, with financial support from DfID of UK and hosting support from the NEPAD Secretariat. The experts came up with the following preliminary recommendations: capitalize on existing regional program initiative; empower existing structures and strengthen the regional instruments for quality assurance, accreditation and recognition of qualifications and promote adoption of related international instruments and guidelines. The meetings endorsed the principle of establishing a permanent AU Higher Education Expert Group to support the AUC.

C. MWALIMU NYERERE AU SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME

275. Scholarship programmes is one of the innovative tools that will enable the AUC programme to address directly the needs of African people in the field of human resource development and local job creation. Thus, in an interdepartmental collaboration, the Commission has developed a proposal for The Mwalimu Nyerere African Union Scholarship Scheme. This Scheme will provide some resources to promote access to tertiary education in fields of study that are critical to the development of Africa. The AU acknowledges that science and technology are critical to industrialization and the development of innovative products in Africa. The Mwalimu Nyerere Scholarship programme will thus initially target young people wishing to pursue their training in various fields of science and technology. The Programme will, however, provide space for sponsorship for studies in other fields which Member States may wish to encourage. In other words, the Mwalimu Scholarship Programme will be an umbrella program to which Member States can contribute towards the study of Science and technology or may contribute funding for other fields of study.

276. The Scheme will provide scholarship to meritorious African young men and women, to study at good African Universities. Students are expected to commit to working within Africa for at least five to ten years after graduation. It is proposed that the Scheme will be managed by a Secretariat to be established in 2006. An AU Scholarship Committee has been set up to oversee the implementation of the Scheme and act as a 'think tank' and as the final selection committee.

D. INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN'S EDUCATION IN AFRICA (CIEFFA)

277. The Third Ordinary Session of the African Union Assembly, which was held in Addis Ababa from 6 to 8 July 2005, welcomed "the establishment and operationalization of CIEFFA under the aegis of UNESCO" and approved "the principle of making CIEFFA an institution for the entire continent under the aegis of the AU". In its decision, the Assembly further requested the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, in collaboration with UNESCO Director General "and other partners interested in the mission objectives of CIEFFA", to carry out studies on CIEFFA and how it should work in future under the aegis of the African Union.

278. Steps are being taken by the Commission to implement such an important decision of the Heads of State and Government and the issue of CIEFFA is on the agenda of the 1st

Extraordinary Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Education scheduled for 13 –15 January 2006 prior to the Summit.

II. HUMAN RESOURCES AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

A. PAN AFRICAN YOUTH CHARTER

279. In order to promote a technical and legal framework for the empowerment of African youth, the AUC has made the development of a new Pan African Youth Charter its priority. In this regard, the Commission, in collaboration with UNFPA, appointed a consultant to produce the draft of a Pan African Youth Charter. The adopted methodology is an interactive approach, that will allow the involvement of different actors and the appropriation and the implementation of the final document will be easier and more effective. In this regard, to collect the needed information for the situation analysis and the development of the Charter, a questionnaire has been prepared and finalized with the inputs of different leaders of principal youth organizations, Pan African Organizations and some other youth movements. The questionnaire has been submitted to them to be filled. The first draft of the Charter has been completed and input by youth representatives was made at a Pre-Summit Youth Forum, which was held in Addis Ababa from the 5th – 7th January 2006.

B. FORMATION OF THE YOUTH FEDERATION

280. Youth Organizations are increasing and understandably are being created all over the continent. Each of them is seeking contact with the African Union Commission. This fragmented communication with the African Union is neither representative nor effective especially as the basis for communication for the implementation of the new Pan-African Youth Charter. The AU needs a credible and representative continental youth organization as its partner in making the Pan African Youth Charter a reality. It is important therefore to create a coordinated organization that represents the interests of all African youth organizations.

281. A concept paper for the formation of the Pan African Youth Federation has been developed and will be discussed together with the Pan-African Youth Charter at a Youth Forum to be held prior to Youth Ministers' conference in March 2006.

III. CAPACITY BUILDING, VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION AREAS

282. Capacity building, vocational and technical education development are key issues for the holistic development of African human resource and quality education. The Commission has conducted documentary survey about vocational and technical education.

283. A concept paper has been drafted and a survey is being conducted through questionnaire. The objective of the survey is to know more about vocational and technical Education programmes Member States have put in place and the impact on youth development as well as the link between the training and the labour market. The documentary survey shows a very good German experience in this area and the Commission started negotiation with GTZ for co-operation through technical and financial support.

IV. POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION DEVELOPMENT (PCRD)

284. African Youth are used as instrument and actors for conflict, not only as individuals, but also as a group. It's easy to recruit them as rioters or soldiers, because most of them are unskilled, unemployed or uneducated. By providing them with alternative mode of livelihood, it is possible to prevent them from being used to destabilize situations; and, in order to guarantee a lasting peace, Youth populations should be given the best possible chance, through formal education, alternative education and qualitative technical training and skills development for their own life and in the social and economic interests of their countries.

285. Through an interdepartmental collaboration, the Commission had developed an AU Programme for peace and security maintenance in the post-conflict countries and post-conflict reconstruction. The programme will include proposal to empower Youth in the reconstruction process through vocational and technical training and entrepreneurship, through life skills development, including literacy training for demobilized young combatants. The planned activities are related to concrete reconstruction skills such as bricklaying, electricians, carpentry, which will be used in rebuilding of houses, schools, etc. The programme will also include the transfer of traditional craft skills from adults to youth, which are usually lost in situations of instability.

V. DEVELOPMENT AND POPULARIZATION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN AFRICA

A. ICT & WORLD SUMMIT ON INFORMATION SOCIETY

286. The Tunis Phase of the Summit, which was held from 16-18 November 2005, gathered 24,000 participants, including 50 Head of States and Governments. 49 African countries participated in the Summit, which adopted 2 documents, namely the "Tunis Commitment" and the "Tunis Agenda for the Information Society". The 3 major decisions of the Tunis Phase are related to financial mechanisms, Internet governance and Implementation and Follow up. African countries were significantly represented at the Summit, having heeded the call made at the July Summit of Heads of State and Governments for a strong African participation. An interdepartmental team led by the Chairperson participated in the Summit; the full report is on the Agenda of Executive.

B. HARMONIZATION OF AU & NEPAD S&T PROGRAMME

287. Following the decision reached through the consultations between the delegations of the AUC led by the Commissioner for Social Affairs, acting for the Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology, on one hand, and the NEPAD Secretariat led by the Chairman of NEPAD Steering Committee, on the other hand, a consultant was appointed to develop a framework for the harmonization of the AU and NEPAD S&T programmes. The brief has been satisfactorily completed and the study identified the following issues relating to the harmonization of the two programmes:

Commonality of Vision between AUC and NEPAD S&T Programmes

288. It was established that the Action Plans of the NEPAD S&T Forum and the programme of work of the AU/HRST Portfolio are complementary and the commonality of vision, mission and programme objectives provides a basis of harmonizing, coordinating and integrating their programmes and accelerating the realization of their common vision and objectives.

289. For the AU, the study identified the following responsibilities: Political Leadership; Policy Directions & Guidance; Advocacy vis-à-vis African States; facilitating dissemination of information on African science and technology development through the Member States; Coordinating representation of Africa's interests and position in negotiations in international arena;

290. For NEPAD S&T Office, the study identified the following roles and responsibilities: Leadership in Technical and Operational Matters; Facilitating Conceptualization, design and implementation of policies and programmes; Identifying and promoting continental programmes; Advocacy vis-à-vis the Network members and other Technical Bodies and stakeholders of Science and Technology including the private sector; Establishing and promoting effective platforms for collaboration within and between programme networks

C. CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

291. The second Conference of Ministers of Science and Technology was held in Dakar, Senegal from the 29 – 30 September 2005 to consider the above-mentioned Consolidated Plan of Action. According to the rules of procedure adopted by the Ministers, the chair changes every two years and a new bureau of Ministers is elected. Senegal as the host country assumed the chair of the Ministers' Conference and a new bureau consisting of Senegal, Congo, Ethiopia, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Nigeria was elected. As the host of NEPAD, South Africa was retained in both the Steering Committee and the Ministerial Bureau as member without voting rights. Ministers adopted Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action. The full report is on the Agenda of the Executive Council.

D. BIOSAFETY AND BIOTECHNOLOGY PROGRAMME

a. AU Project on Capacity Building in Biosafety

292. Agriculture and natural resource development remain fundamental basis for sustainable development and food security for Africa. Thus, with the financial and technical support from the GTZ, the Commission has established a biotechnology panel and a Biosafety programme that are assigned to develop African Biosecurity capacity building and the concrete application of the AUC framework agreement on Biosecurity. In collaboration with the GTZ, 2 permanent consultants have been recruited to conduct the AUC Biosafety programme. Planning for the project has been done and implementation will start in the New Year.

b. Establishment of the high-level biotechnology panel

293. The Chairperson of the AUC has established a High Level African Panel on Biotechnology (APB). This is a body of eminent experts and opinion leaders established by

AU/NEPAD to provide comprehensive advice on current policy issues associated with the ethical, social, regulatory, economic, scientific, environmental and health aspects of biotechnology, including genetic engineering. This output of the Panel will finally take the form of an African Common Position on Biotechnology and it will be presented in 2006. The panel was inaugurated on 29 August 2005 and it held its first meeting then.

SOCIAL AFFAIRS

I. AFRICA'S SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

294. At the invitation of the Chairperson of the Committee on Health, Labour and Social Affairs of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the Commission through its Department of Social Affairs was involved in the development of the Strategic Plan of the Committee, in Midrand, South Africa, September 2005. Among its programmes, the Committee intends to prioritize promoting child survival, control of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, and control of conflicts and mitigation of their impact. The involvement of the Department of Social Affairs was called for because it is important for the Committee on Health, Labour and Social Affairs of the PAP and the Department to harmonize their programmes and activities; as they both work towards the same goal: promotion of the welfare of African populations.

295. Social Development covers multi-dimensional, cross-cutting and inter-linked issues related to the pursuit of life; involving the individual, family, community, society at large and the state. Social issues guide human actions and interactions, and influence culture and dynamism in society; and thus form a pattern or base from which other sectors arise. The family, the core of society, is the means by which communities and populations are kept intact. Furthermore, the measure or indicators for political and socio-economic development largely depend on the social welfare of the people, as was reaffirmed by the choice of the Millennium Development Goals which are all directly or indirectly related to social development.

296. In spite of this, the Social sector is still generally the first casualty of budgetary constraints in Member States and also has limited visibility. However, in the face of an emergency, disaster or communicable disease epidemic, the welfare of the people becomes paramount, when it is usually too late for many. So, it is to raise awareness to these concerns and to underscore the fundamental role social development plays in overall development, that the Commission is working closely with Member States, Civil Society Organizations, UN Agencies and other development partners. The goal is to promote the well-being of all African populations.

II. LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

A. EMPLOYMENT CREATION AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

297. Employment creation remains one of the major development objectives in Africa as it is seen to be one of the main strategies for fighting poverty. Consequently, sustainable wealth and job creation are vital for national well-being and competitiveness. Poverty reduction comes about when individuals, families and communities take advantage of the opportunities available to them by working, investing and innovating to better their lives. Africa is currently experiencing its best economic performance in many years but due to

factors such as the shift to knowledge-intensive economy and the restraints of globalisation, the number of jobs being created in Africa continues to decrease. Poverty is endemic in Africa and is manifested in multiple ways and the trend of deepening poverty is growing. Africa's plan to meet this challenge head-on emanates from the African Union Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation which was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The Plan of Action includes, inter alia, ideas on how to revitalize the agricultural sector, a backbone to Africa's mostly rural economies, and how to regulate and adequately compensate those engaged in informal work, particularly women. A monitoring commission led by the AU would chart the progress of each country towards fulfilling the plan and managing a database of employment statistics to better track how best to disburse aid for job creation.

298. The Heads of State designated Member States and Regional Economic Communities as the principal bodies responsible for the implementation of the Declaration and the Plan of Action on Employment and Poverty Alleviation; and the AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission as the coordinator of the implementing mechanism. Member States in collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), are expected to submit biennial progress reports on the status of the implementation to the AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission and the Commission of the AU prepares a comprehensive Evaluation Report in 2009 and 2014. The Summit also called on the UN bodies, international financial institutions, regional and continental banks to adopt greater policy coherence and increase support to the employment agenda within the context of national and other development strategies.

299. During the period under review, the Commission organized the AU/RECs Consultative Meeting, which took place in Addis Ababa on the 27-28th September 2005. The Consultative Meeting was a joint initiative by the AU Commission and ILO, and aimed at strengthening and enhancing cooperation between the AU Commission and RECs on the outcome of Ouagadougou Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on Employment and Poverty Alleviation. In this regard, the Heads of State had committed themselves to enhance the capacity of RECs to promote the productive employment dimension within the framework of regional and inter-regional cooperation. The Consultative Meeting was attended by the following members of the Bureau of the AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission (LSAC): South Africa – Chairperson, and Benin - Rapporteur. The meeting was also attended by the following Regional, Continental and International organizations; COMESA, ECOWAS, ECCAS, CEN-SAD, SADC, PEC, International Partners: ILO, UNESCO, UNFPA, WHO, IOM and ECA. The Consultative meeting achieved its expected outcome, through the adoption of the following: Guidelines to Member States and RECs on the follow-up to the AU Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa, Reporting format and the Roadmap for immediate actions.

300. The Commission also organized the 2nd Bureau Meeting of the 3rd Ordinary Session of Labour and Social Affairs Commission, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the 26 September 2005. The purpose of the meeting was to review the recommendations adopted at the 3rd Ordinary Session of LSAC for implementation as well as to prepare the Provisional Agenda of the 4th Ordinary session of LSAC. The meeting also considered other issues related to follow-up and reporting on the recommendations of the 3rd LSAC. Among others, the meeting expressed deep concern about the poor implementation of decisions by Member States. The meeting recommended that Member State be reminded of their responsibilities.

Member States who have submitted their reports should be commended and motivated to continue doing so.

III. SOCIAL WELFARE

A. CHILD SURVIVAL, PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT

301. Ensuring the survival, protection and development of the African child are among the main challenges of the continent. The increasing number of child soldiers, orphans, children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, child-headed households, marginalized, abused and neglected children cannot be overlooked and is raising a lot of concerns world-wide. A number of international and regional meetings have been convened to address these problems and come up with strategies to deal with them. However, a lot still remains to be done to implement these strategies at national and regional levels. The Commission has continued its endeavour to promote the rights of the child and lobby for the ratification of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. However, to-date only 37 out of the 53 Member States have ratified the African Charter. An urgent appeal is therefore made to those Member States which have not yet done so, to expedite the ratification process of the Charter.

302. Attaining the MDG 4 on reducing child mortality and morbidity is yet another issue on which the AU Commission is focussing. In this regard, the Commission is working in close collaboration with UNICEF and other stakeholders in ensuring the implementation of Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.75(V), adopted in July 2005, on "Accelerating Action for Child Survival and Development in Africa to Meet the MDGs". With regard to violence against children, the Commission participated in and made a presentation at the Regional Consultation for Eastern and Southern Africa on the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children organized by UNICEF and the South African Government in July 2005. The outcome of the meeting was to be fed in the general report being prepared by the UN Special Expert on Violence against Children.

B. AFRICAN COMMON POSITION ON CHILDREN – AFRICA FIT FOR CHILDREN

303. It will be recalled that an African Common Position on Children was adopted in 2001 to constitute Africa's contribution to the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children (UNGASS). The Common Position which is also meant to be implemented at national level contains fundamental issues which demand action at various levels. It provides a framework for a coordinated, comprehensive and concerted approach to raise the commitment of Governments and other stakeholders to identify priority actions to be undertaken for the well-being of children in Africa. As mandated in the Plan of Action, the Commission is preparing for the mid-term review meeting to be held in 2006 to assess the level of implementation of the Common Position and chart the way forward. Member States are called upon to submit reports to the Commission on achievements made in the implementation of the Plan of Action.

C. AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD

304. The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child which was established in 2001, to monitor the implementation of the provisions of the African Charter, held its 7th Meeting in Addis Ababa from 19-21 December, 2005. During that meeting the six new Members who were elected by the Heads of State and Government in Sirte in July 2005, were sworn in. Among others, the Committee adopted its guidelines for considering the State Parties' Reports as well as its Plan of Action for the period 2005-2009. The Commission would like to commend the Governments of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Republic of Mauritius for forwarding their reports for the consideration of the Committee. Other State Parties to the Charter, whose reports are due, are called upon to follow suit and submit their reports.

D. AFRICAN DECADE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (1999-2009)

305. The plight of people with disabilities has continued to raise concern on the continent. While people with disabilities want to assert their rights and be part of the socio-economic development of their countries, they remain the most vulnerable and marginalized group of the society. In its effort to advocate for the implementation of the African Decade of Disabled Persons, the Commission in collaboration with the African Rehabilitation Institute (ARI), has continued to promote the Plan of Action of the Decade. In September 2005, the Commission and the ARI organized jointly with the African Decade Secretariat, an International Partners Meeting on the African Decade in Addis Ababa. The main objective of the meeting was to create an opportunity for the sharing of information on work already undertaken for the implementation of the Decade by the African Union Commission, ARI, the Decade Secretariat and its Partners, as well as initiatives undertaken by national governments and other organizations. The meeting also afforded an opportunity to Partner organizations to plan together strategies for promoting the Decade as well as providing support to ARI and the Decade Secretariat for the implementation of the activities of the Decade. Preparations are also underway to convene a mid-decade meeting next year to assess progress made in implementing the Plan of Action and develop strategies for achieving the goals of the Decade for the remaining years.

E. PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF THE AGED AND AGEING

306. During the last decade, there was a rapid increase of older people in developing countries due to a number of reasons such as civil strifes, armed conflicts, the HIV/AIDS pandemic as well as various socio-economic challenges. These older people are the most vulnerable and lack the basic as well as social security services. In tackling the challenges facing the ageing population, the Commission has been focusing on the implementation of the AU Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing, which was adopted by the Durban Summit in 2002. In this regard, all Member States are expected to utilize the Plan of Action when formulating national programmes and strategies on ageing. With a view to effectively monitor the implementation process of the Plan of Action and in conformity with the Plan of Action, preparations are underway to develop modalities for the establishment of an Advisory Council on Ageing. The Advisory Council would be responsible for the monitoring, implementation and follow-up of the Plan of Action. The Council is also expected to co-ordinate research on ageing throughout the continent and disseminate this information to national and regional organisations responsible for research and policy implementation.

IV. HEALTH, NUTRITION AND POPULATION

A. SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

307. Women and children bear the brunt of the burden of disease in Africa. Death rates among infants, children and pregnant women are highest on our continent. It was in this connection that, the AU Commission launched an aggressive campaign for the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in the Continent. The Department of Social Affairs, in an effort to accelerate the achievement of the health-related MDGs developed a Continental Sexual and Reproductive Health Framework. This was a follow-up on Regional Meetings jointly organized with the IPPF/Africa Region, and the collaborative effort with WHO/AFRO on the development of roadmap to accelerate the reduction of maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality in Africa. The latter is to be implemented within the proposed strategy. The Policy Framework was presented to the 2nd Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Health (CAHM2) in Gaborone, Botswana in October 2005. The initiative of the AU Commission to contribute to the reduction of maternal and child mortality, HIV/AIDS and other sexual and reproductive health challenges was commended by the African Ministers of Health. Regarding the proposal to integrate SRH and HIV/AIDS, the Ministers called for a Special Session before CAHM3 to detail the linkages between SRH and HIV/AIDS and other Primary Health Care services. This will be held in Maputo in 2006.

B. POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

308. The linkage between demographic dynamics and sustainable development continues to be one of the preoccupations or priority areas of the African Union Commission. During 2005, Commission embarked upon revitalizing the African Population Commission (APC) and strengthening its Secretariat. Accordingly, the APC is now being served by a one-Institute Secretariat, that is, the AU Commission, as recommended by the Fifth General Assembly of the APC and further endorsed by the Executive Council as well as the Sirte AU Assembly of July 2005.

309. The various activities being carried out by the Bureau of the APC and the Secretariat include, among others:

- Identifying of Priority Action Lines for 2006-2007 in the field of population and development;
- Preparation of a detailed plan of action for the Bureau and the Secretariat;
- Convening of the First Bureau Meeting of the APC which took place in September 2005 in Bloemfontein, South Africa;
- Elaboration of a programme and concept note for organizing sub-regional fora on population and development issues to be held in the course of 2006. The theme proposed for these sub-regional fora is "Reproductive Health and Safe Motherhood in the Context of the MDGs";

C. AFRICAN REGIONAL NUTRITIONAL STRATEGY (ARNS): 2005-2015

310. In June 1993, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government endorsed the document, which among other things, urged Member States to mobilize and allocate adequate domestic resources towards achieving the objectives of the African Regional Nutrition Strategy (ARNS). Indeed many Member States utilized the ARNS to develop their respective National Plans of Action on Nutrition (NPAN) based on individual country's socio-economic circumstances.

311. However, due to the general stagnation or decline of most Africa's economies, poverty rates accelerated, health systems deteriorated and agricultural performance – especially food production, became worse. Furthermore, the disease-burden increased, while civil conflicts erupted in many parts of the continent and droughts became more frequent. During the same period HIV/AIDS emerged and quickly became pandemic on the continent. All these factors contributed to the reversal of the gains made to improve nutrition.

312. It was in this context that ARNS 1993-2003 had to be revised. The main purpose of the revision was to re-emphasize that nutrition is a basic input in poverty alleviation strategies and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The revised ARNS was presented to the 2nd Ordinary Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Health (CAMH2), and adopted as amended. It is presented separately for endorsement.

D. THE 2ND SESSION OF THE AU CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF HEALTH (CAMH2)

313. The 2nd Ordinary Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Health was held on 10 – 14 October 2005 in Gaborone, Botswana. The theme of this conference was "*Sustainable Access to Treatment and Care for the Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals*". The issues discussed at this conference included:

- Report on the Implementation of the recommendations of CAMH1 (Tripoli)
- Consideration of Revised African Regional Nutrition Strategy 2005-2015
- Local Drug Production capacity in Africa
- Trips and WTO and the production of generics
- Health Research and Access to Essential Drugs
- Health Systems Strengthening
- Review and Discussion of Draft Policy Framework on Reproductive Health.
- The Bamako Initiative on Essential Medicines and Traditional Medicines In The Africa Region.

314. The outcome of the Conference is presented separately on the Agenda of the Executive Council for consideration.

E. THE EXPERT CONSULTATION TO REVIEW THE BAMAKO INITIATIVE (BI) ON ESSENTIAL MEDICINES AND ON AFRICAN TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

315. The Bamako Initiative was launched within the context of Primary Health Care (PHC) as emphasized by the Alma Ata Declaration of 1978. It was realized that focusing on District Health Systems would be the best strategy of implementing Alma Ata Declaration; and Bamako Initiative (BI) would be the technical aspect of the process in Africa. However, specific concerns within the context of the BI programme were the potential for inequitable access to PHC services because of user charges, community financing, integration of the BI activities with the rest of the health system and management and logistic difficulties associated with community-based revolving drug funds. The rest were focused on drugs as the main strategy for cost recovery efforts and problems of sustainability and dependency. The question remains whether the BI program had achieved its objectives of ensuring efficiency and equity in PHC.

316. The Expert Consultation on Bamako Initiative (BI) on Essential Medicines and on African Traditional Medicine was thus held at the AU Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 5 – 7 September, 2005. The meeting was attended by 11 experts invited on their own merit due to their knowledge and experience in the fields of BI and traditional medicine. In addition, other experts came from WHO, East African Community (EAC), SADC, WAHO/ECOWAS and the AU.

317. With regard to essential medicines, reference was made to the Decision adopted in Abuja in January 2005, whereby the African Heads of State and Government reaffirmed AU Member States commitment to invest in health. The challenges that remain include an increase in the disease burden; lack of access to essential medicines; limited public financing; and constraints in the health delivery system. Moreover, due to economic decline, the majority of the population lives below the poverty line and the result is that diseases, which had been controlled previously, re-emerged with higher consequences on people's life. It was also observed that Health and supply systems in most countries are overwhelmed, inadequately financed, poorly managed and are not able to adequately respond to public health needs. The Recommendations of the Consultation were presented to CAMH2 for consideration.

F. THE DECADE OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

318. African Traditional Medicine is the mainstay of primary health care for the majority of those in the rural areas in Africa (According to WHO about 80% of the population revert to traditional medicine when taken ill).

319. It is within this context that, the Assembly of OAU Heads of States and Government, at the Summit in July 2001 in Lusaka, Zambia, declared the period 2001-2010 as the OAU Decade for African Traditional Medicine. The Lusaka decision requested the OAU Secretary-General in collaboration with WHO and other interested stockholders to assist OAU Member states to elaborate a Plan of Action, to provide a general framework to guide

Member States in formulating respective national strategies. The Plan of Action was developed as well as the Mechanism for Monitoring and Reporting. The Plan of Action was adopted by the First Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Health, which was held in April 2003 in Tripoli, Libya. In this context AUC is collaborating with WHO/AFRO to develop a strategy for the promotion of TMs on the continent by promoting research to document TMs that are safe and efficacious to protect the many people who rely on TMs as well as to reduce the pressure from the cost of modern allopathic medicines.

320. The African Traditional Medicine Day was celebrated on August 31, 2005 in an endeavour to promote the rational utilization of traditional medicine.

G. THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATIONS (WTO), TRADE RELATED INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (TRIPS) AND DOHA DECLARATION AND THE PRODUCTION OF GENERIC DRUGS

321. In some African regions, such as in the East African Community, discussions are going on about changes in patent laws to make use of TRIPS flexibilities. At the EAC meeting convened by the health sector, issues discussed centred on lack of coordination between institutions within a country to harmonize varying legal and sectoral interests in reviewing patent laws, lack of pharmaceutical production capacity, patent laws which do not take advantage of the flexibility provided by TRIPS and DOHA, inadequate access to essential medicines and the need for harmonized pharmaceutical regulations and procedures within the region.

322. The AUC is currently collaborating with WHO/AFRO to urge Africa to take advantage of TRIPS flexibilities. A Consultant has just been engaged to develop a strategy for the operationalization of local drug production in the African continent.

323. Suggestions for improving the document included the use of the current situation, which is different from what was there when BI was adopted. Now there is regionalization; EHP is not the same due to HIV; issues of corruption, globalisation and WTO/TRIPS should all feature in the write-up. It was also suggested that the document should be sent to RECs for further input. There was also need to popularise the Bamako Initiative at Member States level all the way to the community level.

H. THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV/AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS, MALARIA AND OTHER INFECTIOUS DISEASES

324. During the period under review, the Commission focused on mobilizing continental and global efforts for the fight against these diseases, which together, continue to be a major challenge to Africa's socio-economic development. In this regard, the Commission has continued to build on continental and international partnerships to play its role of advocacy, coordination, harmonization, monitoring and regional integration. In collaboration with WHO and UNAIDS, the Progress Report on the Implementation of the Plans of Action on the 2001 Abuja Declarations on Malaria, HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases was prepared for consideration by the 2nd Session of the Conference of African Ministers of Health (Gaborone, October 2005). The Report concluded that even if a lot has been achieved at all levels to reverse the situation, a lot more remains to be done due to the intensifying poverty and disease burden, inadequate health delivery systems and various other challenges to contend with.

325. Within the framework of its mandated role and to accelerate efforts to implement the commitments of Heads of State and Government, action is proceeding with implementation of the Commission HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan which is based on six objectives: Leadership and advocacy, Accountability, Harmonization and Coordination, Mobilizing Human Resources and Capacity Strengthening, Programme Priorities, and Mobilizing Financial Resources. Some of the related activities undertaken include:

- Advocacy to mobilize resources for the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM), which is reversing the tide of the burden of these diseases through promotion of access to prevention, treatment, care and support.
- Follow-up on the implementation of the January 2005 Decision on the Interim Report on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria and Polio. A Consultant has been recruited with the support of WHO to initiate mapping on capacity for local production of affordable generic medicines for African populations. This is also in line with the Declaration of Health Ministers of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa. In the same vein, capacity for African Member States to lead in TRIPS Negotiations is being built through partnerships with African Regional Intellectual Property bodies, the WHO, WTO, World Bank and other Partners. This is important because Africa, which bears the heaviest burden of diseases, is also the poorest, and should, therefore, take advantage of flexibilities in TRIPS Agreement. Thus, more African populations will have a better chance of accessing treatment
- Convening of the Continental Forum on Human Rights and People Infected and Affected by HIV/AIDS in Addis Ababa, 29 –30 November 2005. This was in implementation of the request of African leaders at their April 2001 Abuja Summit on AIDS, TB and Other Related Infectious Diseases; proposed as a means to combat stigma, denial, discrimination and exclusion which are a hindrance to the effective response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The wide range of participants came out with the Framework for Harmonization of Approaches to Human Rights for People Infected and Affected by HIV/AIDS, which will later be submitted to the AU Organs for adoption and subsequent operationalization.
- The Continental Forum culminated in a programme to mark the 1 December 2005 World AIDS Day on the theme “Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise”. The theme is relevant because so many commitments have been repeatedly adopted but with poor implementation. With the mid-term review of the Declaration of Commitment of the UN Council Assembly Special Session on AIDS due, all stakeholders need to recommit themselves to do better, especially in addressing the needs of vulnerable groups. It was in this regard that the Commission participated actively in the launch by the UN Secretary General and the UNICEF Executive Director of the “Unite for Children, Unite Against AIDS” Campaign on 24 October 2005. Unless children, the future generation, are protected against HIV infection and AIDS, the world will not be free of this scourge.

- A global consultation on the status towards development of a vaccine for HIV was organized in Yaoundé, Cameroon, by the International AIDS Vaccine in Africa (IAVI) in October 2005. The AU was given specific responsibilities to coordinate. The AU Commission has supported this initiative over the years and will be actively involved in regional follow-up programmes
- The International Conference for scientists, organized by the Multilateral Initiative on Malaria (MIM) with the support and collaboration of the AU commission, was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon in Nov. 2005. In recognition of the fact that Africa needs special attention in malaria control, the MIM Secretariat has recently been relocated to Dar es Salaam, Tanzania from Stockholm, Sweden.

326. The Commission, well aware of the benefits, has continued to build on partnerships with Member State Governments and Civil Society Organizations, as well as International Development Partners in all its activities. As concerns the control of Infectious Diseases, these partners include WHO, UNAIDS, UNFPA and other co-sponsors of UNAIDS, Roll back Malaria Partnership, STOP TB Partnership and many other development partners. In this regard, the Commissioner for Social Affairs was a Member of the Global Task Team on improving AIDS Coordination Among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors which finalized its Report in June 2005. The Department is also represented on various Steering Committees on HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria; and is active in advocacy to eradicate polio.

327. It was in this connection too that the Commission participated in the 14th International Conference on AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) in Africa (ICASA) in Abuja, Nigeria from 4 – 9 December 2005; on the theme “*AIDS and the Family*”. It coincidentally occurred just a year after the 10th Anniversary of the International year of the Family, vital for effective control and mitigation of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY

328. During the period from July to December 2005, the Commission embarked on a number of activities of strategic importance in the area of infrastructure and energy. Priority was placed on the elaboration of policies and strategies in the fields of railway transport, electricity, oil and gas as well as on the implementation of specific projects aimed at the development of ICT infrastructure and services in Africa. These included the e-Governance VSAT project and the Pan-African e-Network project for tele-education and tele-medicine in cooperation with the Government of India.

329. Furthermore, in the course of strengthening cooperation with partners, the Commission participated in the consultations leading to the establishment of the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa (ICA) as part of the efforts of the G8 countries to support and accelerate development of infrastructure in Africa. In the same spirit, consultations were undertaken with the African Development Bank (ADB) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) with a view to enhancing mobilisation of technical and financial resources for the development of infrastructure in Africa.

I. TRANSPORT

A. 18th EXTRAORDINARY PLENARY SESSION OF AFCAC

330. The African Union Commission hosted the 18th Extraordinary Plenary Session of AFCAC at its Headquarters in Addis Ababa, from 7 to 8 September 2005. The purpose of the meeting was to examine the question of the financial autonomy of AFCAC and the institutional matters related to its revitalization so as to enable this specialized agency of the African Union to play its role in the development of the air transport industry in Africa. The meeting made it possible to adopt the major measures and actions to be implemented with a view to strengthening this institution.

331. Noting that some Member States have considerable arrears of contribution to the AFCAC budget, which undermines the smooth functioning of the institution, the meeting adopted a resolution calling on the States concerned to settle their arrears.

332. Concerning the autonomy of AFCAC, the meeting adopted a resolution which recommended transitional measures to make the Bureau of AFCAC operational, pending the necessary steps to be taken to enhance its capacity to generate financial resources through increased participation and involvement of Member States (secondment of staff, hosting of meetings, donations, etc.).

B. MEETING OF THE MONITORING BODY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE YAMOUSSOUKRO DECISION

333. The Commission organized the 6th Meeting of the Monitoring Body for the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision at the Headquarters of the Union in Addis Ababa on 21 October 2005. The deliberations of the meeting focused essentially on the settlement of the dispute between Egypt and Nigeria regarding air transport liberalization service agreements between the two countries.

334. The meeting recommended that the negotiation process between the two countries should continue for a two-month period.

C. MEETING OF AFRICAN AIRLINES

335. The Commission plans to convene a meeting of African airlines in Tunis with the help of the African Development Bank (ADB) and in collaboration with the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).

336. As part of the preparation of this meeting, the Commission visited the African Development Bank to enquire about the modalities of its technical and financial support to the organization of the said meeting. The Bank pledged to finance the studies for the preparation of the themes on the major problems facing the air transport sector in Africa and to contribute to the material organization of the said meeting slated for the first half of 2006.

D. AIR SAFETY

337. The First Ordinary Session of the Meeting of African Ministers responsible for Air Transport held in Sun City, South Africa in May 2005, set as a major objective in the area of air safety «*bringing down the accident rate in Africa to the worldwide average level by 2008*».

338. Considering the high frequency of incidents and accidents that occur in Africa, the most recent of which took place during the last quarter of 2005, the African Union should commit itself to mobilize as a matter of great urgency, the human and financial resources to achieve this objective within the set timeframe in order to avoid serious consequences on the African air transport industry. The African Union Commission, in coordination with the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC), will implement the appropriate measures necessary for a rigorous air safety policy in Africa.

339. In light of the above, the Commission would like to urge Member States to ensure strict observance of international conventions on safety and security standards in all aspects of their air transport systems through rigorous regulatory and enforcement regimes entailing routine and periodic inspection, certification and licensing of aircraft, airport infrastructure and facilities, navigation equipment and air traffic control systems. No efforts should be spared in strengthening the institutions responsible for air safety oversight in the Continent.

E. 37TH AFRAA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

340. The African Airlines Association (AFRAA) held its 37th Annual General Assembly in Sun City (South Africa) from 14 to 15 November 2005. The objectives of AFRAA are perfectly in line with the concerns of the African Union in terms of integration, particularly through the establishment of a harmonious and effective cooperation among African airlines, with a view to speeding up the economic and social integration of African countries. It was against this background that the Commission took part in the above Annual Assembly.

341. The African Union Commission was called upon to ensure the speedy implementation of the Special Resolution of African Ministers of Air Transport adopted in Sun City in May 2005, aimed at accelerating the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision, namely:

- the elaboration of a common African position in response to the air transport policy of the European Union which decided to negotiate en bloc with individual African countries; and
- the drafting of competition rules.

342. The African Union Commission should of necessity strengthen its capacities to enable it, as the Chair of the Monitoring Body for the Implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision, to fully play its role.

F. MEETING OF A GROUP OF EXPERTS ON RAILWAY TRANSPORT

343. The Commission convened a group of experts on 20 October 2005 at its headquarters to work on the numerous problems and issues constraining the development of railway transport in Africa and prepare strategies that would be presented for consideration by African ministers responsible for railway transport in their meeting planned to be held in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo in April 2006.

344. In that regard, the experts discussed and raised a number of issues considered as key to the development of the railway sector in Africa. These include:

- Interconnection of the railway networks;
- Viability of railway companies;
- Transport sectoral policies and the need for multimodal coordination;
- Financing of the railway sector; and
- The role of different actors.

345. The recommendation of the Experts will be tabled before the Ministers at their meeting of April 2006.

G. 33RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING OF THE UNION OF AFRICAN RAILWAYS

346. The Commission participated in the 33rd General Assembly meeting of the Union of African Railways (UAR), a specialised agency of the AU in railway matters, which took place in Nairobi, Kenya from 7 to 9 December 2005. The issue of financing and privatisation of African railways was considered at length with focus on the implementation of the various options for concessioning of railway companies, the experience gained so far and the future prospects.

347. The outcome of this meeting will also be one of the major inputs at the Ministerial meeting scheduled for Brazzaville in April 2006, particularly in addressing financial issues and the future of African railways.

H. FIRST MEETING OF THE MINISTERIAL FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE ON THE CONSENSUAL TRANSPORT MASTER PLAN IN CENTRAL AFRICA

348. The Ministerial Follow-up Committee on the Consensual Transport Master Plan in Central Africa held its first meeting in Libreville, Gabon, from 10 to 15 October 2005, to examine the project prioritization criteria and define actions for the implementation of the Transport Master Plan. The Commission took part in the deliberations and provided its technical assistance and expertise. It also expressed its support for the drafting of this plan which is vital for the physical integration of Central Africa.

349. The Central Africa's initiative is very much in line with that of the African Union, namely to endow the continent with an integrated transport master plan in accordance with the priority programme "Linking Africa" of the Strategic Framework of the Commission for the period 2004 – 2007.

350. At the Libreville meeting, the Ministers adopted:

- the project prioritization criteria of the Master Plan;
- the roadmap for the implementation of activities related to the Plan for 2006; and
- the Follow-up Committee budget for 2006.

351. The political, technical and financial support of the African Union is solicited for the implementation of the programme activities within the context of this Consensual Transport Master Plan of Central Africa.

I. TRANSPORT POLICY AND FACILITATION (2005 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SSATP)

352. The Commission participated in the 2005 annual meeting of the Sub-Saharan Transport Policy Programme (SSATP) in Bamako, Mali from 11 to 18 November 2005. Eighteen (18) out of thirty-two (32) SSATP member states Ministers responsible for transport also participated in the meeting. RECs as well as other public, private and civil society organisations were also in attendance. Its main objective is to initiate and promote the implementation of sound policies for the efficient development and operation of transport networks in Africa with a view to contributing to the implementation of the MDGs and poverty eradication.

353. Among the major issues broached at the meeting was the need for raising awareness and seeking high level political support, particularly for the establishment of joint border posts and the removal of the numerous road blocks along major transport corridors prevalent in West Africa which have been proven by a number of studies as raising the cost of transport significantly, particularly for landlocked countries. Intervention of the African Union is sought for successful tackling of these areas which are seen to hold the key to substantive lowering of transport costs in Africa.

J. SIXTH MEETING OF MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC WORKS OF COMESA

354. The 6th Session of this meeting was held in Alexandria, Egypt. The meeting focused on transport and communication infrastructural development programmes aimed at improving the competitiveness of the economies of the countries of this region of Africa; it made it possible to adopt the major transport priority projects to be realized and the common Information and Communication Technology policy (ICT). Special emphasis was placed on the proposed establishment of a Regional Maritime Transport Navigation Company.

355. The Commission should pursue its efforts aimed at the continental harmonization of the programmes prepared by the Regional Economic Communities.

II. ENERGY

A. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AFRICAN ELECTRO-TECHNICAL STANDARDIZATION COMMISSION (AFSEC)

356. The Commission organized at its Headquarters from 18 to 19 July 2005, a meeting on the African Electrotechnical Standardization Commission (AFSEC), which was officially launched on 7 June 2005 at Accra under the auspices of the African Union. AFSEC, the establishment of which forms part of the 2005-2007 Plan of Action of the Commission, will be responsible for the preparation and publication of African and international electricity and electronics standards and allied technologies. These standards will serve as a basis for

national and regional standardization, as well as references when advertising tenders, drafting international contracts, manufacturing and marketing products manufactured by African electrical industries. AFSEC will also be responsible for the promotion, through its members, of international cooperation in the uniform application of standards and evaluation to determine their compliance in the above-mentioned areas.

357. The meeting recommended that the African Union Commission play a major role in the effective establishment of AFSEC, especially with regard to:

- the appointment of members of the interim organs;
- the organization of the constituent General Assembly.

358. According to the roadmap adopted at that same meeting, the effective establishment of AFSEC with its statutory organs is slated for March 2006.

B. PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AFRICAN FUND FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL ELECTRIFICATION (AFDRE)

359. The proposed establishment of an African Fund for the Development of Rural Electrification initiated by the African Electrical Energy Producers, Transporters and Distributors (UPDEA) was the subject of an experts' meeting held at the Headquarters of the Commission in Addis Ababa, from 12 to 13 September 2005.

360. At the end of a fruitful exchange of views on the vision, guiding principles, mission, funding source, areas, forms and conditions of intervention, as well as the *modus operandi* of the Fund, the meeting decided that a feasibility study be conducted from January to March 2006 and adopted the following month, April 2006. The Commission was requested to provide the necessary support and leadership for the successful implementation of the project.

C. OIL AND GAS

a) Meetings of Group of Experts

361. The oil price hike has led to an increase in the prices of other goods and services, with widespread consequences on all the sectors of the semi-permanent fragile economies of most Member States of the African Union. Against this background, there is an imperative need to conduct a prospective study on the question of oil and natural gas in Africa, considering the impact of the oil price hike which may worsen, with untold consequences on the weak African economies on the one hand and, on the other, the growing world demand for this highly strategic commodity which may run out.

362. To this end, in the second half of 2005, the Commission organized on 19 July and 18 October 2005, two high level experts' meetings, including representatives of the Regional Economic Communities, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Energy Commission (AFREC), the Association of Oil Producing Countries (AOPC), to exchange views on Africa's peculiar situation and on the urgent steps the Commission could take and/or propose to deal with the situation.

363. The main conclusions and recommendations of these meetings are as follows:

- The problem of oil in Africa must be dealt with based on the elements listed hereunder:
 - The need to link the question of oil to that of gas;
 - Consideration of the whole chain : exploration, production, transport, refining, marketing, technical and economic training;
 - Dealing with the question in a wider context of multi-sectoral development;
 - Articulation of the various short, medium and long term actions.
- The question should be considered from the regional perspective and the added value that the African Union can bring to the efforts invested by States should be viewed in this context;
- The oil producing countries can help the non-oil producing countries through mechanisms to be identified by the prospective study.
- Projecting oil and gas scenarios, while outlining the major strategic guidelines that could be adopted by the Pan-African institutions and national governments;
- Taking into consideration the initiatives already proposed on this issue, particularly those relating to regionalization of refineries, intra-regional trade, strategic management of stocks, diversification of energy sources (coal, renewable energies).

364. The report on the prospective study will be presented for consideration and approval by the African Petroleum Ministers at a meeting to be organized in Luanda, Angola, in May 2006.

b) Meeting on Oil, Johannesburg, 22 to 23 September 2005

365. The Commission participated in the meeting on oil organized by the South African Government as part of the preparations for the World Summit on Oil. The recommendations of the meeting focused essentially on the following:

- Intra-African trade and increase in investment in the oil and gas sector;
- Creation of a Pan-African Oil Exploration and Exploitation Company;
- Poverty reduction and access to energy in Africa through the promotion of gas and liquefied oil;
- Consolidation of institutions and strengthening of the capacities of the energy sector;

- Fluctuation in oil prices in the oil industry – Consequences on Development in Africa.

366. These different issues will be considered by the Ministerial Meeting on Oil in Luanda, in May 2006.

III. TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICT)

A. PAN-AFRICAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK PROJECT

367. During the Pan-African Parliament Session held in Johannesburg, South Africa in September 2004, the President of the Republic of India, His Excellency A.P.J. Abdul Kalam announced his country's pledge to finance a Pan-African Telecommunications Network Project through satellite and fiber optics to link the 53 Member States of the African Union. This project is aimed at providing, among other things, tele-medicine and tele-education services to Member States.

368. The project initially estimated to cost US\$50 million was presented in May 2005 to the African Union Commission by a delegation of the Indian Government. Following that presentation, the Chairperson of the Commission convened from 20 to 22 July 2005 a Special Advisory Committee of representatives of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the African Union Commission, NEPAD and African and International Telecommunication ICT institutions on the Continent. This Special Advisory Committee was mandated to:

- ascertain the appropriateness of the project as offered by India, bearing in mind the strategic objectives of the African Union and its political independence;
- analyse the technical quality of the project; and
- study the implementation modalities of the said project.

369. The Special Advisory Committee concluded that:

- the Indian Project was interesting and relevant and will contribute to the attainment of the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and bridge the digital gap;
- the Indian promoters have mastery over what they are offering Africa and are experienced;
- the Project is perfectly in line with the objectives of the African Union.

370. The Committee recommended the adoption of the Project by the African Union Commission. The Committee however indicated that the viability and sustainability of the network and the services proposed would require a firm commitment on the part of Member States and the African Union.

371. Two agreements were later signed within the context of the Project. The first Agreement signed between the Indian Government and the African Union Commission relates to the general aspects of the establishment of the Pan-African Network. The second concluded between the African Union Commission and Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL) concerns the supply, installation, operationalization and maintenance of the network by TCIL for a 5-year period. Furthermore, the copy of the agreement between TCIL and each Member State was initialled by the two parties.

372. After the signing of the agreements, the African Union Commission is in the process of sensitising Member States to participate in the Project by signing the Agreement with TCIL and to put in place a Project Implementation Steering and Follow-Up Committee. The Committee will be composed of African and Indian experts.

B. E-GOVERNANCE PROJECT (VSAT)

373. The e-Governance Project (VSAT) of the African Union is aimed, within the context of the institutional transformation, at ensuring full connectivity and providing modern telecommunications services between the Headquarters of the Commission and the Regional Offices, Foreign representations, Regional Economic Communities and Member States, through the establishment of a satellite interconnection network.

374. The Project will enable the African Union to have its own telecommunications system and a greater autonomy in terms of services and availability. The network will provide the African Union with video conference capabilities, high speed internet, IP telephony and instant messaging services, coupled with video discussions real time. It will also make it possible to share knowledge and know-how as well as information, and will promote teamwork, thereby enhancing productivity and maximization of resources (savings on communications, travel costs, etc.).

375. The specifications were prepared and invitation to tender for the selection of the supplier of satellite services was issued in early September 2005. The tenders received were opened and analysed by the Tender Board. The tenders evaluation report is being prepared by the Commission.

376. In its initial phase known as pilot phase, the Project will be established in four identified locations, namely Addis Ababa, Abuja, New York and Johannesburg. The Commission mobilized funding for the pilot phase of the Project. The deployment of the Project on the rest of locations identified (Member States, RECs) will be carried out in course of 2006.

C. MEETING OF PARTIES ASSEMBLY OF THE REGIONAL AFRICAN SATELLITE COMMUNICATION SYSTEM (RASCUM) OUAGADOUGOU, 11 – 12 OCTOBER 2005

377. RASCUM was established in 1992 by the ex-OAU with the main goal of “Providing an efficient and economical means of telecommunications, including the requirements for transmission of sound and television broadcasting to all areas of African countries, using all appropriate technologies which shall be properly integrated in the existing and/or planned national networks, with a view to fostering the development of African countries”.

378. The Parties Assembly is the supreme organ responsible for the strategic and political orientation of the Organization. The 9th Meeting of the Assembly held in Ouagadougou from 11 to 12 October 2005, in which the Commission participated; it examined, among other things, the progress so far made in the construction and launching of the very first RASCOM satellite dedicated to Africa and the RASCOM future development strategy.

379. The Parties Assembly decided to:

- Request the Governing Board to ensure that the satellite project is consistent with the goals and objectives of RASCOM and complies with the timetable of the industrial programme for the construction and launch of the satellites;
- Encourage the African authorities in charge of telecommunication's policies and regulation to provide support to the rapid deployment of RASCOM satellite telecommunications system;
- Request the Governing Board and the Executive Organ to take all the necessary measures for the continuation of the amendment process of the articles in the Convention and the Implementation Agreement;
- Request the Director General to pursue the structural changes within the Executive Organ for enhanced productivity.

380. The African Union Commission should continue to lend its support to this all-important project.

D. WORLD SUMMIT ON INFORMATION SOCIETY (WSIS)

381. The activities relating to the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) are monitored by the Human Resource, Science and Technology Department and the Infrastructure and Energy Department. The special report is being prepared on the WSIS which will be submitted to the Executive Council in Khartoum in January 2006. In a nutshell, the Commission carried out the following WSIS-related activities during the period covered by this report:

- Participation in the third meeting of the Preparatory Committee (Prep Com 3) held in Geneva from 19 to 30 November and in Tunis from 13 to 15 November 2005.
- Effective participation in the Summit, which took place in Tunis from 16 – 18 November, 2005.

382. The conclusions of the Summit include the Tunis Commitment and Agenda. The Summit decided to put in place an implementation and follow-up mechanism at national, regional and international levels. Within the context of this mechanism, the Commission should prepare and adopt an action plan focusing on its contribution to and participation in the implementation of the Summit decisions. The full report on the outcome of the Summit constitutes one Agenda item of the Executive Council.

IV. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

A. INFRASTRUCTURE CONSORTIUM FOR AFRICA

383. At the initiative of the Government of United Kingdom, representatives from the G8 countries, the African Union, the AU/NEPAD, the African Development Bank, the World Bank and the European Union met in London on 6 May 2005 and agreed to establish an Infrastructure Consortium for Africa.

384. The objective of the Consortium is to build a strategic partnership among donors and stakeholders to facilitate the development of infrastructure in Africa as prioritized by AU/NEPAD and national governments in support of economic growth and poverty reduction.

385. The Consortium is not a substitute to existing institutions, but a cooperative mechanism among like-minded donors whose principal role is to support African efforts to help remove the existing bottlenecks to progress on infrastructure in Africa, including through scaled up and better coordinated support for and investment in African infrastructure. Its main focus will be on continent-wide cross-border/regional projects, and at national level, in support of main trunk infrastructure that would lead to improved competitiveness of African economies. The sectors to be covered are transport, water supply and sanitation, ICT and energy.

386. It was agreed that the Consortium will be a tripartite relationship between bilateral donors, multilateral agencies, and African institutions and that the consortium will identify and secure finance for at least 5 STAP projects by June 2006. To ensure delivery, a small secretariat will be set up to support work on the Consortium objectives and commitments. It was agreed that the Secretariat will be located at the African Development Bank. The Consortium will report annually to the Africa Partnership Forum on its activities. The Commission has invited the Consortium to hold its second meeting at its headquarters in Addis Ababa in June 2006.

B. MINISTERIAL COLLOQUIUM ON ITU PRELIMINARY ASSISTANCE TO NEPAD AND REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING (RPM) OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON TELECOMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT (WCTD-06) ABUJA, NIGERIA – 3-7 JULY 2005

387. Pursuant to Resolution 35 of the World Conference on Telecommunication Development (WCTD) – 02, Istanbul 2002) and Resolution 124 of the ITU Conference of Plenipotentiaries (PP-02, Marrakech 2002), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in conjunction with the African Telecommunication Union (ATU) conducted a study to support the NEPAD initiative. The study focused on the ICT infrastructural development activities and projects to be undertaken by Africa in order to attain the NEPAD objectives. It was in this context that a Ministerial Colloquium in which the Commission participated was held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 3 to 7 July 2005.

388. The main purpose of the Ministerial Colloquium was to enable African Ministers in charge of Telecommunications and ICT to consider the report on the study and decide on what action to take regarding the recommendations.

389. The Ministerial Colloquium decided to:

- Adopt the study report as reference document for the implementation of the recommendations aimed at the rapid development of ICT in Africa;
- Endorse the establishment of an Inter-Institutions Coordination Committee (IICC) to coordinate and monitor ICT infrastructural projects and other ICT related programmes in Africa;
- Commend ITU for its technical and financial support in the conduct of this study and request it to release the necessary financial resources to backstop NEPAD ICT related activities;
- Request the African Union to:
 - initiate, with the support of ITU, the necessary contacts for the establishment of an Inter-Institutions Coordination Committee (IICC) with the mandate to coordinate and oversee ICT infrastructural projects and other related programmes in Africa and ensure the follow-up on, and evaluation of, the implementation of these projects;
 - table, in collaboration with Member States, a resolution on ITU's continued assistance to NEPAD at the next World Conference on Telecommunication Development (WCTD-06) and the Conference of ITU Plenipotentiaries (PP-06).

390. The Ministerial Colloquium further proposed actions to be undertaken in terms of infrastructure, environment and capacity building, and in relation to cooperation and partnership establishment.

C. REGIONAL PREPARATORY MEETING (RPM) OF THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT (WCTD)-06 DOHA - QATAR

391. The Commission participated in the Regional Preparatory Meeting (RPM) of the World Conference on Telecommunication Development (WCTD-06) Doha, Qatar held in Abuja, Nigeria on 3 July 2005 on the heels of the Ministerial Colloquium.

392. The meeting examined the evolution of ICT in Africa and took stock of the implementation of the Istanbul Action Plan of the World Conference on Telecommunication Development (WCTD-02). It identified and adopted several regional initiatives (projects including the proposed establishment of a unified numbering zone of the Commission), which will be submitted to WCTD-06 slated for Doha, Qatar from 7 to 15 March 2006.

RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE

393. During the period under review, the Commission engaged with many of its development partners in the creation of enabling conditions and facilitation of actions to enhance agricultural productivity and growth, reduce food insecurity and rural poverty. The Commission through its department of Rural Economy and Agriculture focused its interventions on selected key areas where it can take leadership, add value and make a significant and measurable impact on Africa's agricultural and rural development.

I. IMPLIMENTATION OF CAADP PRIORITY PILARS

A. IMPLEMENTATION OF CAADP PILAR I

a. Disaster Risk Reduction

394. To prepare the Africa region for natural and man-made calamities and to reduce the vulnerability of African nations, in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action that was adopted by the Global Community at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) in Japan in January 2004, the Commission convened an AU Conference of Ministers in charge of Disasters on Disaster Risk Reduction from 5 to 7 December 2005. The main purpose of the Conference was to encourage Member States to incorporate disaster risk reduction into development policies and programmes. The outcome of that Conference will be presented to Summit for political endorsement during this session. The Commission also maintained contact with, and participated in the activities of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UN/ISDR) to ensure that Africa's interest is kept on the agenda of the Global ISDR system.

395. In other areas, such as water resources, the Commission had been in contact with partners such as the African Development Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the African Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) to find ways to strengthen cooperation in trans-boundary water management in the continent in accordance with the February 2004 Sirte Declaration. The Commission will continue its efforts in this area.

b. Land Policy Framework

396. In this area of activity, the core of the work Programme for 2005-2007 is the development of a Land Policy Framework for Africa. Land in Africa is at the heart of social, cultural, political and economic life of its people and land; as a vital asset it is central to peaceful development, economic growth and sustainable resource use. To this effect, the African Union Commission/NEPAD, the African Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), under the leadership of the African Union commission, have formed a partnership with the view to develop a land policy and land reform framework in Africa.

397. The aim of the land policy framework is to increase productivity, improve livelihoods, secure land rights, enhance natural resource management and contribute to broad-based economic growth on the continent. In collaboration with key stakeholders (Regional Economic Communities and Member States), it is envisaged that, the framework will be developed through consultation and validation at country, sub-regional and continental levels. The process will take about 24 months – starting with a Consultative Workshop in

March 2006. Financial resources are being mobilised and interested co-funders include: ADB, the Rockefeller Foundation, ECA, IDEA and IFAD.

398. Within the framework of the African Union-European Union partnership, significant progress has been realized in pushing the African environmental agenda through the European Union system. Based on request from some Regional Economic Communities, the Commission started work with the European Union with the view to hosting the Project Management Unit of the “Africa Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD)” project. This project will allow participating Member States to have access to satellite information on meteorological and other environment and natural resources development in the continent for development and as early warning for imminent catastrophes.

B. IMPLEMENTATION OF CAADP PRIORITY PILAR III

399. In recognition of the importance of agriculture in poverty reduction, African Heads of State and Government endorsed the “Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa” in July 2003 and committed themselves to increase government budget allocation to the agriculture and rural development sector to at least 10 percent of the annual budgets. The African Union Commission in collaboration with the NEPAD Secretariat carried out the following activities in the implementation of this declaration.

- (i) A definition of the core areas of agriculture and rural development relevant to the 10 percent budget allocation was developed using the COFOG (Classification of the Functions of Government) system.
- (ii) A joint AU-NEPAD consultative workshop was organized in Johannesburg on September 12-13, 2005 with participation of representatives of both Finance and Agriculture Ministries from six selected countries representing the various RECs. The workshop was also attended by representatives of the FAO, World Bank and IMF.
- (iii) A *Questionnaire* and accompanying *Guidance Note* to report on the Agriculture Expenditure Tracking System in AU Member Countries were developed.
- (iv) A continental workshop on this subject has been planned for all the 53 Member States on December 15-16, 2005.

400. Similarly, to implement the decision adopted during the Sirte Summit in February 2004, calling for the “Enhancement of Early Warning Systems at regional level and their establishment where they do not exist as well as their coordination at the continental level in order to avert the negative impact of drought, desertification, floods, natural disasters and pests”, the AUC carried out the following activities:

401. The Commission in collaboration with the FAO and EU conducted an assessment study for the establishment of a continental early warning system for Africa. The Objective of this exercise is to obtain a clear understanding of the efficiency and effectiveness of existing early warning systems on food security in Africa. This will lead to recommendations on actions that could be taken towards the strengthening of these systems for improved

decision-making at national and regional level in relation to food security interventions. The Assessment study reviewed both strengths and weaknesses of existing Early Warning Systems on food security, and assessed the extent to which they are relevant, credible, cost-effective and sustainable, at regional and national levels.

II. PATTEC

402. Decision AHG/Dec.156 (XXXVI) adopted by the Heads of State and Government urged Member States to collectively embark on a Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign (PATTEC). Within the framework of this decision, the Commission of the African Union was assigned the task of coordinating the activities, including mobilizing commitment, generating support and initiating the action necessary to expedite the elimination of the scourge of trypanosomiasis from Africa. In order to fulfill the obligations of this assignment, the Commission established the PATTEC Coordination Office to maintain contact with affected member states and all partners relevant to the implementation of the PATTEC initiative.

403. In collaboration with the affected countries and cooperation with various partners, the Commission has initiated a number of activities, including efforts to increase awareness about the cause and purposes of the PATTEC initiative through the development and dissemination of publicity and public information materials; training to build the necessary technical capacity and competence required to execute the objectives of the PATTEC initiative; development of tsetse eradication project proposals for specific areas; and seeking financial and technical support for executing specific tsetse eradication projects in identified areas in affected Member States.

404. Funding has recently been obtained from the African Development Fund to support the implementation of tsetse eradication projects in six countries (Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali and Uganda) in the first phase of tsetse and trypanosomiasis eradication activities under the PATTEC programme. In consultations with the African Development Bank, work on the preparation of a multi-national project proposal for the creation of tsetse and trypanosomiasis-free areas in 12 more countries (Angola, Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Chad, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Togo and Zambia) for phase 2 within the PATTEC Programme has been initiated and the proposal is soon to be presented to the Bank for support. Efforts continue, in consultation with the affected Member States and collaboration with the African Development Bank and other partners, to mobilize the support needed to create an enduring and comprehensive support framework through which countries engaged in the implementation of PATTEC can be assisted. The PATTEC Coordination Office continues to drum up action and ensure that the activities necessary for the elimination of tsetse and trypanosomiasis are engaged and sustained.

405. The significance and trans-boundary nature of the tsetse and trypanosomiasis problem is now well appreciated and consensus in support of the implementation of the objectives of the PATTEC initiative has been recorded at various international meetings, including the recently concluded conference of the Ministers for Animal Resources. NEPAD, COMESA, SADC, ECOWAS and CEMAC have agreed to help mobilise support for the implementation of PATTEC, and international organisations, notably the International Atomic Energy Agency, have declared their intention to support African countries in the implementation of PATTEC.

406. To consolidate the achievements made so far within the PATTEC initiative and enhance the plans and efforts currently devoted to the war against trypanosomiasis, it has been strongly recommended that a special donors' conference should be held in the near future to mobilise resources to supplement the support being provided by the African Development Bank. In this regard, the involvement of the African Heads of State and Government in rallying for support would be highly desirable and effective.

III. AVIAN INFLUENZA AND 28TH ISCTRC CONFERENCE

407. In response to the current outbreak of the Avian Flu, the Commission, through its specialized Technical Office of IBAR developed a continental strategy for the prevention and control of the disease in Africa. Funding for the implementation of this strategy is being solicited from development partners.

408. The Commission successfully organized two important meetings on livestock:

- The 7th AU Conference of Ministers responsible for Animal Resources with main objective of focusing on the constraints facing the livestock industry in the continent. The conference that is being held every two years adopted a number of resolutions on the way forward for Africa on livestock issues.
- Similarly, the 28th International Scientific Council for Trypanosomiasis Research and Control (ISCTRC) was convened in the AUC headquarters in Addis-Ababa with more than 300 scientists from 40 different AU member states and nearly 20 international and regional organizations participating. The 28th ISCTRC Conference adopted a number of resolutions pertaining to the control and eradication of tsetse and trypanosomiasis from the African continent with a strong call to AU member states to give support for the implementation of the PATTEC initiative.

409. The Commission has also taken a number of steps in speeding up the eradication of Rinderpest and other major diseases of livestock in the continent. In this respect, the following activities under taken during the period under review:

- Preparation of country dossiers for these countries to be declared free from RP in May 2006, namely: Central African Republic, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Gabon,
- Assistance to Rwanda, Kenya, RCA, Burundi, Congo, Guinea Bissau, Gambia in the finalisation of their national emergency Preparedness Plans for rinderpest.
- Launching of the Programme Estimate No. 1 of the Somali Ecosystem Rinderpest Eradication Coordination Unit (SERECU) and recruitment of the personnel of this coordination unit.
- Veterinary laboratories in Cameroon and Sudan were supported through capacity building training and technical support services.

IV. PASTORAL LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMME (PLP)

410. In an effort to improve the living standards of the Pastoralists, the AUC, through its Pastoral Livelihood Program (PLP) in AU-IBAR, supported an assessment of training needs of livestock marketing associations and is currently conducting capacity building workshops in key areas of interest. In addition, the PLP also supported the development of the following community-based pastoralist programmes under the following headings:

- Increased access to business support services for small livestock related enterprises;
- Access to regional and international livestock markets for Kenyan livestock;
- Disease surveillance and control;
- HIV/AIDS Awareness creation and Behaviour Change;
- Capacity building of Ministry of Health – Kenya in provision of Voluntary Counselling and Testing services.

V. SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FRAGILE NATURAL RESOURCES (SAFGRAD)

411. To promote the preservation and sustainable management of strategic and fragile natural resources, particularly in the highlands, the AUC through its Specialized Technical Office of AU - SAFGRAD in Ouagadougou developed a consensual legal and institutional framework aimed at facilitating and strengthening cooperation between the member states in the management of the shared and transboundary natural resources of the Fouta Djallon highlands. This, together with the comprehensive regional project for the integrated Management of the Fouta Djallon Highlands Natural Resources, have received approved funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to the tune of 11 Million US Dollars. This project is being implemented through the Specialized AU – Office of Fouta Djallon.

412. On the promotion of strategies, policies and technologies for sustainable production systems and increased food security in semi-arid zones of Africa, the AUC through AU-SAFGRAD Office, has continued to dialogue with partners to identify those who can actively participate in this network for sharing both experience and information. The AUC has also developed a joint project with the Republic of Korea - The African Striga Research and Control that is aimed at improving food security and farm income by reducing yield losses caused by the weed parasite *Striga hermonthica*. The project activities have been implemented with 1400 farmers benefiting in seven countries including Burkina Faso, Ghana, Benin, Cameroon, Mali, Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire. Improved technologies demonstrated included using striga tolerant or resistant maize varieties and/or agronomic practices such as intercropping or rotation with leguminous trap crops such as soybean, cowpea, and groundnut. In addition, seed multiplication of both resistant maize varieties and leguminous trap crops were also undertaken in all these countries. It is expected that more than 17 tons of seed will be produced overall.

VI. RAINWATER AND NUTRIENT USE

413. The AUC also implemented the project on enhancing rainwater and nutrient use in the Volta Basins. This program is aimed at reducing poverty and improving food security, income and livelihoods of small-scale resource poor farmers in the Volta basin. During the period under review, participating countries have continued to implement field demonstration activities involving technologies for water and soil conservation, nutrient

management and improved germplasm. Exchange visits involving farmers from the two countries were conducted.

VII. SUPPORT ACTIVITIES

414. In advancing environment and natural resource protection in the continent, the AUC in July 2005 provided support to the Government of Burkina Faso in the organization of the Planet'ERE conference on Environment and Education. In line with its advocacy and facilitation role, the Commission also provided support, to the African Group at the seventh Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (COP7/UNCCD), which was held in Nairobi in October 2005. This support was to facilitate the group's consultations in preparation for the various negotiation sessions.

VIII. COORDINATION ACTIVITIES

415. The AUC, in collaboration with the development partners, discharged its responsibilities of coordinating the overall policy and strategic plan of the AU in the area of agriculture, food security, natural resource management and environment satisfactorily during the period under review. This was in spite of the non-availability of funds allocated to the implementation of the programmes for 2005 under the solidarity budget. The AUC will continue working in close collaboration and in partnership with all its key players, the NEPAD Secretariat, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Member States, regional and international institutions, the civil society and other development partners in implementing the 2004 – 2007 action plan on rural economy and agriculture.

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

416. During the period under review, the Commission through its Department of Economic Affairs undertook a number of activities related to the following:

- The establishment of financial institutions as stipulated in Article 19 of the Constitutive Act;
- Rationalisation of Regional Economic Communities (RECs);
- Follow up on the Outcome of the G8 Summit held in Gleneagles, Scotland;
- Establishment of the Statistical Services Unit;
- Follow up on the European Union (EU) Strategy for Africa; and
- Follow up on the Africa-Europe Dialogue.

417. Activities pertaining to the establishment of the financial institutions and the rationalization of RECs are not covered in this report as there will be special reports on these on the Agenda of the Executive Council.

I. THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS) AND FOLLOW-UP ON G8 COMMITMENTS

A. THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS)

a. Review of the MDGs

418. The Millennium Development Goals were adopted by 189 nations in New York during the 55th General Assembly in September, 2000. Following this adoption, a Decision was taken by the African Union during the 4th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held from 30-31 January 2005. Upon recommendation of the Executive Council, the Assembly requested the AU Commission to coordinate and lead in the process of developing an African Common Position as the Continent's contribution to the Review of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which was considered at a high-level Summit in September 2005.

419. In preparation for the Review of the MDGs, the African Union (AU) Commission in collaboration with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Secretariat, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Regional Economic Communities, and African Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Development Programme prepared the report on MDGs.

420. Three documents on the Review of the MDGs, namely the Background Paper; an African Common Position; and the Draft Declaration on the MDGs were prepared by a Drafting Committee comprising AUC, NEPAD, ECA, ADB and UNDP and were presented to, among others, the Eminent Personalities and the African Ministers of Economy and Finance during the meeting, which was held from 2nd to 7th May, 2005 in Dakar, Senegal. Further, the Report was presented to the July 2005 Summit in Sirtre, Libya, and was then considered by the United Nations Summit, in New York in September, 2005.

421. The *Back ground Paper* contains, among others, a detailed synthesis of the MDGs in Africa; country reports on MDGs; NEPAD Sub-Regional Reports on MDGs; and recommendations of AU-NEPAD Sub-Regional consultations held in Algiers, Algeria (for North Africa); Johannesburg, South Africa (for Eastern and Southern Africa); and Abuja, Nigeria (for Central and West Africa). The *African Common Position* paper assesses progress toward the achievement of the MDGs, and also outlines key action-oriented policy recommendations for accelerating progress toward achieving the MDGs. The *Declaration* outlines commitments to be undertaken by the Continent in achieving the MDGs. It covers the following main issues: peace and security; good governance; social and economic policies; financing of the MDGs; and African commitments.

422. In fulfillment of the Decision of the Assembly contained in the Declaration on the Review of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Assembly/Au/Decl. 1 (V), the African Union Commission transmitted the African Common Position to the United Nations General Assembly.

423. The Review of the Status on the MDGs reveals that progress has been made in several countries, especially in Asia, Latin America and North Africa. According to the statistics given, these countries are on track in meeting the MDGs. Despite progress in the countries mentioned above, some African countries are lagging and are unlikely to meet some of the MDG targets. The overall performance of the continent has not been as good as those of other developing regions of the world. The experience of the last decade and half shows that achieving the MDGs in Africa will be difficult.

424. Currently, almost half of the continent's population is living in poverty and hunger and the Continent is at the bottom regarding health-related indicators and the HIV/AIDS

prevalence is very high. Overall, Africa has recorded insufficient progress in many areas and if current implementation trends continue, Africa risks not achieving the MDGs.

b. 2005 United Nations Summit

425. The Commission circulated the Background Paper; the African Common Position; and the Declaration on the MDGs to all Member States of the African Union. The three documents formed the basis for discussions by the African Group in New York during the negotiations with other Member States of the United Nations on the draft outcome document of the 2005 United Nations Summit. The AUC coordinated its activities with the African Group to ensure that most of the elements of the African Common Position and the Declaration were included in the final Outcome Document of the UN Summit. The outcome document made unequivocal commitment to meet the special needs of Africa. The Commission and the African Group worked hard to ensure a specific paragraph focusing on Africa consistent with the Millennium Declaration of 2000.

426. The Outcome Document adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the United Nations Summit focused on five main areas: values and principles, development, peace and security, human rights and institutional reforms of the UN. It is envisaged that the implementation of the development aspects of the outcome document would cost almost 50 billion dollars. However, a small percentage of this would be included in the budget of the UN, specifically the provision of additional resources for the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa.

427. The international community pledged additional US\$50 billion a year by 2010 for fighting poverty. This includes the G8 commitments on ODA as well as the timetables for meeting the 0.7% of GNI target by the European Union. It will be vital for the AU to maintain its advocacy for the implementation of the internationally agreed target of 0.7 % of GNI to developing countries and 0.15-0.20 % of GNI to the Least Developed Countries.

428. The world leaders also committed themselves to provide immediate support for quick impact initiatives to support anti-malaria efforts, education, and healthcare. The African Group in New York has often emphasized on the need for these initiatives also called “quick wins”, to be anchored on the longer-term development goals, maintain national ownership, and ensure sustainable and predictable financing. In addition, the World Summit also committed itself to innovative sources of financing for development, including efforts by groups of countries to implement an International Finance Facility and other initiatives to finance development projects, in particular in the health sector.

429. The international community in the 2005 Summit outcome document committed to promote a comprehensive and durable solution to the external debt problem of African countries, including through the cancellation of 100 per cent of multilateral debt consistent with the Group of Eight proposal for HIPC, and, on a case by case basis, where appropriate, significant debt relief for heavily indebted African countries not part of the HIPC Initiative that have unsustainable debt burdens. It is important to note that many African countries remain burdened by debt and thus the need for the African Union Commission to continue working on urgent measures to address the debt crisis of Africa especially in light of the rising oil prices that would cause economic crisis for most of the non-oil producing

countries. It will be also important for the AUC to continue its work on the measurement of debt sustainability as well as innovative means of addressing Africa's external debt problem.

430. The World Summit further made commitment to trade liberalization and expeditious work towards implementing the development dimensions of the Doha work programme. While debt relief and increased ODA, coupled with policy reforms are important to meeting Africa's needs in the short to medium-term, equitable trade holds the key to its long-term growth and development.

C. Way Forward

431. African leaders in partnership with all national stakeholders and with the international community will need to move with urgency and act swiftly to ensure progress in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It will take a combination of National policies and priorities, enhanced regional integration, continental response under the auspices of the African Union and the NEPAD socio-economic programme and effective financing and strategic partnerships to make a difference. The main pillars for strategic action include: Peace and security; broad-based pro-poor growth and social policy; regional integration and harmonisation, regional infrastructure development, science and technological development and regional trade; effective domestic resource mobilisation and utilisation, increased ODA, debt relief and debt cancellation, and removal of trade barriers. Africa will need all the assistance it can get from the international community as it walks the path of achieving the Millennium Development Goals and achieving sustainable development and poverty reduction beyond 2015.

B. FOLLOW-UP ON THE G 8 COMMITMENTS

432. In preparation for the G8 Summit which was held in Gleneagles, Scotland, from 6-8 July, 2005, the Commission convened a meeting in Sirte, Libya, on 29th June, 2005 with the African Ministers of Economy and Finance whose countries were invited to attend the G8 Summit. The meeting was also attended by Chief Executives of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (ADB); and Ministers of Economy and Finance of the countries currently chairing the RECs.

433. The meeting, among others, commended the G8 Finance Ministers Conclusions on Development including debt, following their meeting held in London from 10th to 11th June, 2005. In this respect, Africa called on the G8 Summit to endorse these conclusions and work on their realization as soon as possible, including the G8 proposals for HIPC debt cancellation. An African Common Position (ACP) was prepared, which covered issues of increasing support for peace and security in Africa, committing to rapidly increase development assistance to at least 0.5% of GDP by 2010 and 0.7% by 2015 and debt cancellation for African countries in debt distress and provide more resources and technical support to fight HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria and eliminate subsidies on agricultural products. This document was presented to the G8 Summit, which was held in Gleneagles, Scotland, from 6-8 July, 2005 by the Heads of State and Government who were invited to the meeting including the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. The G8 Summit placed Africa high on the Agenda, which provided the G8 countries an opportunity to reaffirm their commitments to continue supporting the development of Africa. Many issues raised by the

African side were welcomed and a number of recommendations and conclusions were adopted.

434. As a follow-up to the G8 Summit, the Chairperson of the Commission convened a meeting on 18th July, 2005, to brainstorm on the implications of the decisions adopted by the Gleneagles G8 Summit. The meeting also discussed an African response to the commitments and decisions of the G8 Summit. As a follow-up, the African Union Commission convened a meeting in Addis Ababa of Ministers of Finance and Planning whose countries were invited to the G8 Summit in Gleneagles, Scotland, to finalise the African Response and prepare an African Action Plan on the implementation of the G8 Commitments. The NEPAD Secretariat, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Development Bank (ADB), the East African Community (EAC) and the African Union Commission also attended the meeting.

435. The African Action Plan was prepared in the form of a detailed matrix focusing on key development priority areas for the Continent, including Peace and Security; Governance; Infrastructure and Energy; Human Development; Agriculture and Food Security; and Financing for Development, including issues pertaining to domestic resources mobilization, debt cancellation for Africa, and overseas development assistance (ODA). The Action Plan formed the basis for discussion during the Meeting of the NEPAD Steering Committee held from August 21- 22, 2005 in preparation for the African Partnership Forum which was held in the United Kingdom from October 4- 5, 2005. The African Response, which was a high-level document with a political message to assist our Heads of State and Government in their engagements with the G8 and the international community, was presented to African Heads of State and Government on September 13, 2005 in New York, United States of America, in the margins of the UN Summit.

II. ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATISTICAL SERVICES UNIT

436. All stakeholders dealing with policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation require statistical data as the basic and fundamental resource. This statistical data make it possible to appreciate the progress and improvement achieved in socio-economic development. A good and reliable database is a starting point in monitoring progress achieved in the implementation of key economic and social policies both at the national and international levels. Statistical information is a pivotal tool in social and economic research and planning. The role of statistics in the implementation of projects and programmes meant to achieve the objectives of the Commission cannot be overemphasized as they provide the basis for measuring progress or lack of it. Due to this critical importance, it was seen necessary to create a Statistical Services Unit within the Economic Affairs Department.

437. The main objective of the Statistical Services Unit is to enhance the African Union's institutional capacity for generating, collating, storing and distributing statistical data needed for decision-making by various policy organs of the African Union. The Statistical Services Unit is being established in such a way that it will be a reliable provider of data in the economic, social, political, environmental, cultural and technological areas. Each area will be covered by the identification of a list of measurable indicators that would assist decision makers take informed decisions and assess progress.

438. The Statistical Service Unit will:

- (i) In collaboration with the RECs, Member States of the African Union (AU), and the partners generate and store data on variables that are relevant to the integration and development of African economies;
- (ii) Access statistical and other data on Africa from international organizations and agencies and store and manage them in a computerized database, and
- (iii) Develop mechanisms for the dissemination, within and outside the region, of social and economic data on Africa.

439. In order to operationalize this Unit, several activities have been undertaken. Based on the statistical requirements of the various departments of the AUC, sectors and relevant indicators have been identified that would inform the establishment of the database. Data collection forms have already been prepared and significant statistical data have been collected on Member States individually and at Africa level. The data have been incorporated into MS Excel files and have been classified by country and REC. The data collection formats indicate the list of major information indicators and the various information [statistical and non-statistical] columns.

440. The development of a database is in progress. A Web site has been developed and is being used as an interface between the data-bases through the Internet. The current equipment of the Statistical Services Unit is composed of five (5) computers, which are already inter-connected and functional. The Commission expects to engage the required staff of the Unit during 2006.

III. EUROPEAN UNION STRATEGY FOR AFRICA

441. The Commission organised a meeting on the European Union (EU) Strategy for Africa on 11 November 2005. The meeting sought to critically examine the strategy with a view to assess how it responds to the African Union Strategic Plan and the NEPAD Programme. The Regional Economic Communities and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Secretariat attended the meeting.

442. The Commission, the RECs and the NEPAD Secretariat welcomed the EU Strategy for Africa as its objectives and common interests coincide with those of the African continent, namely strengthening support in priority areas, including achieving the MDGs, peace and security, governance, creating a positive environment for economic growth and poverty reduction, increasing EU financing for Africa and making aid more effective and efficient.

443. The Commission, RECs and NEPAD also noted that the Strategy is a tool for supporting the implementation of Africa's priorities and programmes. Of particular importance is the proposal for establishment of an EU-Africa Infrastructure Forum, which would enhance the financing and implementation of the NEPAD infrastructure programme across the continent. Given the role the private sector plays in socio-economic development, the EU proposal to hold a Euro-Africa Business Forum in 2006 comes at a time Africa is placing emphasis on private sector participation in policy formulation and implementation as well as its social responsibility. It was observed that it would be necessary that all parties review the Strategy in order to come up with a Joint Africa-Europe Strategy. In this respect, Africa and the EU should agree that the current Strategy Document be seen as a living document that could still be reviewed to include certain

priorities that may not be explicitly covered in the current version. It is, therefore, crucial that Africa and Europe put in place a mechanism that operationalizes the implementation of the Strategy taking into account new developments.

444. The AU and its related institutions welcome with appreciation the commitment by the EU to increase financing to Africa in order to stimulate productive activities, increase private investment, build administrative and financial management capacities and foster sustainable economic growth and development. Africa on its part should popularize the Strategy, to ensure ownership and understanding, once it has been reviewed into a Joint Africa-Europe Strategy amongst Member States and other stakeholders and non-state actors in development so as to ensure its effective and efficient implementation.

IV. AFRICA - EU DIALOGUE

445. In the framework of the Africa-EU Dialogue, the fifth Ministerial Meeting of the African and EU Troïkas met in Bamako, Mali, on 2 December 2005. The Meeting was preceded by a meeting of Senior Officials, held on 1 December 2005. Ministers recognised the remarkable efforts that have been made in recent months to revitalise and re-dynamize the partnership between Africa and the EU. Ministers welcomed this new approach and decided to launch a number of new joint initiatives in the following areas:

- Enhancing and monitoring the dialogue, notably through elaboration of a joint implementation matrix, with a further meeting of officials in Addis Ababa in the first half of February 2006 and enhanced dialogue between Heads of Missions in Addis;
- Finding creative ideas that will lead to the holding of an Africa-EU Summit as envisaged in the Cairo Plan of Action;
- Deepening technical and political co-operation between the African Union and European Union and between the AU Organs and EU institutions;
- Establishing a comprehensive dialogue on migration, including at ministerial level;
- Developing initiatives in the areas of governance and infrastructure for the identification of priority actions;
- Considering other thematic joint initiatives that could deepen co-operation and exchange of experience between Africa and the EU, for example in the areas of peace and security, trade, HIV/AIDS, environment and energy and other areas to help achieve the MDGs.

446. Ministers agreed to actively work towards an Africa-EU Summit, which has been outstanding since the last one held in Cairo, Egypt in 2000. A number of issues have remained on the agenda because they require political decision. For example, on the issue of external debt, the Troika Ministers agreed to submit the joint Experts' Report on Africa's External debt to the Africa-EU Summit for a political decision. The African side called on EU to follow the example of the G8 and cancel the debt of African countries. Senior Officials

have been mandated to submit concrete proposals for consideration at the next meeting of the Ministerial Troikas.

447. In order to ensure that the commitments made are followed upon, the African side presented a monitoring matrix, which was welcomed by the EU and both sides agreed to elaborate a joint matrix for consideration at the next meeting of the Troikas. For this purpose, officials will meet in Addis Ababa in the first half of February 2006.

448. The EU side agreed to help Africa to accelerate progress towards the MDGs, in particular through speedy implementation of the commitments in the EU Strategy for Africa and support to the African Union Commission for monitoring the process.

449. Given the serious social and economic impact caused by the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, Africa invited the EU to support AU Member States in the local production of generics especially those used in the treatment of HIV, AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. The EU side pledged support in building the capacity of AU Member States so that they can take advantage of the flexibilities in the WTO/TRIPS Agreement. The Troika Ministers also noted the gravity of the Avian Flu crisis. The AU side requested the EU to help AU Member States to stockpile Tamiflu and Relenza, which are the currently known effective drugs for Avian flu. The EU side took note of this request and pledged support wherever possible.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

450. During the period under review, the Commission undertook to implement decisions adopted by the 7th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the 5th Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in July 2005 in Sirte, Libya. These are: Assembly/AU/ Dec.80 on multilateral trade negotiations; and Council Decisions 203 – 207 pertaining to trade in general, trade facilitation, trade and investment, AGOA and TICAD III. To that effect, the following activities were conducted.

I. COMMODITIES

451. In accordance with the Decisions of the first Conference of AU Ministers of Trade held in Mauritius in June 2003 and the Third Conference held in Cairo in June 2005 on the need to resolve the problem of Africa's commodities and the mandate given to the AU Commission to establish a mechanism for resolving all aspects of the problem, the Ministers also considered in Arusha the problem of commodity trade. At the end of their deliberations, the Ministers adopted a Declaration and Plan of Action in which the African Union deplores the high dependence of the economies of African countries on commodity trade, of which the continued decline in the terms of trade and the continued fall and volatility of prices, are largely responsible for the abject poverty in which most African countries find themselves.

452. The Ministers identified measures to be taken to improve the productivity and competitiveness of this trade as well as to strengthen South-South Cooperation. They also called for assistance to increase and diversify production, improve market access and make the multilateral trade system more balanced and fair. They then committed themselves to developing mechanisms for consultation aimed at improving exchange of information and

experiences in this area and to strengthen public–private sector partnership for the establishment of commodities exchanges in Africa.

II. MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS.

453. In accordance with the decision taken by the 3rd Ordinary Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Trade held in Cairo, Egypt in June 2005, to build on the unity and solidarity of the African Group as established prior to Cancun, an extraordinary session of Ministers of Trade was held from 22 to 24 November, 2005 in Arusha, Tanzania, in order to adopt a common position on each issue of the Doha Work Programme in preparation for the 6th WTO Ministerial Conference scheduled for 13 to 18 December 2005 in Hong Kong. The meeting considered the draft WTO texts issued by the Geneva negotiating groups on agriculture and non-agricultural market access, and also examined progress in the negotiations on development issues, services, TRIPS and public health, LDCs, and trade-related issues. An interactive session also enabled the African negotiators to interact with some main players at the WTO such as Brazil, the USA and India and to exchange views with the Director General of WTO and the Hong Kong organizers.

454. The Ministers expressed concern at the lack of political will of some WTO member states to fulfill the obligations contained in the July package of 2004. They reaffirmed that Africa was not ready to compromise on the development objectives of the Doha Development Round and reiterated their conviction that the success of Hong Kong would depend on the interest and flexibility to be demonstrated by developed countries with a view to enabling African countries achieve their legitimate development goals. At the end of their deliberations, the Ministers adopted the Arusha Development Benchmarks for the 6th WTO Ministerial in which they reiterated their commitment to undertake meaningful negotiations which will ensure that the 6th WTO Ministerial Conference delivers a balanced and fair outcome, and makes progress towards achieving full modalities and maintaining the level of ambition agreed at Doha.

455. The African Union's priority areas are summed up into four, as follows:

- a) Market access for the export products of African countries;
- a) Removal of subsidies which create structural distortions in the agricultural commodity markets;
- b) Keeping Africa's commitments proportional to its level of development;
- c) Increasing financial assistance to African countries to enable them to cope with the cost of adjusting their economies and to increase their supply capacity and thus competitiveness.

456. While welcoming the Trade Assistance Initiative, the Conference expressed its preferences with regard to the nature and objectives of the programme. The recommendations adopted in Arusha were subsequently presented at a meeting of Trade Ministers of ACP countries and at the G-90 meeting held in Brussels to obtain the support of non-African ACP countries and non-African LDCs.

III. AGOA

457. The Commission participated actively in the fourth US-Sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum, popularly referred to as the AGOA Forum, held under the Chairmanship of Maître Abdoulaye Wade in Dakar, Senegal, under the theme “Expanding and Diversifying Trade to Promote Growth and Competitiveness”. It was attended massively by African Ministers as well as Experts from government, the private sector and civil society.

458. The Forum acknowledged the importance of using the opportunities offered by AGOA to speed up the growth of African economies and the need to assist many more African countries to become AGOA-eligible. It stated that AGOA was more than just market access but also involved other critical areas such as increasing supply potentials of many African countries, building entrepreneurship, strengthening regional integration, etc. The Forum acknowledged that the primary responsibility for implementing AGOA lay with governments, with the assistance of the private sector and civil society and that they should work to overcome the challenge through common agreement.

459. It should be emphasized that the African side is fully aware of the challenges as well as opportunities of AGOA and has decided to prepare itself better in order to take full advantage of the initiative’s benefits. To this end, unlike the three earlier forums organised to date, African Ministers decided to draw up a plan of action defining the actions to be taken by governments, the private sector and civil society of both African countries and the United States, within a defined time frame, specifying each and every one’s role, and whose implementation will be examined at each Forum. The Forum also proposed that every eligible country should draw on this plan of action to prepare its own at the national level in order to make the most of AGOA. The African side wished that Africa would be more prepared before attending the Forum and recommended that the eligible countries should first hold preparatory meetings at the ministerial level preceded by expert group meetings prior to every Forum. It also recommended that every regional and sub-regional organization should establish a section to be responsible for AGOA matters to ensure that relevant issues are included in the agenda of their individual meetings.

460. The other major observation made by the meeting is that about 80 percent of the African products exported to the United States within the framework of AGOA are petroleum products, 9 percent textile products and the rest agricultural products. In terms of value, US imports from Africa are increasing in value but this is due mainly to the rise in the price of crude oil. It is time for Africa to benefit from its energy wealth without counting only on the gains from petroleum. African oil-producing countries should fight to make the United States and other oil-importing countries to develop industries, especially refineries in Africa, to prevent them from importing petroleum products at excessively high prices to meet their own needs.

461. The packages announced by America for Africa are: US\$15 billion for the emergency plan on HIV/AIDS; US\$1.2 billion to combat malaria, training of half a million teachers and an award of 300,000 scholarships to African students, particularly girls; provision of US\$200 million over the next five years to strengthen African economies to

enable them to participate more actively in multilateral trade systems; establishing in Dakar, a fourth United States Trade Office, adding to the ones in Accra (Ghana), Gaborone (Botswana) and Nairobi (Kenya) to provide more information to African countries on investment and export opportunities in Africa in order to increase their efficiency to trade with the United States. Eight African countries have already qualified to benefit from the Millennium Account from which Madagascar has just received US\$110 million. It was announced that the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was going to organize a series of three Round tables on Africa aimed at focusing attention on the need to invest in the Continent as a means of creating jobs and stimulating economic growth.

462. Furthermore, Washington should create an AGOA Diversification Fund to assist those African countries taking measures to diversify their economies and to benefit more from the opportunities offered by AGOA. Under this last initiative, one of the projects would be to provide a financial aid totalling US\$1 million to West African countries to improve air transport safety and to prepare plans for a new railway line that would facilitate integration in the region.

IV. AFRICAN PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY INITIATIVE (APCI)

463. In order to implement Decision 38 of the 3rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Government in July 2004, which adopted the African Productive Capacity Initiative (APCI), the Commission joined UNIDO, COMESA, government experts from Member States and economic operators in November 2005 in the third of a series of five regional meetings to be held in Africa to achieve the objectives of the African Productive Capacity Initiative (APCI) by formulating national/regional sectoral plans and road maps for its implementation. It is to be recalled that the APCI is a comprehensive programme of developing regional value chains based on existing strengths and competencies, enhanced by new investment in infrastructure, human and physical capital. It is built on the recognition that sustained economic growth necessarily involves the promotion of the manufacturing sector through public-private partnerships at every level.

464. APCI is a comprehensive attempt to build an African common vision on productive capacity based on the value chain approach; to harmonise industrial strategies and policies at both the regional and national levels with the objective to facilitate through regular benchmarking the implementation of the APRM on industrial performance and competitiveness matters, which is in line with the Strategic Plan of 2004-2007; to highlight sectoral priorities as part of specific segments of the value chain where Africa has a comparative advantage; and to suggest regional programmes on productive capacity backed by a financial facility - the African Productive Capacity Facility (APCF). The recommendations of the three meetings held so far were endorsed by the Ministers of the respective RECs and will contribute to a continental action plan for the implementation of APCI under the responsibility of the AU Commission.

V. CHINA-AFRICA FORUM

465. The Commission participated in the 4th of high-level Meeting of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation held from 22 to 23 August 2005, in Beijing, People's Republic of China. The main conclusions of the Forum, and on which all the partners should work are as follows: the holding of the Third Ministerial Conference of the China-Africa Forum in the autumn of 2006 in Beijing whose exact dates are to be fixed after consultations. It will be

preceded by a High-Level meeting and followed by a Summit. The Second Conference of China-Africa Entrepreneurs will be held parallel to the Summit. For the first time, those countries not having diplomatic relations with China will be invited as observers. Two major documents will be presented for adoption, namely:

- a) The Beijing Joint Declaration by the Heads of State of Africa and China; and
- b) The Beijing Plan of Action by the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation 2007-2009.

VI. AFRICA – EUROPE DIALOGUE

466. During the meeting of the AU/EU college of Commissioners held on 12 October 2005, the Commission focused, among other things, on the regional approach to the formulation of trade facilitation programmes, the body of Rules of Origin and concessions on market access to facilitate trade both within and outside Africa. It also requested the EU to help increase the supply capacity of African countries and their competitiveness in the external market.

VII. TRADE FACILITATION

467. In accordance with Decision 204 of the 7th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council on Trade Facilitation, more particularly on the need to carry out in-depth studies on Trade Facilitation at regional level, three workshops have been organized in Western, Eastern and Central Africa during the period October to November 2005. These were jointly organized by the International Lawyers and Economists against Poverty (ILEAP) and the Commission, with the collaboration of the following RECs: ECOWAS for the western region, EAC for the Eastern region and CEMAC for the Central region. The workshops aimed at addressing, in a holistic sense, how development objectives can best be achieved in trade negotiations.

468. The major element that emerged from these workshops was that, in order for development objectives to be realized for sub-Saharan Africa from trade negotiations such as those under the WTO and the EU-ACP Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), two conditions needed to be fulfilled: first, trade negotiations must have poverty reduction and sustainable human development – as opposed to simple trade liberalization – as their ultimate objective; second, developing countries need to ensure an outcome from these processes that situates their trade positions within wider development strategies, which are primarily constrained by supply-side constraints.

2006

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