

AFRICAN UNION
الاتحاد الأفريقي



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REPORT OF THE AU COMMISSION FOR THE PERIOD
FROM JANUARY TO JUNE 2005

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**INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION PROJECT OF THE
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

INTRODUCTION

1. The Assembly and the Executive Council will recall that in the approved Commission's Priority Action Plan envisaged by the year 2007 which they approved for the Organization, four priority components were considered likely to give credibility to the AU Commission by the year 2007, thereby making it a principal actor in the development of Africa. One of these components considered essential which was considered necessary to pay particular attention is the Institutional Transformation of the Commission to which it was deemed expedient to pay particular attention. Indeed, the effectiveness and efficiency of the Union are mainly contingent dependent on a strong, dynamic and creative Commission

2. This therefore entails the transformation of the Commission's administrative and financial systems, its working methods as well as its culture.. Hence, the most urgent task for the Commission is to embark on a change process involving its structures and its staff. This change should also involve the other organs of the Union, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other Specialized Agencies. The institutional transformation programme was therefore launched in February 2005.

MANAGEMENT OF THE PROGRAMME

3. To implement the Transformation Programme, the project approach was adopted and the "Institutional Transformation Project" . The project is managed internally by a Project Team of twenty-two members ,all of whom are officials of the Organization – working part-time on the project.

4. Above this project team is the Steering Committee which comprises the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Commissioners as well as the President of the Staff Association. The role of the Committee is to define the orientation of the Project and validate all the stages and activities. The Commissioner for Social Affairs, is the sponsor of the project and the Chairperson of the Steering Committee. A consortium of consultants provides technical support to the transformation process.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

5. The Institutional Transformation Project (ITP) consists of the following three major components:

- Culture, which refers to all aspects concerning attitudes, values and leadership;
- Process , which deals with the reorganization of the operational system, i.e all aspects concerning texts, working methods relating to management, all supporting or backstopping processes and all operational processes;
- Priority projects designed to accelerate operational activities in four areas that are vital to the success of the change process.

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

6. The Project implementation commenced with a diagnosis phase during which evaluations were made with a view to assessing the structure which we want to build. The diagnosis was conducted in two stages :

- i. the questionnaires stage (during which a “Culture” Questionnaire was circulated to the entire staff and a “Management” Questionnaire was circulated to the Managerial Staff);
- ii. individual interviews with a cross-section of staff selected at random across the board and in all the Commission’s areas of intervention. The two components of the appraisal made it possible to gather the relevant elements on which special emphasis will be laid within the transformation framework.

7. The appraisal phase also helped in identifying three main categories of processes and a series of their sub-components, namely:

- the support/backstopping processes;
- the orientation processes; and
- the operational processes.

8. Working Groups were set up for the first two processes to prepare the road map and the relevant Action Plans. Their activities will be completed by the end of July, which is the deadline for Phase one of the Project. The Action Plans will be implemented in the third phase.

9. In order to fine tune the Action Plans, it is necessary to establish benchmarks by drawing on the best practices obtained in similar institutions. To this end, visits are programmed to the European Union, the African Development Bank, the United Nations and other institutions which carried out such reforms in the past so as to learn from their experiences. The process has already begun with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), a sister organization in Addis Ababa.

10. The institutional transformation which according to the authorities of the Commission must have a human dimension and be staff centred, first and foremost, also comprises a very important culture component which aims at helping the staff to collectively build a new culture of responsibility, a Pan-African spirit, team spirit and performance spirit, geared towards a culture of results.

11. In this connection, a two-day workshop of dialogue and enhanced team spirit was organized from 1 to 2 April for the members of the Team Project, and another one on 21 May for the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson and Commissioners as well as Directors. The same series of workshops have been underway since 8 June for the entire staff of the Commission in small groups of 20 and are expected to be completed by September 2005. It is envisaged to organize similar workshops for the staff of the Specialized and Representational Offices outside Headquarters. The dialogue generated during these workshops will make it possible to better inform staff members about the objectives and components of the transformation, and to collect

their views on the best way to bring it to a successful conclusion.

12. The keynote address of the Chairperson of the Commission of this year Africa Day (25 May) celebration was Institutional Transformation. On that occasion, all the staff of the Commission, including representatives of the Regional Offices were invited to a Convention around the theme <<Together we shall make it>>. It was a tremendous and unique opportunity for all to exchange views on the objectives, methodology and progress in the Transformation Project. The Convention brought together, for a whole day, about four hundred staff, all categories put together, for a series of activities. The Convention was an occasion to officially launch the Institutional Transformation.

13. In order to ensure a wider communication and dissemination of information on the Project, missions were fielded to all the twelve (12) Regional Offices of the Commission. They were led by members of the Project Team, consultants and the Project sponsor. The staff were briefed on the objectives and initiatives of the Project.

14. Still within the context of Communication and in order to keep the entire staff of the Commission, Member States, the RECs and the partners regularly informed about developments in the implementation of the Project a Bulletin on the Institutional Transformation was launched and is published every two weeks. The fourth edition of the Bulletin has recently been published and is widely circulated to all the stakeholders.

15. The Transformation Process is a long-term project and its various stages should be defined, and the year 2007 constitutes a pivotal stage at the end of which a large number of processes will be in place. However, there are some processes that need to be established with such urgency that they are given special importance in the form of Priority Projects which have to be completed by the end of December 2005. These projects are as follows:

- acceleration of staff recruitment;
- acceleration of the establishment of new financial systems;
- acceleration of the operationalization of tools for collaborative work and knowledge sharing;
- acceleration of the operationalization of internet and external communication mediums.

16. Management Teams for these priority projects are working to successfully complete their task within the given timeframes.

CONCLUSION

17. The end of 2005 will constitute the first turning point in the implementation of the Institutional Transformation Project as planned in its road map. A progress report will therefore be presented at the January 2006 Assembly session which should show the progress made by the Organization during the previous six months which are regarded as the critical phase of the Commission's change project. This progress report will indicate what remains to be done before the end of 2007, the end point of

the 2004-2007 Strategic Plan. It will also make it possible to make the necessary adjustments in the light of observations made by Member States in keeping with the Vision of the Union and the Mission of the Commission to successfully implement the Continent's integration process.

ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**ADJUSTMENT TO MAPUTO STRUCTURE**

18. Council will recall that during the Extra-Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 6 to 7 December, 2004, it authorized the Chairperson of the Commission in consultation with the PRC to re-adjust the structure of the Commission as approved by the 2003 Maputo Summit subject to the limits of the approved budget for 2005 for Common Staff Costs.

19. In implementing the above decision, the Commission in consultation with the PRC held meetings of the Sub-Committee on Structure from February to June 2005. The PRC guided by the budgetary constraints it approved the adjustment of the Maputo Structure but keeping within the 2005 budget for staff costs for the following Departments/Directorate:

Social Affairs
Infrastructure and Energy
Human Resources, Science and Technology
Trade and Industry
Rural Economy and Agriculture
Economic Affairs
Peace and Security
NEPAD

20. However, the Office of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Political Affairs required strengthening beyond the 2005 budgetary provision. The PRC, considered and adopted the adjustments to the structure in line with the plea of the Chairperson.

RECRUITMENT

21. Following the finalization of the work of the Sub-Committee on Structure and PRC respectively, the Commission will advertise all the vacant positions in the professional and GSA categories approved under the adjusted Maputo Structure.

22. The current staff situation reflects the decision of the Assembly on the implementation of the Maputo Structure. The Commission has endeavoured to ensure that there is a balance in the composition of staff in accordance with the quota of each Member State and gender representation. However, efforts are continuing to bring on board nationals of those Member States who are still under-represented. As at June 2005, the number of female staff has increased in top managerial positions. The Table below indicates the staff composition at the African Union.

**COMPOSITION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF COMPLEMENT
AT THE COMMISSION
AS AT 7 JUNE 2005**

#	COUNTRY	QUOT A ALLO C A - T I O N	FULFILL - M E N T	GENDER		% ATTAIN- M E N T O F Q U O T A	DIFF. T O R E C - R U I T
				NUMBER	MALE		
1	Algeria	17	5	4	1	29.00	12
2	Angola	7	4	4	0	57.00	3
3	Benin	5	4	3	1	80.00	1
4	Botswana	7	2	0	2	29.00	5
5	Burkina Faso	5	5	5	0	100.00	0
6	Burundi	5	5	5	0	100.00	0
7	Cameroon	8	8	5	3	100.00	0
8	Cape Verde	5	1	0	1	20.00	4
9	Central African Republic	5	1	1	0	20.00	4
10	Chad	5	2	2	0	40.00	3
11	Comoros	4	0	0	0	0.00	4
12	Congo (Republic)	5	1	1	0	20.00	4
13	Cote d'Ivoire	10	4	4	0	40.00	6
14	Democratic Republic of Congo	6	1	1	0	17.00	5
15	Djibouti	4	2	1	1	50.00	2
16	Egypt	17	4	3	1	24.00	13
17	Equatorial Guinea	4	0	0	0	0.00	4
18	Eritrea	5	1	0	1	20.00	4
19	Ethiopia	7	6	4	2	86.00	1
20	Gabon	7	3	2	1	43.00	4
21	Gambia	4	1	1	0	25.00	3
22	Ghana	7	7	5	2	100.00	0
23	Guinea	6	1	1	0	17.00	5
24	Guinea Bissau	4	0	0	0	0.00	4
25	Kenya	9	8	3	5	89.00	1
26	Lesotho	5	1	1	0	20.00	4
27	Liberia	4	1	0	1	25.00	3
28	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	17	4	4	0	24.00	13
29	Madagascar	6	6	4	2	100.00	0
30	Malawi	5	4	2	2	80.00	1
31	Mali	5	4	2	2	80.00	1
32	Mauritania	5	1	1	0	20.00	4
33	Mauritius	7	5	3	2	7.00	2

#	COUNTRY	QUOT A ALLOC A-TION	FULFILL -MENT	GENDER		% ATTAIN- MENT OF QUOTA	DIFF. TO REC- RUIT
				NUMBER	MALE		
34	Mozambique	6	3	3	0	50.00	3
35	Namibia	6	2	0	2	33.00	4
36	Niger	5	4	3	1	80.00	1
37	Nigeria	17	10	8	2	59.00	7
38	Rwanda	5	1	1	0	20.00	4
39	SADR	4	1	1	0	25.00	3
40	Sao Tome & Principe	4	0	0	0	0.00	4
41	Senegal	6	7	4	3	117.00	0
42	Seychelles	4	0	0	0	0.00	4
43	Sierra Leone	4	2	2	0	50.00	2
44	Somalia	5	0	0	0	0.00	5
45	South Africa	17	4	1	3	2400	13
46	Sudan	9	4	3	1	45.00	5
47	Swaziland	5	2	1	1	40.00	3
48	Togo	5	7	4	3	140.00	0
49	Tunisia	15	3	2	1	20.00	12
50	Uganda	7	8	3	5	114.00	0
51	United Rep. Of Tanzania	7	5	3	2	71.00	2
52	Zambia	5	5	3	2	100.00	0
53	Zimbabwe	7	3	2	1	43.00	4

Summary: As at 7 June 2005, there are 179 staff on quota.

Breakdown: Male: 122 (i.e. 68.16%)
Female: 57 (i.e. 31.84%)

23. In conformity with the commitment undertaken by the Commission to ensure transparency in the recruitment process, the Commission has constituted the Selection and Interview Panels to include professionals/experts in the respective fields, the Staff Association.

24. The Commission continues to implement the principle of gender parity adopted by the Heads of State and Government. It should be noted that three years ago the Commission had inherited a structure that had a 20% representation of women at the level of the directors. Today, the Commission is led at the technical level by a team of Directors, 50% of whom are women.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

25. As the demand for performance continues, the Commission is in the process of designing a holistic integrated performance management system that will include a

business strategy based on management of people and performance. It will therefore require planning, coaching, reviewing and rewarding. Such a system will fulfill the aspirations of the Organization by securing staff of the highest standards of efficiency, competency and integrity whilst satisfying the legitimate desire for self-realization.

PENSION, INSURANCE AND MEDICAL BENEFIT

26. The Commission realizes the importance of attracting, developing and holding onto talented staff and therefore this requires the improvement of their benefits hence the Commission is in the process of reviewing the social systems of staff welfare, namely; pension, insurance and medical benefit. The results of the study and its recommendations will be presented to the PRC for consideration.

HARMONIZATION OF THE SALARY STRUCTURE

27. As the desire of the Commission is to retain high caliber of staff, it will be necessary to have an effective salary strategy that will be based on performance of individual staff. The Commission is therefore in the process of reviewing the current salary structure to ensure harmonization between the OAU salary structure and the adopted Maputo Salary Structure. At the moment, the implementation of the approved salary structure is hampered by a number of problems relating to incompatibility between the two salary structures that were merged. The study will be finalized and presented to the PRC for consideration.

28. I would like to express my gratitude to Member States for their continuous support in these achievements

PROGRAMMING, BUDGETING, FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING DIRECTORATE**I. REFORM OF THE FINANCIAL SYSTEM**

29. During the period under review the directorate of Programming, Budgeting, Finance and Accounting made progress to implement the recommendations contained in Ernest and Young Report as well as those of the Board of External Auditors in pursuance of various Council and PRC Decisions. apprised

II. Specific progress has been made in the following areas:

30. The draft Financial Rules and Regulations as proposed by Ernst and Young have been submitted to the Member States for their consideration. The appropriate AU Organs will consider the Report after this Summit. The report shall be submitted to Council for consideration and adoption it at its next Session.

31. The staff strength of the department is improving by the ongoing recruitment for both the Headquarters and Regional Offices. Furthermore, the revised structure based on the recommendations of the Ernst and Young consultants and that of the Board of External Auditors has been submitted to the sub-committee on structure and has made positive recommendations which when implemented will bring the Department at full strength.

32. All Finance Officers have undergone a reorientation to equip themselves with their operations and financial services requirements of other departments. They have been directed to implement the Ernst and Young Report and progress monitoring has been put in place to ensure strict compliance. The department has issued budget guidelines and inducted the staff of the commission on its use. We are hopeful that with the issuance of the guidelines, the preparation of the 2006 budget will be better managed and the programme managers will easily monitor their budget execution. The department is timely producing monthly reports on the budget performance and it should greatly help to minimize unauthorized expenditure and facilitate proper implementation of the programmes.

33. The Department has also embarked on a systematic implementation of the recommendations of the Directorate of Internal Audit . This will enhance the efforts to improve and strengthen the Internal Control Management system of the Commission.

34. Early this year, the Commission launched an Institutional Transformation process and special attention has been given to the transformation of the financial management and accounting processes. To date, the Commission has finalized the diagnosis process and gap analysis. The Commission will benchmark the desired financial and management and information system against reputable organizations to ensure that the needs of both internal and external stakeholders are catered for.

35. Needless to emphasize, all the Commission's objectives and targets can only be achieved if adequate funds are made available during the first part of the year to facilitate timely implementation of the programmes. To date, only ten Member States have paid their 2005 assessed contribution. The total amount received to date is US\$21,517, 796.53 which represents 36% of the budget.

36. The Council had set up a Ministerial Committee to review the scale of assessment based on primarily, the capacity of Member States to pay, the Committee is still seized with the matter.

37. It is our hope and desire that a definitive position is taken during this Council Session in a bid to hopefully improve Member Contributions for the Commission.

DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND SECURITY**I. INTRODUCTION**

38. The efforts deployed by the Commission since the last session of the Assembly of the Union were informed by the Plan of Action emanating from the Vision and the Strategic Framework approved in Addis Ababa, in July 2004. In this regard, it should be recalled that the Plan of Action identified a number of activities structured around the following axis: establishment of the continental architecture for Peace and Security; strengthening the AU's role in conflict prevention and management; disarmament; child soldiers; terrorism; relations with the United Nations and other AU partners; consolidation of the Peace Fund and resource mobilization; and institutional development.

39. Despite the human resource as well as financial constraints with which the Commission is confronted, significant progress was achieved in many of these programmes and activities, particularly with respect to the establishment of the continental architecture for Peace and Security, conflict management and resolution, as well as interaction with our partners in the international community. This progress is all the more remarkable since it came at a time when the deployment of the AU Mission to the Sudan (AMIS) and the responsibilities assigned to the Commission in other conflict areas such as in Somalia where the AU should deploy a peace support mission, and in the Democratic Republic of Congo, with the preparations for the future deployment of a force which will disarm the Ex-FAR/Interahamwé and other armed groups in the East of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)- constitute a tremendous burden on the still limited capacities of the Commission.

II. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONTINENTAL ARCHITECTURE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY

40. The importance of completing the establishment of the continental architecture for Peace and Security cannot be over-emphasized. Indeed, there are two pillars underpinning this architecture, namely: the protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC), on the one hand, and the Common African Defence and Security Policy (CASDP), on the other.

(i) PSC Protocol**Signing and Ratification of the Protocol**

41. During the period under review, the issue of the signing and ratification of the PSC Protocol continued to feature among the priorities of the Commission. Since January 2005, no new signature has been recorded; however, Egypt ratified the Protocol on 1 February and deposited its instrument of ratification on 1 March 2005. At the time of finalizing the present report, 49 Member States had signed the Protocol and 38 had ratified it. The four Member States that have not yet signed the Protocol are Botswana, Cape Verde, Eritrea and Tunisia. The following Member States have signed, but are yet to ratify the Protocol: Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritania, DRC, Seychelles, Somalia and Swaziland.

42. I would like, once again, to renew my appeal to Member States that have not yet done so to take the necessary measures to become parties to the PSC Protocol.

Operationalization of the PSC

43. Despite various types of constraints, the PSC, whose current members were elected in March 2004, continued to effectively discharge its duties. Since January 2005, the Council has held eight meetings during which many decisions were taken, particularly pertaining to the strengthening of the AU Mission to the Sudan (AMIS) and the deployment of an IGAD Peace Support Mission in Somalia (IGASOM), which will be followed, at the end of its Phase I, by the deployment of an AU Mission. As indicated in my previous reports, it is imperative to endow the PSC with the necessary human and material resources to fulfil its duties. In this regard, I am pleased to inform Council that the process for the establishment of the PSC Secretariat and recruitment of additional staff from extra-budgetary funds is underway.

Continental Early Warning System

44. The Continental Early Warning System constitutes an essential element of the continental architecture for Peace and Security, therefore its full establishment is all the more urgent. During the period under consideration, the efforts of the Commission focused on working out a road map with a view to establishing this System. To this end, consultations took place between the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) at an experts meeting held in Addis Ababa, from 22 to 23 March 2005. It is planned that the consultations will continue with other bodies as well as Member States in the coming weeks and months. In the meantime, thanks to the support of partner institutions and countries, the AU Situation Room, which constitutes a crucial element of the Continental Early Warning System, has been renovated. Other measures will soon be taken in order to strengthen its capacities.

Establishment of the Panel of the Wise

45. Concerning the Panel of the Wise, I intend to initiate the necessary consultations with a view to submitting recommendations on the nomination of Panel Members at the next session of the Assembly of the Union.

Establishment of the African Standby Force (ASF)

46. During the period under review, significant progress was made with regard to the establishment of ASF. I should like, in particular, to highlight the formal and solemn launching of the Brigade for the Eastern Region (EASBRIG), which took place at the Headquarters of the AU, in Addis Ababa, on 11 April 2005. In the same vein, progress has also been made in West Africa, Southern Africa, and Central Africa.

47. As indicated above, from 22 to 23 March 2005, the Commission convened, in Addis Ababa, a meeting with the Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, to review various aspects of their relationship in the area of peace and security. The meeting agreed on a Road-map, identifying the practical measures to be taken both at the continental and regional levels, to

operationalize Phase I of the ASF, by June 2006. These measures, among other aspects, include:

- the establishment of Planning Elements (PLANLEMs), both at the level of the AU and the RECs by June 2005;
- the completion, by December 2005, of studies relating to the different aspects of the ASF (logistics, communication, training, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), etc.), including through the convening of sectorial and technical workshops;
- the establishment of regional brigades; and
- funding, collaboration and cooperation with partner countries and institutions.

48. It was further agreed that the AU would carry out follow-up and periodic review of the implementation of the agreed Road-map. In this regard, the RECs shall forward progress reports every three months. On its part, the AU will facilitate the dissemination of the information collected and the exchange of experiences between RECs.

Elaboration of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the AU and the RECs

49. Efforts have been deployed with respect to the elaboration of an MoU between the AU and the RECs in the area of peace and security. During the meeting of experts referred to above, the participants exchanged views on the draft MoU, which has been prepared by the Commission, based on the Consultative Missions undertaken to the different RECs, between November 2003 and January 2004, in pursuance to Article 16 of the Protocol Relating to the PSC. The participants underlined the fact that the draft MoU constitutes a viable basis for work and that necessary adjustments should be made to the document, in order to make it more focused and to ensure that it contributes effectively to the overall coherence of the continental peace and security architecture.

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

50. Council will recall that within the framework of the CADSP, a Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact was adopted last January by the Assembly of the Union. I wish to inform Council that the Pact has already been signed by 12 Member States, although 15 ratifications are required for its entry into force. In addition to efforts aimed at ensuring the entry into force of this instrument, steps will be taken to identify other activities to be undertaken within the framework of the CADSP.

III. CONFLICT PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT, AND POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION

51. Concurrently with the completion of the establishment of the continental

architecture for Peace and Security, the Commission continued its efforts towards conflict prevention and management. With regard more specifically to conflict prevention, the Plan of Action places special emphasis on the prevention known as structural prevention, which contrary to what is known as direct or operational prevention, aims at dealing with the root causes of conflicts. In this regard, consultations are underway in the Commission with a view to successfully completing the review process of the Lomé Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government. Likewise, it is intended, during the second half of the year, to initiate programmes relating to border management, combating violence and promoting the peace culture. These programmes will be designed and implemented with the cooperation of the RECs and partner institutions.

52. Concerning actual conflicts, the Commission's action was geared towards increasing the involvement of the AU in resolution efforts as well as in the implementation of peace agreements. Consequently, the Commission initiated the necessary measures to work out a global and coherent approach to post-conflict reconstruction. Obviously, it is a crucial aspect of efforts aimed at consolidating progress achieved in the area of peace and security. In view of the increasing number of conflicts in the process of being resolved in the Continent (Southern Sudan, DRC, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, to mention but a few), there is no doubt that the issue of post-conflict reconstruction will be a priority on our Union's agenda in the coming decades. Therefore, there is a need to develop an approach that will enable the AU to identify the areas where it has a comparative advantage and can thus assume its rightful role, to complement the efforts of other African as well as non-African institutions. In this regard, the organization, next September, of a workshop bringing together all stakeholders is envisaged.

53. During the past few years, and with a view to increasing its contribution to conflict prevention and management, the AU established Liaison Offices or deployed Peace Support or Observer Missions in different areas of conflict or tension. This presence on the ground proved particularly useful for monitoring conflict situations and supporting the implementation of peace agreements, as well as the visibility of our Union's action. It is in this context that the Commission is in the process of reinforcing the means and human resources of AU Missions and Liaison Offices. Another concern, which has become more obvious thanks to the deployment of AMIS, is linked to the AU procedures for recruitment and award of contracts. Manifestly, the current procedures which were designed at a time when the operational dimension of our activities was much more limited, are not adapted to the exigencies of peace support operations such as the one underway in Darfur; these are operations which require flexibility at the same time as delegation of powers. In the special case of Darfur, *ad hoc* solutions are being found. Now, with the assistance of institutions such as the United Nations, permanent procedures must be worked out which should be applied to all peace support operations, in the light of the increasing responsibilities taken on by our Union in this domain.

54. Council would recall that, at its session in Abuja, and at the initiative of Nigeria, the need to design an African policy on the supply of items to AU and UN peacekeeping missions was discussed. Indeed, while African nations have been in the forefront of troop contributions to peacekeeping operations, the continent rarely features in the supply of items for those missions. Yet, African countries do have

comparative advantages in some areas, especially in the preparation and supply of staple food. In light of the above, it was proposed that the AU consider developing an African policy that will ensure that African companies and businesses are given priority for the supply of materials for UN and AU peacekeeping operations in Africa, and identify those items that could be procured within Africa. Subsequently, Council adopted decision EX.CL/Dec.189 (VI), requesting the Commission to establish a Working Group to study the proposal and submit a report to its 7th ordinary session.

55. During the reporting period, the Commission has undertaken internal consultations on how best to implement the decision adopted in Abuja. As a follow-up to these consultations, the Commission intends to convene a meeting bringing together all stakeholders to formulate recommendations on the best way forward. Meanwhile, the Commission has taken steps to involve African companies in the supply of goods and services to AMIS. In this respect, an inter-Departmental Task Force traveled to Darfur from 8 to 15 February 2005, to work out modalities for such an involvement. Subsequently, preliminary contacts were established with some African companies.

56. Generally, the past months have been marked by remarkable progress in the resolution of conflicts facing our Continent, particularly in Burundi and DRC, with the continuation of the transition process in these two countries, despite the delays and difficulties encountered; Côte d'Ivoire, where the implementation process for the Linas-Marcoussis and Accra III Agreements are back on track thanks to the efforts of President Thabo Mbeki; and Liberia, where elections to mark the end of the transition should take place as scheduled, in October this year. No effort should be spared to guarantee the irreversibility of these achievements.

57. At the same time, more sustained efforts are obviously required to overcome the persistent stalemate in the peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea; reviving the peace dynamic in Somalia, failing which the results of the Reconciliation Conference conducted under the aegis of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) will be undermined; ensuring the success of the negotiation process in the Sudanese region of Darfur, and improving security and combating impunity in the region. In all these situations, the African Union is expected to play a primary role. The events which occurred in Togo, after the death of General Gnassingbé Eyadéma, clearly showed that coordinated action, based on the principles of our Union can yield concrete results; these events also highlighted the need for closer cooperation between the AU and ECOWAS, as well as the urgency of reviewing the Lomé Declaration to adapt it to the exigencies of the times.

58. The following paragraphs provide an overview of developments in the different conflict situations with which our Continent is faced.

(i) The Comoros

59. During the period under consideration, the Commission continued to monitor the situation in the Comoros, particularly developments in the reconciliation process in the Archipelago. Despite the progress achieved, the process is still facing many difficulties, linked mainly to the absence of dialogue and cooperation between the Union and Island Executives, as well as between the Executive and the Assembly

of the Union; the issue of power sharing between the Union and the Islands; delays experienced in the adoption, promulgation and implementation of the basic laws required to complete the process; as well as lack of human and material resources. Furthermore, it should be noted that at military and security level, many problems arise, pertaining mainly to the formation of a single army; the status of the internal security forces of the Autonomous Islands; and the deployment of the army of the Union throughout the national territory. The socio-economic situation is also a source of concern.

60. As part of efforts aimed at helping the Comorian parties to overcome these difficulties, my Special Envoy to the Comoros, Francisco Madeira, visited the Archipelago from 21 to 28 March 2005. Subsequently, a ministerial delegation of countries of the region and the AU Troïka also travelled there from 6 to 7 May 2005. As a follow-up to the visits, the establishment of a group of African experts was envisaged, to help the Archipelago to overcome the technical difficulties relating to the implementation of the reconciliation process and expedite the convening of a donors' round table intended to mobilize the necessary resources for the socio-economic development of the Archipelago. However, it is clear that the Comorian parties bear the principal responsibilities for ensuring the successful completion of the reconciliation process in their country. In this regard, I would like, once again, to urge them to demonstrate the necessary political will and sense of compromise.

(ii) Somalia

61. Since the Abuja Summit, sustained efforts have been made to facilitate the deployment of the IGAD Peace Support Mission (IGASOM) in Somalia, following the communiqué adopted by the IGAD Heads of State and Government, in Abuja, at the end of January 2005, and which the Assembly of the Union, then meeting at the same venue, subsequently supported. In follow-up to the decision of the 24th meeting of the PSC, held on 7 February 2005, which authorized IGAD to deploy a Peace Support Mission in Somalia, pending the deployment of an AU Peace Support Mission, the 29th meeting of the PSC, held on 12 May 2005, specifically authorized the deployment of Phase I of IGASOM, with Uganda and Sudan providing the troops, in accordance with the decision of the 24th Ordinary Session of the IGAD Council of Ministers, held on 17 and 18 March 2005, in Nairobi.

62. At the same time, conditions prevailing among the Somali Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) have remained pre-occupying. Since their establishment, towards the end of last year, and even though there were initial plans to relocate the TFIs as early as December 2004, they have remained in Nairobi to date. The security situation has not satisfactorily improved in Mogadishu and other parts of Somalia. Despite the existence of a common cause among those institutions to relocate to Somalia without any further delay, differences continue to undermine the efforts to undertake that relocation. There is no consensus among the TFIs as to whether relocation should be straight to Mogadishu, the capital, or to some transit towns, pending the stabilisation of the security situation in Mogadishu. There is, also, no consensus regarding the composition of foreign troops which should support the relocation process, as well as the stabilisation of the security situation and the training of the police and army. The lack of funding for the relocation and other needs compounds the problems facing the TFIs. Given these challenges and the heavy

tasks to be undertaken by IGASOM, and later by the AU, which will take over IGASOM at the end of phase I, there is need to foster harmony among the TFIs and to mobilize the requisite of support for the peace process. Moreover, the Chairperson of the Commission sent a fact-finding mission to Somaliland and contacts with the authorities are being pursued.

(iii) Ethiopia

63. Ethiopia was shaken by serious post-electoral violence, although the general elections held on 15 May 2005 were conducted with calm and discipline that was commended by the international community. This crisis resulted in about thirty dead and many arrests. It is however fortunate that the situation is returning to normal. The African Union is fully involved in the ongoing mediation process and in the Verification Commission whose aim is to find common ground between the Ethiopian opposition and the government with a view to a peaceful and transparent resolution of this electoral crisis.

(iv) Ethiopia-Eritrea

64. The Ethiopia-Eritrea peace process has not seen any significant movement in recent months. It has remained stalemated by the divergent approaches of the parties regarding the implementation of the April 2002 Decision of the Boundary Commission. While Eritrea calls for the full and unconditional implementation of the Decision, Ethiopia stresses the need to engage in dialogue to resolve contentious issues resulting from the Decision. Despite the occurrence of incidents, calm and relative stability continue to prevail in the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ), along the border area.

65. The UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) continues to monitor the situation in the border area. In this respect, the UN Security Council, on 14 March 2005, extended the mandate of UNMEE until 15 September 2005. On that occasion, Council also stressed that Ethiopia and Eritrea have the primary responsibility for the implementation of the Algiers Agreements and the Decision of the Boundary Commission, and called upon both parties to show leadership to achieve a full normalization of their relationship, through political dialogue for the adoption of further confidence-building measures, and to consolidate progress achieved so far, by making full use of the existing framework of the Boundary Commission. Council also called on the parties to cooperate fully and promptly with the Boundary Commission and create the necessary conditions for demarcation to proceed expeditiously.

66. The OAU Liaison Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (OLMEE) continues to undertake monitoring activities along UNMEE. On my part, I have undertaken consultations and continue to do so, with a view to exploring ways and means of finding a lasting solution to the border problem, through the early convening of a meeting of the witnesses of the Algiers Agreements, to review the situation.

(v) The Sudan

67. The Sudan peace process was successfully completed on 9 January 2005, when the Government of the Sudan (GoS) and the Sudan People's Liberation

Movement (SPLM/A) signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), ending Africa's longest running armed conflict. The CPA is being implemented in two stages, commencing with a six-months pre-interim period, which began with the signing of the agreement; this period will be followed by a six-year interim period, after which there shall be a referendum to decide on the future of Southern Sudan. The CPA provides, among other aspects, for the elaboration of an Interim National Constitution (INC), which will be the basis of the National Unity Government during the transitional period. In this respect, the Sudanese parties have submitted their proposals for the INC. It should also be noted that, on 24 March 2005, the United Nations Security Council decided to establish, for an initial period of six months, the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), consisting of up to 10,000 military personnel and an appropriate civilian component, to support the implementation of the CPA.

68. On its part, and in support to the CPA, the AU Ministerial Committee on Post-conflict Reconstruction in the Sudan convened a Workshop in Cape Town, on 18 February 2005, to map a strategy on the basis of which AU Member States are expected to contribute to the post-conflict reconstruction efforts in the country. Subsequently, the Committee visited the Sudan from 22 to 26 March 2005. The Committee also participated in the Donors' Conference convened in Oslo, from 11 to 12 April 2005, with the aim of mobilizing support for post-conflict reconstruction in the Sudan. The Conference raised more than US\$4,5 billion for the first phase of the development plan of the Sudan.

69. While tremendous progress has been made in the search for a lasting solution to the conflict in Southern Sudan, the situation in Darfur remains a matter of deep concern. In spite of the efforts of, and improvements brought about by AMIS in the areas in which it is deployed, insecurity continues to prevail on the ground, with persistent attacks against civilians, particularly by the Janjaweed militias, as well as increasing incidents of armed banditry and attacks against humanitarian organizations and commercial convoys by the rebel movements. These developments have negatively impacted on the delivery of the much-needed humanitarian assistance to the civilian population.

70. It is against this background that the 28th meeting of the PSC, held on 28 April 2005, having noted that the AU Mission on the ground did not have sufficient strength to effectively implement its mandate, decided to increase the strength of the Mission to a total of 6,171 military personnel, with an appropriate civilian component, including up to 1,560 civilian police personnel, by the end of September 2005. Since then, a number of steps have been taken by the Commission to make it possible to effect the deployment of the authorized strength within the stipulated timeline, including the convening in Addis Ababa, on 26 May 2005, of a Pledging Conference to mobilize the required financial and logistical resources.

71. As far as the negotiations to reach a comprehensive political settlement are concerned, it should be noted that the period under review has been characterized by intense consultations with the parties, to whom a Draft Framework Protocol for the Resolution of the Conflict in Darfur has been submitted, as well as with the Chadian co-Mediation, the Nigerian authorities in their capacity as co-facilitators, and the AU partners. The Talks are scheduled to resume in Abuja on 10 June 2005. I should also like to indicate that I have designated Salim Ahmed Salim, former OAU Secretary-

General, as my Special Envoy for Darfur in charge of the negotiation process. It is my earnest hope that the forthcoming negotiations will, rather soon than later, result in a comprehensive settlement.

(vi) Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

72. The period under consideration was marked by significant progress in the transition process, in spite of prevailing tension within the Congolese political class and the resurgence of insecurity, particularly in Ituri. In this respect, the announcement of the possible postponement of the elections by the Chairperson of the Independent Electoral Commission at the beginning of the year provoked deep turmoil within the Congolese political class. Faced with this situation, the international community became further involved in assisting the transition, thereby expediting the review of the laws relating to the electoral process. It was also within the framework of this momentum that the Draft Constitution was adopted on 16 May 2005, by the two Chambers (Parliament and Senate), in the presence of Presidents Joseph Kabila and Thabo Mbeki. The Draft Constitution will be submitted for a referendum, shortly. The overall situation however remains precarious and therefore calls for the sustained commitment of the international community.

73. Furthermore, the Joint Verification Mechanisms put in place between the DRC and Rwanda (MCV) on the one hand, and between the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda (the Tripartite), on the other hand, contributed to restoring trust between the three countries and reinforced the hope for lasting peace in the region. For its part, the Commission took active part in the operation of the MCV. In this regard, the officers it appointed to participate in the activities of the Verification Teams are already working in the field. It also participated in all the meetings organized within the Tripartite framework.

74. As part of the implementation of the decision of the 23rd PSC meeting held in Libreville on 10 January 2005, on the disarmament and neutralization of the ex-Far/Interahamwé and other armed groups in Eastern DRC, the Commission organized a consultative meeting on the issues in Addis Ababa, from 15 to 16 March 2005. This was followed on 22 April, still in Addis Ababa, by a meeting of military experts of Member States of the PSC Chiefs of Defence Staff Committee and the AU Committee on the DRC. At the time of finalizing this Report, the Commission was preparing to submit recommendations to the PSC. It was in this context that the *Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda* (FDLR) published in Rome, on 31 March 2005, a declaration whereby the movement expressed its condemnation of the genocide committed in Rwanda in 1994, as well as its perpetrators, its renunciation of the armed struggle, and its commitment to join the DDRRR programme established by the United Nations.

75. In spite of this encouraging overall development, the security and humanitarian situation remain a cause for concern in Ituri, where a few armed groups continue to attack MONUC convoys and refuse to lay down arms. However, MONUC's firmness with regard to these groups has enabled over 13,000 armed elements, amongst who are many child soldiers, to voluntarily lay down arms.

(vii) Burundi

76. In Burundi, the peace and reconciliation process has entered its last phase. The post-transition constitution was adopted by referendum on 28 February 2005. The initial electoral calendar, published on 16 October 2004, provided for the holding of elections between 26 November 2004 and 22 April 2005. Since various forms of constraints have made it impossible to respect this schedule, a new calendar was fixed, which provides mainly for the holding of legislative elections on 4 July 2005, and presidential elections on 19 August 2005. Due to the delays encountered, the 24th Summit of the Regional Initiative for Peace in Burundi held on 22 April 2005 in Entebbe, Uganda, decided to extend the transition period until 26 August 2005, by which date the President elect would have been sworn in.

77. In the meantime, the PALIPEHUTU-FNL, the last armed movement which has not joined the peace process, offered to begin serious negotiations with the Transitional Government and work for a viable peace plan. It was in this context that President Benjamin Mkapa facilitated a meeting between the President of Burundi, Domitien Ndayizeye, and Agathon Rwaso, on 15 May 2005, in Dar-es-Salaam. On that occasion, the two parties declared the immediate cessation of hostilities and decided to establish technical teams with the mission to define the permanent ceasefire mechanisms; they also undertook to begin negotiations as soon as possible, without however impeding the ongoing electoral process. Simultaneously, the process for the reform of the security sector continues its normal course.

78. Council will recall that the PSC, at its meeting on 15 November 2004, had authorized the South African Protection Force charged with ensuring the protection of political personalities in Burundi to operate under the mandate of the African Union. I am pleased to inform Council that the takeover of the Protection Force by the African Union is henceforth effective.

(viii) Process of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region

79. Council will recall that the first phase of the process of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region ended with the organization of the First Summit of the Conference in Dar-es-Salaam, from 19 to 20 November 2004, and the adoption of a Declaration on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region. The second phase of the Conference Process began with the holding in Kigali, from 17 to 18 February 2005, of the first meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Regional Committee (IRC), established by the Dar-es-Salaam Summit. The IRC is responsible for preparing the draft protocols and programmes of action on the four themes of the Conference, which will be adopted by the 2nd Summit slated for Nairobi, in November 2005.

80. The four thematic technical groups (TTG) established by the IRC in Kigali, held their 1st meeting in Mombasa, from 4 to 8 April 2005, agreeing, *inter alia*, on the list of proposed programmes of action at the level of the TTG. These proposals which will be submitted for the consideration of the TTG at its forthcoming meetings, will be elaborated by the Regional Preparatory Committee, supported by experts. The Commission participated actively in these meetings within the framework of the Joint

AU/United Nations Secretariat; likewise, it took the necessary measures to ensure the effective functioning of the AU Liaison Office for the Great Lakes, which is based in Nairobi.

(ix) Central African Republic

81. The situation in the Central African Republic was marked these past months by the holding of presidential and legislative elections (on 13 March, for the first round, and 18 May 2005, for the second round). General Bozizé was declared the winner with 64.6% of the votes, against 35% to Martin Ziguéle, who acknowledged defeat and congratulated his opponent. Furthermore, the Kwa Na Kwa Convergence, a coalition of General Bozizé's partisans, obtained a relative majority in the National Assembly, by winning 40 out of 105 seats. According to general opinion, these elections took place in an atmosphere of peace. However, the publication of the results of the second round of legislative elections gave rise to several contentions and even clashes in some constituencies.

82. Furthermore, Council will recall that faced with the security problem throughout the country, particularly in the interior provinces, the Commission had backed the request for financial assistance for the CEMAC Multinational Force (FOMUC), within the framework of the Peace Support Facility established by the European Union (EU) at the request of the AU. A contribution of 3.38 million euros had been paid to FOMUC, covering the Force's needs for the period from 1 November 2004 to 30 June 2005. In April 2005, CEMAC again requested for the support of the Commission to renew this funding, to enable FOMUC to complete its mission of restructuring the Central African Armed Forces and stabilizing the country. The Commission initiated the necessary measures to obtain financing in order to enable FOMUC to continue its mission in the CAR.

83. The end of the presidential and legislative elections marked an important stage in the return to constitutional order in the country. The Commission intends to take the necessary steps to consolidate this positive development and participate actively in efforts towards the socio-economic recovery of the CAR.

(x) Côte d'Ivoire

84. In line with the decision of the 23rd PSC meeting held in Libreville, Gabon, on 10 January 2005 on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire, President Thabo Mbeki continued his mediation with a view to reviving the reconciliation process in this country. His efforts culminated in the signing, on 6 April 2005, of the Pretoria Agreement between the Ivorian parties. This Agreement addresses, among other things, a joint declaration on the end of the war; disarmament and dismantling of the militia; the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme; security in the area under New Forces' control; the security of members of the Government from the New Forces; delegation of powers to the Prime Minister; the Independent Electoral Commission; organization of elections; as well as the issue of eligibility to the Office of President of the Republic on which the Mediator was only to decide after consultation with the current Chairman of the AU and the Secretary General of the United Nations.

85. In a letter dated 11 April 2005, President Mbeki requested President Laurent Gbagbo to implement the provisions of Article 48 of the Ivorian Constitution. On 26 April, President Gbagbo decided to apply Article 48 and decreed that all signatories to the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement were eligible. At the same time, the launching of the operation for the disarmament and dismantling of the militia took place in Guiglo, in Western Côte d'Ivoire, on 25 May. I encourage the Ivorian parties to respect the commitments to which they have subscribed and work towards the full implementation of the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement.

xi) Liberia

86. Since January 2005, much progress has been made in the implementation of the Accra Comprehensive Agreement (CPA) of August 2003. Amidst calls from the National Transitional Legislative Assembly (NTLA) and other segments of the society for the postponement of the elections, steps have been taken for the holding, next October, of general elections that will successfully conclude the transitional period. These include the voter education and voter registration programmes. In addition, the rehabilitation and reintegration programme is underway, following the end of the disarmament and demobilization programme, last November.

87. However, a number of difficulties are to be overcome to bring the current process to a successful end. In this respect, it is worth mentioning, among other things, the restructuring and reforming of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), which has been stalled due to lack of funds. In addition, there are the recurrent accusations of corruption and lack of transparency, integrity and accountability leveled against the Transitional Institutions, which clearly are making it more difficult to mobilize the requisite support from the donor community. In reaction to these accusations, the Government set up an anti-corruption Task Force and empowered it to investigate allegations of corruption in the public sector. This Task Force is yet to prove effective in carrying out the mandate entrusted to it.

88. On its part, the Commission has continued to support the ongoing process in Liberia. In addition to the contribution of the AU Liaison Office in Monrovia to the implementation of the CPA, my Special Envoy visited Liberia from 2 to 10 April 2005, for an overall assessment of the situation. The Commission also approached the EU to seek the much-needed support for the restructuring and reforming of the AFL. At the time of finalizing this report, efforts were underway to provide further assistance to the Liberian peace process.

(xii) Togo

89. In Togo, following the death of President Eyadéma on 5 February, and in conformity with the basic texts of our Union, it was necessary to call for the restoration of constitutional order, in compliance with Article 65 of the Constitution of the Republic of Togo which lays down conditions for accession to the Presidency of the Republic in case of a power vacuum. Combined pressure from the AU, ECOWAS and the international community, helped bring about the return to constitutional legality, and the organization of presidential elections within the constitutional timeframe. ECOWAS felt that the irregularities observed during the elections did not undermine the credibility of the elections. However, it should be noted that the

violence and controversies that marked these elections resulted in 30,000 Togolese taking refuge in Bénin and France.

90. It was in this context that the 30th PSC Meeting held on 27 May 2005, urged the Togolese parties to exercise restraint and show a sense of compromise in order to encourage the establishment of a National Redemption Government and promote reconciliation and democracy. The PSC supported my decision to appoint a Special Envoy to facilitate dialogue between the Togolese parties, in collaboration with ECOWAS, and encouraged me to take all the necessary steps, including sending an observer mission, to monitor developments in the political, security, social, humanitarian and human rights situation in Togo. At the same time, the PSC considered that the conditions for the resumption of the participation of the Togolese authorities and their representatives in the activities of all AU organs had been met, and therefore requested the Commission to take the necessary measures to ensure the resumption of Togo's participation.

91. At the request of the Current Chairperson of ECOWAS, the Chairperson of the Commission cancelled the nomination of a Special Envoy and the sending of an observer mission, and decided to support the efforts of the Current Chairperson. Since 21 June 2005, a new government has been established with Mr. Edem Kodjo as Prime Minister, from what is said to be the moderate opposition.

(xiii) Guinea Bissau

92. Since the coup d'état that toppled President Kumba Yala on 14 September 2004, the AU backstopped efforts deployed by ECOWAS with a view to the definitive return of constitutional order and stability. Council will recall that in compliance with the Transition Charter, legislative elections were held on 28 and 30 March 2004, which facilitated the formation of a Government and the installation of the Peoples' National Assembly. Presidential elections which will mark the final return to constitutional order are scheduled to hold on 19 June 2005.

93. However, it should be stressed that although the situation in the country remains relatively calm, the mutiny of 6 October created real tension, exacerbated in the past months by many events, particularly the disintegration of political parties, the controversial candidatures to the presidential elections of former Presidents Kumba Yala and Joao Bernardo Vieira, and the Declaration of 15 May 2005 by Kumba Yala asserting his legitimacy as President of the Republic and calling for the postponement of the presidential elections. In this regard, his attempt to occupy the presidential palace during the night of 24 to 25 May, with the help of a group of soldiers should be noted. Last January, my Special Envoy, Francisco Madeira, visited Guinea Bissau to evaluate the situation and submit recommendations on the support the AU should provide to the ongoing process in the country. At the time of finalizing this Report, the convening of a PSC meeting to consider the situation in Guinea Bissau was planned.

(xiv) Western Sahara

94. Since last January, efforts at resolving the dispute over the territory of Western Sahara have not witnessed any new development. In particular, no progress has been made in the implementation of the Peace Plan submitted to the parties, two

years ago, by the then Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General, James Baker, and which provides for the exercise by the people of Western Sahara of their right to self-determination, after a transitional period of five years.

95. As part of his continuing efforts, the UN Secretary General, on 19 April 2005, submitted to the Security Council yet another report on the situation in the dispute over Western Sahara. The Security Council subsequently considered the said report and adopted, on 28 April 2005, resolution 1598 (2005) by which, among other things, it reiterated its call upon the parties and States of the region to continue to cooperate fully with the UN, while extending MINURSO's mandate until 31 October 2005.

96. Towards the end of May 2005, the city of Laayoune was hit by unrest and demonstrations organized and carried out under the leadership of Saharawi human rights activists and their supporters. Several people were reported to have been injured or arrested. On 1st June 2005, the President of the SADR wrote to me in relation to these developments. In his letter, he indicated that the demonstrations were aimed at securing the release of Saharaoui prisoners, the respect of human rights and the exercise by the Saharaoui people of their inalienable right to self-determination. He called on the AU to intervene urgently, and to ensure that the United Nations, including the Security Council, assume its responsibilities to enable the Saharaoui people to exercise their right to self-determination.

IV. DISARMAMENT

97. The Action Plan provides for a number of steps to be taken with respect to disarmament issues, including the early entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty Establishing a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Africa. In this context, the Commission took part in the Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that establish Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zones, which was held in Tlatelolco, Mexico, from 26 to 28 April 2005. I would like to seize this opportunity to urge those Member States that have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the Pelindaba Treaty as soon as possible. Indeed, not much progress has been made towards the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty: as of 25 May 2005, almost ten years since the adoption of the Treaty, only 16 Member States had deposited instruments of ratification, whereas a minimum of 27 ratifications are required for it to enter into force.

V. PREVENTING AND COMBATING TERRORISM

98. During the period under review, the activities of the Commission regarding terrorism were two-fold: campaigning for the signature and ratification of the Algiers Convention and its Protocol thereto, and the operationalization of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT). At the time of finalizing this report, 46 Member States had signed the Convention, while 36 had ratified it. Twenty Member States have signed the Protocol, but none has deposited its instrument of ratification; 15 ratifications are required for it to enter into force.

99. Since the inauguration of the ACSRT, the Commission has continued with its efforts to operationalize the Centre. These efforts have resulted in the appointment of the Director *ad interim* of the Centre. Furthermore, and in pursuance of decision

EX.CL/Dec.177 (VI) adopted by Council at its 6th Ordinary Session, the PRC considered and approved the Draft Modalities for the Functioning of the ACSRT. In order to facilitate the effective functioning of the Centre, the Government of Algeria has provided the sum of US\$2 million to meet its running and operational costs. Since assuming office, the Director of the Centre has participated in a number of international forums, including a seminar on counter-terrorism, organized by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), on 1 March 2005, and a seminar on money laundering and the financing of terrorism, organized by the Government of Switzerland, in Geneva, from 18 to 23 April 2005. These forums enabled the Centre to outreach to the international community and to promote cooperation. At the time of finalizing this report, the Commission was finalizing preparations for the following activities:

- the meeting of National Focal Points, to be held in Algiers, from 7 to 8 June 2005, which will, among others, consider and approve the programme of work of the Centre;
- the signing of the Host Agreement between the AU Commission and the Government of Algeria on the Headquarters of the Centre;
- the dispatching of personnel from the Headquarters to assist with the operationalization of the Centre, particularly in setting up the administrative and financial procedures of the Centre, based on the rules and regulations of the Commission; and
- the recruitment of the key personnel of the Centre.

100. As part of efforts aimed at strengthening the capacity of the Union in the prevention and combating of terrorism, the Commission continues to engage AU partners to mobilize the necessary resources. The Commission has also taken steps to strengthen cooperation with the CTC Executive Directorate (CTED), whose Director General visited Addis Ababa, in May 2005.

101. In light of the aforementioned, the challenge before the Commission remains in the effective implementation of the AU's counter-terrorism agenda. This includes the ratification of the Convention and its Protocol thereto and the effective functioning of the ACSRT.

VI. RELATIONS WITH PARTNERS AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

102. The Commission continued to engage in constant dialogue with the AU's partners on peace and security issues. This dialogue, which is being conducted at several levels, undoubtedly contributed to strengthening AU efforts geared towards promoting peace and security in the Continent.

103. First, I would like to stress that during the past six months, the Commission maintained regular contact with the United Nations on different conflict situations in the Continent, including the deployment of AMIS, for which the United Nations established a Special Support Unit based in Addis Ababa. At my level, I also maintained close contacts with the Secretary General of the United Nations. From 28

February to 1 March 2005, at the head of a delegation of the Commission, I held consultations in New York with the Secretary General of the United Nations and other senior officials of the Secretariat on the different conflict situations in the Continent, as well as the modalities of closer cooperation between the AU and the United Nations.

104. On 4 April 2005, and within the framework of the G8 Plan of Action for Africa on building African capacities to conduct peacekeeping operations, the Commission organized a consultative meeting between the AU, the RECs, the NEPAD Secretariat and Representatives of G8 Member States, the EU, the United Nations and other important partners. The objective of the meeting was to consider the activities requiring support, with a view to consolidating peace and security in Africa, including the establishment of the African Standby Force.

105. Within the context of the road map for the establishment of the ASF adopted at the above-mentioned meeting from 22 to 23 March 2003, and in the light of the G8 Summit scheduled for Gleneagles, in Scotland, in July 2005, the meeting allowed itself a number of measures aimed at supporting the AU in areas as diverse as the ASF, lessons drawn from experiences, the Continental Early Warning System, post-conflict reconstruction and coordination between donors. The meeting also agreed on a follow-up mechanism structured around the consultation provided for in the G8 Plan of Action for Africa, which will be held in April each year; a technical meeting, in October each year to review progress made and prepare the annual consultation mentioned above; and regular consultations in capitals between the AU's partners, the RECs and other stakeholders.

106. On 4 April, at the head of a delegation of the Commission, I visited Washington for consultations with the American authorities. On that occasion, I met with the American Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice. The visit made it possible to consolidate the partnership between the AU and the United States and to discuss a number of issues of common interest. As part of the follow-up to this visit, the organization of regular dialogue at high level between the Commission and the American Government on issues of common interest in Washington and Addis Ababa alternately, is envisaged. The first of such meetings will be held in Washington, during the first two weeks of July.

107. During the period under consideration, the Commission also continued to intensify its partnership with the European Union. Within this context, the Commission participated in the Ministerial Meeting of the Europe-Africa Troïka held in Luxembourg, on 11 April 2005. This meeting provided an opportunity to review conflict situations in the Continent and other related issues, and consider the ways and means of strengthening cooperation between the EU and the AU. On 17 May 2005, at the head of a delegation of the Commission, I travelled to Brussels. On this occasion, I had fruitful discussions on different conflict situations and other issues with the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, as well as the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the EU, Javier Solana, and the European Commissioner for Development, Louis Michel. I also met with the Secretary General of NATO, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, and the Atlantic Council to discuss the possible assistance NATO could provide the AU within the framework of the deployment of AMIS.

108. With regard particularly to Darfur, it should be mentioned that the Pledging Conference for AMIS took place in Addis Ababa, on 26 May 2005. This Conference, which was chaired jointly by the Secretary General of the United Nations and myself, and was attended by our partners, facilitated the mobilization of the necessary support with a view to strengthening AMIS as decided by the PSC at its meeting of 28 April 2005.

109. The Commission also maintained close contacts with a number of other bilateral and multilateral partners. I would like particularly to mention here the visit to Addis Ababa on 9 May 2005, by the Secretary General of the International Organization of the Francophonie (OIF), Abdou Diouf, on which occasion we signed a Memorandum on cooperation between the AU and the OIF. Among other provisions, this Memorandum provides for increased cooperation between our two institutions in the area of conflict prevention and management.

VII. CONCLUSION

110. On the whole, although unquestionable progress has been achieved in promoting peace and security, there is still a long way to go. There is even greater urgency because the untold suffering inflicted on civilian populations in conflict areas and the development and integration project which is at the heart of the AU's concerns can only be achieved if sustainable peace and stability are restored throughout the Continent. In addition, the distortion of our Continent's image, which is all too often and unfairly associated with violence and instability, makes it even more difficult to mobilize the necessary foreign investment for the economic take-off of the Continent.

111. Consequently, the present session of our Union should be an opportunity for African leaders to consolidate the existing mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution and renew their commitment to eradicate the scourge of conflicts in the Continent, including through the bolder implementation of the principle of non-indifference which informs the Constitutive Act of our Union; for as experience has alas, often shown, many conflict situations afflicting Africa can be prevented once there is the will to intervene before they degenerate, the reluctance of the countries concerned notwithstanding

Political Affairs Department

112. The democratic process continued on the Continent in a context marked on the one hand, by significant strides in some Member States where elections were held in all transparency and in an atmosphere of peace and orderliness. On the other hand, there were setbacks as evidenced by reticence to the positive developments associated with the advent of the African Union, which reticence is at variance with the norms enshrined in the Lome Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government.

113. Concerning good governance, the interest shown by some Member States to promote good governance and the hopes placed in the Peer Review Mechanism to this effect have not yet produced the expected results. Efforts still need to be invested to make this review a reality that paves the way for a process which should involve, if not all the Member States, at least a great majority of them, and thus put an end to bad governance that still prevails on the Continent. To this end, Member States should demonstrate their willingness to participate actively in the process by ratifying the Convention of the African Union on Corruption which, to-date, has not entered into force for want of the fifteen ratifications required.

114. Furthermore, the conflicts that continue to erode the Continent have resulted in new forced movements of populations, characterised by serious and systematic violations of human rights.

115. The challenges facing the Commission were commensurate to the stakes arising from this complex situation. Democracy, good governance and respect for human rights on the Continent were the main axes around which revolved the activities undertaken by the Commission within the context of the implementation of its Priority Plan of Action. Beyond the traditional activities of election monitoring, humanitarian assistance and human rights promotion, new activities were undertaken towards the establishment of new legal norms such as the drafting of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance, and the review of the Lome Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government. A more sustained interaction was also established with national bodies dealing with issues related to the promotion of good governance, democracy and human rights.

ELECTIONS

116. During the period under review, observer missions composed essentially of Pan-African parliamentarians, representatives of National Electoral Commissions and the civil society were deployed in Zimbabwe on the occasion of the 31 March 2005 legislative elections and in Ethiopia during the legislative elections of 15 May 2005 respectively. The reports submitted by our observers revealed that the elections in these two countries were held under favourable conditions.

117. However, we did not field observer missions to the Central African Republic on the occasion of the presidential and legislative elections of 13 March and 8 May 2005, and to Togo during the 24 April 2005 presidential election on account of unconstitutional change of government, in accordance with the relevant provisions of

the July 2000 Lome Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa. As a matter of fact, the continuing unconstitutional changes on the Continent led us to initiate a brainstorming session on the Lome Declaration with a view to evaluating it and examining possible ways and means of strengthening it, in keeping with the relevant provisions of the Decision of the Council calling for an in-depth review of the Declaration. The meeting brought together a group of independent experts whose conclusions will be submitted to experts from Member States in the near future before being presented to the Executive Council.

118. In the next six months elections will be held in Mauritius, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Gabon. The African Union will take part in the monitoring of these elections if invited within the stipulated two-month deadline.

119. I should point out that studies on the establishment of a unit and an Electoral Assistance Fund were initiated and are expected to be submitted to the competent organs in the coming months. The publication of the Guidelines for Election Observation and Monitoring is also underway and all the necessary steps will be taken soon afterwards to circulate these directives to Member States and the observer groups.

GOVERNANCE

120. The governance development goals stated in the Constitutive Act of the African Union Commission and the priority program of a well governed Africa are the reference and the basis of scored achievements as well as of ongoing programs and consultations with Members States and partners to improve the level of commitment, implementation and monitoring in respect of agreed principles, conventions and mechanisms required to ensure respect of rule of law, transparency and accountability, political and economic stability without taint of corruption, and an effective public service delivery.

FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

121. The Commission has continued to disseminate to all Member States and to advocate for the ratification of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption that was adopted by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Maputo, Mozambique in 2003. To date, only nine Member States have ratified the Convention.

122. Member 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 organs in order to enhance their effectiveness.

123. To this end, the Commission plans to host during 2005 continent wide conferences on governance and corruption issues in order to identify and disseminate best practices on ethics and integrity in Africa.

DEFINITION OF NORMS TO REINFORCE PUBLIC SERVICE

124. The Commission is committed to collaborate closely with its Member States to reinforce public administration policy development and participation in decision-making process and ensure qualitative delivery of public services.

125. The Commission is in the process of preparing public administration guidelines to encourage Member States to combat impunity at all levels, create enabling environments and regulatory frameworks that will increase participation of all stakeholders as well as encourage vital partnerships.

126. Workshops bringing together independent experts and representatives of Member States will be organised soon to deepen the substance of the guidelines on public administration and governance and improve their quality and operationalisation.

EVALUATION AND COORDINATION STRATEGY

127. The Commission, in close collaboration with Member States is committed to establish its own instruments and indicators to evaluate performance and compliance of nationally organizational and institutional structures with the standards values of transparency, accountability and effectiveness, improve participatory process and ensure sound and coherent policies. In this context, technical exchanges with NEPAD and the African Peer Review Mechanism already exist to boost the AU approach to the challenges of African governance and integration.

CANDIDATURES

128. I have deemed it necessary to draw the Commission's attention to this specific issue because of the repeated setbacks suffered by African candidatures. During the reporting period, Africa had presented four candidates for posts within the international system in the persons of Dr. Jacques Diouf from Senegal for the post of Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO); Dr. Kandeh Yumkella from Sierra Leone for the post of Director General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organizations (UNIDO); Mr. Jaya Krishna Cuttaree, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mauritius, for the post of Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO); and Dr. Mohamed El Baradei from Egypt for the post of Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

129. The WTO election was held and notwithstanding the declared support of Africa and of Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Member States, our candidate was not elected. This state of affairs poses a serious problem as regards the commitment made by our Member States and the respect thereof. We cannot on the one hand make a firm commitment to support a candidature and on the other hand fail to make sustained effort to back such a candidature.

130. Consequently, we appeal to all the Member States to throw their weight behind the other candidates still in contention for the posts of Directors General of FAO, UNIDO and IAEA, and keep in mind that such posts are of strategic importance to our Continent.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFRICA

131. Since my last report to the Summit in July 2004, the African Union Commission has made significant progress in implementing the Kigali Declaration on Human Rights, which it will be recalled, was adopted by this august Assembly in Maputo to serve as the Union's road map to the realisation of the rights and duties enshrined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and its Protocol relating to Rights of Women in Africa, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child as well as the entire body of human rights instruments to which AU Member States are a party.

132. In accordance with the Vision, Mission and 4-year Strategic Plan of the Union, our strategy to facilitate the actualization of the Kigali Declaration on Human Rights in Africa, includes building the delivery capacity of key local actors which comprise states organs such as the independent national human rights commission and ombudsperson, human rights defenders at large and civil society organisations and the media. Our strategy is also premised on mainstreaming human rights in every aspect of the work of the AU Commission. Beyond the normative framework and our political commitment to human rights, we give priority to 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. It is within this context that the following activities were undertaken.

First AU Conference of National Human Rights Institutions

133. For the first time in the history of the Union, we brought together in Addis Ababa, from 18 to 21 October 2004, the leadership of all existing national human rights institutions on the continent as well as several other Member States contemplating the establishment of national institutions, to exchange experiences and acquire new knowledge in the advancement of human rights at domestic level. National human rights institutions are the key pillars of the monitoring and evaluation mechanism on the continent. As such, we view their reinforcement as a worthy investment and a success criteria for the actualisation of human rights in Africa.

Inauguration of the Center for Democracy, Governance and Human Rights

134. On the occasion of the 2004 Africa Human Rights Day, I inaugurated the AUC Center dedicated to providing first hand information and training modules in the field of governance, democracy and human rights to AU field missions, members of the diplomatic community, the Pan-African Parliament among others. This Center is attracting interest and support from our traditional partners, such as the European Union and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Promoting the Work of African Human Rights Defender

135. The consolidation of a vibrant African community of human rights defenders is key to bringing changes at the lowest level possible of various African communities. It is for this reason that from 8 to 10 December 2004, we facilitated a seminar

for human rights defenders – media professionals, women’s rights defenders, youth groups and civil society training experts - to have their views on how we could support their work and they in turn could better contribute to the realisation of human rights in Africa, not just civil and political rights, but also socio-economic and cultural rights of all Africans. In accordance with the Union’s Strategic Plan, this year will see the first edition of the African Human Rights Defender’s Award. The award will be given on the occasion of the African Human Rights Day, on October 21st.

Supporting the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights

136. The support to Africa’s main human rights mechanism still remains a priority. We facilitated the holding of the 36th and 37th statutory sessions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights and provided leadership by attending those sessions.

137. In view of the importance of the mandate of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the Commission of the African Union will pursue its efforts aimed at increasing its resources and building its capacity.

Partnership with the United Nations

138. Our partnership with the United Nations in the field of human rights is intensifying. It has taken the form of increased technical support, through the Addis Ababa Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, collaboration on the ground in the Darfur region, in Burundi, in Cote d’Ivoire and in Liberia. This partnership opens ways to greater expansion. In accordance with the pertinent resolutions of the UN General Assembly on the relationship with the African Union, we are exploring ways of consolidating our relationship with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

139. In this regard, the Commission of the African Union attended the 61st Session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights which took place from 14th March – 22 April 2004 in Geneva, Switzerland and made contributions on items of interest for Africa. Among other important issues discussed, the reform of the UN Commission on Human Rights was considered. The African Group in Geneva made it clear that, if the UN Commission of Human Rights is to be reformed, the equitable representation of all regions should be respected. The Commission of the African Union will follow up this issue as well as the general reform process of the United Nations.

Human Rights Capacity Building for AUC Staff

140. During the first quarter of the year 2005, we have initiated a series of capacity building activities for the staff of the Commission of the African Union. On 16th April we organized a training workshop on human rights based approach to programming for senior staff of the Commission. We envisage the continuation of these capacity building activities.

Future plans

141. Our human rights related activities for the coming months include a regional seminar on human rights in countries emerging from conflict that will take place shortly after the present Summit, a regional conference on the rights of women in Nairobi and the 2005 human rights defenders award.

HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

142. The progress made in the peace process that was successfully set in motion on the Continent has paved the way for the repatriation of refugees and the return of displaced persons to their homes, resulting in a fall in the number of refugees. Coupled with this major challenge of repatriation is the challenge posed by reintegration, as the best possible conditions must be created for the return of refugees and displaced persons. This latter challenge is difficult to address because of the limited resources made available to the humanitarian agencies concerned, particularly the UNHCR, to bring the various activities to a successful conclusion. At the same time, the Member States concerned still find themselves in a vulnerable and precarious situation and, as a result, cannot address the numerous problems created by the arrival of refugees and the return of displaced persons to their homes. As a matter of fact, the problem of increased assistance to both the humanitarian organizations and the states concerned is becoming more acute.

143. During the period under review, new fears were created by the confusion, instability and troubles in some countries where anti-constitutional changes have thrown thousands of refugees on the road to exile. The most recent and revealing case is that of the Republic of Togo, 30,000 of whose nationals, according to the estimations of humanitarian organisations have sought refuge in the neighbouring countries, especially Benin and Ghana. The Sub-Committee of the Permanent Representatives' Committee in consultation with the Commission fielded an evaluation mission to Benin and Ghana last May. The conclusion of the evaluation mission were submitted to the PRC for consideration. Furthermore, the two countries were each given assistance to the tune of US\$30,000.00 to help them cope with the massive influx of refugees.

144. The Togolese case is a source of serious concern with each passing day, on account of the bad example it has set via the odd anti-constitutional change and its negative consequences from the political, security and humanitarian perspectives.

145. There is also the case of Darfur which requires our special and utmost attention. The restoration of peace in the South of the country did not have the desired impact on this part of the country where a humanitarian and complex tragedy is unfolding despite the efforts invested by the international community. The number of Sudanese refugees in Chad is increasing by the day and has reached almost 300,000. In the same vein, the displaced persons estimated at close to 2 million, who are victims of highway bandits, continue to live in appalling conditions. We fear that their case, just like that of their refugee compatriots, may be trivialized as time goes on. My mission to Sudan last June reinforces this fear. It is imperative that the international community gives the victims of the Darfur conflict the attention commensurate with the untold sufferings which are their daily lot. I have no doubt

that the results of the pledging conference which the Commission took the initiative to organise last 26 May in Addis Ababa will be translated into deeds and that in the very near future humanitarian assistance to the people of Darfur will increase significantly.

146. In order to meet the challenges posed by the humanitarian situation on the Continent, the Commission has buckled down to implement its programme of activity as defined in its priority plan of action comprising a component dealing with institutional capacity building and capacity of action, as well as the establishment of an effective policy that enables the Union to contribute, in one way or another, to the programmes for the repatriation and reintegration of refugees and displaced persons.

147. The process for the revitalization of the Refugee Assistance Co-ordination Committee has begun within the context of the institutional capacity building. A first meeting of the Committee was held on 27 May 2005 and was attended by all the members of the Committee and the Bureau of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees. On that occasion, the Committee examined and adopted the recommendations aimed at its revitalisation, particularly as regards its mandate, composition and mission. A second meeting will take place within the next six months to validate these recommendations and translate them into competent organs of the Union.

148. Furthermore, the African Union Commission on Refugees now known as the AU Sub-Committee on Refugees has come out of its hibernation. It met in April 2005 to consider and adopt its work programme focusing on evaluation, sensitisation, resource mobilisation, revitalisation of the Co-ordination Committee and assistance to refugees. It was against this background that the Sub-Committee in June 2005 fielded evaluation missions to Sudan, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Ethiopia and Tanzania.

149. Council will recall that in a bid to address the complex and thorny issue of protection of civilians in conflict situations, I appointed a special Representative in the person of Madam Mame Madior Boye to deal with the issue. The representation has been in operation for some months now thanks to the generous co-operation of the Canadian authorities. The Special Representative undertook field missions to Darfur and Côte d'Ivoire to sensitise the various stakeholders about the need to protect the civilian populations. In Côte d'Ivoire, she proposed a code of conduct to the various actors. The mission assigned to the Special Representative cannot be over emphasized. She needs the support of each and everyone, especially the actors on the ground.

150. The issue of displaced persons in Africa was a subject of special attention on the part of the Council at its last Ordinary Session. The need was felt for the establishment of an institutional framework to try and give an appropriate response to the problem of displaced persons on the Continent. To this end, the AU Commission is in the process of identifying a consultant who will support the Commission to elaborate an Institutional Framework for IDPs. The Draft Terms of Reference and the draft Framework are currently being elaborated and it is expected that framework will be ready for review by the AU decision-making organs by end of the year.

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EXTERNAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT WITHIN THE COMMISSION

151. Global developments so far have increasingly been complicating international relations. As a result, it has become necessary for us to formulate new policies to enable us adapt to the far-reaching changes taking place in the world. In this context, there is an urgent need to promote Africa's presence and visibility. We should also follow up, coordinate and harmonize the external policies of our respective States, if not to develop a single external policy, at least in order to attend to the contemporary issues and challenges with the same level of understanding. Besides, the development of a flourishing cooperation with our partners from all horizons entails some exigencies that can find expression in the establishment of appropriate structures to revitalize such cooperation.

152. It is from this perspective that the Commission deemed it necessary to establish a new Directorate in charge of External Relations in their broadest sense: multilateral cooperation (with the United Nations System, European Union and other regional and international organizations, bilateral cooperation (with the United States, Canada, European countries, Latin America, the Caribbean zone, Asia and Oceania), and Afro-Arab cooperation. At the same time, this Directorate would be entrusted with the supervision of our foreign Missions. The Directorate would be placed under the supervision of the Commissioner for Political Affairs. I am confident that the Council will give this initiative its full attention.

Prospects

153. Africa is more or less forging ahead resolutely towards its democratic transformation. Some concrete progress has been made to warrant hope in the future. Apart from a few exceptions, the elections held on the continent recorded massive popular participation that obviously attests to the African peoples' declared will to successfully accomplish the democratic transformation of the continent. Nevertheless, more efforts are needed to accompany this popular will, particularly through the promotion of good governance on the continent. The intentions expressed so far have not lived up to the African peoples' expectations just as the established legal and institutional mechanisms did not attain an operational level that could pave the way for qualitative changes in this direction. The African Union Convention on Corruption has remained a dead letter because it never came into force. The Peer Review Process is yet to be launched on the ground in spite of the declared appeals made by an ever-increasing number of Member States.

154. As far as human rights are concerned, systematic violations are still witnessed on the continent, especially in conflict situations, as testified by the acts of violence perpetrated against civilian communities in Darfur. Generally speaking, despite the slight improvements observed here and there, more progress remains imperative in the human rights domain which should be perceived not only from the political and security perspective but also from the socio-economic standpoint.

155. Finally, on the humanitarian score, the positive trends witnessed on the ground have been jeopardized by the disturbing developments that occurred in certain countries during the period under review. Apart from the policies and

mechanisms that should necessarily be established to eradicate the underlying causes of the plight of refugees and displaced persons on the continent, the entire international community, and the Member States, especially, should give assistance to host countries and to the populations concerned.

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

156. As part of the implementation of the Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AEC), as well as **Article 19 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union** and the monitoring of international cooperation, the Economic Affairs Department undertook certain activities that deserve to be brought to the attention of the Executive Council.

Implementation of the Abuja Treaty

157. On this subject, the activities undertaken mainly focused on the protocol that should govern relations between AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), as well as the coordination of REC activities and the Conference of African Ministers of Economy and Finance.

A. THE AU/REC PROTOCOL

158. The Council will recall that the Maputo Summit recommended that the draft protocol submitted to it for consideration and approval be revised by the contracting parties, for the purpose of improving it, by including all aspects of the new deal embodied in the African Union as an institution for integration. The Commission therefore organized a series of meetings with the RECs in order to negotiate the content of the new Protocol. A draft Memorandum of Understanding was prepared at the end of these meetings. The draft document was subsequently submitted for consideration to the Permanent Representatives' Committee, which made some amendments before adopting it.

159. However, the Council will recall that the January 2006 Summit will have to examine the thorny issue concerning the rationalization of Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The decision taken by the Heads of State and Government at the end of their deliberation on this issue will inexorably have an impact on the form and content of the current protocol on which the African Union Commission and the RECs have nevertheless reached an agreement. It is for this reason that we propose that the protocol be examined by the Executive Council later on. However, the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the ECA, which has already produced a study on REC rationalization, will finalize, by January 2006, a detailed report on this subject that the Commission will submit for consideration to the policy-making organs of the African Union.

B. COORDINATION OF REC ACTIVITIES

160. The Council will recall that the Commission organized an AU/REC coordination meeting from 24 to 25 January in Abuja (Nigeria). The meeting considered the following items, among others, and took the appropriate decisions relating to them:

Implementation of the recommendations and decisions of the Coordinating Committee (March 2003), Lusaka.

161. The Committee decided as follows:

- The administrator of the African Union Website should undertake a mission to the various Regional Economic Communities (RECs) for the purpose of developing a framework for establishing REC websites and harmonizing links between existing ones.
- The AU should serve as facilitator of the harmonization of policies within and between the RECs while taking account of the work already accomplished by the RECs;
- Immediately after each coordination meeting, the AU Commission should inform RECs about the meeting's decisions concerning measures to be taken;
- The AU should hold consultations with the RECs and the other partners to ensure that the Conference of Africa-Asia Sub-regional Organizations and other conferences of that nature are mutually advantageous and productive.
- The Economic Integration Training Programme for RECs should be elaborated according to their needs.

Implementation of the African Productive Capacity Initiative (APCI).

162. The Committee decided as follows:

- The APCI Report should be submitted to the RECs for evaluation and observations;
- supplementary consultations should be undertaken with the RECs with a view to improving the document and working out other specific strategies for each REC according to their needs;
- this item should be put on the agenda of the next meeting of the Coordinating Committee.

Joint sectoral policies, projects and programmes concerning transport, energy and telecommunications : Methodological approach and state of implementation by the RECs

163. The Committee decided as follows:

- Member States should accelerate the implementation of the policies, projects and programmes already adopted at national, regional and continental levels with respect to infrastructure, transport, energy and telecommunications;
- The African Development Bank (ADB) should assist RECs to implement these policies, projects and programmes in conformity with the short-term plan as well as the approved medium-term strategic programmes of the New

- Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD);
- The RECs should submit their sectoral policies and programmes to the AUC so that it can analyze and harmonize them and then popularize the standard practices within the RECs;
- The impact of the policies should be assessed at the national and regional levels with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and, in particular, the Yamoussoukro Decision.

Establishment of an African Central Bank and an African Investment Bank

The African Central Bank

164. The Committee decided as follows:

- The terms of reference for the studies should be communicated to the RECs, ECA and ADB in order to gather their observations and improve the studies;
- The cooperation between AU and the Association of African Central Banks and the African Development Bank should be strengthened so as to facilitate the process;
- The studies should reflect Africa's policies and economic performance as well as the proposed political approach and past and current REC experiences in monetary issues.

African Investment Bank

165. The Committee decided that:

- the RECs, ECA and ADB should participate in the review of the policy paper and in the elaboration of the terms of reference for the study.

African Private Sector Forum

166. The Committee emphasized:

- the need for close collaboration between AU and the existing Regional Private Sector Forums to facilitate the promotion of the continental forums .

Consideration of the stages of integration as envisaged in Article 6 of the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community

167. The Committee decided as follows:

- AU should be the African authority to review and validate the harmonization studies conducted by partners such as the RECs, ECA, ADB and the Global Coalition for Africa, and to make appropriate recommendations to that end;
- AU should reactivate the AU/ECA/ADB Joint Secretariat that can be entrusted with the preparation of the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and

Government on Regional Integration and Facilitation of the Regional Integration Process.

Establishment and effective implementation of Networks of Chambers of Commerce, Professional Associations, Transit Agents Associations, Producer Associations, Insurers Associations, etc., for the promotion of trade in Africa

168. The Committee decided as follows:

- The existing networks should be strengthened at the regional level;
- The RECs should play a prime-mover role in the establishment of new regional networks

Exchange of information on the status of economic integration in Africa.

169. The Committee decided as follows:

- The RECs should be encouraged to continue with their efforts to achieve the continental economic integration objective.
- Collaboration between RECs should be strengthened so as to promote exchange of experiences and standard practices;
- The AU Commission should be requested to increase its financial and technical assistance for the implementation of REC programmes.

Exchange of views on the African initiative for international negotiations

170. The Committee decided as follows:

- The AU should coordinate the preparatory meeting of African Sub-regional Organizations in collaboration with ECA, ADB and the RECs in order to facilitate the implementation of programmes of the conference of sub-regional organizations of Africa and Asia;
- the AU Group of Experts should be revitalized and strengthened. In carrying out this task, the Group should make use of expertise available in the African research institutions;
- Africa's concerns about the current Economic Partnership Agreements and WTO negotiations should be brought to the attention of the AU Summit for the purpose of promoting dialogue with development partners at the highest levels.

Other Issues

Political issues:

171. The Committee decided as follows:

- AU and the RECs should strengthen their cooperation in the supervision of elections and ensure that their participation in the process starts right from the preparation of the electoral roll and continues with civic education programmes for the electorate, throughout the polling period, to the proclamation of polling results and after the election process;
- the efforts to effectively implement the AU Convention on the Prevention and Control of Corruption should be intensified through the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for enforcing the principles of this Convention at all levels (AU, RECs and Member States);
- AU Member States should adhere to the African Peer Review Mechanism;
- These political issues should be included in the agenda of its next meeting.

Peace and Security

172. The Committee decided as follows:

- Finalization and signing of the AU-REC Memorandum of Understanding on modalities and relations in matters concerning the promotion of peace and security;
- follow-up technical meeting between AU and the REC for further review of the use of the AU Peace Operations Support Facility by the RECs.

C. First Conference of African Ministers of Economy and Finance, Dakar (Senegal)

173. As part of the activation of the Specialized Technical Committee, as envisaged by the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community, the AU Commission organized the first Conference of African Ministers of Economy and Finance on 7 May 2005 in Dakar (Senegal). This important conference which focused on the central theme of “Africa’s Debt Reduction”, was structured around the following elements:

- Evaluation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
- Africa’s External Debt;
- Evaluation of the Report of the Commission for Africa (dubbed Blair Report); and
- Alternative sources of financing for the African Union.

174. The Ministerial Conference was preceded by the Eminent African Personalities’ Meeting on 2 and 3 May 2005 still in Dakar. The Chairperson of the Commission expressed the desire for the organization of this meeting for the sole purpose of obtaining the opinions of some African leaders who have proven experience and are internationally recognized in their respective fields of competence in matters concerning the continent’s external debt, evaluation of the MDGs and the Report of the Commission for Africa (Blair Report). The report produced by the Eminent Personalities at the end of their meeting constituted one of the principal

working documents for the governmental experts who prepared the Ministerial Conference. The report was therefore presented to the Ministers during their conference. However, the important aspect worth pointing out was the convergence of opinions of the Eminent Personalities and the African Ministers of Economy and Finance (AMEF) about the issues considered.

175. The AMEF was hosted by His Excellency Maître Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, who agreed to give, at the opening of the Experts Meeting preceding the Conference, a clear and pertinent presentation on the major economic problems plaguing Africa and proposed equally pertinent and innovative guidelines that could promote considerable and sustainable growth likely to curb the poverty and misery that constitute the near-daily lot of the vast majority of African populations. The President especially highlighted in outline all the theoretic and practical aspects of the debt evaluation methodology dubbed "radioscopy of debt". Maître Wade emphasized that this evaluation methodology could help in:

- assessing the volume of debt,
- identifying all creditors
- identifying loan conditionalities governing all the debt components; and
- establishing amounts already paid up as well as the outstanding debts.

176. After a thorough examination of the items on their agenda, the Ministers made the recommendations listed in the following sections.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Assessment of the Status of Implementation by Africa

177. In the ensuing discussions, Ministers noted the recent achievements of African countries in promoting peace and security, good governance, and implementing economic and social reforms. But, there was a consensus on the need for further progress in these areas and many other aspects of social, economic and political life in Africa. The Conference also agreed that efforts should be made to internalise the MDGs and that national policies and appropriate institutional mechanisms should be put in place and/or reinforced to ensure implementation, monitoring and review of the MDGs.

178. It was also noted that breaking the cycle of poverty and conflict in Africa required equitable and sustainable economic growth and social development, especially addressing the problem of youth unemployment, inequality and social exclusion. The enhancement of physical and social infrastructure, and the development of human capital, especially through financing science and technology were considered critical for the attainment of the MDGs. Emphasis was also placed on the need for speeding up the process of Africa's regional integration and implementation of NEPAD. The Conference called for greater mobilization and efficient utilization of Africa's resources, - human and financial - for the implementation of the MDGs.

179. The Ministers agreed that Africa's inability to make sufficient progress towards the MDGs had partly been due to the failure of the international community to meet its previous commitments in the areas of development assistance, debt

alleviation, and trade. In this regard, it was agreed that debt cancellation would greatly contribute to the reduction of poverty, promotion of socio-economic development and improvement in the living conditions in Africa.

180. At the end of the discussions, the Ministers made the following recommendations:

- a. Background papers on economic policies must highlight MDGs and be used as operational frameworks for the achievement of these goals;
- b. Member States should have coherent socio-economic plans and programmes in which the MDGs should constitute a part;
- c. In the framework of the implementation of the MDGs, African countries should put emphasis on youth employment, wealth creation, promotion of good governance and peace and security;
- d. Greater attention should be paid to the mobilization of domestic resources for the financing of the MDGs;
- e. The AU Commission should be aggressive in the coordination of efforts in achieving the MDGs and sharing best practices among member states;
- f. Concerted efforts should be made by the AU and the RECs in the framework of the NEPAD programme to speed up Africa's infrastructure development and regional integration;
- g. The international community should fulfil its commitments to Africa's development by increasing and improving the flow of development assistance. In this regard, the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP of the developed countries as ODA should be met for the achievement of the MDGs by the target date;
- h. The alignment of aid procedures with development strategies of African countries is essential;
- i. The cancellation of Africa's external debt would help release resources for the promotion of economic and social development, especially for combating HIV/AIDS, improving primary health care and education and achieving other MDGs;
- j. The imbalances against Africa in the global trading system should be redressed through the elimination of subsidies, tariff peaks and escalation, and through greater valorisation of Africa's natural resources and commodities; and
- k. The Ministers recommended the Draft Declaration on the MDGs to the Executive Council for the consideration and onward transmission to the AU Summit in Sirte, Libya from 4-5 July 2005.

Africa's External Debt

181. At the end of the discussion on this important issue, Ministers underscored the dramatic character of Africa's indebtedness and the need to devise adequate solutions. The Conference made the following observations and recommendation:

- The Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative had a limited scope.
- The Ministers agreed that debt cancellation should be the ultimate goal for Africa but this must be linked with the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and also the access of African products to foreign markets.
- Apart from Africa's external debt, the Conference also expressed concern about domestic debt which is also an impediment to national and continental development.
- Debt cancellation should not result in any reduction of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Africa.
- As regards the proposed scenarios, the Conference highlighted the need for a selective approach that would result in only one formula to make negotiations with creditors easy for the Heads of State.
- Consider establishing an African Debt Management Fund to facilitate all debt relief or cancellation mechanisms and initiatives.
- In order to justify debt cancellation, African countries should carry out an audit indicating the amount of debt, its origins and terms.
- It was in the interest of African countries to adopt a common position on debt that would be presented to the African Union Summit in July 2005 in Sirte (Libya).
- African countries have the responsibility to ensure that Africa's debt remains indivisible so that any initiative vis à vis African debt should benefit all African countries.

African leaders should avoid being subjected to conditionalities related to debt cancellation.

Consideration of the Commission for Africa Report

182. Regarding this issue, Ministers made the following observations and recommendations:

- i. The Ministers commended the initiators of the Report and indicated that if the stated objectives of the Report are to be met it should benefit from the political will of the G8 countries and the entire international community.

They were of the view that implementation of the proposals and recommendations contained in the Report could contribute to the development process in Africa.

- ii. The Report offers the African Continent an opportunity that can help it not only to attain the MDGs but also to place itself on sustainable growth and development path. The African Union should therefore take ownership and ensure its implementation;

Alternative Sources of Financing the African Union

183. After the discussions, the following recommendations were made:

- The Member States and the African Union Commission should continue to reflect on the ways and means to endow the Union with its own sufficient and permanent resources;
- President Wade's proposals should be presented to the Member States before July 2005, once the document has been translated in the four working languages of the Union. The Member States, RECs and civil society should further be involved in the review of the proposals by President Wade;
- Ministers agreed to fulfill their commitments to contribute to the African Union budget and to clear their outstanding arrears.

II. The setting up of financial institutions

184. The creation of African financial institutions is based on the following fundamental texts:

- On September 9 1999, the Heads of State and Government, during their special session in Sirte (Libya), indicated clearly, among other things, in their declaration, the desire to accelerate the integration process of the continent, and especially the setting up of financial institutions provided for in the Abuja Treaty.
- This Sirte position was completely integrated into the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which in its Article 19, solemnly calls for the creation, within the shortest possible time, of the three following financial institutions: the African Central Bank (ACB); the African Investment Bank (AIB), and the African Monetary Fund (AMF).
- To translate these decisions of the Heads of State and Government into reality, the Commission has undertaken preliminary studies to enable a better understanding of these institutions within the context of the international financial market.

185. These studies have led to the elaboration of the following documents:

- A concept paper on the African Investment Bank;
- A draft protocol on the daily operation of the African Investment Bank;
- A concept paper on the African Monetary Fund;

In the very near future, studies will produce a draft protocol on the African Monetary Fund; a concept paper on the African Central Bank as well as its draft protocol.

186. Besides, it is important to emphasise that the AU Commission wants to go beyond the production of the above-mentioned texts. As a result, the following questions arise: What should be done after the production, examination and analysis of the texts? In other words, what are the stages necessary to give form to these institutions? There are so many questions which come to mind when one reflects on the best way to create these institutions according to the spirit of the Sirte Declaration and Article 19 of the Constitutive Act.

187. For the African Union Commission, one way to create the institutions within a reasonable period of time is to set up technical steering committees, as follows:

- A steering committee for the African Investment Bank (AIB)
- A steering Committee for the African Central Bank (ACB)
- A steering Committee for the African Monetary Fund (AMF)

188. Each of these structures will function as a “pre-bank” structure and will be charged, among other things, to initiate, coordinate and follow up all activities relating to the financial institution for which it was created. Each committee will be composed of five officials whose grades and status will be determined by the decision-making bodies of the African Union. Moreover, for ease of operation and efficiency in the setting up of these financial institutions, the AUC suggests that the head of each steering committee and his collaborators, exercise their functions as residents in the would-be headquarters of the institution concerned. It is of course understood that these technical steering committees will operate under the supervision of the AUC's Department of Economic Affairs.

189. The texts already available, as well as the Terms of Reference for the technical steering committees have been served to the Member States for in-depth examination. In the very near future, the Commission will organise a meeting of government experts, and another for the Permanent Representatives Committee, for an exhaustive examination of all these texts. At the end of these two meetings, the Commission would enrich the texts by integrating proposed amendments, after which they will be submitted to the Executive Council, then to the Summit of Heads of State and Government for their recommendations and relevant political decisions.

i. International Cooperation

190. Under this chapter, the African Union Commission through the Economic Affairs Department, has focused its activities on following up Africa-Europe dialogue. In this regard, the Commission first of all hosted from 2 to 4 December 2004 in Addis Ababa, the Ministerial Troïka preceded by the enlarged Troïka of experts; then it actively took part in the Ministerial Troïka, preceded also by the enlarged Troïka of experts organised by the European Union from 8 to 11 April, 2005 in Luxembourg.

The Ministerial Troïkas of Addis Ababa and Luxemburg

191. The two Troïkas were centred on the following four problems: peace and security ; good governance ; regional integration and trade; and the key issues of development. On the basis of reports produced by experts, the Ministers, in turn, examined these questions in detail. In general, it should be noted that although on certain problems there were recommendations and mutual commitment (peace and security, governance, in particular), on others, discord in the Africa-Europe dialogue continued (the holding of the second summit, Africa's external debt, the implementation of projects linked to the acceleration of Africa's integration process; the reconfiguration of Africa within the Cotonou framework). The results of these two Troïkas were contained in two final communiqués which were served to Member States.

192. In Luxemburg, in the framework of the preparation of the UN Summit to be held in September 2005, Ministers had an exchange of views on the UN Secretary General's proposals for a UN reform. While recalling that these proposals were still under examination, the EU expressed its determination that the process of reform should result in devising common responses to the main development, security and human rights problems. The EU side noted the common African position on the proposed reform of the UN as set out in the "Ezulwini Consensus", and undertook to share its positions with the AU in advance of the Summit. The Ministers considered that a parallel reading of the common African position and the priorities of the EU shows that it is possible to continue and step up the dialogue in order to foster convergence of positions.

193. The EU agreed to share, in advance of the Summit, its proposals for acceleration of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular with regard to coherence, financing, effectiveness of aid and with a specific focus on Africa.

194. Regarding the Second Summit, Ministers reaffirmed the need to convene an EU-Africa summit in the spirit and letter of the Cairo declaration. In this regard, the EU reiterated its position that there are political circumstances that are currently impeding the holding of the summit. The AU on the other hand, reiterated the need to hold the summit as soon as possible, noting that there are no political impediments to holding a summit.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT**Introduction**

195. During the period under review, the Commission has made every effort to implement the decisions issuing from the 5th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council held in Addis Ababa in June 2004, namely EX/CL/Dec.107 - 113 (V) on the 2nd Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of Trade, on WTO issues, on EPA negotiations, AGOA, Customs Network, Reform of the All-Africa Trade Fair and the Commodities Exchange as well as EX/CL/Dec.116 on Industry and EX/CL/Dec.120 on the follow-up to the AU-EU Summit.

I. Intra-African Trade**1.1 3rd Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of Trade**

196. The Commission held the 3rd Ordinary Session of the Conference of Ministers of Trade from 5 to 9 June, 2005 in Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt. It was graced by the presence of the Prime Minister, H.E. Dr. Ahmed Nazif and saw a record participation of forty Member States, RECs and some thirty-partner organizations due to the important items on the agenda and the issues at stake for Africa. AU's partners contributed valuable analytical papers. The Conference allowed Member States to examine the state of play of trade liberalization at RECs' level and come up with recommendations on the way forward with regard to intra-African trade, the strengthening of the Customs Network and the establishment of the Commodities Exchange. The Conference also discussed other important issues such as the utilization of instruments under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement for trade and investment and ways of maximizing benefits from the TICAD initiative. It further examined the implementation of AGOA III in light of the expiry of the Multifibre Agreement and made recommendations in preparation for Africa's participation in the AGOA Forum scheduled to take place in July in Dakar, Senegal.

197. The Conference gave a golden opportunity to Member States to coordinate positions on multilateral negotiations, namely WTO negotiations in preparation for the 6th Ministerial Conference to be held in Hong Kong in December, 2005 and EPA negotiations on which Africa needed to reorient its focus. As a result, two main documents were adopted by the Ministers, namely the Cairo Declaration and Road Map on the Doha Work Programme and the AU Ministerial Declaration on EPA negotiations. The Cairo Road Map outlines the strategy to be followed by AU Member States at the WTO with regard to Agriculture, non-agricultural market access, services, development issues, commodities, trade facilitation, rules, trade, debt, finance, technology transfer and accession. The Declaration on EPA negotiations reaffirms Africa's position with regard to EPAs as development tools, its relationship to regional integration, the speed of negotiations, as well as other issues, such as the role of the AU Commission in coordinating the negotiations, particularly, in ensuring coherence at multilateral, regional and bilateral levels of negotiations.

1.2 Africa-Asia (AFRASIA) Business Council

198. The Commission participated in and contributed to the official launching of the Africa-Asia (AFRASIA) Business Council (AABC) which took place on 30-31 March, 2005 in Port Louis, Mauritius. The AABC came into being after a two-year incubation process that started in Casablanca, Morocco in April 2003 as a follow-up to TICAD III and NEPAD's short-term action plan. It is a consultative mechanism in support of building sustainable business partnerships between Africa and Asia. The Commission welcomed the initiative and pointed out to dialogue and evaluation mechanisms put in place by the AU, such as the Peer Review Mechanism of the NEPAD programme, that can also strengthen public-private partnership and improve the business climate in Africa. The role of the AU Commission as a framework for dialogue among partners was highlighted as demonstrated by the recent accreditation to the AU of representatives of partners in development. The news about the institutionalization of the private sector Forum was received with much enthusiasm for it will serve as a platform to bring together all the public-private partnership networks existing in Africa, including the AABC. Some priority actions of the AU such as the harmonization of business laws, trade promotion and improvement of market access to other regions, as well as the advocacy role of the AU in international trade negotiations in favour of fair trade were pointed out.

199. The constitution of the AABC, its strategy and triennial business plan were endorsed during the meeting and the electronic platform called Afrasia Exchange, which is a network of local partner institutions in Asia and Africa sharing common databases, investment projects, validation standards and partnership support services, was established. The Commission must count the AABC as a useful partner for the implementation of its programmes and very close collaboration with it will be necessary in order to benefit from its vast potentialities.

1.3 Launching of CIAP

200. The Commission played a major role in the preparation and launching of the Union of African Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Agriculture and Professionals (CIAP) which took place on 30 April, 2005 in Alexandria, Egypt. Prior to the launching, the Statutes and Rules of Procedure of its General Assembly, as amended by the Commission were adopted by forty-five African countries represented by either the Presidents of their Chambers of Commerce or their Ambassadors in Egypt. A Bureau, composed of Egypt (President), Cameroon (Vice-President) and Libya, Mauritius, DRC, Ghana and Angola as members, was elected. Meetings of the Union will be held on an alternative basis in each of the five regions. Egypt, which is hosting the Union, will provide the necessary facilities. It has also offered to create an electronic database connecting all African national Chambers of Commerce.

201. The Union is a major element in building an African Common Market as mandated by the Abuja Treaty and the Constitutive Act of the African Union. It provides a valuable network for the involvement of economic operators in the improvement of the business and investment climate in Africa and also to coordinate Africa's position with regards to issues of global interest. Advocacy will be undertaken by the Commission in order to register the Union within the UN ECOSOC because of the role it is called to perform in public-private partnership.

II. CUSTOMS

2.1 Sub-Committee of Directors General of Customs

202. In line with Decision EX.CL/Dec.111(V) of the 5th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, the Commission has organized, in very close collaboration with the transition secretariat, the South African Revenue Service (SARS), the inaugural meeting of Directors General of Customs which took place in Kigali, Rwanda from 18th to 20th April 2005. The meeting adopted the Rules of Procedure of this body and has agreed to the elaboration of a work plan that includes amongst others, action points on Trade Facilitation, Capacity building, and Transit procedures

2.2 The Customs Network

203. The network is being put in place and the preliminary tasks relate to the elaboration of a directory of heads of customs, an appointment of liaison officers and a survey carried out at RECs level with a view to be able to get in touch with all customs administrations at any time for consultation purposes. It is regretted that this exercise has been dragging on for quite some time due to lack of responses from national Customs administrations and from RECs.

2.3 WTO Trade facilitation

204. In conjunction with the above, the Commission followed up on the WTO issue of Trade Facilitation which impacts directly on Customs administrations and which is critical for intra-African trade as well as trade with the rest of the world. In order to implement the Maputo decision mandating the Commission to support and build capacity of African negotiators, the commission organized the first AU Customs Expert meeting from 4 to 6 April, in Addis Ababa. The objectives of this meeting were to analyse and assess, reflect and discuss Articles V, VIII and X of GATT 1994 relating to Freedom of Transit, Fees and Formalities connected with Importation and Exportation and Publication and Administration of Trade Regulations respectively. The meeting made a number of recommendations that were submitted to the AU Sub-Committee of Directors General of Customs held in Kigali. The sub-Committee recommended *inter-alia* that an in-depth study be pursued to provide backstopping to the African negotiators in Geneva, to use existing toolkits to assess and measure the level of trade facilitation and to advocate for the implementation of the Revised Kyoto Convention and other conventions relevant to trade facilitation

2.4 Customs Cooperation

205. Customs cooperation is a critical element of Africa's integration and the Abuja Treaty had provided that a specific protocol in this area should be annexed to it. The evolution of the on-going WTO negotiations in the area of Trade Facilitation as well as the aftermath of September 11 have placed Customs cooperation even higher on the agenda. Thus, after 13 years this protocol has been drafted and is going through a consultation process in view of its tabling for adoption at next year's summit. Thus after intensive internal consultations, the draft has been submitted to the RECs at the AU/RECs Coordination meeting held in Abuja last February as well

as to the AU Sub-Committee of Directors General of Customs meeting of Kigali. The final draft, incorporating amendments made, will be submitted to the next meeting of the sub-committee for approval.

III. Commodities

206. In line with the mandate given by Council Decision EX/CL/117(v), the Commission is fine-tuning the Business Plan for an African Commodity Exchange whose validation process is well underway. The process of strengthening and creating new commodity groupings where they do not exist and of defining their working relations with the Commission of the African Union is in progress. The Commission is also actively preparing, in close collaboration with the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC) a position paper on the issue of commodities which will be examined by an extraordinary session of the Conference of Ministers of Trade scheduled to take place in November 2005. The outcome will then be submitted to the Summit in January 2006.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY

INTRODUCTION

207. The Commission had a very engaging schedule regarding matters of infrastructure and energy during the period of January to June 2005. Priority was placed on the implementation of those activities which relate to the Strategic Framework and Plan of Action of the African Union. Two Ministerial meetings were organised in the transport sector and there was intensive involvement in the area of communications and information technologies (ICT) where preparations for the forthcoming second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS II) to be held in Tunis, Tunisia late this year are ongoing. Also, the Commission proceeded with the implementation of its project on the Creation of a Unified Telecommunications Numbering Space for Africa. Beside the major engagements, there were activities in other areas of the portfolio such as energy and postal services. Detailed account of developments in the specific areas is outlined hereunder.

I. TRANSPORT

I.1. Meeting of Ministers responsible for Transport and Infrastructure on Transport and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

208. As mentioned in the previous report of the Commission during the January 2005 Summit, the Commission, in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Development Bank, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the Sub-Saharan Transport Policy Programme (SSATP) under the auspices of the World Bank, organised a meeting of African Ministers responsible for transport and infrastructure held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 4 to 6 April 2005. The meeting considered and adopted transport targets and indicators relevant to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The outcome of this meeting has also been taken into the context of Decision EX.CL/Dec.166 (VI) requesting the Commission to coordinate the elaboration of an African position in the review of the MDGs.

209. Prior to the Ministerial meeting, a Task Team under the leadership of the African Union involving the UNECA, RECs, ADB, European Union, World Bank and SSATP met in Addis Ababa in early February 2005 to prepare a document on the specific targets and indicators that would be considered and adopted by the sector Ministers before being submitted to the United Nations Conference for the Review of the MDGs in New York in September 2005. The work of the Task Team was based in part on contributions of case studies from African countries, some Regional Economic Communities and specialized agencies of the UN.

210. The need for inclusion of the transport targets and indicators has been necessitated by the realisation that given the material conditions existing in Africa, transport plays a critical role in facilitating cost-effective access to socio-economic opportunities and services having direct linkage to poverty reduction and the MDGs in general. The absence of a clearly defined role of transport in the current framework has cast some doubt on the effectiveness of the strategies being engaged to realise

the MDGs in the continent. It is, therefore, expected that the adopted targets and indicators will guide the process of setting appropriate priorities in transport programmes at national, regional and continental levels with a view to accelerating the achievement of the MDGs.

211. The report on the Ministerial meeting including the Declaration adopted by the Ministers has been submitted as a separate agenda item for consideration and endorsement by the Executive Council.

I.2. AIR TRANSPORT

I.2.1 4th Meeting of the Monitoring Body of the Yamoussoukro Decision on the Liberalisation of Air Transport Markets in Africa

212. The Monitoring Body chaired by the African Union and composed of the UNECA, AFCAC, AFRAA and the RECs met in Addis Ababa on the 3rd and 4th of March 2005 to consider progress on the implementation of the Decision. The reports presented indicated some progress particularly at the level of the regions where specific measures were being put in place to facilitate its effective implementation. However, at the level of the continent, it was acknowledged that implementation was proceeding rather slowly contrary to expectations.

213. Moreover, there were a number of key instruments that were not yet in place and their absence was seriously constraining implementation. These include the rules of competition and the dispute resolution mechanism. Also, institutional weakness due to absence of the executing agency and unclear roles of the members of the Monitoring Body as well as lack of effective financing for the Body were recognised as major setbacks to the implementation of the Decision. In that regard, the meeting recommended a number of measures to correct the shortcomings and strengthen implementation. The recommendations were submitted to the meeting of sector Ministers held in May 2005 in South Africa.

I.2.2. Meeting of African Ministers Responsible for Air Transport

214. The Commission in collaboration with the Department of Transport of the Republic of South African organised a four days Meeting of African Ministers responsible for Air Transport which was held in Sun City, South Africa from 16 to 19 May 2005. The need for urgent remedial action on Africa's ailing air transport sector had been recognised by the Commission, which has been concerned by mounting challenges on the sector and seems to pose a serious threat to efforts to revive and strengthen the weak air transport industry in Africa. These include inefficiency and the high cost of air travel in the continent, internal and external market restrictions, increased safety and security risks and the lack of an effective overall industry policy framework to mention the immediate ones.

215. In March 2004, the Commission convened a meeting of the Working Group on Mastering the African Sky to carry out an assessment of the sector. The Working Group elaborated an action plan for tackling the numerous problems assailing air transport in Africa and proposed the way forward for strengthening its performance. Recommendations of the Working Group, including the organisation of a Ministerial

meeting planned for the year 2005 to elaborate the necessary policy and strategic decisions on the sector, were incorporated into the Plan of Action of the Commission.

216. The Ministers meeting reviewed the overall situation of the air transport sector in Africa focusing particularly on the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision on the liberalisation of air transport services in Africa, the need for a common African external air transport policy, air safety and security, and institutional matters specifically referring to the autonomy of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC). Specific recommendations on required action in each area were made. Given the crucial importance of the Yamoussoukro Decision to the development of the air transport industry in Africa, a Ministerial resolution aimed at accelerating its implementation was adopted.

217. The report of the Ministers meeting together with their Resolution have been submitted as a separate agenda item for consideration and endorsement by the Executive Council.

1.3. Rail Transport

Conference on Rail Transport and Railways in CEN-SAD Member States

218. The Commission participated in the Conference on Rail Transport and Railways in Member States of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), held from 21 to 23 March 2005, in Tripoli, Libya.

219. The aim of the Conference was to evaluate the obstacles to development of railways in this Community with a view to finding solutions for the construction of new lines and the interconnection of existing lines.

220. The Conference adopted the broad lines of the master plan for railway interconnection in CEN-SAD Member States, of which one of the flagship projects is undoubtedly the Trans-Saharan Railway Network (TRN) of a total length of 2,068km, initiated by Libya, which should link the town of Sabha in Libya to N'Djamena in Chad, via Niger.

1.4. Maritime Transport

Maritime Safety and Security

221. The Commission has continued with the implementation of activities arising from Decision EX.CL/Dec.163 (V) of the 5th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council on maritime security which focuses on the compliance by African countries with the International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) Code and the Amendments to the Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea 2002, which came into force on 1st July 2004. Following a desk review of the status of ratification of maritime conventions in Africa, the Commission formulated a self-assessment questionnaire addressed to Member States in their position as port, flag and coastal states to seek for up-to-date information on the measures they have taken to ratify and implement relevant maritime conventions regarding maritime safety, security and the preservation of the marine environment in Africa.

222. The questionnaire seeks to establish the measures taken in terms of legal and administrative structures training, enforcement, audits and sanctions, among others, in the implementation of the ISPS Code. Coordination of this exercise is being monitored in conjunction with the RECs and will further be augmented by working visits by the Commission. The Commission aims through this exercise to obtain current information from Member States and use it as the basis of mobilising technical support for them. Member States are, therefore, urged to respond positively to this exercise to enable the Commission accomplish the task successfully and in time.

223. Furthermore, the Commission has already embarked on the revision of the Model Maritime Transport Legislation and the Maritime Charter in line with the same Decision (EX.CL/Dec.163).

II. TELECOMMUNICATION, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND POSTAL SERVICES

II-1 Project for the creation of a Unified Telecommunications Numbering Space in Africa

224. In compliance with Decision EX.CL/Dec.101 (V) of the 5th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, the Commission organized a Meeting of Experts of Member States and regional and international organizations, from 22 to 24 March 2004, in Addis Ababa, to consider the conclusions of the preliminary study and the methodology of implementation of the project's feasibility study.

225. It should be recalled that the preliminary study proposed the creation of the unified numbering space in two phases. Phase 1 is the Creation of an African Telecommunications Numbering Space (ATNS). This phase is characterized essentially by the attribution to Africa of a common code for groups of countries and the co-existence of the said code with present country codes in order to ensure a smooth transition towards total unification. Phase 2 is the evolution towards the unified numbering zone characterized by an integrated numbering plan with the phasing out in the long term of country codes and the use of pan-African telephone numbers.

226. The proposed methodology for the feasibility study comprises essentially the activities to be carried out, namely, technical, economic and legal studies, the organization and means to be put in place to realize them.

227. The Experts highlighted the expanding, strategic and unifying characteristics of the project and were of the opinion that its implementation would bring international and regional visibility to the actions of the African Union, and would serve as an example to coordinate the initiatives and interventions of partners in the key sector of Telecommunications and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT).

228. The Experts adopted the proposed methodology for the realization of the feasibility study and made recommendations on the need to:

- Ensure the adhesion and effective participation of the principal African stakeholders concerned which are Member States, network operators and service providers;
- Enlist the support of other international players in the telecommunications sector given that the numbering resource sought by Africa to establish the ATNS belongs to the whole world;
- Conduct a study to justify the project economically and financially in order to attract the maximum number of ATNS resource users.

229. The Inter-Institutional Coordination Committee (IICC), established in compliance with Decision EX.CL/Dec.101 (V) to coordinate the implementation of the projects met on 24 March 2004, in Addis Ababa. The Committee considered and approved the conclusions of the deliberations of the Experts.

230. The budget required to finance the project is US\$1,500,000, an amount that should cover all the activities from the feasibility study to the end of the project which will be marked by the operationalization of the ATNS numbering resources. The overall implementation timeframe for the project is approximately 2 years.

231. The Project for the Creation of a Unified Telecommunications Numbering Space is the subject of a separate report which will be submitted to the Executive Council at this Sirte Assembly Session.

II-2 World Summit on Information Society (WSIS)

232. Activities relating to the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) are followed jointly by the Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology and the Department of Infrastructure and Energy. Furthermore, WSIS is the subject of a special report, coordinated by the two Departments which will be submitted to the Executive Council at the Sirte Assembly, in July 2005.

233. The main points are summarized as follows:

- The African preparation was organized essentially around the Accra Regional Conference (2 to 4 February 2005), the work of the Bamako Bureau, participation in the PrepCom1 and PrepCom2 meetings, and participation in the Pan-Arab Conference (8-10 May 2005, Cairo). The mechanism put in place by African countries to prepare the 2nd Phase of the Summit is composed of the Bamako Group, established in 2002 and the Ministerial Committee established in Dakar in 2004, whose composition was enlarged from 8 to 15 Member States at the Accra Conference.
- The main results of the African preparation are the Accra Commitments and the African Regional Plan of Action on the Information Society adopted in Cairo.
- The Commission participated in the coordination and monitoring of the African preparation. Consequently, it organized consultations in Addis Ababa with the

ECA and the ITU before the Accra Conference, and worked in close cooperation with the African Telecommunications Union to sensitize States. The Commission participated actively in a few thematic sessions at the Accra Conference, the Ministerial Meeting and the Regional Conference. In Cairo, the Commission attended the Pan-Arab Meeting and the African Ministerial Committee Meeting.

- The establishment and launching of the Digital Solidarity Fund by President Olusegun OBASANJO on 14 March 2005 in Geneva was an undisputed success which strengthens African positions on WSIS.
- The Commission will continue to play its coordinating role during the period leading up to Tunis and at the Summit itself. It will also organize a meeting of the principal stakeholders for an in-depth consideration of the African Regional Plan of Action on the Information Society and the modalities of its implementation.

II-3 E-Governance Project (VSAT Project)

234. The e-Governance Project of the African Union has been launched. The project is meant, within the framework of the institutional transformation of the African Union, to ensure total connectivity and the supply of modern telecommunications services between the Headquarters of the Commission and the Regional Offices, External Representations, the Regional Economic Communities and Member States, through the establishment of a satellite interconnection network.

235. The technical team to supervise the implementation of the project was set up in the Commission in May 2005. Tender documents were prepared and the international call for tenders for the selection of equipment and infrastructure suppliers will be launched at the beginning of June 2005. During the summer of 2005, the tenders bids will be examined, equipment and infrastructure suppliers selected and the project implemented on the four pilot sites identified: Addis Ababa, Abuja, New York and Johannesburg. The provisional calendar provides for receiving equipment on 10 November 2005. A presentation is planned during the World Summit on Information Society (Phase II) which will be held in Tunis, Tunisia from 16 to 18 November 2005.

236. Starting from November 2005, the African Union will have its own telecommunications system and consequently, more autonomy in terms of services and their availability. This network will make it possible to provide the African Union with a videoconference system, high-speed Internet access, IP telephony and instant messaging coupled with video for real time discussions. The network will also facilitate sharing knowledge and information, as well as collaborative work resulting in better productivity and optimisation of resources (savings in communication costs, travel, etc)

237. The deployment of the new infrastructure on the remaining target sites (Member States, RECs, etc) and interconnection with African and international partners will be carried out in 2006.

238. The implementation of this project according to the calendar retained will require the necessary resources being out in place within the set timeframe.

II-4. Harmonization of Telecommunications and ICT Policies and Regulations

239. Strengthening African connectivity by intra and inter-regional broadband networks and the development of ICTs at continental and regional levels can only be done effectively and rapidly if the regulatory environment and telecommunications policies are appropriate. Hence the need for a study with a view to harmonizing telecommunications and ICT policies and regulation.

240. As a prelude to the principal work to be undertaken for the study, the Commission carried out consultations with the major actors in telecommunications and ICT policies and regulation in Africa. Consequently, it participated in the Meeting of the Association of Regulators of Information and Communication for Eastern and Southern Africa (ARICEA) held from 7 to 11 March 2005, in Nairobi and the 6th Forum on Telecommunications Regulation in Africa held from 27 to 28 April in Maputo. These two meetings made it possible to collect data and pertinent information on the directives, concerns and regulatory implications within the context of the African telecommunications environment.

241. Within the framework of this project, and generally with a view to strengthening cooperation with the principal actors and giving international and regional visibility to the African Union's vision on the role of Telecommunications and ICTs in the socio-economic development and integration of the Continent, the Commission held working sessions and meetings with the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the African Telecommunications Union (ATU), experienced and competent actors in the telecommunications and ICT sector in Africa. This initiative resulted, among other things, in the establishment of an Inter-Institutions Coordination Committee for ICT Development (IICC-ICT Dev.) chaired by the Commission and comprising the ADB, ECA, ITU, ATU, URTNA, RASCOM, e-AFRICA Commission, PAPU, and the RECs.

II-5. Project for the Establishment by India of a Pan-African Telecommunications Network for e-Education, e-Health and e-Governance

242. India proposed to the Commission a project for the establishment of a Pan-African Telecommunications Network to link the 53 Member States and provide e-Medicine and e-Education services, including e-Governance services between Heads of State. Briefly, India proposed to provide, install, operationalize and ensure the maintenance over a total period of 3 years, a Pan-African network offering the above-mentioned services, for a total budget of US\$ 50 million.

243. A meeting took place on 11 May 2005, in Addis Ababa between the Commission and an Indian Government delegation. At the end of this meeting, an internal technical team was established by the Commission to conduct a preliminary study of the technical documents submitted by the Delegation. A Committee of African Experts will be set up to carry out, during the month of July 2005, an in-depth study on the Indian proposal and prepare a report which will be submitted to a

meeting of Experts from Member States, to be organized in September 2005.

ENERGY

III.1. Electricity

244. The African Union Commission provided support and contributed to the success of the Seminar on Financing Integrating Projects in the African Electricity Sector, held from 22 to 24 March 2005, in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This Seminar was organized by the Secretariat of the African Electrical Energy Producers, Transporters and Distributors (UPDEA), in partnership with the NEPAD Secretariat and the National Electric Company of DRC (SNEL). Two integrating projects were examined and viewpoints exchanged during this seminar, namely on the development of the INGA hydroelectric site and the construction of high-tension energy transport lines towards southern (WESTCOR) and western (INGA-CALABAR/NIGERIA) areas of the Continent, in the first phase.

245. For the effective implementation of these projects, participants in the seminar recommended that the African Union establish a Council for the coordination of the development of the INGA site and related projects, in collaboration with the UPDEA Secretariat, NEPAD Secretariat, SNEL and existing structures or those in the pipeline mentioned above (WESTCOR and INGA-CALABAR/NIGERIA).

246. The Commission should be gratified by the consensus and acknowledgement by all stakeholders that the African Union should play the coordination and leadership role for the implementation of the INGA Project, particularly through the establishment of the Coordination Council for this site. Indeed, it is this very role that the Continental Organization is called upon to assume in the projects listed under "African Union/NEPAD" flagship projects. It should be recalled that the INGA Project constitutes an essential vehicle for the integration of the energy sector in Africa.

III.2. Petroleum and Gas Second African Petroleum Congress

247. The principal activity worth mentioning in this sector is the participation in the Second African Petroleum Congress held in Algiers, Algeria from 14 to 18 February 2005. This Congress was organized by the African Petroleum Producers Association (APPA), in collaboration with the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. The Commission participated in this important meeting.

248. One of the key issues the Congress addressed was petroleum income. It was observed that indeed, the bulk of the income derived from the growth of the petroleum sector in Africa for many decades did not enable the Continent to meet its economic development needs with a view to sustainable development. This growth often occurred to the detriment of other sectors of economic activity, particularly agriculture. It was therefore recommended that reforms be initiated in order to make the hydrocarbons sector in Africa and the income it generates play its rightful role of promoting the attainment of the objectives of sustainable development.

249. Another important element is fighting marine and coastal pollution by hydrocarbons. This is also a cause for concern for Africa. The initiative of establishing a multinational anti-pollution company was launched.

250. These concerns are taken into account in the Strategic Plan of Action of the African Union Commission for the period 2005-2007, which envisages, among the activities to be carried out in the area of hydrocarbons, the evaluation of the petroleum and gas situation in Africa, and the formulation of petroleum and gas policies and strategies within the global framework for the Continent's integration and sustainable development.

251. In this regard, the Commission will establish a working group, comprising, among others, recognized African experts and representatives of hydrocarbon producing and importing countries. This working group will help the Commission to determine the way forward for petroleum and gas issues in Africa.

252. The role of hydrocarbons in the revitalization of African economies is indeed worthy of attention at the level of the African Union, for the sustained and coherent economic and social development of our Continent.

III.3. African Energy Commission (AFREC)

253. The African Union Commission deplores the considerable delays by most Member States in ratifying the Convention of the African Energy Commission. To date, the minimum number of fifteen ratifications required has not yet been obtained in order for this Commission to become operational. All States that have not yet ratified the Convention are urged to do so as soon as possible.

COOPERATION WITH PARTNERS

IV.1. G8 + Africa Meeting on Infrastructure

254. The need for more attention and an increase in funds for infrastructure was identified in the United Nations Reports on the Millennium Project and the Commission for Africa. The United Kingdom intends, during its tenure as the chair of the G8 to instigate action. It is within this framework that the Department for International Development (DFID) of this country organized on 5 May, in London, a G8 + Africa Meeting on infrastructure.

255. The aim of the meeting was to consider the present shortcomings and bottlenecks with a view to reaching an agreement on the need for more resources and improved cooperation in infrastructure, in Africa.

256. The meeting was attended by representatives of G8 countries, the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the European Union, NEPAD Secretariat and the Economic Community of West African States. The African Union Commission also participated in this meeting.

257. Participants acknowledged that infrastructure in Africa constitutes the key for accelerating growth, reducing poverty and promoting integration. In this regard, they agreed to establish an Infrastructure Consortium to work together and build on

the invaluable work already done, based on the priorities set by Africa.

258. The London meeting identified the key role of advocacy and pressure organ for the promotion of better coordination among donors to be played by the Consortium. In the light of the magnitude of the issue, an urgent, larger and more effective response, commensurate with Africa's infrastructure needs should be recommended. The meeting also retained a few aspects that the Consortium should take into consideration, namely:

- Contents of the programme: Emphasis will be placed on trans-border projects at continental and regional level, as well as on projects at national level.
- Types of infrastructure: The sectors to be covered are: water and sanitation, energy, transport, telecommunications and urban infrastructure.
- Financing data: There is insufficient data on financing and the level of activities funded. There is an urgent need to establish who does what, where, and with which money, mainly in order to identify the gaps.
- Capacity building: There is a need to strengthen capacities in the areas that generate the current bottlenecks, particularly the preparation of projects.
- Monitoring: There is a need to monitor actions and results.

259. The inaugural meeting of the Consortium will be held on 6 October 2005 in London. The specific mechanisms on how the Consortium will work as well as the possibilities of incorporating additional members will be discussed on that occasion. In the meantime, the United Kingdom is responsible for coordination and facilitation activities.

260. In this Consortium, whose overall objective is to initiate more effective and larger scale action with a view to building sustainable infrastructure in Africa, the African Union's role should be central and clearly stated taking into account its mandate at continental level.

IV.2. ADB/AU Cooperation in Infrastructure

261. Within the framework of the official meeting which took place on 25 April 2005, in Tunis, between the African Union Commission and the African Development Bank (ADB) a working session was held on the infrastructure sector.

262. The Commission expressed its requests for assistance to this Institution, in terms of physical projects, strategic studies and harmonization of policies at continental level in the infrastructure sector.

263. At the end of discussions, it was agreed, *inter alia*, as follows:

- Introduction by the African Union of an official request to the ADB relating to the proposals for assistance considered;

- Strengthening the coordination of actions between the ADB, the African Union and the RECs;
- Proposal by the ADB for institutional support to be provided to the African Union to boost its facilitation role in the implementation of multinational projects;
- Involve the African Union in the study of the NEPAD's medium and long term Strategic Frameworks, particularly in future discussions;
- The African Union should play its role in the areas where it has a certain comparative advantage to help move forward multinational projects and NEPAD. It is a catalytic, political and advocacy role to resolve problems or facilitate the necessary dialogue for the advancement of frozen projects; or to help resolve the problems of African countries under sanctions.

DEPARTMENT OF RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE**INTRODUCTION**

264. Poverty and hunger is widespread in Africa and continue to be most acute in rural areas. In spite of rapid urbanization the rural poor still account for about 70 percent in Africa. Livelihoods for rural population depend on agriculture and agricultural related activities. Most households also pursue a variety of other non-farm activities to generate income. However, inadequate investment in agriculture and rural development has had catastrophic implication for rural livelihoods leading to high incidence of poverty, hunger, and environmental degradation as well as inducing premature exodus of unskilled rural population to already over crowded cities and urban areas. The situation is currently being aggravated by other factors such as; HIV pandemic and debilitating diseases such as malaria, natural and man-made disasters in addition to impediments from poor macroeconomic policies, weak institutions and institutional arrangements, inappropriate technologies and weak rural infrastructures. Currently some 23 countries in sub-Sahara Africa are facing food emergencies and will need food assistance in the coming months according to the Africa Report. In these deficit countries, the causes range from civil strife and war to adverse weather and economic disruptions.

265. The African environmental scene remains challenging despite many initiatives by Member States, Regional Economic Communities and development partners. The threat of hunger and famine resulting from droughts and other environmental eventualities continue to hover over the continent. In Niger today, according to the UN Integrated Regional Information Network, 3.5 million of the country's 12 million population are threatened by hunger and starvation - a consequence of the 2004 drought and locust infestation. Over 800,000 children under the age of five are suffering from hunger in the country, while 120,000 are malnourished. Unless the international community could mobilize US\$16 million to provide emergency food aid, the situation in Niger could escalate to a crisis level. Other sahelian and semi-arid countries in the continent continue to be similarly threatened by negative environmental developments.

266. These statistics imply children too hungry to concentrate in school; underweight mothers who give birth to sickly children; and chronically hungry adults who lack the energy to raise their families above the subsistence level. Hunger is inextricably linked to poverty in Africa. It is thus a basic development issue impeding national economic growth and a major part of what keeps millions trapped in poverty. While Africa is the only region where these inter-linked problems are so pronounced, the situation varies markedly from one sub-region of the continent to the next.

267. One of the main reasons for this increase in the number of undernourished people has been the declining investment in agriculture and rural development by African governments. There is also ample evidence that support for agriculture and rural development from development partners has also declined over the past 30 years.

Responses and Framework for Implementation.

268. Due to this negative trend in agriculture the African Heads of State and Government endorsed the “Maputo Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security in Africa” in July 2003 at the Second Ordinary Summit of the Assembly of the African Union. The Declaration contains several important decisions regarding agriculture but prominent among them is the “**commitment to the allocation of at least 10% of national budgetary resources to agriculture and rural development policy implementation within five years**”. This declaration was further reinforced in the Sirte Declaration on the Challenges of Implementing Integrated and Sustainable Development in Agriculture and Water, Sirte Libya, and at the Fourth African Union Summit in Abuja, in December 2004. The Abuja Summit further requested the Commission to **define**, in collaboration with Member States and the NEPAD Secretariat, **the core areas of agriculture and rural development relevant to the 10% allocation** adopted in the Maputo Declaration.

269. At the Sirte Summit of February 2004, African Heads of State and Government made the declaration to “Enhance 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”.

270. The African Union Commission (AUC) has been seized with the implementation of the decisions on the development of African agriculture of with particular reference to the implementation of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development programme (CAADP) and the *Sirte Declaration on the Challenges of Implementing Integrated and Sustainable Development in Agriculture and Water in Africa*. To this end the Commission has consulted with the Bureaus of AMCEN and AMCOW with the view to adapting their mandates and structures within the African Union Commission and its Specialized Technical committees as requested by the Declaration. The Commission also undertook some facilitating activities geared towards the promotion of joint and integrated management of transboundary waters. These activities, which will result in the development of a framework model cooperation agreement and the promotion of cooperation and exchange of experiences between existing river basin authorities, will be undertaken with partners such as UNEP and the African Development Bank.

271. Relevant ministerial bodies such as the African Ministers’ Council on Water (AMCOW) and the AMCEN, have been seized with the issue of meeting the Millennium Development Goal regarding environmental sustainability. These bodies have developed and are implementing projects and programmes, in collaboration with their multilateral development partners, such as the ADB, UNEP, UNDP, UN-Water/Africa and the European Union, as well as bilateral partners, aimed at addressing some of the environmental challenges. The African Development Bank has developed a comprehensive Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Initiative (RWSSI), which when effectively implemented will help Africa meet the Millennium Development Goal on water supply and sanitation in rural Africa by 2015. Many RECs have taken decisive measures to strengthen their environmental portfolios. It will be

recalled that SADC adopted a revised water protocol while ECOWAS has taken steps to strengthen its water portfolio. The Central African region concluded and signed a treaty on the conservation and sustainable management of the forests of the Congo Basin in February 2005. IGAD, ECOWAS, SADC, IOC and CEMAC, with the support of the European Union have initiated an African Monitoring of the Environment for sustainable Development (AMCESD) to help the economic groupings implement policies in environment and sustainable development. These regional initiatives are examples of the many taken to complement national plans and actions to achieve environmental sustainability.

Results and Performance Appraisal

272. Many activities have been undertaken by the Commission in the Agriculture and Rural Economy sectors to implement its action plan for the period 2005 to 2007. These include development of concept notes for implementation of enabling activities in Food Security, Livestock, Fisheries, Water and land sectors as well as the Eradication of Tsetse and Trypanosomosis.

273. The United Nations Environment Programme has agreed to finance studies for the elaboration of a model Cooperation agreement for joint management of Transboundary waters, which could provide valuable reference material for the negotiation of new basin management agreements.

274. For the first time in 2005, the Commission, in collaboration with the Government of Ethiopia, implemented concrete on-the-ground actions to celebrate the Africa Environment Day in line with its advocacy role. This activity will remain a feature of the Commission's annual work plans, and, as much as possible will be undertaken with selected Member States on a regional rotational bases.

275. As would be recalled, the Commission and the NEPAD Secretariat, collaborated with development partners, such as the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), The African Development Bank and other relevant UN agencies and regional organizations, to guide and support a continental process for the development of a strategy for disaster risk reduction. The African Ministerial Conference on Environment adopted the resulting Regional Strategy for Disasters Risk Reduction at its tenth session in June 2004. The Commission and NEPAD Secretariat will seek further support from the partners to assist Member States and Regional Economic Communities to mainstream disaster risk reduction into their development plans and activities over the next couple of years.

276. While progress is slow, the African Stockpiles Programme (ASP) continues to work with six Member States for the implementation of obsolete pesticide eradication from these countries. The unavailability of sufficient funds have constrained implementation. However the recent financial contributions from the African Development Bank and Swedish Government, as well as the standing commitment of the Global Environment facility will enable implementation in some countries in the very near future.

277. The Commission of the African Union provided support to the African Group at the third session for the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 3) to Combat Desertification in Bonn, in May 2005. This assistance, in the form of simultaneous interpretation, facilitated communication within the group and therefore enhanced their negotiation capacity.

278. The Commission together with the FAO and EU have just completed an assessment of early warning systems in West 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 West Africa. This will lead to recommendations on action to be taken towards the strengthening of these systems for improved decision-making at national and regional level in relation to food security interventions.

279. On Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis eradication, the Commission has been seized with the implementation of Decision **AHG/Dec.156 (XXXVI)** adopted by the African Heads of State and Government urging Member States to collectively rise to the challenge of eradicating trypanosomiasis, a devastating disease of man and domestic animals transmitted by tsetse flies, which causes death, debility, diminished productivity, massive economic losses and untold human misery. Within the framework of this decision, the Commission of the African Union was assigned the task of mobilizing the commitment, support and action necessary to expedite the elimination of the scourge of trypanosomiasis from Africa by waging a Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign (PATTEC). In order to fulfill the obligations of this assignment, the Commission established an office to help coordinate and expedite the implementation of the PATTEC initiative.

280. A Plan of Action on the implementation of this decision was prepared and duly endorsed; a mechanism to guide the process of implementing the objectives of the PATTEC initiative and a structure to initiate and coordinate the activities of the tsetse and trypanosomiasis eradication campaign are now in place. In collaboration with the affected countries and cooperation of 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 identified tsetse eradication projects in Member States.

281. 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 the PATTEC programme.

Results of Performance Appraisal.

282. Slow implementation of programmes attributable to insufficient human resources and lack of funds in the solidarity Budget account.

Outstanding Problems and Related Issues.

283. The lack of funds in the solidarity budget accounts and shortage of staff in the department continues to hinder the implementation of programmes as planned.

Way Forward.

284. In view of the slow flow of contributions to the Solidarity Budget, there is need for the Commission to intensify its financial resources mobilization activities to enable the successful implementation of the approved programmes.

285. The Commission should make concerted efforts to mobilize member states to allocate sufficient funds for agriculture and Rural development and to fulfil their commitments on allocating at least 10% of their national budgets.

286. There is need to remind all countries in general, and countries that have not yet engaged action especially, to urgently respond to the tsetse eradication campaign and include the obligation of eliminating trypanosomiasis from all countries among national development priorities, national Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, etc.

287. In consultation with the affected countries and relevant development partners, the Commission has initiated a resources mobilization initiative in cooperation with the African Development Bank, seeking to develop a substantive support framework to create sustainable mechanisms through which countries engaged in the process of eradicating trypanosomiasis can be effectively supported. In this connection: The relevant offices in the affected countries are encouraged to contact the PATTEC Coordination Office for further information. A donor's conference should be specially convened for the mobilization of resources for PATTEC.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**1. INTRODUCTION**

288. Programmes of the Department of Human Resources Science and Technology followed up on decisions mentioned below:

Education:

289. The Decade for Education for Africa was declared at the Heads of State Summit in Yaoundé in 1996. A Programme of Action for the Decade was adopted in March 1999 in Harare, and endorsed by Heads of State in July 1999. The Lome 2000 Assembly of the Heads of State and Government reviewed some reports on the Decade and assigned to the OAU Secretariat the tasks of :

- Dissemination, sensitisation, and advocacy for education
- Setting up coordination and monitoring structures in regional economic spaces
- Promoting cooperation and exchange and strengthening partnerships
- Selecting a limited number of pilot projects in each region

290. A Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union was held in Algiers from 10 to 11 of April 2005 as part of the review of educational policy in Africa, under the auspices of the Decade for Education for Africa (1997-2006).

Science and Technology:

291. Following the Maputo Decision of Heads of State and Government to make NEPAD a programme of the AU and integrate it into the Structures and processes of the AU (July 2003), a Conference of African Ministers in-charge of Science and Technology took place in Johannesburg in November 2003 organised by the NEPAD Secretariat and the Department of Science and Technology of the Ministry of Arts, Culture and Science and Technology of South Africa. During the Conference, consultations were held between the delegations of the AUC led by the Commissioner for Social Affairs (Adv. B. Gawanas), 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, Prof. W. NKUHLU, on the other hand. The meeting resolved that a consultant be employed to develop a framework for the harmonization of the AU and NEPAD S&T programmes.

292. Maputo Decision EX/CL/Dec.26(III) of the 3rd Ordinary Session of the Executive Council on *"Africa-Wide Capacity Building in Biosafety"* enjoined the Commission to undertake the following:

- a) To continue with and finalise the Project on Capacity-Building in Bio-safety in Biotechnology.
- b) To convene a meeting of Experts and Civil Society Organisations to give further consideration to the issue of Bio-safety in Biotechnology and come out with proposals for an African Common Position for adoption by the Policy Organs of the AU.

ICT

293. In its Resolution 56/183 of 21 December 2001, the General Assembly of the United Nations welcomed the resolution of the Council of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in which the Council endorsed the proposal put forward by the Secretary-General of the ITU for the holding of the World Summit on the Information Society in two phases, the first phase in Geneva from 10-12 December 2003 and the second phase in Tunisia. On this basis, and in order to play a more proactive role in the forthcoming World Summit of Information Society (WSIS) in Tunis, the commission of the African Union has adopted and taken note of the following:

- Decision EX.CL/61 (III) by the assembly of the African Union held in Maputo, 2003.
- Decision EX.CL/1118 (V) by Chairperson on the World Summit on Information Society.

2. RESPONSES AND FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Education

294. A Plan of Action was elaborated for the Decade of Education, with focus on four priority areas: i) Equity and Access to Education, ii) Quality, relevance and effectiveness of education, iii) Complementary training modalities, iv) Capacity building. To these were added crosscutting issues such as research, resource mobilization, and communication campaigns.

295. For each of the priority areas, an operational definition was given, and specific action areas highlighted.

Science and Technology

296. A Consultant has been appointed on the basis of Terms of Reference jointly developed by the AU and NEPAD Secretariat to develop a framework for the harmonization of programs of the AU and those of NEPAD.

297. A high level panel of Experts has been set up to develop an African Position on biotechnology and bio-safety. In addition the AU and the German Government through its cooperation agency, GTZ have signed an agreement for funding a project for capacity building in Bio-safety. This will develop capacity among AU member States to deal with bio-safety issues.

298. The Commission through this Department, in collaboration with the Third World Network (TWN), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) organised an *“African Regional Workshop on the WTO-TRIPS Agreement on Patents and Access to Medicines: Appropriate National Policy Responses”*. The Workshop took place at AUC Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 01-04- March 2005. One hundred thirty-five (135) representatives from thirty-five (35) Member States from both Ministries of Health and Ministries

responsible for Patents, as well as representatives from African and non-African NGOs, Regional and International Organisations and Business persons in the area of Drugs manufacturing attended.

299. The overall objective of the Workshop was to enhance the capacities in Member States on the issues related to WTO-TRIPS Agreement with regard to Patents and Access to Medicines and updating them on those issues

ICT

300. The AU participated in the following events related to preparations for the WSIS Summit, which will take place in Tunisia in November 2005:

a. Africa Preparatory Conference

301. The African Union Commission participated in the Africa regional conference preparatory for WSIS II from 28 January to 4 February 2005 that was held in Accra, Ghana under the theme "Africa's key to an inclusive Information Society".

302. At the end of the deliberations, the conference adopted a document entitled "Accra Commitments to The Tunis Summit", whose contents focused on the following key issues:

1. The major principles underpinning the African information society.
2. Development guidelines.
3. Resource mobilization, including human resources.
4. International cooperation.
5. Operational aspects; road to Tunis, ICT implementation strategies, financial mechanisms, Internet governance, partnership, prospects and the way after Tunis.

303. The African Union Commission was assigned to undertake the following actions:

1. Solicit support in the other regions of the world for the financing of the Digital Solidarity Fund.
2. Assist the bureau of the African Ministerial Committee in coordinating African governments' position before and during Tunis summit.
3. Organize and chair twice a year, the Inter-Institutional coordinating committee involved in the ICT infrastructure development projects.

b. Second Preparatory Committee Meeting for WSIS – Tunis Phase

304. The Tunis Preparatory Committee Meeting was held in Hammamet, Tunisia, from 24-26 June 2004, where Governments decided to hold PrepCom II in Geneva for 7 days, starting on 17 February 2005.

305. The African Union participated in the PrepCom II for Tunis Phase of WSIS, which decided that, during the inter-sessional phase between PrepCom II and PrepCom III:

1. The current text of chapter two of the Operational Part (Financing Mechanisms), as it stands at the conclusion of PrepCom II, will be forwarded directly to PrepCom III.
2. The text of the Political Chapeau, as it stands at the conclusion of PrepCom II, together with a compilation document containing written comments and proposals, will be forwarded directly to PrepCom III.
3. The Group of Friends of the Chair (GFC) will continue to draft proposals for chapters one (Implementation Mechanisms) and four (The Way Ahead) of the Operational Part. These new proposals will be in addition to the written comments and proposals presented during the first reading on 21 February, contained in the compilation documents on chapter one and chapter four respectively. The above-mentioned documents will be forwarded to PrepCom, where a decision on the use of the new proposals will be taken.
4. The report of the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) will be presented in mid-July 2005; a compilation of these contributions will be forwarded to PrepCom III, together with the report of the WGIG.
5. PrepCom III will take place in Geneva from 19 to 30 September 2005.

c- Pan-Arab Conference and the African Ministerial Committee Meeting

306. The African Union Commission participated in the Pan Arab Conference for WSIS Phase II from 8 to 10 May 2005. In Cairo, Egypt. The African Ministerial Committee meeting (AMCM) was also scheduled to take place on the second day of the conference - 9 May. The AMCM has been planned to discuss and adopt the outcome of Bamako Bureau and the progress of Accra commitments, in order to have African common position and action plan, to be presented in the forthcoming AU Heads of States Summit in July. However, the Ministers did not form a quorum to make decisions.

307. The following points were adopted during the AMCM:

1. Draft of African Regional Action Plan on the Knowledge Economy (ARAPKE)
2. AUC to lead the African Member States to WSIS II in Tunis, and take the (ARAPKE) to the next Heads of State Summit for adoption.
3. Bamako Bureau to continue the coordination action in preparation for WSIS II
4. Arab-African Information Society Joint declaration

Digital Solidarity Fund:

308. In February 2003, during the preparatory process of the first phase of WSIS, H.E. Mr. A Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, had proposed on behalf of NEPAD and AU, the creation of a global Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF). The fund (DSF) was launched officially in Geneva on 14 March 2005 and was financed

during 2005 through contributions from its 17 founding members.

3. RESULTS AND PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Education

309. During the decades 1960 – 1990, African states had made tremendous efforts to develop Education, especially in the areas of Literacy and curriculum reforms. Most of the countries were able to institutionalise educational planning and to professionalize their national education services. These gains were however frustrated by a number of factors, mainly:

- Political instability
- The downturn in Africa's economy, beginning from the 1980 decade
- Structural adjustment programmes
- The debt burden

310. Activities for the Decade of Education started late as some regions did not get started till 2002. This was complicated by the two-year gap between the formal declaration of the Decade in 1997 and the development of its action plan in 1999.

311. However, a notable achievement in this Education is the smooth functioning working relationship between the AU and its regional economic groups, through the setting up of five regional coordinating structures for the Decade. Regional projects were developed in four of the five regions: western, eastern, central and southern Africa. The Western and Southern Africa groups undertook some notable activities. ECOWAS now has an education protocol, while SADC has set up working groups on a variety of issues related to regional integration through education.

4. OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS AND RELATED ISSUES

Education

312. Political instability and internal conflicts, as well as HIV and AIDS have taken a toll on Education in a number of countries during the past Decade, but every country in the continent is making sustained effort towards attaining the 2015 targets set by the international community.

313. Ministers noted the need for governments to liberalise band-width and connectivity in order that new information and communication technologies can play a major role in education.

5. THE WAY FORWARD

Education

314. During the Conference of Ministers, a number of recommendations were made, key of which are the following:

- Promotion and Mobilisation of Human Resources through programs which manage brain drain for brain gain, addressing quality and retention for teachers, Involving local universities and the Association of African Universities in planning for revitalisation of university education; Development of Higher Education through the establishment sub-regional and regional centres of excellence in science and technology, and other disciplines; operationalizing the African Academy of Languages;
- Immediately carry out an in-depth evaluation of the Decade;
- Develop a plan of Action for the next Decade of Education;
- Facilitate the integration of MINEDAF and COMEDAF.

Science and Technology

315. The Framework for S&T in Africa will be discussed and adopted as an overall programme for S&T in Africa at the next S&T Ministerial Conference, which will take place in Senegal in September 2005.

WSIS in Tunis November 2005

316. The second phase of WSIS in Tunis November 2005 will be the phase of concrete action and solutions. The focus of the second phase will be on:

- Follow-up and implementation of the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action by stakeholders at national, regional and international levels, with particular attention to the challenges facing the Least Developed Countries;
- Consideration of the report of the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms (TFFM) and appropriate action;
- Internet governance: consideration of the report of the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) and appropriate action.

317. It is expected that the draft of African Action Plan will be tabled, for review and enrichment at the Capacity Building Workshop on Internet Governance for African Policymakers to be held in June in Dakar and at the Forum on Gender and ICT to be held from 29-31 August in Cape Town, in addition to other related issues.

318. PrepCom III for WSIS will be held from 19-30 September 2005 in Geneva. In addition to AMCM to review the latest progress made to ARAPKE and other related issues that will be held in July in Nigeria.

319. The Bamako Bureau is expected to meet in Bamako at the end of September 2005 to finalize the Action Plan for circulation to Member States for final comments.

Digital Solidarity Fund

320. The Executive Committee of the Fund and its Secretariat will prepare the move from political support to legal agreement, by calling an international conference in 2006 in Geneva. The objective of the conference is the adoption of an International Convention on global DSF. Bamako bureau and the African community still developing and debating over the best possibilities of resources (financing mechanism, intervention policy, monitoring, evaluation of activities, etc.)

321. It is expected that the draft of African Action Plan will be tabled, for review and enrichment at the Capacity Building Workshop on Internet Governance for African Policymakers to be held in June in Dakar and at the Forum on Gender and ICT to be held from 29-31 August in Cape Town, in addition to other related issues.

6. DRAFT DECISIONS THAT SHOULD BE TAKEN TO NEXT EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND SUMMIT

322. In the declaration the Ministers adopted at the Conference, they recommend that the Assembly of the African Union, to instruct the AU Commission, in consultation with the various Regional Economic Communities to:

- Immediately **carry out an evaluation of the Decade** of Education in Africa (1997 – 2006), which is coming to an end;
- **Develop**, on the basis of the outcomes of the evaluation, and the new challenges confronting African education, a new Plan of Action for the second Decade of Education, which includes appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, incorporating benchmarks and performance indicators;
- **Adopt the New Plan of Action and proclaim the second Decade of Education in Africa** taking into account the adopted AU/NEPAD strategy Framework and the lessons learnt from the first decade;
- **Finance the implementation** of the New Plan of Action drawing on the resources of the Member States as well as the capacities of the African specialized agencies and development partners existing in Africa;
- **Garner** support for the strengthening of the Regional Economic Communities and any other continental implementing agencies and networks in the field of education;
- **Take steps** to ensure the integration of MINEDAF into COMEDAF;
- **Ensure** the unlocking of resources in ICT's, in particular the control of bandwidth and connectivity in Africa, to facilitate the delivery of quality education, research and development in general in support of African regional integration.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS**INTRODUCTION**

323. In its work Programme for 2005-2007, the Social Affairs Department has the ambition to “promote a holistic and human-centred approach to socio-economic development, and intra and inter-sectoral coordination of the social sector with a view to alleviating poverty and improving the quality of life of the African people, in particular the most vulnerable and marginalized”.

324. It was noted that unless the basic social needs of people are catered for, efforts at political and economic development are wasted. It was also noted that the activities of the social sector are cross-cutting and interlinked, and that policies and programmes of other sectors have social and human implications.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

325. The Programmes on Social Development are based on the AU Commission Strategic Plan 2004-2007 and concerns Health and Nutrition, programme 20: *Stop AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis*; and Programme 21: *Fight Against Poverty and Social Exclusion*. The AU Commission collaborated closely with UN Agencies and other partners to coordinate and harmonize the promotion of the fight against prevalent diseases and improve health on the continent. This was in the framework of implementation of the January 2005 Assembly Decision on the Interim Report on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria and Polio; and the Mid-Term Review on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). If Africa is to attain the MDGs, access to essential drugs, materials and services for all will have to be accelerated. The fight against HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases entails addressing access to prevention, treatment, care and support.

326. The AU Commission participated in the European Union (EU) Seminar on “*Promoting Social Development for All*” in Brussels, Belgium in January 2005. Its main objective was to prepare for the debate of the UN Commission on Social Development for the ten-year review of the 1995 Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development (WSSD).

327. In 2003 Heads of State and Government of the African Union passed a resolution endorsing the recommendations of the World Report on Violence and Health and requesting the Member States to develop national plans of action for violence prevention and systems for data collection on violence. The African Union resolution further requested Member States to declare 2005 an “*African Year of Prevention of Violence*”. The WHO and other partners are supporting Member States in implementing this Decision, and the AU Commission, in collaboration with WHO, is in the process of recruiting a Project Manager to support the process. This is important in view of the violence related to conflicts and other causes which are prevalent on the continent.

328. It will be recalled that the majority of Africans are young people, these are the future leaders and parents and thus, custodians of the next generation. However, they have many challenges to overcome, particularly poverty, unemployment, drug

abuse and HIV/AIDS. They have clearly demonstrated that they can succeed if empowered and supported. This requires effective leadership at all levels, proper planning, an integrated and multi-sectoral approach, public participation, well-coordinated partnerships and sustained access to resources. In this connection the AUC attended the 1st Executive Committee Meeting of The Pan-African Youth Organization Against HIV/AIDS (PAYA) in Kigali, Rwanda from 14 -19 March 2005. The theme of the meeting was *“Empowering Africa’s Young People: A Holistic Approach to Encountering the HIV/AIDS Pandemic”*. One of the conclusions drawn at this meeting was that the Youth are Africa’s richest resource and are also change agents for halting and reversing the HIV/AIDS pandemic. They should, therefore, be empowered so that they can empower themselves to fight HIV/AIDS.

329. At the end of March 2005, the new WHO/AFRO Regional Director visited the Chairperson of the AU Commission and the Commissioner for Social Affairs. They discussed issues of mutual interest in the promotion of health and well-being in Africa as well as cooperation in this regard; and for pushing the AU Vision and Mission forward in the areas of economic, social and political integration. As a follow-up to this visit, the AU Commission participated in a meeting of WHO, AU and RECs on *“Strengthening Partnership for Health”* in Brazzaville, Congo on 28-29 April, 2005. Information on policies, plans and actions in health development of each organization was shared, current cooperation tools reviewed and ways for improving existing cooperation, partnerships and collaboration identified.

330. The World Health Day was celebrated on 7 April 2005 on the theme *“Make every Mother and Child Count”* to encourage public health programmes to work together to ensure that all families have access to a continuum of care and services. This coincided with the High Level meeting on maternal and child health in Delhi, India in which the Commission participated and which resulted in the Delhi Declaration on Maternal, New-born and Child Health. (April 9, 2005).

331. In March 2005, the Multi-lateral Initiative on Malaria (MIM)/Tropical Disease Research (TDR) Programme collaborated with the AU Commission to organize an Investigators’ Task Force Meeting on *“Strengthening Malaria Research Capability in Africa”*. Furthermore, on 25 April 2005, Africa Malaria Control Day was marked on the theme *“Unite Against Malaria: Together We Can Beat Malaria”* with awareness-raising Programmes both in Member States and at the AU Commission. It was highlighted that malaria is *Africa’s daily Tsunami, home is the first hospital* and that everybody has a role to play in fighting this scourge. The AU Commission in collaboration with WHO is setting up an *Ad-hoc* Malaria Task Force to coordinate and accelerate activities towards the mid-term review of the 2000 Abuja Summit on Roll-Back-Malaria.

332. With respect to epidemics of emerging and re-emerging disease, outbreaks of very contagious haemorrhagic fevers with high case fatality were reported: **Marburg** in Angola and **Ebola** in Democratic Republic of Congo. Prevention and control of such epidemics requires effective emergency preparedness and response systems, and strict application of international health regulations. The related challenges are compounded by the lack of surveillance systems and the fact that there are no effective vaccines against these viruses yet. As concerns polio eradication, effective interventions are in place to interrupt further transmission

through universal immunization of all children in Member States affected by polio outbreaks. A lot of progress has been made towards eradication of polio. However, Africa needs to intensify efforts to prevent further transmission especially in countries affected by conflicts and other emergencies. It must be pointed out here that, according to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, the resurgence of polio in some African countries was due to misinformation and other challenges. This clearly shows that, if we are to succeed in eradicating polio we need to keep our advocacy, dissemination of correct information and vaccination campaigns alive all the time. This also applies to immunization programmes against some other infectious diseases.

333. The AU Commission participated actively in the 58th World Health Assembly which took place in Geneva, Switzerland from 16 - 26 May 2005. In her address to the Assembly, the Commissioner for Social Affairs highlighted the AU's involvement in the fight against HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria and other diseases in line with Programme 20 of the AU Commission Strategic Plan (2004-2007). The issues that received much attention during the Assembly include: Revision of International Health Regulations, Achievement of Health Related MDGs, Health Action in Crises and Disasters, Control of HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria, Polio Eradication and the Global Immunization Strategy, Non-communicable Diseases and Conditions, Social Health Insurance, World Report on Violence and Health, Research and others.

334. The Commissioner for Social Affairs met with the Africa Group of Ministers of Health at the World Health Assembly (WHA). They discussed such matters as how to address India's draft bill on generic drugs which was very likely going to affect drug access in Africa. The Commissioner reminded the Ministers that the January 2005 Abuja Summit of Heads of State had requested the AU Commission to identify capacity for establishing regional centres of excellence for generics in the framework of NEPAD. In this regard, the AU Commission would engage with various partners to prepare such a plan. Meanwhile the Commission is planning a drug production capacity mapping exercise in collaboration with the World Health Organization. This issue of access to drugs will also be discussed at the next Ministers of Health meeting in Gaborone, Botswana in October 2005. During the World Health Assembly the AUC Delegation had an opportunity to fulfil a number of official engagements which included bilateral meetings with various specialized programmes of WHO. The Commissioner also participated in the Global Task Force on HIV/AIDS of which she is a Member and whose objective is to coordinate the response to the pandemic more effectively.

335. During the WHA the Commissioner for Social Affairs had another meeting with the WHO/AFRO Regional Director and discussed preparations to convene the Experts Meeting on essential drugs which would address the review of the Bamako Initiative and the AU Decade for African Traditional Medicine. They also considered preparations for the high-level participation of the AU in the WHO Africa Regional Committee Meeting as well as for convening the next Session of the AU Conference of African Minister of Health, scheduled to be held in Gaborone, Botswana from 14-18 October, 2005. As mentioned earlier, access to drugs will be an important issue at this Conference.

336. The AU Commission and WHO Technical Group met on May 20, 2005. During this meeting, the AU Commission delegation was informed that the WHO Technical Group has 2 related programmes on research namely the African AIDS Vaccine Programme (AAVP) and the Multi-lateral Initiative on Malaria (MIM). The Coordinator of AAVP informed the meeting that AAVP is a WHO supported programme and is a network of research scientists which aims at building research capacity for AIDS Vaccine. It is a joint programme with UNAIDS with a Steering Committee that meets annually. The programme has 6 thematic working groups namely, Advocacy, National Strategic Planning, Ethics, Epidemiology, Social behaviour and Community issues. She finally reminded AU Commission about the June 6-8 AAVP Meeting in Addis Ababa and the June 3, 2005 Technical briefing which the AU Commission was supposed to host and lead.

337. The MIM co-ordinator also briefed the AU delegation on Multi-Lateral Initiative on Malaria (MIM). He reported that MIM is part of the TDR Programme on Research and Training and has the overarching goal to build capacity in Malaria Research in Africa. He expressed his gratitude for AUC support especially during the March 2005 MIM meeting where the Commissioner for Social Affairs delivered a statement. He informed the AUC delegation about the November 2005, Cameroon Malaria Conference where the Commissioner for Social Affairs is expected to make a key note address. The Scientist from the Capacity Building Programme briefed the AUC delegation about the capacity strengthening programme in WHO saying that they provide research grants and training support for M.Sc and Ph.Ds for Africans. He noted that the francophone research capacity is lagging behind and that it needed more attention. He finally informed the meeting that African Universities are now encouraged to provide the required training noting that University of Cape Town and Witwatersrand in South Africa have been strengthened to take up this challenge effectively.

338. A meeting between AU Commission and **STOP TB Partnership** was also held in Geneva during WHA. At this meeting the Stop TB Partnership expressed gratitude to the AU Commission for taking part in their Board Meeting which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in March 2005. The Executive Secretary for Stop TB Partnership informed the AU Commission delegation that Commissioner for Social Affairs had been appointed a special Board Member for Stop TB Partnerships and that she would be invited to participate in the next board meeting. The Executive Secretary also informed AU that Ethiopia had offered to host the TB Financing meeting and that there would also be a TB Partnerships forum in Africa in 2007. Furthermore, it was hoped that African Ministers of Health might declare TB as an emergency at their next regional meeting which will be held in Maputo, Mozambique in August 2005.

339. In December 2004, the AU Commission, in collaboration with UNAIDS and other partners, organized a Technical Consultation to prepare its draft HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS for 2005-2007. Participants were selected on the basis of their professional competence and long-standing experience in the field. The Consultation resulted in a comprehensive Draft Strategic Plan which was reviewed and finalized by a Second-round of Technical Consultation Meeting on 26-28 May organized by the AU Commission for Social Affairs. Its objective is to accelerate action to confront the continental emergency posed by HIV/AIDS.

340. In addition, the Consultations also drafted the 2005-2007 Strategic Plan of AIDS Watch Africa (AWA) to enable it play its role more effectively. It also provided opportunities for key stakeholders to make inputs into the final plan of action, and to propose ways of mobilizing resources within the AU and outside to implement the AU Commission HIV/AIDS and the AWA Strategic Plans.

341. In the area of nutrition, the African Union Commission is in the process of revising the African Regional Nutrition Strategy in the light of the recent developments in the field of nutrition, especially HIV/AIDS and its linkage to nutrition and food security.

342. The challenges encountered by the AU Commission in undertaking activities related to Social Development include: shortage of human and financial resources, limited inter-departmental collaboration, limited communication with relevant Sectoral Ministries, and a heavy schedule of other activities in the Department. It is recommended, therefore, that the following actions be undertaken:

- Improve human capacity in the AU Commission;
- Make more resources available for the activities;
- Improve networking with Ministries of Health and National AIDS Councils/Commissions;
- Coordinate Programmes with partners more effectively to avoid duplication;
- Put health high on Africa's development agenda as all other sectoral programmes cannot proceed without healthy populations.

343. The activities which are in the pipeline include the organization of:

- Experts meeting on the Review of the Bamako Initiative on Essential Medicines, traditional medicine and health systems during July 2005;
- The 2nd Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Health, Botswana, 1–14 October 2005;
- Continental Forum on Human Rights and People Affected and Infected by HIV/AIDS as part of the World AIDS Day commemoration (1st December 2005). It will precede the International Conference on AIDS and STDs in Africa (ICASA) which will be held in Abuja, Nigeria in early December 2005.

POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

344. The AU Commission recognizes population and reproductive health as important components of socio-economic development in Africa. Therefore, the Commission encourages policies and programme targeting population dynamics to bring about sustainable development in both rural and urban areas.

345. During the reporting period, the following activities were undertaken in the area of Population and Development:

- Convening of the First African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban

Development (AMCHUD) in Durban, South Africa, on 3-4 February 2005. The theme of the AMCHUD was “Urbanization, Shelter and Development: Towards an Enhanced Framework for Promoting Sustainable Cities and Towns in Africa”. This Conference was organized in collaboration with the UN-Habitat and the Government of South Africa and preceded by the African Population Commission Meeting (31 January – 02 February 2005). The Ministerial Conference was preceded by the Meeting of the African Population Commission (APC) which served as Experts Group for the Conference. The Ministerial Conference established a Bureau chaired by South Africa.

- A report of the Activities of the APC during 2002-2004 was prepared and discussed both in the Durban Meeting mentioned above and during the Fifth general Assembly of the APC convened in Addis Ababa, from 27-28 April 2005. During this Meeting, the APC elected a new Bureau chaired by South Africa. The General Assembly also revised the APC’s Rules of Procedure and decided that the APC be serviced by the AU Commission as a sole Secretariat with continued support from the ECA, ADB, UNFPA and other partners. The decision was made to ensure effective coordination, speedy flow of communication and accountability in facilitating the work of the APC.
- The 5th Ordinary Session of the APC, convened by the AUC in collaboration with UNFPA, reviewed the Report on the MDGs prepared by the Department of Social Affairs in accordance with the January Summit decision on the review of progress on the implementation the MDGs. The APC appreciated the preparation of the Report and made a number of observations to improve it. The Document served as a resource material for the AU Commission’s Report and the Draft African Common Position on the MDGs.

346. In addition to the foregoing, the Department participated in a number of conferences and meetings where population and reproductive health as well as other development issues were discussed and important decisions made. The Department of Social Affairs thus participated in the following meetings and conferences.

- 4-8 April 2005, The 20th Session of the Governing Council of UN-HABITAT, Nairobi, Kenya;
- 2-7 May 2007, the AU Conference of African Ministers of Economy and Finance, Dakar, Senegal

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

347. Reproductive health has long been recognized not only as a mere absence of sickness or infirmity, but as a complete state of well-being and security of men and women, young and old, in all societies. It also assumes a human rights overtone whereby it refers to the right to health, to personal integrity and dignity, to make decisions on matters affecting one’s life, to choose one’s marital partner, to decide the number and spacing of children, and to get access to health and other services to make sexual life as well as childbirth safer and happier.

348. A series of sub-regional reviews on the status of reproductive health are being conducted in collaboration with the International Planned Parenthood Federation Africa Region (IPPFAR) since August 2004. The final outcome of all the sub-regional reviews will be a “Comprehensive Action Plan on Reproductive Health in Africa” which is one of the priority line-actions of the AU Commission for 2005.

349. The draft Action Plan, along with the draft Roadmap for Accelerating the Reduction of Neonatal and Maternal Morbidity and Mortality, developed in 2004 in collaboration with WHO/AFRO, will be submitted to the Second Session of the African Ministers of Health Conference in October 2005 in Gaborone, Botswana. The AUC participated in the following meetings:

- 22-26 February 2005, Sub-Regional Conference on Reproductive Health and Rights for the Southern Africa Region, Windhoek, Namibia;
- 30 May - 3 June 2005, the Department of Social Affairs participated in the UNFPA Regional Workshop to Operationalize Country Requests for Reproductive Health Commodity Security (RHCS) Capacity Development. The major objective of this workshop was to programme regional activities and work plans and also to agree on timelines around which expected support to countries will be provided. In this regard, the African Union Commission supports the UNFPA initiative of Reproductive Health Commodity Security which has already mobilized US\$75 million of which US\$20 million is intended to support a 24-month project on RHCS in conflict and post-conflict countries, most of which are in Africa.
- 7-9 June 2005, Sub-Regional Conference on Reproductive Health and Rights for the West African Subregion (Anglophone), Abuja, Nigeria;

350. All the foregoing activities and events indicate the due emphasis placed on Reproductive Health by the AU Commission which is very clearly reflected in the new Vision, Mission and Strategic framework of the Commission for the period 2005-2007.

LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT AND MIGRATION

351. Africa remains faced by immense challenges of poverty and unemployment. These challenges are complicating Africa’s efforts towards realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of halving poverty by 2015. Unemployment and underemployment are increasing at an alarming rate in Africa. The effect of this increase has been most severe on the youth, women, the poor and the disabled who are particularly vulnerable to socio-economic shocks. Most of these labour forces are found in the informal sector economy where conditions of services remain the poorest of the poor. The paradox of extreme and increasing poverty and deprivation in Africa amidst plenty in human and natural resources is a sad reality in the light of positive changes in world poverty profile.

The AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission

352. The Third Ordinary Session of Labour and Social Affairs commission met in Johannesburg from 18 to 23 April 2005. Different issues of importance were considered by the Meeting of Experts and adopted by Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs. Among others, these include:

- The Millennium Development Goals in relation to labour and employment;
- The outcome of the Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa;
- Consideration of the Ouagadougou Declaration and Plan of Action on Employment and Poverty Alleviation;
- Report on Activities of the African Members of the ILO Governing Body;
- Draft Social Policy Framework for Africa;
- Draft Strategy Framework for a Policy on Migration in Africa;
- Follow-up on the AU Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing and Establishment of an Advisory Council on Ageing;
- Promoting youth Employment; and
- Rethinking the Labour and Social Affairs Commission.

353. At the end of its deliberations the Labour and Social Affairs Commission adopted a number of recommendations. The report and recommendations are presented to the Council for endorsement and further directives.

SOCIAL WELFARE

Child Protection, Survival and Development

354. Africa's children is Africa's future. Almost half of Africa's population is made of children and youth. Africa's future, therefore, lies with the well-being of its children. However, we continue to witness the vulnerability, marginalization, and abuse of children in the Continent. Their lives are too short and their life-chances too limited. Yet many commitments have been made in existing blueprints to improve the standard of living of children and give them the best chances for survival and development. Among others, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the African Common Position on Children –“Africa Fit for Children” and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set out targets for Governments to respond to the needs of Africa's children and include them in their priority programmes.

355. The AU Commission has put children as a priority in its Strategic Plan for 2004-2007 and in this context a number of advocacy and awareness raising activities

have been carried out. For the Day of the African Child, which is celebrated on 16 June of every year, the AU Commission conducted a Workshop on “*Social Protection for Orphans and Vulnerable Children*” to identify issues that make children vulnerable and develop programmes/strategies for protecting them. It was also an opportunity to come up with concrete projects in favour of vulnerable children that can be implemented jointly with other stakeholders.

356. The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child has also been active in promoting the rights of children as spelt out in the African Charter. The Committee’s Report is presented separately. However, it is still disturbing to note that only 35 out of 53 Member States have ratified the African Charter. An appeal is therefore made to those Member States which have not yet done so, to urgently ratify the Charter.

African Decade of Disabled Persons (1999-2009)

357. People with disabilities (PWDs) are among the most vulnerable group in our society. Disability issues and disabled persons are not getting the attention they deserve by Member States and no policy or social protection exists to improve their living standard. With the proclamation of an African Decade for Disabled People and the adoption of a Plan of Action to implement the Decade’s objectives, PWDs have become more conscious of their role in society and of their rights. They want to participate in the socio-economic and political development of their countries and not to be considered as incapacitated or useless. With the establishment of a Secretariat for the Decade, the Disabled Peoples’ Organisations (DPOs) are making sure that the objectives of the Decade’s Plan of Action are being implemented at national level.

358. The African Rehabilitation Institute (ARI) which has been mandated to monitor the implementation of the Decade’s objectives is following up the implementation process closely with the Decade’s Secretariat. However, the major constraints ARI is faced with is lack of human and financial resources. With a view to raising awareness on the Plan of Action and preparing the mid-term review of the Decade, the AU Commission is planning a Meeting in September this year in collaboration with ARI, the Secretariat of the Decade and the ILO. Donors and major stakeholders will also be represented at the meeting. It will therefore be an opportunity to sensitize them to support Member States in implementing the Decade Plan of Action.

The Aged

359. The number of older people is increasing rapidly and it is estimated that by the year 2050 the African continent would have between 204 and 210 million of older people. Older people are facing increasing hardships due to the prevailing conflicts, HIV/AIDS pandemic and other social and economic changes in the continent. It will be recalled that efforts to address the challenges facing the older people culminated in the adoption of a Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing by the Summit in July 2002. The Plan of Action is aimed at guiding Member States to develop programs and national plans of action to assist older people, including social protection, pensions and other benefits. The AU Commission, in collaboration with HelpAge International – Africa Region, has been mandated to establish an Advisory

Council to oversee the implementation of the Plan of Action. Actions are already underway to set up a Council which will comprise representatives from the RECs, Civil Society Organisations and social partners.

Drug Control and Related Crime

360. Illicit trafficking and abuse of drugs is progressively becoming a problem to African families, communities and nations. Now is the time for the continent to address it effectively. It will be recalled that the Second Ministerial Meeting on Drug Control in Africa was held in Mauritius in December 2004. The meeting adopted an African Common Position on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice as Africa's contribution to the 11th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.

361. The Common Position was presented by the Representative of African Union Commission to the 11th UN Congress held in Bangkok in April, 2005. The AU Commission is also following-up on the implementation of the recommendations of the 2nd Ministerial Meeting on drug control in collaboration with the UN Office on Drug Control (UNODC). Drugs and crime are related and inter-linked and need to be addressed in conjunction. The Round Table that was to have been organized in May 2005 was postponed due to logistical issues.

SPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

362. In the area of sport, the AU Commission has continued to work in close collaboration with the Supreme Council for sports in Africa (SCSA) and with other international organizations. The protection of ethical and moral values sport require the cooperation of all countries in combating unethical behaviours including doping in sport. In this connection, a delegation of the African Union Commission participated in the conference organized by UNESCO within the context of the drafting of the International Anti-Doping Convention in January 2005. The Commission's participation in this important conference also formed part of the implementation of Maputo Decision EX.CL/Dec.30 on the formulation of an African policy against doping in sports.

363. Pursuant to the implementation of Maputo Decision EX.CL/Dec.62 (III) calling on "the Ministers of Member States in-charge of sports to establish a Consultative Committee that will focus on physical education and sports, the first meeting of the Consultative Committee composed of eleven (11) Member States and four (4) sporting organizations and associations was held in Algiers on 14 April 2005. The African Union Commission participated in the said meeting in its capacity as member of the Consultative Committee. At the end of the deliberations, the Committee tabled a recommendation calling on the Executive Council to adopt a decision creating a statutory ministerial meeting to deal with sporting and youth matters.

364. Furthermore, the Supreme Council for Sports in Africa (SCSA) held its General Assembly (20th Session) in Algiers from 19 to 20 April 2005. In attendance were thirty Member States, the African Union Commission and several African sporting organizations and confederations. The Assembly examined the activity report of the SCSA Executive Committee, the final report on the organization of the

8th African Games which took place in Nigeria in October 2003, the report of the World Anti-Doping Agency, women and sport, SCSA Plan of Action for the period 2005 – 2006, and elected the members of the various commissions and the new SCSA Secretary General in the person of SONSTON YAMEW A KASHIBA from Zambia.

CULTURE AND HERITAGE

World heritage in Africa

365. The Commission attended an experts meeting 15-18 March 2005 in Cape Town, South Africa. The objective was to further develop an African position paper and a Declaration concerning the World Heritage Convention. The Commission made the following contribution and will initiate the following activities:

- Africa should establish a list of sites with a regional scope, complementary to the World Heritage list;
- Each African country should establish a national Commission/Board for cultural/Natural Heritage comprising all Ministries/Services concerned;
- AU will participate in July 2005 in South Africa in the 29th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee which will take place for the first time in Africa south of the Sahara;
- AU will sensitise and encourage a significant African Participation to the meeting. AU could also sponsor African participants to the meeting if its solidarity budget permits ;
- AU would also contribute to follow-up activities to the meeting that would be essential;
- AU will sensitise African countries in the importance of natural/cultural heritage as a factor of sustainable development (tourism, biodiversity, social cohesion, cultural diversity, promotes poverty eradication). Countries will be therefore encouraged to sign relevant conventions and protect their sites to be registered in the world and regional listing; the following five African countries are encouraged to sign and ratify the World Convention: Djibouti, Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome, Swaziland;
- AU encourages all member states to emulate initiatives such as Nigeria Project to prepare a master plan to preserve national cultural heritage resources.
- Part of the exhibition planned during the AU Summit on Culture in January (Sudan) will be devoted to African Heritage Sites, especially to the last significant event: the return of Axum Obelisk from Italy to Ethiopia;
- An African Monument in Rome: As a gesture of good will, and promotion of cultural cooperation, AU/EU/Africa/Italy/Ethiopia/UNESCO could sponsor African artists to create a monument to be placed in Rome.

Meetings on culture

366. The Commission is preparing for the following meetings on culture to take place in October/November 2005 in Nairobi Kenya and in 2006 in Khartoum Sudan:

- A Pan-African congress in line with the Symposium, which took place in 1969 in Algiers and adopted the Pan-African cultural Manifesto, which led to the African Cultural Charter. High level African experts and personalities in the various fields of culture will attend a week long meeting (5 days) in Nairobi, Kenya;
- The 5th conference of African Ministers of Culture to be prepared by governmental experts, soon after the Congress. Also in Nairobi, Kenya. The previous conferences took place in 1986 in Mauritius, 1988 in Burkina Faso, in 1990 in Cameroon, in 1993 in Benin. The Commission would like to thank the Government of Kenya for accepting to host these important meetings that will draw and adopt the new cultural orientations and programmes of the AU. All members' states and partners are invited to actively participate in these meetings;
- AU Summit on Culture. As already agreed, the first AU Summit on Culture will take place in Khartoum in Sudan, in January 2006. The summit will among others consider the conclusions of the Congress and Ministers Conference.

AFRO ARAB COOPERATION

367. During its Third Ordinary Session in July 2003, in Maputo, Mozambique the Executive Council took important decisions aimed at revitalizing the Afro Arab Cooperation (Dec EX/CL/54(III)). During its sixth Ordinary Session in January 2005, in Abuja, Nigeria, the Council also re-emphasized the need for re-launching and deepening Afro-Arab cooperation.

368. The new Strategic Plan of the African Union further confirms Africa's strong commitment towards the promotion of Afro-Arab Brotherhood. It gives a new impetus to the Cooperation, recognizing the role of the civil society and the private sector of both regions. It advocates for the shift from fragmented and routine activities to more visible and large-scale undertakings based on principles of complementarity, mutuality and reciprocity.

369. In these directions, the four-year Operational Plan of the Commission approved a number of regular and transitional activities for the year 2005. The Commission also launched activities aimed at revitalizing the Afro-Arab Cooperation.

370. Regular and transitional programs include activities listed below, followed by initiatives to revitalize Afro-Arab Cooperation.

Regular activities and initiatives for the Revitalization of Afro-Arab Cooperation**Afro Arab Trade Fair:**

371. The 7th Afro-Arab Trade Fair is scheduled to take place from 23 November to 1st December 2005, in Khartoum, Sudan, under the general theme "Together for a Regional Economic Power". The Organizing Committee so far held three meetings in Khartoum, Sudan. The Commission is of the opinion that the role of the African Union and the League of Arab States in this project should be limited to only facilitation. Efforts are therefore being exerted to increase the participation of the public and private sectors of the two regions in the organization of the Fair. In this regard, the proposal made in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania during the 6th Edition to undertake an overall evaluation of the fair and make a change of direction will be implemented during this interim period 2005/2006. The Council is invited to appeal to all stakeholders both public and private in AU members States to participate in this fair

Institute of Strategic Studies:

372. The Commission is carrying out consultations with the League of Arab States and other partners on the establishment of an Institute of Strategic Studies. A preliminary agreement has been reached to undertake feasibility studies on the organizational and programmatic aspects of the envisaged Institute. The outcome of the study will be presented to the next Session of the Council.

Capacity building:

373. The Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), is providing a capacity building support to the Commission by sponsoring training programs to its staff members in cooperation with IDEP in Dakar, Senegal. The first cycle of this program was completed in 2004 and preliminary agreements are reached to resume the second cycle in 2005. Contacts are also being made for BADEA to contribute to the costs of global and sectorial evaluation of Afro-Arab Cooperation in general and of Afro-Arab trade fairs in particular.

Afro-Arab Chamber of Commerce:

374. As part of the AU Program to promote African visibility in some strategic regions of the world, the successful launching of the Afro Arab Chamber of Commerce took place in Cairo Egypt in March 2005

Afro-Arab Investment Forum on Agriculture:

375. Preparations of the first part of the Afro-Arab Investment Forum on Agriculture, designed for member states of the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) are underway. It will be held in Yaounde, Cameroon during the second half of the year, subject to availability of funds. Preparations for the second Forum, covering the Eastern and Southern regions, will also be resumed during the same period.

Investment Map for Africa:

376. The Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU) is collaborating with the African Union Commission, RECs, and relevant regional and international organizations to build an Investment Map for Africa, similar to the one developed for the Arab region in 2004. The two Investment Maps will serve as important tools to enhance trade.

Afro Arab Cultural Institute:

377. In spite of limited resources both human and financial, the Afro Arab Cultural Institute established in 2002 in Bamako, Mali convened a meeting of high level African and Arab Scholars and Researchers and has published the first volume of old medieval Arab manuscripts in African languages. It has also organized the first edition of the Afro Arab Salon of Handicraft in June 2005, in cooperation with relevant Egyptian national institutions.

Series of high level consultation meetings:

378. Upon the invitation of the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, a high level delegation led by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission attended the 17th Summit of the Arab League in March 2005, in Algiers, Algeria, which also marked the 60th Anniversary of the League. The Summit adopted a number of important decisions, aimed at revitalizing the Afro-Arab Cooperation. At

the margins of this Summit, the Chairperson of the AU Commission met the Secretary General of the League of Arab States; it was agreed to organize a series of Consultative meetings between the two organizations in Addis Ababa, Cairo and Sirte.

379. Accordingly, the first consultative meeting, between the African Union Commission and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and the representative of the Afro-Arab Cultural Institute was held from 10 to 12 May 2005 at the Headquarters of the Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This inter secretarial consultation will be followed by another meeting between the Chairperson of the Commission and the Secretary General of the League in June, in Cairo, Egypt. The highest-level consultation is expected to take place between the Chairperson of the African Union (President O. Obasanjo) and the Chairperson of the League of Arab States (President A. Bouteflika), during the Fifth AU Summit in Sirte, Libya, in July 2005, to discuss ways and means to convene the 2nd Afro Arab Summit

Collaboration with partners

380. Implementation of these and other programs of Afro-Arab Cooperation are made in collaboration mainly with the League of Arab States and its affiliated bodies such as the Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU), Arab League of Education, Culture and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment and Development (AAID), Arab Fund for Technical Assistance to Africa (AFTAAC), as well as the International Center for Bantu Civilizations (CICIBA), Arab Research Center, Associations of African and Arab Universities, Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and other African and Arab regional organizations.

Outstanding Problems and related issues

381. The nearly three-decade performance of Afro-Arab Cooperation shows that this cooperation is not able to meet the objectives set to it by the First Afro-Arab Summit in 1977, in spite of the few achievements registered in some areas. The Action Plan adopted in Cairo in March 1977 and the wide range of decisions taken since then, have not been adequately and fully implemented and the Institutions and structures created to guide and monitor the cooperation are not functioning well.

382. Difficulties and challenges hindering Afro-Arab Cooperation are still, among others, lack of political commitment, lack of financial resources (inadequacy and inconsistency of budgetary provisions by the two organizations and absence of sound financing mechanism to run Afro-Arab programs and institutions), cumbersomeness of the existing structures, lack of a monitoring and follow-up system, external influences tending to separate Africa and the Arab world, lack of knowledge about each other, etc.

383. There is the need therefore to revisit the Cairo Plan of Action and implementation mechanisms of the Afro-Arab Cooperation, in light of the above listed and other opportunities and threats as well as new developments and challenges that took place since 1977. This will lead to the adoption of a new Plan of Action for Afro-

Arab Cooperation with a clear Vision and specific Missions. The African Union and the League of Arab States should also provide adequate financial resources to ensure smooth functioning of Afro-Arab Cooperation programs, organs and structures.

Way forward: Towards the 2nd Afro Arab Summit:

384. The Addis Ababa inter secretariat consultative meeting in May 2005 reviewed the conclusions and recommendations made by independent African and Arab Experts which met in January 2003 in Cairo, Egypt and in May 2004, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, respectively. These high-level Experts underscored the strong need for reactivating Afro-Arab Cooperation for the interest and benefit of the peoples and governments of the two regions. Building on these findings, the inter secretariat meeting proposed the following activities, which are to lead to the holding of the Second Afro Arab Summit:

- Undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the Afro-Arab cooperation;
- Elaborate a common vision and develop a strategic plan of action, taking into account new developments, challenges and opportunities taking place in the AU and LAS as well as in the African and Arab regions and the rest of the world; and considering the need to tackle regional and global policies targeting the two regions, and to take up the challenges of peace, security and terrorism;
- Adopt suitable orientation, coordination, implementation and evaluation mechanisms;
- Provide adequate financial resources to ensure the smooth functioning of Afro-Arab cooperation programs, organs and structures;
- Involve the private sector, civil society and Diasporas of both regions in Afro-Arab cooperation programs as well as facilitate the establishment of regular contacts between them;
- Remobilize relevant regional and international partners such as the AFDB, ECA, ESCWA, BADEA, IsDB, AFRIXM, African and Arab Regional Economic Groupings;
- Establish a comprehensive consultation mechanism between AU and both the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) and the Arab Fund for Technical Assistance to African countries (AFTAAC), which could include signing of Memorandum of Understandings;
- Undertake a comprehensive inventory of all fund raising initiatives at the regional and international levels, especially those dealing with social issues including poverty, education, high rates of morbidity and mortality with the aim of attracting some of these funds in both regions;
- Establish a mechanism to open new channels of cooperation between the two organizations in the social issues;

- Establish an Afro Arab Development Forum;
- Organize the Second Afro Arab Labour Congress, which would bring together African and Arab Social partners and strengthen Afro Arab cooperation through a wider exchange of information between Arab Labour Organization and AU Labour and Social Commission.

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

INTRODUCTION

385. The activities of the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation (CSSDCA) for the period under consideration focused on: (a) launching and development of the process of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), (b) developing an appropriate framework for engaging with and harnessing the contributions of the African Diaspora, (c) the transformation of CSSDCA into the African Citizens Directorate (CIDO).

Launching of the Interim General Assembly of ECOSOCC

386. Following the adoption of the Statute of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) at the 3rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in July 2005, the Strategic Plan of Action of the Commission identified the launching of the ECOSOCC process as one of its key priorities. The Commission set up an Inter-departmental Task Force under the leadership of the Secretariat of the Coordinating Unit of the CSSDCA to establish an appropriate schedule and work programme for this purpose in close consultations with the Chairperson of the Union. In accordance with the Transitional Arrangements contained in the ECOSOCC Statute, the Task Force proposed modalities for launching the Interim General Assembly of ECOSOCC including venue, dates, budget line, modalities for the involvement of Member States and the selection of delegates. The budget line was presented to the appropriate policy organs, including the Permanent Representative Committee and approved by the Executive Council of the Union in its Extra-Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 6-7 December 2004, which considered the Solidarity Budget.

387. The programme, agenda, work programme and post-launching activities proposals were submitted to and reviewed by the AU-Civil Society Pre-Summit meeting held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 21-24 January 2005.

388. Subsequently, the official launching of the Interim General Assembly of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 29 March 2005, at the Conference Centre of the African Union Commission. In attendance, were representatives of about two hundred and fifty Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and socio-professional groups from Member States, observers from the African Diaspora and representatives of the Diplomatic Corps. The launching was preceded by independent regional consultations and caucuses to nominate delegates for the Bureau and the Standing Committee on 26th and 27th March 2005. Subsequently, elections were conducted through secret ballots on 28th March 2005. The counting process was conducted openly and in public and the results were duly announced in front of the delegates. The results were not disputed.

389. The Interim General Assembly of ECOSOCC elected a Bureau composed as follows: Prof Wangari Maathai (Interim Presiding officer), Mr. Charles Mutasa (Deputy Presiding Officer, *Southern Africa*) Prof. Maurice Tadadeju (Deputy Presiding Officer, *Central Africa*) and Mr. Ayodele Aderinwale (Deputy Presiding officer, *West*

Africa). It also elected a Standing Committee comprising the following: Mr. Jean Collins Musonda Kalusambo, Mrs. Julienne Mavoungou Makaya, Mrs Yvette N. Rekangalt (*Central Africa*) - Mrs Zeinab Kamel Ali, Mr. El Hussein Abdel Galil Mohammed, Mr. Patrick Kayemba (*East Africa*) - Mrs Amany Asfour, Mrs. Saida Agrebi, Mr. Ahmed Abdel Fattah (*North Africa*) - Mr. Moses Tito Kachima, Mrs. Joyce Nondwe Kanyago, Mr. Helder Francisco Malauene (*Southern Africa*) - Mama Koite Doumbia, Mr. Landing Badji, Mr. Omar Gassam (*West Africa*).

390. In addition, the Assembly elected four adhoc Committees on rules of Procedure, Resource Mobilization, Work Programme/Roadmap, Communications and Public Relations. It also resolved that the Standing Committee should meet soon after in Nairobi Kenya, from 22-24 April 2005 to deliberate on a strategic plan and support the preparation of the presentation of the Interim Presiding officer, Prof. Wangari Maathai, to the Assembly of the Union in July 2005 as anticipated in the ECOSOCC Statute.

391. The Standing Committee met as scheduled and it prepared and adopted its Rules of Procedure and a Draft Strategic Plan of Action to facilitate the smooth and effective functioning of ECOSOCC from 2005-2007. Components of this Plan includes: modalities, procedures and timelines for the organization of regional, national and continental elections of representatives into the Post-Interim ECOSOCC Assembly; guidelines for conduct of these elections and consultations, participatory consultative process for civil society to engage with ECOSOCC on these issues, modalities for the operationalization of cluster committees, outlines of both communication and publicity plan to give required visibility to ECOSOCC and resource mobilization and fund raising strategy to support the work of ECOSOCC and the process of integration on the continent in general.

The Diaspora Initiative

392. The Commission continued the process of engagement and collaboration with Diaspora Communities in the various regions of the world through the setting up and consolidation of alliances and regional Diaspora networks.

393. The AU collaborated with the Bob Marley and Rita Marley foundation, UNICEF and the World Bank to host the 60th birthday anniversary of Bob Marley, the legendary musician, that was called the African Unite Event. The Africa Unite Event celebrations held in early February 2004 in Addis Ababa featured symposia, workshops, and musical concerts and an open-air reception on the premises of the AU Commission. The event brought together youths, intellectuals, artists etc from the continent and the Diaspora. Consultations are underway to make this celebrations an annual event.

394. Furthermore, the African Union Commission, in partnership with the Government of South Africa and the Government of Jamaica, held a Conference on the Diaspora in Kingston, Jamaica from 16-18 march 2004. The theme of the Conference was "Towards Unity and Action for Africans and the African Diaspora in the Caribbean for a better world. The case of South Africa". The objective of the meeting was to create linkages between Africa and the Diaspora and to foster dialogue and develop a common agenda on the challenges that confront these

regions in the era of globalisation. The meeting, which was attended by the Foreign Ministers of most states in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), served as an expression of the African Union resolution to engage the Diaspora and rekindled the historical linkages of kinship and common origins. The meeting produced a conference statement and a programme of action. The meeting also agreed that the AU Commission would assume responsibility for the implementation of the programme and further initiatives in this regard.

395. The Commission has also continued the process of defining the African Diaspora. In the deliberation preceding the adoption of the ECOSOCC Statute, it was agreed that the Diaspora inclusion in the ECOSOCC processes must be in accordance with a definition of the Diaspora approved by the Executive Council. Thus the Commission had convened a workshop of Technical Experts to develop a framework definition for consideration by the Executive Council at its 6th Ordinary Session in Abuja, Nigeria, in January 2005. The definition was presented to the Permanent Representative Committee (PRC) in preparation for the meeting of the Executive Council. However, the PRC recommended that the subject should be referred to a meeting of experts from Member States for a more suitable definition.

396. The Experts Meeting was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 11-12 April 2005 and concluded by recommending the following definition:

“The African Diaspora Consists of peoples of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute the development of the continent and the building of the African Union”

397. The definition would be considered by the PRC and the Executive Council of the Union during its current session. Our expectation is that this consensus definition would be adopted to facilitate Diaspora inclusion in ECOSOCC and other programme activities of the African Union.

Transformation of CSSDCA into CIDO

398. The Commission has also persisted with plans for the transformation of CSSDCA into the African Citizen’s Directorate (CIDO) in order to ensure that the vision of a prosperous Africa “driven by its people” contained in the Strategic Plan is pursued with greater vigour and institutional support capacity. The plan involves upgrading CSSDCA into a CIDO Directorate with two divisions for the Diaspora and Civil Society Affairs including an ECOSOCC Secretariat. The proposals were approved by the PRC Sub-Committee on Structures in May 2005 and hopefully, will be approved by the Executive Council and Assembly at its current session.

The way forward

399. CIDO must work hard to ensure the institutionalisation and growth of ECOSOCC and the active implementation of the civil society and Diaspora agenda and should build constructively on the efforts and achievements of the CSSDCA in this regard.

400. The main task of the Interim ECOSOCC Assembly is to engage in regional and national consultations and conclude elections into the post-interim ECOSOCC Assembly. This is a consuming task and it requires that CIDO should concentrate efforts and resources and provide the necessary support for the work of the Interim ECOSOCC Bureau, Interim Standing Committee and Interim General Assembly. There is also the requirement of galvanising Member States and enlisting their support for this process.

401. I drew attention at the last Summit in Abuja in January 2005 to the fact that budget allocations for ECOSOCC for 2005 did not include provisions for either the key sectoral clusters which are the key operational engines of ECOSOCC as provided in the Statute or the consultative processes of elections into the post interim ECOSOCC Assembly that the same Statute specifies as the critical interim agenda. The Statute of ECOSOCC does provide that the organ can raise extra-budgetary funds but I am sure that Member States would agree with me that there is great danger in allowing the ECOSOCC processes to be driven largely by external funding and this may not conform with the vision of partnership between governments and civil society contained in the Constitutive Act of the Union.

402. In any case, the CSSDCA as CIDO must continue to work actively and with perseverance and character to promote the idea of a “people-friendly” and “people oriented” African Union, a community of all African peoples in the continent and the Diaspora, as envisaged in the Constitutive Act.

WOMEN, GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE**Introduction**

403. At their 3rd Ordinary Session, in July 2004 Summit, AU Heads of State and Government addressed the critical issue of persistent gender inequalities on the continent and the costs they impose on women's lives, on economic development and on societies generally. As a result of that important debate, the Heads of State and Government adopted a Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. This is in addition to other recent decisions to promote gender equality within the AU Commission and throughout the continent.

404. In view of these decisions, the Commission through its Directorate of Women, Gender and Development has elaborated a strategy and program with three main components.

- The first component focuses on putting the institutional fabric in place, in order to lay a firm foundation for gender mainstreaming within the Commission of the AU.
- The second component concerns building gender mainstreaming capacity within the Commission so that the Commission can fulfill its gender mandate entrusted to it by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.
- The third component of the Directorate's work concerns translating the AU Heads of State decisions on gender equality and women's empowerment into concrete actions at the regional, sub-regional and national levels.

405. This programme has continued to be the implementation framework for the reporting period. In addition, at the last session of their Assembly, Heads of State and Government adopted the Outcome of the Seventh Regional Conference on Women as Africa's Common Position in relation to the Beijing-Plus-Ten Global Review Process, and requested the Chairperson of the Commission as well as Member States, to participate fully and actively and to speak as one at the Beijing Plus Ten UN meeting in New York in 2005. In line with this instruction, the Chairperson sent a delegation headed by the Commissioner of Social Affairs to represent the Commission and to coordinate and facilitate African delegations to articulate the Common Position. The Delegation organized an orientation workshop for the Delegations at the beginning of the meeting, a panel discussion to raise awareness about the gender agenda of the AU, it assisted the African Group in New York to prepare a common statement for the plenary session and made an official intervention on behalf of the Commission. The role of the AU Commission to support Africa's voice in the global process was appreciated and applauded by African and non-African delegations and permanent representatives. Coordinated participation of Member States of the AU at the meeting brought visibility and increased confidence in the AU by Member States and the international community. The Commission worked closely with the UN ECA to prepare to advocate for an African Common Position during the Beijing Plus Ten Review Meeting. This collaboration has continued. We are currently working together to build synergies between the ECA coordinated Beijing Plus Ten follow up, and the implementation and reporting on the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, which is our responsibility.

406. During the reporting period, every effort was made to ensure that the recruitment exercise adhered to the AU principle of gender parity. More directors were recruited and installed as well as a number of heads of Division. There are currently 7 female and 8 male directors. There is also a gender balance in the newly-recruited heads of division. As the recruitment exercise progresses, this principle will continue to be applied. Also, gender issues in staff matters are being discussed and addressed in the context of the ongoing institutional transformation process.

2. Responses and Framework for Implementation

407. Since the last Summit, the Commission, through its WGD Directorate, has made steady progress in the three programme areas outlined above. A consultant was recruited to assist in elaborating and kick-starting a participatory process of formulating a gender policy. The gender policy, which is expected to be in place by the end of next year, is a vital component of the institutional framework for gender mainstreaming. Consultations with gender focal points within the RECs are currently taking place with a view to ensuring that the AU gender policy is at the cutting edge of gender policy formulation and that it adds value to what already exists on the continent.

408. Regarding building gender mainstreaming capacity within the Commission, the Commission has embarked on developing a comprehensive strategy, plan of action and budget, that will ensure a sustained in-house effort of capacity building, gender analysis, systems and tools development, bench marking, target-setting, data gathering, monitoring and evaluation, advocacy, piloting and gender coordination. Several partners, including UNFPA and UNIFEM are currently assisting the Commission in this task.

409. However, as the comprehensive gender strategy, plan and budget are being developed, some gender mainstreaming work is already being undertaken in selected departments. During this reporting period, several mainstreaming interventions have been initiated in the department of peace and security and economic affairs. To highlight the situation of women and girls in Darfur and seek ways of strengthening women's voices in the on-going peace process, the Chairperson will soon send a high level women's delegation to Darfur. The high level Mission's report and a report of an advance technical gender mission will help the peace and security, political and gender directorates as well as the AU Mediator to design interventions and seek solutions to address the particular problems of women and girls in Darfur. This intervention, which is in its final stages of preparation, will also further inform the Peace and Security Council on the situation in this troubled region. Through inter-departmental coordination, a project on the rehabilitation of child-soldiers has also benefited from advisory services from the Gender Directorate and issues of girl children recruited and abused by armed groups have been integrated in the project's terms of reference.

410. Again, as a result of effective inter-departmental coordination led by the department of Economic Affairs, the report prepared by the Commission as an input for an African Common Position at the MDG Review Summit addressed MD Goal Number 3 on gender equality and women's empowerment comprehensively. These

examples of gender mainstreaming interventions, underscore the importance of cross-departmental collaboration, which is being encouraged within the Commission. The Commission views the interventions as pilots and is monitoring them carefully to be able to draw lessons for the gender mainstreaming strategy being developed.

411. The framework for the third component of the Directorate's work concerning translating the AU Heads of State decisions on gender equality and women's empowerment into concrete actions at the regional, sub-regional and national levels, is the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa.

412. Consultations have been successfully undertaken with experts from governments and civil society to elaborate a draft implementation framework as well as monitoring and reporting guidelines for the Solemn Declaration. Consultations with the RECs and NEPAD are also underway. It is expected that the drafts will be presented to a ministerial meeting for adoption during the last quarter of this year. Once the priorities in the implementation framework and the reporting guidelines have been agreed upon, Member States will be expected to make their annual reports on progress towards gender equality as is required in the Solemn Declaration.

413. Paragraph 13 of the Declaration requires the Chairperson to report annually on measures taken to promote gender equality and all issues in the Declaration at the national and regional levels. In compliance with this requirement, the Chairperson has submitted his first report to the Seventh Ordinary Session of the Executive Council. In this report, details on the interventions undertaken by the Commission and partnerships with various state and non-state actors are provided. Significant among these are; (i) a continent-wide advocacy campaign being prepared in collaboration with Population Services International, an international NGO, to address young women's higher vulnerability to HIV infection; (ii) a gender and economic and trade policies course being developed in collaboration with UN Institute for Economic Planning and Development (UN IDEP) to build the capacities of Commission staff, RECs, government officials and civil society advocates to mainstream gender issues and women's economic rights in policies; (iii) in partnership with the Coalition for African Women's Rights, a coalition of 19 civil society organizations, promoting early ratification and domestication of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights Relating to the Rights of Women in Africa; (iv) in partnership with UNIFEM, a plan to develop a gender training manual for AU peace-keepers and to train and deploy trainers among the AMIS; (v) with UNDP regional office, a plan to establish an African Women's Rights Observatory (vi) with Japanese funding, an on-going collaboration with the Peace and Security and Political Affairs Departments, and rehabilitate both boys and girls recruited in fighting groups and to campaign for prohibition of the recruitment of child soldiers and abuse of girl children.

3. Results and Performance Appraisal

414. The work of the Commissions WGD Directorate has been constrained by understaffing. To address this problem, consultants have been contracted to undertake particular assignments. Currently, the Directorate has only three professional staff, and it is expected that one of the three will be re-deployed soon. A staff structure of three divisions and a total professional staff of ten was proposed and justified. As the recruitment exercise progresses, an immediate supplement of at least

3 professional staff and one support staff is required to be able to fully implement the 2005 work-plan.

415. Despite this constraint, the Commission has registered several successes and achievements during this period, notably the successful coordination of an African Common Position during the Beijing Plus Ten Global Review at the UN, the framework for implementing and reporting on progress towards gender equality under the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality has been drafted and significant inputs made by government and civil society experts. It will be ready to be used by Member States at the next Summit. The Chairperson has submitted his annual report, thereby fully complying with the Solemn Declaration. The Commission has continued to adhere to the principle of gender parity in recruitment and to attract qualified women and men to take up senior positions in its structure. This, among other decisions taken, has established the AU as an undisputed global leader in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

4. Way Forward

416. The demands on the WGD Directorate from within the Commission and from Member States and women's civil groups are growing rapidly as a result of the Commission's standard-setting and credibility on gender issues. More staff and extra-budgetary resources are needed to implement some of the planned activities.

417. While taking full cognizance of the achievements so far, I want to seize this opportunity to remind you of your commitment in the Solemn Declaration to sign and ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa by the end of 2004. I regret to inform you that, to date, only 10 countries have ratified the instrument. It is my hope that the ratification process will be accelerated so that with the coming into force of the Protocol, the process of its domestication can commence in Member States. The importance of the Protocol to the enjoyment of African women's rights cannot be overemphasized.

418. I know that I can always count on your support to bring the women of Africa into the mainstream of development in all sectors.

OFFICE OF INTERNAL AUDIT

419. The activities of the Office of the Internal Audit are aimed at exercising an independent appraisal function for ensuring compliance and effectiveness of the Commission's Rules and Procedures. Based on the results of risk assessment, the Office has updated its annual audit plan. To this end, the audit tasks evaluate the efficiency of operations of the various functions of the Commission with the aim to improve the effectiveness of risk management and governance processes.

Activities Undertaken

420. Activities undertaken for the period under review include the following:

- a) Undertaken various regular audit projects, among others: The AU Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations - New York, Budget Execution and Expenditure Control, Review of Maintenance of Buildings and Renovation works, Payroll and Related Activities, Stock and Fixed Assets Automation;
- b) Prepared and submitted a follow-up report on the Board of External Auditor's Report for the year ended 31 December 2002, for consideration of the Advisory Committee on Administrative, Budgetary and Financial Matters;
- c) Undertaken special audit assignments including, Joint Mission to the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS), year-end stock and cash count.

Impact and Challenges

421. The audit activities have added value to the operations of the Commission by providing assurance to management on areas which are going properly and by identifying weaknesses and suggested appropriate recommendations for improvement. They have initiated a tradition that will bring a more systematic and disciplined approach to the operations of the various units and Directorates in particular, and the Commission in general.

422. However, audit endeavours have also encountered certain constraints that require urgent rectification. One is the shortage of manpower affecting virtually all Directorates including, the Office of Internal Audit itself. This has an adverse effect in the overall internal control system of the Commission. It is believed that the current recruitment process, as well as, planned future activities would provide a solution to this problem. The issue of manpower shortage in the Office of Internal Audit itself would require the adjustment of the Maputo structure, which did not cater for effective support in the Office of the Director. The current consideration to revise the structure to accommodate a Deputy Director and an IT Auditor will solve the problem.

423. Finally, there is a need to sensitize the various directorates and units in the Commission the role of Internal Audit and its importance for stimulating efficiency and effectiveness of operations. The Office and the different Units and Directorates would be expected to develop appropriate models of a working relationship with the Office.

Way Forward

424. The Strategic Vision and Mission of the African Union and the Strategic Plan of the Commission for 2004-2007 has placed serious demands on the Office of Internal Audit. The Office is expected to function effectively, to enhance the audit of the budgetary financial, operational and management functions. The Activity Plan of the Office for the four year as contained in the program, is designed to respond to these challenges. Its expeditious implementation is expected to be a sufficient condition for the overall success of the Strategic Plan.

425. The audit objectives would also require a seminar to develop awareness among senior management on the role of the Office of Internal Audit to foster a proactive approach to operations management and risk assessment. This orientation would also, encourage managers to work diligently and positively with the Office of Internal Audit, and rely on its counsel, as appropriate.

OFFICE OF THE LEGAL COUNSEL

426. Council will recall that during its Sixth Ordinary Session held in Abuja, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, it decided that the following pending legal matters should be submitted to a meeting of the PRC and Legal experts for finalization before the next session of the Executive Council:

- i. Merger of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Court of Justice of the African Union;
- ii. Draft Protocol on Relations between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities;
- iii. Proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of the Union, the Executive Council and the Permanent Representatives' Committee as well as the Statute of the Commission;
- iv. Draft Criteria for Hosting AU Organs; and
- v. Criteria for Granting Observer status and a System of Accreditation within the AU.

427. I would like to inform Council that a meeting of the Permanent Representatives' Committee (PRC) and legal experts from forty-three (43) Member States was held at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 29 March to 1 April 2005 to consider all the legal issues mentioned above.

428. With regard to the merger of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Court of Justice of the African Union, Council will recall that the mandate of the meeting was to consider the recommendations of the Commission and the PRC relating thereto and finalize the Draft legal instrument on the merger of the two courts for submission to the 7th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council in July 2005, without prejudice to the operationalization of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights as far as possible. In deliberating on the issue of the merger of the two courts, the Meeting considered the following three options:

- i. Adoption of a single legal instrument to establish a new integrated court;
- ii. Adoption of a short and simple amending protocol as proposed by the Commission;
- iii. Adoption of a decision by the Assembly to expedite the functioning of the Human Rights Court, but to do so with a view to the eventual creation of a single court.

429. The Meeting finalized the draft Protocol on the merger of the two courts pursuant to the mandate given to the PRC and Legal Experts by Council in January 2005. It also considered the second option proposed by the Commission and also came up with a third option, all of which are being submitted to Council for consideration.

430. With regard to the Protocol on the Relations between the African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Council will recall that by its decision AHG/Dec. 160 (XXXVII) of July 2001, the Assembly had mandated the then OAU General Secretariat to revise and update the existing Protocol concluded under the aegis of the OAU, in order to align it with realities of the Constitutive Act and the

AU as well as to provide a more comprehensive framework for the relations between the AU and the RECs. I would like to report here that the meeting of the PRC and Legal Experts considered the Draft Protocol and proposed amendments and textual changes.

431. Council will further recall that the necessity to amend the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, the Executive Council and the Permanent Representatives and Statutes of the Commission arose in March 2003 during the 2nd Ordinary Session of the Executive Council. Indeed, there seemed to be inconsistencies in the provisions relating to the Chairmanship of Council and the Legal Counsel was then requested to look into the matter and formulate appropriate recommendations to the policy organs for consideration. Thereafter, during the elections of the Commissioners carried out in Maputo, Mozambique, in July 2003, it was felt that the implementation of the provisions thereto did not facilitate the election process and that there was need to review them. The Commission undertook the task as mandated and submitted proposed amendments to the 5TH Ordinary Session of the Council held in July 2004. However, the proposed amendments could not be considered at that session. Furthermore, the recent decision of the Assembly in Abuja, Nigeria in January 2005 to convene two ordinary sessions annually has implications for the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly and, thus, there was need to amend some of the provisions relating thereto.

432. I would like to report to Council that the meeting considered and adopted the Rules and Statute with amendments. However, it took note of the fact that other Rules apart from those proposed by the Commission required amendments. In this regard, it was pointed out that Rule 37 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly empowered the Chairperson of the Assembly and the Chairperson of the Commission to take a number of actions in situations of unconstitutional changes of government. In similar situations, the Protocol on the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (PSC), which entered into force on 26 December 2003, empowered the PSC with the same functions but with lines of action set out that appear inconsistent. The meeting, therefore, recommended that the Commission should consider this issue together with any other similar situations. It is also recommended that any additional proposals for amendment by Member States should be considered at a later stage by the PRC which would then make appropriate recommendations to the Executive Council.

433. With regard to the draft criteria for hosting AU organs, Council will recall that pursuant to its decision, EX.CL/163 (VI), it mandated the PRC and Legal Experts to finalize the criteria and submit it to the 7th Ordinary Session of Council in July 2005 for consideration. I would like to report that the text of the draft criteria has been finalized. Further, pursuant to decision Assembly/AU/Dec.64 (IV), I have decided to request all Member States AU regions to undertake the necessary consultations in order to provide the names of the Member States that will be hosting the following organs:

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---|-----------------|
| • | African Central Bank | – | Western Region |
| • | African Investment Bank | - | Northern Region |
| • | African Monetary Fund | - | Central Region |
| • | Court of Justice | - | Eastern Region |

434. With regard to the Criteria for the granting of AU Observer Status and a System of Accreditation within the AU, Council will recall that the necessity for the review of the existing criteria applicable under the OAU arose after the establishment of the AU, as well as the need for a formal system of accreditation particularly for Regional Integration and International Organizations as well as non-African States. I would like to report to Council that the Meeting of the PRC and Legal Experts considered the draft criteria, finalized it and made appropriate recommendations to the present session of the Executive council.

Registration of Names, Abbreviations, and Emblems of the AU and NEPAD with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

435. It will be recalled that in line with decision Assembly/AU/Dec.49 (III), adopted by the 3rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly held in Addis Ababa between 6 – 8 July 2004 wherein it decided to retain the Emblem and Flag of the former OAU and adopt them as the new AU Flag and Emblem, I directed that arms of the Commission to initiate the necessary steps to protect the Intellectual Property Rights of the AU and AU/NEPAD Paraphernalia under Article 6ter of the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (Paris Convention).

436. I am pleased to inform Council that we have received confirmation from the International Bureau of WIPO that the draft official request and the draft reproductions of the AU and AU/NEPAD paraphernalia are in order for communication to State Parties to the Paris Convention. Accordingly, the Office of the Legal Counsel has finalized the official request for both the AU and AU/NEPAD.

437. The procedures in place at the International Bureau of WIPO will require about two (2) months. The protection will take effect in the territories of the States Parties once they have been notified. However, the States Parties have a maximum of one (1) year to notify WIPO of their refusal to protect AU's intellectual property rights in their territories. In effect, the AU will have to wait for one (1) year after notification of States Parties to the Paris Convention to know the coverage of protection of its intellectual property rights in the respective territories of Member States.

438. I therefore wish to draw the attention of Council to the need for Member States to ensure that they help the AU to protect its Intellectual Property Rights in their various countries through enacting laws to this effect. I would like to point out that most AU Member States are State Parties to the Paris Convention. This means that protection is available to the AU in these countries. In respect of AU Member States that have not acceded to or become members of the Paris Convention and do not have any domestic legislation that provides for the protection of international intergovernmental Organizations (IIO's) trademarks, the AU will only enjoy protection if it applies for and obtains registration of its trademarks or publishes cautionary notices in these countries. Therefore, I wish to appeal to all Member States to ensure that they take the necessary steps to provide for the protection of IIO's trademarks, in particular AU paraphernalia, in their domestic legislations.

THE STATUS OF OAU/AU TREATIES

439. Since the submission of my last report in January 2005, some Member States have made considerable efforts to sign and ratify OAU/AU treaties especially the five (5) “Maputo” treaties, namely, the Protocol to the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism adopted in July 2004, and the African Union Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact adopted in January 2005, which has received at the time of writing this report twenty (20) signatures.

440. Despite these efforts, however, a lot remains to be done. In this regard, I would like to draw the attention of Council to the need to ensure that some of these treaties enter into force as soon as possible in view of the fact that they address specific issues of priority to the Union. This is why it is important that the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (the Treaty of Pelindaba) enters into force. Twenty (20) Member States have already ratified it and it requires twenty-eight (28) to enter into force. The entry into force of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa is equally important. Ten (10) Member States have ratified it and the Protocol requires fifteen (15) instruments of ratification to enter into force. I need not emphasize the importance of the Protocol on the Amendments to the Constitutive Act of the African Union which has been ratified by only nine (9) Member States and requires ratification by two-thirds majority. In concluding on this matter, I have no doubt that signature and ratification or accession to OAU/AU Treaties is among the priorities of Member States today.

AD-HOC ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL OF THE AFRICAN UNION

441. The Ad-Hoc Administrative Tribunal of the African Union charged to rule on disputes between the staff and the organization held its last session in 2001. In accordance with the texts governing the Tribunal, the latter shall sit when existing cases justify the holding of a session.

442. I wish to inform Council that given the numerous pending cases that have yet to be heard by the Tribunal, two consultants have been recruited by the Commission to assist the Office of the Legal Counsel to prepare and get the dossiers for consideration by the Tribunal as soon as possible.

443. The compilation of the dossiers has revealed that there are currently about twelve cases to be heard by the Tribunal. They relate essentially to disputes over retirement after 30 years of service, in keeping with the provisions of article 51 (a) (ii) of the Staff Rules and Regulations.

444. Considering the various stages of the procedure as provided for under the Statute and the Rules of Procedure of the Tribunal, namely pleas, notifications to the plaintiffs, counter answers, notifications to the judges, convening of the Tribunal etc, and in a bid to refer all pending dossiers to the Tribunal at its next session, we believe that all outstanding cases to date could be heard and a ruling made thereon by the Tribunal when it sits in the first quarter of 2006.

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

1. Introduction:

445. The Directorate for Strategic Policy Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Resource Mobilisation (SPPME) has undertaken many activities. According to the Executive Council and Summit Decisions, the main functions of the Directorate are to initiate, develop and manage strategies for sustainability, self-financing, incoming generation and investment; to promote internal best practices concerning the strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation; to assist Directorates and offices to develop strategic planning skills; to design and implement monitoring and Evaluation system for assessing programmes/projects achievements and effectiveness; to promote and prepare the mid and annual reporting system of the Commission; to facilitate logistical support ,to mobilize extra-budgetary resources for the Commission and coordinate inter-action with international partners.

446. The Directorate has started to comply with its main functions and participating in the activities of Strategic Policy Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Resource Mobilization process of the AU commission. Monitoring and evaluation systems have been created and approved and the process is going on. Moreover, the Directorate started to build and develop constructive and productive institutional relationship with other AU departments according to its mandate and responsibilities.

447. The Directorate has focused on exploring and putting in place frameworks and mechanisms for securing sufficient, reliable and sustainable finance modalities to cover budgetary and extra-budgetary activities. In this context, the SPPME has been involved in a series of activities, notably, the work on proposals on alternative modalities of financing the African Union and on discussions aimed at enhancing the partnership between the AU and International Partners.

2. Responses and Framework for Implementation;

448. The following actions and activities have been undertaken.

a . Planning Activities:

449. Finalizing the Strategic Plan of the AU for distribution to the Member States and all AU departments. Brainstorming and studying the means and ways to find alternative sources of financing the African Union. Representing the AU Commission to discuss the UNESCO Action Plan for 2006/2007 for NEPAD Committee in Tripoli from 7-8 May 2005.

Monitoring and Evaluation Activities:

450. Monitoring and Evaluating the Internal Audit Reports of the AU Office in Brussels, the Inter-African Bureau For Animal Resources (AU/IBAR) Office, on Transportation and Vehicle, on AU Headquarters. Ensuring quality in all Sectoral for the AU Institutional Transformation Process.

Designing a harmonised and unified Monitoring and Evaluation system:

451. The Directorate has designed a Monitoring and Evaluation system and presented it in a meeting to all AU departments. Studying and proposing decisions to be taken at this Summit. Alternative Sources of financing the African Union, discussing the Commission for Africa Reports and Prospective MDGS.

b. Resource Mobilization activities.

452. During the period under review, the activities of the Commission in the area of Resource Mobilisation has focused on exploring and putting in place frameworks and mechanisms for securing a sufficient, reliable and sustainable finance modalities to cover budgetary and extra-budgetary activities. In this context, the Commission has been involved in a series of activities, notably, the work of the Ad Hoc Ministerial Committee on the Scale of Assessment; proposals on alternative modalities of financing the African Union; and on discussions aimed at enhancing the partnership between the AU and International Partners.

453. In that area, the Directorate undertook the following activities:

- Coordinate a meeting for Donors under the auspices of the Chairperson of the Commission
- Developed Framework for cooperation as a basis for further discussions with International Partners.
- Assist the AU Commission to reform its financial management systems and donors to secure sufficient funding to support the budget of the AU Commission.
- Establish an Internal Task Force for the coordination of International Cooperating Partners and a Development Cooperation Review Forum (DCRF).

3. Results and Performances Appraisal.

Difficulties and Challenges encountered in the process of implementation.

454. Some problems have been faced by the Directorate during the reporting period as follows:

- Most of the departments complained about their lack of knowledge of the Strategic Plan contents,
- Most of the donors preferred finance programmes /projects rather than providing budget support,
- In view of the resource constraints and the fact that the majority of Member States fail to pay their assessed contributions, the work of the Commission has evolved around creating a genuine long-term partnership with International Partners with a view to securing resources for implementing the programmes contained in the AU Strategic Plan. In this context, on 9 March 2005, the Chairperson of the Commission convened a meeting of all International Partners resident in Addis Ababa to brief them on the AU Vision, Mission and priorities of the AU for the period 2004-2007.

455. At that meeting the Chairperson also stressed the need for a new partnership based on a genuine, regular and institutionalized dialogue at the political, policy and technical levels for constructive engagement, information and experience exchange and the promotion of best practices on development cooperation. The message by the Chairperson was well received by International Partners who pledged their commitment to supporting the AU priorities as reflected in the Strategic Plan. International partners also expressed their agreement in principle to exploring ways and means of moving towards more predictable, efficient and effective funding arrangements in the form of a common support mechanism (direct budget support).

456. In order to operationalise the partnership, the Commission developed a framework for cooperation as a basis for further discussions with International Partners. This framework outlines the overall goal of the partnership, its objectives, guiding principles and mechanisms for its operationalisation. The proposed framework was discussed with International Partners on 31 May 2005. The Partners expressed their satisfaction with the proposed framework as a basis for further discussion. Of particular note is that the framework proposes a shift from the funding of individual projects towards un- earmarked direct budget support. It also proposes that such a shift should be introduced in a gradual fashion in order to allow the AU Commission sufficient time to reform its financial management systems and donors to secure sufficient funding to support the budget of the AU Commission. It thus proposes that direct budget support should start in 2005 with those partners that are ready and its share to total support increasing in 2006 onwards as the AU reformed financial management systems are implemented.

457. Another noteworthy feature of the proposed framework is the creation of mechanism for closer coordination with International Partners internally within the AU and with International Partners. This has seen the establishment of an Internal Task Force for the coordination of International Cooperating Partners and a Development Cooperation Review Forum (DCRF). The DCRF is chaired by the Chairperson or his Deputy and comprises all AU Commissioners and Directors and representatives of International Partners resident in Addis Ababa and accredited to the AU. Its primary role is to initiate dialogue and ensure that it takes place on a regular basis; consider and make policy decisions on cooperation arrangements and funding mechanisms; provide strategic advice in the implementation of the AU Strategic Plan; monitor and evaluate implementation progress; and, consider and approve proposals on the simplification, streamlining and harmonization of donor procedures and practices. It will meet on a quarterly basis and provide regular progress reports to meetings of the Permanent Representatives Committee.

458. Other activities in the area of resource mobilisation have entailed the preparation of a synthesis and analysis paper on alternative modalities of financing the African Union. This paper was presented to a Meeting of Ministers of Finance held in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2005. The recommendations contained therein are still being considered by Member States.

459. The key challenge for the implementation of the new partnership between the AU and International Partners is to reform the financial management system in such a way that it is viewed as credible by International Partners. Such a reform is

already underway under the auspices of the Institutional Transformation Programme. The views of key stakeholders, including International Partners, have been sought in the reform process and are being taken into consideration.

To overcome these problems the actions taken were as follows:

460. More copies of the Strategic Plan is been distributed, the consolidated copy of the Strategic Plan has been finalized and is under review for distribution as soon as possible. To coordinate donors meeting under the auspices of the Chairperson, to sensitize the donors within a new framework for their support and partnership proposal, an Internal Task Force for the coordination of International Cooperating Partners and a Development Cooperation Review Forum (DCRF) has been established. A Monitoring and Evaluation system has been proposed for implementation by all departments.

Results and Achievements.

461. The Partners expressed their satisfaction with the proposed framework as a basis for further discussion. Of particular note is that the framework proposed a shift from the funding of individual projects towards un- earmarked direct budget support. Reform of the financial management system is underway under the auspices of the Institutional Transformation Programme.

4. Outstanding Problems:

462. Broader funding mechanisms (program and direct budgetary support) would relieve the work burden of the AU Commission in various ways. It removes the need to discuss activities separately with each International Partner. It allows use of a single set of administrative, financial and operational controls. It permits joint evaluation, audit and other related exercises by the donors as well as a single reporting mechanism. In short, it results in considerable savings in transaction costs.

463. The main challenge will be to enhance the absorption capacity of the AU Commission. This should be addressed in the context of the ongoing Institutional Transformation Programme, and will entail among other things the ability to develop and implement programmes and provide regular progress reports in formats mutually agreed upon with International Partners.

5. The Way Forward

- Monitoring and Evaluation system has to be approved by AUC management to be implemented.
- All the departments have to act within the context of Strategic Plan.
- The Directorate will continue to hold regular consultations with International Partners with a view to forging a new partnership that will contribute towards increased efficiency and effectiveness of donor support towards the achievement of AU's socio-economic development agenda.

6 . Draft Decisions to be taken by the next Executive Council and Summit.

- All the programmes and projects implemented by all departments, should fit within the framework of the Strategic Plan 2004-2007.
- Each Department with the assistance from the Directorate of Strategic planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Resources Mobilization should issue action work plans together with the budget before the beginning of the financial year.
- Programmes and projects action work plans should be approved and reviewed in consultation with the Directorate of Strategic planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Resources Mobilization and the Directorate for Programming, Budgeting, Finance and Accounting.
- Monitoring and Evaluation system, which has been proposed by the Directorate, should be implemented by all AUC Departments. The Directorate should be requested to continue consultations with International Partners with a view to securing predictable resources for the implementation of the Strategic Plan as well as with the International Community to expedite the process of providing direct budget support towards the implementation of AU priority activities.

COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION UNIT**1. Introduction and Context of Presentation**

464. It will be recalled that the Maputo Decision in 2003 approved a structure for Communication and Information, alongside other Directorates. However, the approval has not been operational due to a plan to correct its inadequacies.

465. In the place of the Maputo Decision, a new structure with a proposal to replace the Information and Communication have Information with Popularization Directorate has been recommended. This implies setting up a new Division that would in addition to the previous Unit be responsible for publications, Website Management and electronic publishing in conformity with the decision to popularize the African Union.

466. At the 23 May 2005 meeting, of the Sub-Committee on Structure, the Sub-Committee concluded that since the proposed new structure went beyond the 2005 fiscal year budget along with the unavailability of funds, it would be illogical to create additional posts, hence the Information and Communication Unit as stipulated in the Maputo Structure, should remain the same.

2. Responses and Framework for Implementation

467. According to the AU Priority Plan of Action Horizon 2007 (Rev. 2) approval was granted in the 2005 financial year, for the Communication and Information Unit to carry out the following programmes:

- Developing strategies, tools and systems for communication;
- Designing a Communication Strategy;
- Designing a Graphic Chart for AU;
- Designing an AU Commission Newsletter (on-line bulletin);
- Producing an official Journal of AU (bi-monthly publication);
- Producing a quarterly Bulletin in national languages.

468. The two meetings also approved the following:

- A Workshop on the vision of the African Union to articulate a Common Communication and Information guideline as a 1st step in establishing a Common African Communication Policy, scheduled tentatively for Accra, Ghana from November 21 to 23, 2005.
- A meeting on sharing of the Pan-African Radio and Television Project, (meeting of promoters of potential and existing ventures) tentatively scheduled for Cairo, Egypt before the end of 2005.

3. Results and Performance Appraisal

469. The Commission decided to place some activities of the Communication and Information Unit under the Institutional Transformation Team for priority programmes implementation and to produce quick wins.

470. The activities listed in this category are to :

- produce an In-house bi-weekly Newsletter (hard copy and on-line) before the end of July 2005;
- produce an African Union bi-monthly publication (hard copy and on-line) before the end of October 2005; and
- design a graphic chart for the African Union.

471. The rest of the activities would remain implementation in the Communication and Information Unit, including two approved meetings for 2005, namely:

- the meeting of experts on sharing the Pan-African Radio/TV Project;
- a Workshop to articulate a Common Communication and Information guideline as a 1st step in establishing a Common African Communication Policy is being deferred till 2006.

472. The Experts Meeting on sharing of the Pan-Africa Radio and Television Project is expected to enable the AU Commission to have a continent-wide plan of action for consideration in 2006, by the Ministers responsible for Communication, Information and Broadcasting in Africa.

473. The decisions of the Ministers will later be submitted to the Executive Council and the Summit of the African Union for adoption.

4. Outstanding Problems and Related Issues

474. Among the key Maputo Council and Summit Decisions in 2003, is the popularization of the African Union.

475. Owing to continuing difficulties faced by the Communication and Information Unit of the African Union Commission, including the lack of capacity (personnel and resources); Member States and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have not been able to take up their responsibilities in the popularization of the African Union. Improving the lives of the African peoples and ensuring continental development, and socio-political and economic integration of Africa largely depend on effective mobilization of the Mass Media hence emphasis is being placed in establishing a viable Directorate of Communication and Information, at the AU Headquarters that is well equipped to deliver the correct messages to the general public and the international community.

476. The Communication and Information Unit as composed at present, with one professional officer and five technical support staff, even with the full compliments of Maputo Decision cannot adequately address the communication challenges facing the Union.

477. In spite of this, the Information and Communication Unit has continued to saunter along by performing among other duties some essential functions of the Commission such as, reporting on the activities of the AU, receiving and debriefing visitors to the African Union Headquarters, organizing interviews, responding to press and public inquiries and distributing information materials.

478. Within the past six months (January to June), the Unit has received commendations and letters of appreciation from outside and within Africa for public lectures and prompt responses to inquiries about the African Union.

5. Draft Decisions for next Executive Council and Summit

479. No draft decisions have been prepared for the consideration of the forthcoming Executive Council and Summit because no Ministerial meetings pertaining to Communication and Information has been held.

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