



ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Seventy-Third Ordinary Session

**INTRODUCTORY NOTE TO THE
REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

Tripoli, LIBYA

22 - 26 February 2001

I am honoured to submit this Introductory Note to my Report to the 73rd Session of the Council of Ministers.

The Note provides an overview of the financial and administrative situation of our Organization. An attempt has also been made to highlight some of the major developments in our Continent.

This Note, which covers the period since the last meeting of Council, has been prepared with the view to facilitating the deliberations of the current session of Council.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SA Salim', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Salim Ahmed Salim
12 February 2001

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INTRODUCTION

1. This is a session of Council that is devoted to addressing administrative and budgetary matters of our Organization. However, as it is customary, it will also have the opportunity to deliberate on some of the political and socio-economic issues which need the Council's urgent attention. The fact this session is taking place just before an Extra-Ordinary Summit and after a few weeks a Special Summit will follow, gives this session of Council a special significance, particularly in terms of the scope of its deliberations.

2. In this Introductory Note I have endeavoured to present an overview of the administrative and financial situation of the Organization. I have also provided an account of the initiatives taken by the Organization in dealing with some of the urgent political and socio-economic challenges confronting our Continent in the period since the last session of Council.

3. Once again, I wish to bring to the attention of Council the same concern I have been raising in the past years, that the financial status of the Organization leaves a lot to be desired. While the budget allocation has tended, over the years, to depreciate in constant terms, contributions have significantly decreased, arrears have accumulated, and the ability of the Organization to execute programs has diminished. It is common, lately, to find a majority of Member States to be in arrears, a situation whose adverse impact to the Organization need not be overstated.

4. I am fully cognizant of the difficult economic difficulties facing Member States and appreciative of the efforts being made in making contributions to our Organization. I do point out in this Note that there is a limit to relying on restricting expenditure as a way of overcoming budgetary deficits. Beyond a certain point, this option becomes dysfunctional. There is a need, therefore, for undertaking a major review of the existing financing arrangement so that a more sustainable system is put in place, that can enable an effective realization of our goals.

5. At this session, Council will consider a draft programme for the next financial year. A draft annual budget, instead of a biennium one,

is being presented so as to enable the General Secretariat to put in place the full complement of the new Organizational structure, to mainstream the change process, and to execute the activities that would enable a realization of the immediate organizational goals. I am confident that through the resources allocated in this budget, and the consolidation of the restructuring exercise which is now at an advanced stage, as well as the improvement of the working environment, including the completion of conference-cum-secretariat complex, the capacities of the General Secretariat will be more enhanced as we begin the new decade.

6. In the socio-economic front, the General Secretariat has continued to perform a facilitating role by implementing activities which contribute towards sectoral coordination and also in refining and harmonizing some conventions that were seen to be outdated or whose provisions are not appropriately connected with other instruments. At the same time, from the Ministerial meetings that were held in the past six months, and those jointly organized with partner institutions, there is a strong commitment by Member States to harmonize and coordinate programmes of some key sectors of development. These meetings have been also beneficial in forging common positions on certain areas of major global negotiations such as those involving the World Trade Organization, the United States Trade and Development Act, the ACP-EU negotiations, and in the follow-up to the Africa-Europe Summit. Similar initiatives were undertaken in making an input to the participation of OAU Member States at the China-Africa Forum that was held in October 2000.

7. Indeed, there is an increasing interest demonstrated by major international partners in having consultative meetings with our Continent and our Organization. These meetings have provided an important forum for reaffirming a consolidation of relations between Africa and the partners. The experience of participating in these meetings has also underlined the need for OAU Member States to consistently strive in forging coordinated positions that are in tandem with the agenda for closer Continental cooperation and integration.

8. The launching of the COMESA Free Trade Area in October 2000, the revival of the East African Community, the decisions taken on the issue of monetary harmonization by the ECOWAS Summit in

December, and the signing of the Protocol on Relations between the African Economic Community and the Regional Economic Communities by CEN-SAD, are a demonstration of a dynamic momentum for enhanced cooperation and integration in the Continent. Consultations are taking place aimed at finding ways of overcoming bottlenecks and developing stronger linkages between RECs and the OAU.

9. The most notable development in the quest for stronger unity has been in the signing of the Constitutive Act for the African Union. As this report was being prepared, more than two thirds of the Member States have signed the Act and 11 Members have completed the ratification process. The remarkable progress attained in the signing process is a reaffirmation of African Governments to the commitment of attaining Continental unity. I remain hopeful that Member States will continue taking the necessary measures to expedite the ratification process so that we can realize this ideal soon. Meanwhile, the draft Protocol on the Pan-African Parliament has been finalized and debated thoroughly by experts, officials and parliamentarians. Council will have an opportunity during this session to consider the draft protocol.

10. Unfortunately, the vitality and vibrancy exhibited in promoting cooperation and integration in the Continent and in overcoming the bottlenecks to economic development seems to be dampened by the situation in the struggle to combat the HIV-AIDS pandemic. The virus is spreading rapidly and the Continent is losing more lives due to this dreadful disease. The recently-concluded African Development Forum organized by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa and in which OAU participated actively was a major breakthrough in recognizing the need for more creative and dynamic leadership in the struggle against this pandemic at all levels. The outcome of the Forum will also constitute an important input to the Special Summit on HIV-AIDS that will take place in Abuja in April this year.

11. In the political front, the situation in the Continent has been generally positive since my last report. The attainment of a Comprehensive peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea was an outstanding achievement not only for the people of the two countries,

but for the Continent as a whole. Equally so, the signing of the Peace agreement on Burundi by a majority of the parties raises hope for overcoming the remaining obstacles and bringing to an end the violence that has gripped that country. In the same regard, after determined effort by the OAU and with the cooperation and support of some of our external partners, conditions seem to be more conducive in the Comoros for finding a lasting solution to the crisis. However, more hard work is still required, coupled with coordinated efforts with our partners and a strong commitment by the Comorian parties.

12. The establishment of a transitional government in Somalia after a long period of anarchy, as well as the successful elections that were held in several countries are positive developments that the Continent needs to build upon. The renewed commitment by all the parties to facilitate the peace process in Sierra Leone is also encouraging. Indeed, the strong and continued determination of ECOWAS in this regard should be applauded.

13. A common position has been adopted on small arms. An increasing number of African countries have become parties to the convention on anti-personnel mines. There is also a stronger interest being shown by different sections of our societies to the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa. All these developments reaffirm the commitment to enhance sustainable peace, security and stability in our Continent.

14. Unfortunately these positive development have also been dampened by negative trends in some parts of the Continent. The rising hostilities among the countries of the Mano River Basin have not only undermined the fragile peace but they have also compounded the severe suffering of the refugee population in that area. Similarly, UNITA's intransigence and its resort to attacking civilian populations is once again generating an alarming humanitarian situation in Angola. Conflicts are really having an immense social cost.

15. In the Great Lakes, the assassination of President Laurent Kabila was a tragedy condemned both internally and throughout the Continent. I am encouraged, however, to acknowledge the reaffirmation of a commitment to the Lusaka peace Agreement by President Joseph Kabila and all the parties involved, and the

determination of various African leaders as well as the international community to finding a lasting solution of the crisis.

16. I am confident that Council will have an opportunity to address the issues raised in this Introductory Note and will provide its guidance accordingly.

PART I - FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

A. Financial Situation of the Organization

17. The 72nd Session of Council afforded me, once again, the opportunity to bring to your attention the fiscal condition of the Organization. In the report to that session, I reiterated my serious concern about the continuous deterioration of the financial situation. In this report, I am compelled to repeat the same alarm because the situation has not improved, and to a significant extent, it seems to be aggravating.

18. In the last report I endeavoured to provide a detailed illustration of financial trends for a 10-year period beginning financial year 1990/1991. Significant aspects of the long-term trend included a stagnating budget, declining contributions and accumulating arrears. Unfortunately, as the budgetary decade ended in the financial year 1999/2000, the situation remained the same.

19. It now appears, that we are beginning the new decade with the same financial handicap. As at 31 December 2000, which was the seventh month in the execution of the current programme budget, only an amount of US\$3.9 million, or 14.5 % of the assessed contribution of US\$27.6 million and 13.8 % of the approved budget of US\$29 million was received. Even in absolute terms, this is the lowest level recorded at the same time as compared to the last few years. For example, in 1999/2000, the Secretariat received US\$7.3 million as at 31 December 1999 towards the budget under execution and in 1998/99, the amount received as at 31 December 1998 was US\$8.4 million.

20. The situation with regard to arrears is equally grave. As at 31 December 2000, the total outstanding contribution due from Member States rose to US\$63.3 million. This is more than twice the budget approved for the current financial year. There was an encouraging development during the past financial year, when the payment of arrears was US\$17.1 million, which was an increase of 62% from the previous year. However, as of 31 December 2000, the amount received to pay for arrears was only US\$7.8 million.

21. Council may wish to know that for the current financial year, and as of 31 December 2000, only 8 countries have paid their contributions in full. These are Botswana, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa, Swaziland and Togo. I wish to convey my appreciation to these countries. I would like also to acknowledge the efforts made by all those countries which do not have arrears in their contributions. I seize this opportunity to encourage Member States that submitted rescheduling plans for settling their outstanding arrears, to take all the necessary measures to comply with these schedules.

22. During this session, Council will consider the budget for the financial year 2001-2002. The draft budget has been prepared for a one-year period due to the fact the new structure of the Secretariat is not fully in place. The total amount for the budget has been scaled down to US\$31 million from the US\$32.8 million originally proposed by the Secretariat.

23. In preparing the draft budget, primary attention is given to enabling the implementation of the second and most critical phase of the restructuring exercise by operationalizing the new structure, and also to implementing priority programmes and activities which need to be carried in the socio-economic and political spheres, during the next financial year.

24. As regards the overall management of the financial resources, the General Secretariat will continue to improve the administrative and financial management of our Organization through rational utilization of the available resources, maintaining tight financial discipline and ensuring cost effectiveness, transparency and accountability at all levels.

25. I wish to draw the attention of Council, once again, to the difficulties the Organization is facing due to the continuous deterioration of the financial situation. Despite the significant increase in the areas and magnitude of responsibilities our Continental Organization has assumed during the past decade, the budget allocation has stagnated in constant terms, and drastically declined in current value. In the financial year 1990/91 the approved budget was US\$29,063,072.00 millions and in the year 2000/2001, a

budget of US\$29 million was approved. This, coupled with the fluctuation in the payment of arrears and the erratic attainment of extra-budgetary financing has contributed to the diminishing of the Organization's capacity.

26. The situation is such that currently, the bulk of the approved budget is consumed by recurrent expenditure, leaving a negligible amount for programme activities. Urgent steps have to be taken to address in a comprehensive manner the financing arrangement of our Organization.

27. It may be necessary to examine the factors that are contributing to having increasingly fewer of our Member States honouring their financial commitments in full and in time. In some cases, the propensity to make contributions timely is not related to the relative economic well-being. There are Member States who continued to honour their commitments even when they were experiencing severe disasters. In the same regard, the effects of having the Organization being sustained more by paid arrears rather than the annual contributions may need to be examined and alternatives explored. More urgently, we need to examine effective financing arrangements for realizing the objectives of our Organization in the context of the obtaining realities.

B. Restructuring Exercise

28. Council will recall that at the 72nd session, I reported on the steps being taken in revitalizing the General Secretariat through the restructuring exercise. I informed Council of the progress made in rationalizing the human resource component and also in addressing the relationship with the Scientific and Technical offices.

29. On the 1st September 2000, the new departmental structure that was approved by Council at its 69th Ordinary Session was launched. Apart from the new designation of departments and divisions, the change also entailed carrying out an elaborate exercise of staff placement, a process that revealed the actual disposition of the establishment, particularly showing the vacant positions. I wish to express my appreciation to all the staff of the General Secretariat for their cooperation and support in this exercise that was completed successfully.

30. Member States were informed of the vacant positions in the new structure together with the requirements in recruiting new staff. In order to provide enough time for communication between the Secretariat and the capitals of Member States, but also to ensure that the exercise is not excessively delayed, a deadline of 31st December 2000 was agreed in consultation with resident ambassadors in Addis Ababa.

31. I am pleased to inform Council that the response from Member States on submitting candidates for the vacant positions was generally positive. The applications are now being processed for consideration. I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate the commitment I had made earlier, that the recruitment exercise will continue to be done while abiding to the principles of transparency, fairness, equity, and with the aim of engendering a high level of efficiency to our Continental Organization.

32. Council will recall that, it approved, during its 72nd Ordinary Session, the recommendation made by the Ad-hoc Committee on Structural Reform of the OAU General Secretariat to "send consultation missions, composed of Member States and the Secretariat to Kenya, Niger, Guinea and Cameroon to consult with the Governments of these countries hosting the OAU Scientific and Technical Offices". It was also decided that the missions should also visit Bamako to consult with the Malian Minister of Equipment and Environment, Chairman of the Conference of Ministers of Fouta-Djallon Project as well as ECOWAS Secretariat on the Fouta-Djallon Project." Doc. CM/2180(LXXII).

33. The Joint Member States/Secretariat missions took place from 1st to 15th October 2000. One delegation led by the Ambassador of Gabon went to Conakry, Guinea, and Niamey, Niger. The other led by the Ambassador of Mozambique went to Nairobi, Kenya, and Yaounde, Cameroon.

34. Council may also recall that at its 70th Ordinary Session I informed it of the appointment of a Transition Team which I entrusted with the task of implementing the restructuring programme. I would like to pay tribute to this team for launching the exercise and putting in place the framework and for initiating the first tasks, some of which

have been painful. After 18 months of laying a foundation, there is still important work that needs to be completed in fully modernizing the Organization.

35. I have now reconstituted the Team and realigned its focus. It is now designated as the Change Management Team, under the leadership of the Assistant Secretary, Department of Administration and Finance. Its basic role is to mainstream the change process within the Organization. In this respect, apart from completing the essential tasks relating to recruitment and training as well as improving systems and methods, I have assigned the Team to recommend ways of increasing staff motivation, as well as to develop a strategy of sharing a common vision of the Organization and to translate this into concrete activities in different areas of work.

36. Other aspects that the Team has to address include the development of an integrated functioning of the Organization so as to avoid rigid departmentalization and a project mode of operation. The General Secretariat has to be driven by holistic objectives and it also has to develop an organizational culture that fosters commitment and efficiency. To achieve all these, in the next few months, improvements will be made on the administrative technology and the work environment, and at the same time rules and procedures will be re-examined.

37. Council may further recall that it approved for the financing of the implementation of the Programme for Reform and Renewal a budget of US\$15,035,276.00 of which US\$8,635,276.00 was to be provided by the OAU and the remaining US\$6,400,000.00 by Donors (Canada, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden). An amount of US\$9,629,398.00 was contributed as at 31 January 2001, of which US\$6,323,845.000 by the OAU and US\$3,305,553.42 by Donors. Steps are being taken to have the balance of US\$5,405,877.58 paid by the two parties.

C. Construction of the OAU Conference Facility and Office Block

38. I wish to inform Council that the construction work of the Conference facility and Office block that started in April 1998 has now reached an advanced stage. The structure has been fully completed and work is now progressing in installing basic fixtures and also

putting on the aesthetic finishing. The electronic equipment for the Conference has been ordered and will be delivered by the end of March and installed during the month of April.

39. All the parties to the project are deploying every effort and taking all necessary measures so that the construction work is completed and the complex is inaugurated on Africa Day, on 25 May 2001.

PART II – IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SIRTE DECLARATION

A. The African Union and the Pan-African Parliament

40. The solemn adoption by the last Summit, on 11 July, 2000, and the signing of the Constitutive Act of the African Union on 12 July, 2000 in Lome, Togo, by twenty-seven Heads of State and Government and other Plenipotentiaries constituted an important milestone and a historical landmark in the process of deepening and strengthening African unity. As I stated in my report to the last Session of Council, the need for Africa to pull together its collective efforts in order to meet the twin challenges of globalization and economic integration in the new century cannot be over-emphasized. It is imperative that our Continent consolidates its position in order to overcome these challenges effectively and forge ahead with the much needed socio-economic development of our countries. This objective can best be attained if Africa is able to enhance the unity, solidarity and cohesion of its nations and peoples, and act with a common vision on the common problems that confront us. In adopting the Sirte Declaration on 9.9.99 and, subsequently, the Constitutive Act of the African Union, our leaders recognized the need to build on the unity which has been embodied in our Continental Organization by establishing the African Union and accelerating the implementation of the Abuja Treaty.

41. I am pleased to inform Council that as at 9 February 2001, the Constitutive Act has been signed by the following forty-one Member States: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Namibia, Rwanda, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia and Zambia.

42. The signing of the Constitutive Act by such a large number of our Member States within a fairly short period is, no doubt, a manifestation of the fact that the vision encapsulated in the Sirte Declaration and the Constitutive Act itself is widely shared by the

overwhelming majority of our Member States. It is an affirmation of the search for the united and stronger Africa which the founding fathers of our Continental Organization fought for, and which succeeding generations of Africans have continued to struggle for.

43. In terms of Article 26, the Constitutive Act requires ratification by a two-thirds majority of all Member States in order for it to enter into force. The minimum number of ratifications thus required is thirty-six out of the fifty-three Member States of the Organization. At the time of finalizing this report, eleven of the signatories mentioned above had ratified the Act and informed the General Secretariat accordingly. These are Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Libya, Mali, Niger, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan and Togo. Ten of these eleven countries had deposited their instruments of ratification with the General Secretariat: Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Libya, Mali, Niger, Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic, Senegal, Sudan and Togo. I am gratified to note that, since the preparation of this report, there have been further developments in this respect, as more and more Member States are taking the necessary measures for the ratification of this important instrument.

44. With regard to the process of establishing the Pan-African Parliament, Council will recall that when the reports of the meetings of the Legal Experts and Parliamentarians were presented, through Council, to the last Summit, the Assembly by its Decision AHG/Dec.143/(XXXVI), inter alia, requested the Secretary-General:

"To convene a Meeting of Parliamentarians to examine the Draft Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating to the Pan-African Parliament and submit it for approval by the next Session of the Council of Ministers and subsequent adoption by the Assembly of Head of State and Government."

45. As a follow-up to the Summit decision under reference, the Meeting of Parliamentarians was held in Pretoria, South Africa, from 7 to 10 November, 2000. The Meeting, which was attended by Parliamentarians from 43 Member States, was devoted exclusively to the consideration of the Draft Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating to the Pan-African Parliament.

Many delegations were led by the Speaker or President of their respective National Parliaments or by a senior member of Parliament.

46. In their deliberations, which were characterized by thoughtful and engaging debates, the delegations focused on all the major outstanding issues which had not been agreed upon during the earlier Experts' and Ministerial Meetings held in Addis Ababa and in Tripoli from 17 to 21 April and from 27 May to 2 June, 2000, respectively. Among these issues were those relating to: the composition of the Pan-African Parliament; functions and powers of the Pan-African Parliament; the system of representation; election and tenure of the Pan-African Parliamentarians; privileges and immunities of the members; and the budget. It was quite clear, throughout these discussions, that the Parliamentarians welcomed the opportunity to be involved directly in this challenging task of constructing one of the major organs of the African Union. It was equally clear that they share the vision of our leaders in viewing the proposed Pan-African Parliament as a body that will enhance the participation of African peoples, through their elected representatives, in the work of the African Union.

47. After a comprehensive reading of all the provisions of the Draft Protocol, the Meeting unanimously approved it for further consideration and appropriate action by Council and, subsequently, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, in keeping with the latter's Decision. I wish to express my gratitude to all the Parliamentarians and the other delegates who participated in this Meeting and thus contributed to the elaboration of the Draft Protocol.

48. During this Session, Council will, of course, have an opportunity to exchange further views on the ways and means of expediting the concretization of this shared objective in the course of its preparation for the Fifth Extraordinary Summit. I am pleased to report that the final Draft Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating to the Pan-African Parliament is ready for consideration by this Session of Council and for further appropriate recommendation to the Summit.

B. Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA)

49. Council will recall that during its Seventy-Second Ordinary Session and the Thirty-Sixth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, that took place in Lome, Togo, the conclusions and recommendations of the Ministerial Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA) that took place earlier on in Abuja, Nigeria, from 8-9 May 2000, were the subject of profound discussions.

50. At that Conference, Ministers responsible for Foreign Affairs, Security and Defense, Development and Cooperation, as well as other Experts, engaged in substantive deliberations, as well as reviewed the state of Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation on our Continent. The Ministers were unequivocal on the place and importance of the CSSDCA in the work of the Organization, at a time that the Continent was confronted with multi-faceted challenges, especially, in the twin areas of peace and security, as well as socio-economic development and integration. It was in cognizance of the important role that the CSSDCA process could play as a bridging Mechanism for addressing the issues raised above, that it was decided to relaunch it within the work programme of the OAU and to provide the momentum for its sustenance. Consequently, both Council and the Summit adopted the CSSDCA initiative because of the conviction that, it would provide a framework for a more holistic an integrated approach when dealing with issues such as peace-building and peace-making, Regional integration, economic development and cooperation.

51. The Lome Summit adopted the CSSDCA Solemn Declaration and its Implementation Mechanism. As part of the Implementation Mechanism, the Leaders agreed to establish a Standing Conference which should meet every two years during the Ordinary Summit. It was also agreed to convene Review Meetings of Plenipotentiaries and Senior officials to monitor the implementation of the CSSDCA decisions in between sessions of the Standing Conference. The Secretary-General was also requested to initiate internal administrative arrangements for designating, within the OAU Secretariat, a Unit to coordinate CSSDCA activities. It was also agreed

to take necessary measures to ensure that detailed discussions are undertaken on the various Calabashes in order to implement the CSSDCA process. In this regard, I was requested to coordinate the consultations with a view to ensuring the convening of the meetings on the Calabashes. In pursuance of that decision, the General Secretariat addressed communications to all Member States, to seek their views on the discussions that were expected to take place. Some Member States have since submitted their views in writing.

52. One of the problems that was experienced after the Lome Summit, relates to the operationalization of the proposed Unit that is to be charged with the responsibility for implementing the CSSDCA process and its work programme. In the implementation of that decision, the Secretariat was faced with the perennial problem of resource constraints. It will be recalled that both in Abuja and in Lome, pledges were made to provide support and funding for the CSSDCA process at the initial stages and pending its full integration into OAU's work programme and budgetary allocation. Those pledges have unfortunately, not yet been redeemed. Currently, the Secretariat is exploring practical ways of overcoming this initial difficulty.

53. As part of the efforts to provide that new momentum for the CSSDCA process, informal consultations were held from 7-8 January 2001, between representatives of the General Secretariat, the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Africa Leadership Forum. The consultations focused on defining the nature of the CSSDCA implementation meetings, the CSSDCA Unit within the General Secretariat, Funding arrangements to sustain the CSSDCA and the work programme of the CSSDCA.

54. It was generally felt that efforts should be made to convene at the level of Experts, four implementation meetings on each of the Calabashes (security, stability, cooperation, development) if possible and if for any reason, it was difficult to convene the four meetings, the possibility of collapsing them into two meetings, should be seriously considered. The consultation also envisaged the convening of a meeting at Ministerial level, to put together the conclusions of the Experts meetings to be subsequently considered by the first Standing CSSDCA Conference during the 2002 OAU Summit.

55. It is my expectation that the proposed CSSDCA Unit will be operationalized shortly, in order to implement the envisaged CSSDCA work programme. As this report was being finalized, steps were initiated towards putting in place the CSSDCA Coordination Unit within the Secretariat. Arrangements were also made for the convening of the first meeting on the Calabashes.

56. Meanwhile, it is significant that African Civil Society Organizations have continued to show sustained interest in the CSSDCA process. The OAU General Secretariat participated in the International Conference on Civil Society, sponsored by the Africa Leadership Forum in Abuja from 11-13 September 2000. The Conference was designed to sustain the momentum generated by the decision of the Summit on the CSSDCA and to consolidate its base of support within the civil society and legislative arms of African governments. The Abuja meeting constituted a valuable starting point for mobilizing legislators in support of the CSSDCA process, while underlining the vital importance of the initiative for sustaining and consolidating democratic processes on the African continent. Legislators that attended the conference organized themselves into a parliamentary network for the advancement and promotion of the CSSDCA ideal.

57. Recently also, a Conference of the Africa Women's Leadership Forum within the context of the CSSDCA was held from 22-24 January 2001 in Tunis, Tunisia. The Conference generally reviewed women's initiative in conflict management, practice models for women in conflict situations and their capacity for responses. It also examined the specific roles of women in the envisaged Security and Stability Calabashes of the CSSDCA. It is expected that the outcome of the Tunis meeting, will provide inputs for broad based gender sensitive approaches for the CSSDCA work programme.

58. It is also my hope and expectation, that the OAU/Civil Society Conference to be organized by the OAU from 16-21 April 2001, will provide an important Forum, for further discussions on the CSSDCA process and particularly, on the role of the Civil Society in sustaining the initiative.

PART III – SOCIO-ECONOMIC ISSUES

A. Implementation of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community

59. The first phase of the implementation of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community came to an end in 1999, and the second phase started the following year. In keeping with the requirements of the Treaty, the General Secretariat focused much attention on working with, and supporting the Regional Economic Communities in launching the activities for the second phase. However, since all the RECs are not on the same level of progress, attention was also devoted to assisting the RECs (like the Economic Community of Central African States) that face particular problems, in ensuring that they are not left too far behind.

60. The launching of the Free Trade Area for COMESA on 31 October 2000 was a major milestone in the cooperation effort that has always under-pinned the implementation of the Abuja Treaty. The decision of nine COMESA Member States to blaze the trail, while others will follow, is significant and a source of encouragement for other RECs to emulate. In recognition of the importance of that achievement, I presented, on behalf of our organization a shield to the Secretary-General of COMESA.

61. Equally important was the coming into force of the SADC Trade protocol, thus paving the way for the establishment of a SADC FTA, in 2008. This was indeed one of the major decisions of the 2000 meeting of the SADC Summit in Windhoek, Namibia last August.

62. In the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) the leaders have taken giant strides with community building. Their recent Summit in Bamako last December took important decisions on the issue of monetary harmonization which should lead to the institution of a single currency for the region, in 2004.

63. Important progress is also being recorded by the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) which held its last summit in Khartoum, Sudan in November last year.

64. It is worth noting that despite the conflicts in some of our regions, the RECs are exerting themselves to the maximum, in order to ensure that their integration programmes are not put in jeopardy.

65. In this regard, the reestablishment of the East African Community in Arusha in January this year, was indeed a significant development not only for the three countries, but also for the Continent as a whole. My participation at the launching ceremony underscored once again, the importance we attach to any group of Member States in forging closer cooperation. Indeed, such initiatives consolidate our collective quest of achieving greater unity at the continental level.

66. On the basis of the Protocol on Relations between the African Economic Community and the Regional Economic Communities, the General Secretariat has established a working arrangement with the Community of the Sahel-Saharan States, following the signature of that Protocol by the Secretary-General of CEN-SAD last December. The convening of a second Summit of CEN-SAD in February this year, in Khartoum, was a clear demonstration of the determination of the Member States of this Community to strengthen cooperation among them.

67. The cooperation between the General Secretariat and the RECs was also focused on an effective sensitization of the entire African society to the importance of, and the requirements for promoting regional integration, in terms of the Treaties of the AEC and RECs. Together, we have concluded an arrangement for the production, by URTNA, of Video and Radio documentaries on the African Community and Regional Economic Communities. These programmes will be distributed to all Member States for diffusion on their national networks.

68. While at Lusaka for the launching of the COMESA FTA, I held an informal consultative meeting with the Chief Executives of the RECs that were present, on our future cooperation. It was agreed that we should meet on the 22nd of February, as a Committee on Coordination, established in the Protocol on Relations between the African Economic Community and the Regional Economic Communities.

Intra-African Trade

69. During the 3rd Ordinary Session of the Committee on Trade, Customs and Immigration of the African Economic Community (AEC) held in Cairo, Egypt on 16-21 September, 2000 the African Ministers of Trade accepted the offer of Egypt to host the 8th All-Africa Trade Fair. The General Secretariat has informed all Members States. Meanwhile in order for the Secretariat to start preparatory work with the host country, this Session of Council is invited to consider and approve the composition of the Technical Organizing Committee (TOC), as well as the date of the Trade Fair as March/April 2002. The specific date will be determined by the Organizing Committee in consultation with the Government of Egypt. The General Secretariat plans to convene the first meeting of the TOC during the first half of 2001.

70. In another development, on 30 October, 2000 the COMESA, which is one of the building blocks of the African Economic Community, reached a major stage in their evolution when at an Extra-ordinary Summit Conference the COMESA-Free Trade Area was launched. Nine out of the twenty Member States have signed up to the Free Trade Area whereby goods and services originating from them would be imported to one another's country duty free.

C. International Negotiations

1. World Trade Organization (WTO)

71. The need to enhance the prospects for market access for African LDCs is being pursued not only in the fora of WTO but also in the preparations for the UN Conference on LDCs as well as in the fora of ACP- EU negotiations.

72. The African countries in the ACP Group in Brussels have been advised about the need to support the request submitted to the World Trade Organization on the waiver on trade provisions of the Cotonou Agreement. The recently concluded meeting of the ACP Ministers of Trade reaffirmed this position.

73. On the need for the WTO to encourage transparency in its operations and procedures the WTO organized a Conference in

Libreville, Gabon from 13 - 15 November 2000, with the aim of enhancing the capacity of African Ministers and High Officials on WTO rules and Agreements. During the month of October 2000 the WTO organized the Second Geneva Week for African countries, especially targeted at those without Permanent Missions in Geneva.

74. African countries also strengthened their coordination in order to build consensus on the main issues prior to future negotiations. This being done, the OAU Panel of Advisors has started its technical work by undertaking working visits to Geneva and Brussels to consult with the African Groups about technical assistance needs as they prepare for the likely launch of a new round of WTO negotiations and the impending commencement of the negotiations of the Trade Provisions of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement which must be WTO compatible.

75. The General Secretariat set up a mechanism to assist and to effectively coordinate the position of the African sub-regions in the process of negotiating the Economic Partnership Agreements. Furthermore the AEC Committee on Trade, Customs and Immigration is expected to evaluate and monitor the various issues in the trade negotiations with a view to ensuring that possible future trade options including Regional Economic Partnership Agreements (REPAs) do not jeopardize the objectives of the AEC; and to this end the ECOSOC should inter-alia, consider the advisability of setting up a negotiating body with the assistance of the Panel of Experts.

76. Council's attention is being drawn to the fact that in order to enable the Secretariat to discharge its responsibilities it participated in the 3rd Meeting of the ACP Ministers of Trade held in Brussels on 11-12 December 2000, as observer, to monitor the preparations for the commencement of the negotiations for the Trade provisions of the Cotonou Agreement which should be WTO-compatible. The General Secretariat also made arrangements for the OAU Advisory Panel on Trade to hold meetings with the African Groups in Brussels and Geneva. The Panel has developed a work programme on the basis of which to assist the countries in the future.

2. ACP-EU Partnership Agreement

77. On the basis of technical papers presented by the OAU General Secretariat, the Conference of African Ministers of Trade held in September 2000 considered issues related to the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement. On this issue the Ministers re-called that in June 2000 the new ACP-EU Partnership Agreement was signed in Cotonou, Benin Republic. Given that the negotiations were due to re-open in September 2002 with the EU in order to make the new Agreement WTO-compatible and to strengthen the capacity of African countries to benefit from the said Agreement, the Conference called on all Member States to ensure its early ratification. It also requested African countries, Members of the WTO, to support the EU request to the WTO for a waiver to be granted to the new Agreement to enable African countries, members of the ACP Group, to continue to enjoy non-reciprocal trade preferences between 2002 and 1 January 2008.

78. In preparation for these forthcoming negotiations the ACP Ministers of Trade met in Brussels on 11-12 December 2000 and adopted a Declaration on issues relating to the formulation of WTO-compatible trading arrangement within the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement. Issues considered require African countries, members of the ACP Group, to decide on the geographical groupings within which to negotiate with the EU. Other sensitive issues concern the type of trading arrangement to negotiate.

79. In connection with the above, Council is invited to endorse the decision of the Conference of Ministers of Trade that:

- the AEC Committee on Trade, Customs and Immigration should find ways and means to ensure coordination between actions taken by the African Groups in Geneva and Brussels so as to avoid conflicting positions being taken in different negotiations, both at the WTO and the ACP-EU ;
- the OAU General Secretariat is requested to organize a meeting at which Africa should formulate and adopt a Common Position in preparation for the negotiations between the ACP and the EU which is due to start in September 2002. The proposed African Common Position should emphasize the ways and means by which future Agreements would strengthen the production and

trade capacities of African economies, including the services trade sector;

- the OAU General Secretariat should carry out studies on all aspects of the Cotonou Agreement, including all Trade Options such as the Regional Economic Partnership Agreements (REPAs) proposed by the EU and any other Alternative Trade Arrangements, that would preserve the preferential access, in conformity with the trade liberalization and integration programmes of Africa;
- the OAU Panel of Experts should be strengthened in order to assist the OAU Secretariat and the OAU Member States formulate the African Common Position; and
- furthermore, the Panel of Experts should re-double its efforts in providing technical assistance to the African negotiators in Brussels and Geneva.

3. US Trade and Development Act

80. During the Ministers of Trade Meeting, the OAU General Secretariat presented a paper in which it informed the African Ministers of Trade about the adoption by the US Congress of the "US Trade and Development Act" which subsumes the "Africa Growth and Opportunity Act - AGOA". It was noted that the Act was intended to promote trade and investment between the United States and African countries, South of the Sahara. It was noted that while the Act was a U.S. Government piece of legislation to be implemented bilaterally with the eligible countries, it was different from the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement, in that it was not negotiated. They also noted that the coverage was limited to sub-Saharan African countries and that even those countries must apply for consideration in order to become eligible. Certain stringent conditionalities, which had been rejected by African countries in the multilateral context of the WTO, such as Core Labour Standards, were contained in the Act.

81. The African Ministers of Trade also noted the institutional machinery that the Act provides namely:

- the U.S.-Sub-Saharan Africa Summit to be convened at least every two years;
- the U.S-Sub-Saharan Trade and Economic Forum, which would involve organizing Sectoral Ministerial meetings of the U.S. Secretary of Commerce and African Ministers of Trade; the U.S. Secretary of Treasury and the African Ministers of Finance; the U.S. Secretary of State and African Ministers of Foreign Affairs; as well as
- U.S. NGOs and Africa.

82. In the light of the above and against the background of their deliberations Council is invited to endorse, *inter-alia*, the decision of the AEC Ministers of Trade adopted during the Third Meeting of the Committee on Trade, Customs and Immigration as follows:

- request the General Secretariat of the OAU to work in collaboration with the UNECA, UNCTAD, the RECs and the other relevant organizations to conduct an in-depth study to identify the potential benefits, and the problems for Member States, as well as their capacity to take advantage of the Act;
- urge the U.S. Government to include as many African countries as possible in the eligibility list and expand the product coverage of the Act, as well as simplify the procedure for benefiting from it;
- request the OAU General Secretariat to develop the practical and operational modalities for the establishment of a Consultative Mechanism on the U.S. Trade and Development Act taking into account the need:
- to develop a joint African strategy to promote a more inclusive approach, and examination of the method by which African countries had met their eligibility requirement; and to
- to establish an Inter-Governmental Mechanism to define the participation and agenda for the envisaged Africa-U.S. Summit, including the role of the OAU Secretariat and the African Ambassadors in Washington.

4. China-Africa Forum

83. The first China-Africa Forum of October 2000, was one of the major activities in which the General Secretariat of the OAU participated during that year. The Forum was an important initiative that emphasized on improvement of existing bilateral cooperation between China and African countries. The overall objective of the Forum was to develop a programme for China-Africa cooperation in economic and social development, within the context of South-South Cooperation, in order to facilitate the establishment of a new international political and economic order.

84. On the whole, 45 African countries attended the Forum, along with all the Regional Economic Communities and other economic institutions in the continent, including representatives from the African private sector.

85. The Forum was organized at ministerial level and was attended by President Jiang Zemin of the People's Republic of China. On the African side were President Eyadema of Togo and Current Chairman of the OAU, President Bouteflika of Algeria, Outgoing Chairman of the OAU, President Chiluba of Zambia, Incoming Chairman of the OAU and President Mkapa of Tanzania. All these important dignitaries addressed the Forum during the Opening Ceremony, in which they stressed the significance of the event in consolidating the foundation for China-Africa cooperation, and for ensuring that the future relations between the countries of the two continents would reflect the aspirations of the Chinese and African peoples, as well as take account of the major global developments that exert serious impact on humanity, as a whole.

86. The Declaration adopted at the Forum recaptured much of the orientation and expectations that were contained in the Opening Statements by the five Presidents. In addition, these important documents underscored the significance of the principles embodied in the OAU Charter and the UN Charter, including the principle of peaceful settlement of international disputes, the role of the UN Security Council in safe-guarding world peace and security, as well as the universality of human rights issues.

87. A major part of the Declaration was devoted to social and economic development issues, including the ongoing globalization, and integration process in Africa, and the need to further consolidate and expand China-Africa cooperation at all levels and in all fields. The Plan of Action adopted by the Forum covers all the critical areas of cooperation including trade and investment, cooperation in engineering, cultural, science and technological projects; financial and agricultural cooperation; exploration and utilization of natural resources, debt reduction and exemption, cooperation in health care and public health, as well as in education and human resource development.

88. In my statement during the closing ceremony of the Forum, which was also addressed by the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Zhu Rongji, I emphasized the spirit of friendship and genuine sense of commitment that China and African countries exhibited at the Forum, which was a demonstration of the bond of solidarity that exists between the peoples of the two countries. I also laid stress on the need for the two sides to ensure that the Plan of Action adopted by the Forum would constitute a viable basis for intensifying beneficial cooperation between China and African countries, with emphasis on areas such as capacity building, information technology, infrastructure development, the fight against HIV/AIDS and other killer diseases in Africa.

89. In addition to the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Plan of Action, the Forum welcomed the announcement by China to reduce or cancel the debt of 10 billion RMB Yuan owed to China by heavily indebted poor and least developed countries in Africa in the next two years. This was indeed a significant action by China, which should serve as a source of encouragement to other creditor countries to do the same.

5. Africa's External Debt

90. Africa's heavy external indebtedness constitutes a serious impediment to the Continent's effort at socio-economic development and poverty eradication. Our leaders have been making every effort to address this problem, particularly in major international fora. It may be recalled that in June last year, three African Heads of State

addressed the G8 Summit in Japan to put forward a strong case for a definitive solution to the debt problem of developing countries, including total debt cancellation for African country.

91. At the Lome Summit last July, the Heads of State and Government devoted much time to a discussion of the debt issue, following the detailed presentation to the Assembly, and analysis by the leaders. During that discussion, President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, submitted specific proposals on the approach and methodology of tackling the continent's debt problem. In recognition of the importance of credible technical studies on Africa's debt problem, President Wade requested the General Secretariat to set up a group of independent Experts on debt and finance, with responsibility for formulating specific measures aimed at resolving the continent's external debt problem.

92. In Lome, the Heads of State and Government reviewed the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative, and called on the creditors and international community to relax the modalities and conditions of the initiative, and extend it to all African countries, as a first step towards the total cancellation of the continent's external debt. They also called for the cancellation of all outstanding arrears, in respect of debt incurred before the new millennium.

93. The Lome Summit gave special recognition to the close linkages between the solution to the debt problem and the provision of adequate financial resources for development. In that regard, the Summit stressed the need for Africa's effective preparation and the adoption of a common position for the 2001 Event on Development Financing, as well as the formulation of concrete proposals on the reform of the international monetary system.

94. The General Secretariat has, since Lome, deployed much effort and resources in launching the implementation of the decision adopted by the Summit on these issues. In particular, we have, with the support of Africa's competent institutions, selected the critical issues on which to focus attention, and identified competent consultants and experts to assist in addressing these issues, with a view to ensuring that concrete proposals will be presented to the Contact Group.

95. We have cooperated closely with the ECA and ADB in organizing jointly, the Conference of African Ministers responsible for finance and development, last November in Addis Ababa. The Conference adapted an African Statement on the Intergovernmental Event on Financing for Development, which is scheduled for June this year. In that African common position, the Ministers have identified the critical issues of concern that should feature on the agenda this important global event, including our continent's debt problem. Emphasis has also been placed on mobilization of domestic and external resources for development, the strengthening of partnership and improving policy coherence as well as on the need for special measures in favour of the Least Developed Countries.

6. Follow-up on the Africa-Europe Summit

96. The Follow-up Mechanism in the Cairo Plan of Action adopted by the First Africa-Europe Summit in April last year, provides for *inter-alia* a Bi-Regional Group at Senior Officials' level. The activities of the General Secretariat were, in part, directed at a critical analysis of the Cairo Plan of Action, in terms of the required follow-up actions, and at supporting the OAU Follow-up Committee in initiating preparations for the first meeting of the Bi-Regional that took place in Brussels in 17 November 2000. An important outcome of that meeting was the selection of eight priority subjects on which to launch the first phase of the implementation of the Cairo Plan of Action. The Second Meeting of the Group held last month in Addis Ababa has further advanced the process of implementing the Cairo Plan of Action. In particular, the meeting attacked, as a priority, the debt problem of Africa, the return of Africa's historical monuments and cultural goods and regional integration, including trade and integration of Africa into the global economy. The General Secretariat, with the cooperation of the RECs, ECA and ADB, will continue to support Africa's effort at implementing the Cairo Plan.

D. Industry and Energy

97. In pursuing the agenda of promoting the process of industrialization in our Continent, the General Secretariat working in collaboration with our partners such as the ECA, ADB, UNIDO, has

continued to implement the activities conceived within the framework of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry (CAMI) and also the follow-up activities of the Industrial Development Activities for Africa (IDAA I & II). The Secretariat in close cooperation with the Government of Cameroon and in collaboration with the ECA is preparing the 15th meeting of CAMI to be held in Yaounde, Cameroon, in November 2001. This meeting will mainly focus on:

- strategies for Africa's industrialization in the new millennium; and
- ensuring the sustainability of the Conference of African Ministers of Industry.

98. Regarding the efforts towards the establishment of the African Energy Commission, a progress report is being presented to Council separately. The Special Conference of African Ministers of Mines and Energy held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 2-3 December 2000 considered on its agenda, the Progress report on the establishment of the African Energy Commission. The draft convention of this Commission was earlier prepared by the meeting of African experts in Energy held in Cairo, Egypt, 22-25 May 2000. The African Ministers noted the progress that has been achieved and decided to meet again to consider the establishment of the Commission before the next OAU Summit. The meeting is scheduled to take place in May 2001.

E. Transport and Communication

99. Council may recall that the strategy for the development of transport, communications and tourism infrastructure and services has focused on strengthening cooperation with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the OAU specialized agencies and other African and international technical institutions in the sector. These organizations are regarded as the key actors and facilitators in the implementation of the specific provisions of the Abuja Treaty relating to the sector in their areas of competence and responsibility. In this regard, the General Secretariat has participated in the deliberations of the policy organs of COMESA, ECOWAS, SADC, AFCAC, UAR, AFRAA and UPU on matters of transport, communications and tourism.

100. These meetings enabled the General Secretariat to gauge the progress attained so far in the development of the sector as well as to discern the key issues and problems that must be addressed in order to enable the sector to play its integrating role in the continent. Some of the priority actions being pursued harmoniously include: commercialization and privatization of sector enterprises; promotion of traffic facilitation measures; promotion of the use of state-of-the-art IT systems in sector activities; liberalization of air transport markets; improvement of air safety including introduction of the modern CNS/ATM systems; postal sub-sector reforms; human resources development; and environmental protection.

101. At this point, it is relevant to make specific reference to the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision on the liberalization of air transport markets in Africa, which was endorsed by the 36th Ordinary Session of the Heads of State and Government. In pursuance of that Decision, the Monitoring Body, which is charged with the responsibility for follow-up and providing technical support to Member States on the implementation of the Decision, has been inaugurated. The Body held its first meeting under the chairmanship of the OAU in November 2000 in which it adopted its terms of reference and plan of action; prepared relevant annexes to the Decision; and began resource mobilization for its activities.

102. It should be noted that implementation of programmes and activities particularly of the OAU specialized agencies continue to be severely constrained by lack of resources as a result of the failure of Member States to honour their financial obligations. This problem has been repeatedly brought to the attention of the General Secretariat with appeals for assistance in sensitizing all the concerned on the plight of the agencies.

F. Afro-Arab Cooperation

103. Pursuant to decision CM/2158 (LXXII), consultations are under way with a view to re-energizing the Afro-Arab Cooperation Programme. The two Organizations will devote attention to elaborating a new programme which would be better adapted to present social and economic realities and to the new orientations of the two institutions.

104. Furthermore, the Secretariat has entered into consultation with the League of Arab States and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) for implementation of joint projects such as establishment of the Afro-Arab Cultural Institute, new guidelines for the Afro-Arab Business Week and preparations for the 5th Afro-Arab Trade Fair.

105. The First meeting of the Organizing Committee of the 5th Afro-Arab Trade Fair was held in Beirut, Lebanon, from 15 to 17 February. BADEA has undertaken to bear the cost of rental and furnishing of Exhibition Stands for all African LDCs which are not members of the Arab League, participating in the Fair.

106. Similarly, an Afro-Arab Forum on investment promotion in the agricultural sector is in the process of preparation and will be organized as part of the next convening of Afro-Arab Business Week.

G. Environment

107. Council would recall that in my two previous reports I reiterated the need for building adequate capacities at national, regional and Continental level for disaster management. I pointed out that the catastrophe caused by man-made and natural disasters is aggravated by our inability to mitigate the devastating effects. Indeed, the need for such a capacity is becoming more imperative as the frequency and magnitude of disasters increase and our inability is more exposed.

108. I am pleased to inform Council that in the consultations that have been held with Member States and partner institutions, the gravity of this problem is being appreciated. At the level of the General Secretariat, discussions are continuing with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) for holding the Regional Symposium on Disaster Management. Regrettably, due to some unavoidable constraints, the symposium has had to be postponed twice. However, efforts are being made to ensure that the symposium takes place before the middle of this year.

109. The General Secretariat has also pursued the task of revising the 1968 African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in the same collaborative manner. This follows the request of a number of Member States to revise and update this Convention so

that it accords with the current environmental realities of our Continent as well as with the recent international environmental laws. By working jointly with the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN) a first draft revision has been completed and reviewed. The outcome of this meeting will be made available to Member States for their views and comments in preparation for an experts meeting towards a final draft version later this year.

110. In terms of assisting Member States to combat drought and famine, there is no doubt that, despite the financial difficulties facing the Special Fund, the Fund constitutes a vital instrument for combating the scourges resulting from drought and famine on the Continent.

111. Since its establishment in July 1984, the Fund has appropriated a total of US\$32,000,000 as grants towards the funding of about 50 projects in 32 Member States.

112. During the reporting period, the 25th Ordinary Session of the Policy Committee of the Special Fund was held in Addis Ababa on 11 January 2001 to consider new requests as well as the reports of project evaluation missions.

113. At that session, the Committee noted that some beneficiary Member States did not comply with the terms and conditions of the agreements concluded between them and the OAU. Periodic reports on project implementation were not regularly transmitted to the General Secretariat.

114. Additionally, since the call for pledges of voluntary contributions to the Special Fund in Harare, Zimbabwe, in June 1997, no new contribution has been received. The only resources available to the Fund remain OAU's annual statutory contribution of US\$ 1,000,000.

115. At the international level, one instrument that was expected by Member States to be of major importance, was the Global Convention to Fight Desertification and to Mitigate the Effects of Drought. Considerable amount of enthusiasm and efforts were manifested by African countries during the negotiation of the Convention and the preparation of national and sub-regional action plans for its implementation. However, since the entry into force of the Convention

in 1994, the Mechanism has been cash trapped and unable to assist the most needy of the developing world, most of whom are in our Continent. Assistance provided by the developed country Parties to the Convention have so far tended to be generally directed towards the general environmental and natural resources issues instead of being focused and directed towards desertification and land degradation control as called for in the Convention. Despite repeated calls by African and other delegations of developing countries to the Conferences of the Parties, urging for the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) to create a window for the funding of desertification control activities, the developed country Parties who provide and manage the bulk of the financial resources for GEF operations, have manifested little or no flexibility to accommodate these concerns.

H. The HIV/AIDS Pandemic

116. The AIDS pandemic continues to wreck havoc among our people. The figures published by UNAIDS in November 2000 show no signs of decrease in the magnitude of the pandemic in our Continent. Around 26 million adults and children are now living with HIV/AIDS in Africa. 7 million young people aged between 15 and 24 years are infected with the virus, and sadly, around 600,000 children are being newly infected every year. It is reported that 95% of the 13.2 million children orphaned by AIDS are in Africa, where 40-70% of all beds in big cities hospitals are occupied by HIV patients in most severely affected countries.

117. The General Secretariat participated fully and actively at the African Development Forum that took place in Addis Ababa, from 3 to 7 December, 2000 addressing the AIDS pandemic. The overall objective was to launch a higher level of organization and commitment to a viable programme of sustained action against HIV/AIDS in Africa. The aim was to generate a vigorous and effective response to the AIDS crisis, through the active leadership of informed people.

118. The outcome of the Forum was to develop an African consensus and plan of action that articulates a broad strategy for surmounting the pandemic, and that includes all the major actors and stakeholders from all parts of society. It also outlines a plan of action for

implementing the strategy at national, sub-regional, and regional levels.

119. Council will recall that in July 2000, at the Lome Summit, our leaders took Decision AHG/Dec. 154 (XXXVI) to hold a Special Summit on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases in 2001. In this respect, the deliberations of the African Development Forum will serve as an important input to the Special Summit. During the six months, the General Secretariat has been working very closely with the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in preparing for this important Summit that is scheduled to take place from 24-27 April 2001, in Abuja, Nigeria.

120. I do believe that the Abuja Summit will be a Summit with a difference. The fate of decisions and commitments made in all other Summits – including the commitment to enhance the democratization process of our societies; the promotion of peace, security and stability; socio-economic transformation; the promotion of continental and economic integration as well as the establishment of the African Union – all these are intricately linked to the struggle against this deadly pandemic.

I. Combating Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking of Drugs in Africa

121. The problem of Illicit drug trafficking in, and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in Africa remains a source of concern and is also aggravating the socio-economic crisis which the continent has got to grapple with.

122. Council will recall that since 1998, with the financial and technical support from the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), a Drug Control Focal Point (DCFP) was established within the Secretariat, the OAU/UNDCP joint Project on capacity building for the implementation of the OAU Plan of Action on Drug Control. Council may wish to be informed that this joint project will come to an end in July, 2001.

123. Since my last report to the council last July, the OAU has been able to send two of its staff to Lagos, Nigeria for training in both Law Enforcement and Demand Reduction Programs, by a team of Experts; In addition, a seminar was given on Drugs and Sports, and the

development of a model on Preventive Drug Abuse Education Curricular for Africa is in progress. -

124. Council will also recall that at its last session in Lome, Togo, it had, by Decision CM/Dec.535 (LXXII), endorsed the recommendation of the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission for the convening of a meeting of experts on drugs. I am glad to inform Council that Nigeria has accepted to host the 4th meeting of Experts as well as the first meeting of Ministers responsible for drug issues, in Abuja in May 2001.

J. Women, Gender and Development

125. As I reported to Council during its last session, the issue of ageing and the aged has been given priority attention and a collaborative framework has been developed with Help-Age International to address this aspect. I am pleased to report that an Experts meeting to draw up an OAU Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing was organized in Kampala, Uganda, from 27 November to 1 December 2000. The meeting brought together various stakeholders from all over the Continent, and also involved UN Agencies, the Economic Commission for Africa; the African Development Bank; various non-governmental organizations; development partners; representatives of the aged, the disabled and the blind; as well as local and international press.

126. The draft OAU Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing which was developed by the Experts Meeting will be presented to the April 2001 Ordinary Session of the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission for consideration, and to the July 2001 Ordinary Sessions of the OAU Council of Ministers and Assembly of Heads of State and Government for consideration and appropriate action. The Policy Framework is intended to guide OAU Member States in developing national policies, strategies and plans of action on ageing.

127. The organization of the Experts Meeting was within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the OAU and HelpAge International in March 2000 for purposes of promoting issues affecting older persons and facilitating the elaboration and implementation of joint activities between the two Organizations in this area.

128. During the period under review, in furtherance of its mandate of promoting implementation of the African and Global Platforms for Action on Women, the General Secretariat participated in the Eastern Africa Regional Seminar on the Decade of Education which was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in December 2000. The Seminar was organized within the framework of Decision AHG/Dec. 136 (XXXV) adopted by the 35th Ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Algiers, Algeria, in July 1999. The Decision urges Regional Economic Communities to take the necessary steps to implement the Programme of Action in consultation with the OAU General Secretariat; it also appeals to African and International Agencies to support the implementation of the Programme.

129. The Seminar adopted a joint regional project to promote the empowerment of women through functional literacy and the education of the girl child in line with the Kampala Declaration on the Empowerment of Women Through Functional Literacy and the Education of the Girl-child. It is my firm belief that this regional collaborative effort will go a long way towards bringing women into the mainstream of continental developmental initiatives. I, therefore, urge OAU Member States, our social partners and other stakeholders to support this regional initiative.

130. The General Secretariat has also been working closely with the Inter-African Committee (IAC) on Harmful Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children, the Special Rapporteur on Women's Rights on the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the Secretary to the ACHPR to merge the "Additional Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women" (developed by ACHPR) with the "Draft OAU Convention on Harmful Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Girls" (developed by the IAC in collaboration with the OAU). The merged document will be discussed later at an Experts Meeting.

K. Youth

131. Council will recall that two years ago, at its 68th Ordinary Session, it adopted the Common African Position on Youth which was submitted as Africa's contribution to the First World Conference of Ministers of Youth which took place in Lisbon and Braga, Portugal, in

August 1998. The very active participation of the OAU and the Pan-African Youth Movement and African delegations in that conference inter alia resulted in a world youth event to be organized for the first time on the continent, namely: the 4th World Youth Forum which will take place in Dakar, Senegal, in August 2001. The OAU, the Pan-African Youth Movement, the Senegalese Youth Chapter and the United Nations Youth Section are working together to prepare for this all-important world gathering of Youths. The international preparatory committee for this youth forum of which the OAU is member, will hold its 4th and last meeting in Dakar in March 2001.

132. I would like to request Member States to provide all necessary facilities and resources (financial and material) to national youth organizations to enable them to participate actively in the 4th World Youth Forum.

133. I would also like to refer to another world event whose organization has also been entrusted to Africa. This is the 15th World Youth and Students Festival to be staged in Algiers, Algeria, in August 2001.

L. The African Child

134. I informed Council during the 72nd Session that the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child came into force in November 1999 with 15 Member States ratifying it. In conformity with Articles 32-45 of the Charter and the planning of the Secretariat, the Experts' Committee, which will ensure the promotion of the rights and welfare of the African child, should have been established during the 36th Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. However, due to the lack of sufficient number of candidates, that decision has been postponed to the 37th Summit. Until now, 21 States have ratified and 32 have signed the Charter. Out of the 21 which have ratified only 7 have submitted the names of their candidates to the Secretariat. I wish, therefore, to reiterate my call to those Member States who have not ratified the African Charter to ratify it, and to those who have adhered to it to submit their candidates to the Secretariat in order to facilitate the establishment of the Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child by the 37th Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

135. I wish also to draw the attention of Council that in implementation of Decision CM/Dec. 542 (LXXII) Rev.1 on the Global Partnership for Children, the Secretariat in collaboration with UNICEF and other stakeholders, is in the process of preparing for the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children to be held in September 2001.

136. I would like to bring to the attention of Council one of the issues jeopardizing the lives and future of our Children. This is the issue of children in armed conflict. It is becoming increasingly evident that more and more children are being compelled to bear arms and fight violent conflicts instead of going to school and leading a normal life of children. Within the context of conflicts, children are deprived of their physical, mental and emotional needs. They are traumatized by the conflicts they witness and experience, they become psychologically scarred, socially dislocated, physically and sexually abused, orphaned and deprived of education.

137. The most deplorable fact is that children have been compelled to become instruments of war, recruited or kidnapped to become child soldiers. It is therefore important that all our Member States adhere to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and endeavour to honour its provision. Meanwhile, the General Secretariat is consulting with the Special Committee on Children in Situations of Armed Conflict, whose chairperson is Honourable J. Mukwaya, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development of the Republic of Uganda, and also with the Government of the Republic of Egypt towards organizing the Second Continental Conference on this burning issue.

PART IV - POLITICAL ISSUES

A. The Democratic Republic of Congo

138. Since the meetings of the Council and Summit in Lome, Togo, the peace process in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continued to face difficulties emanating from the combined effects of continuous violations of the Ceasefire, the blockage of the National dialogue as provided for in the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and the problem linked to the deployment of Phase II of the UN Mission in the Congo (MONUC).

139. In order to give a new lease of life to the process, many initiatives were taken at the level of the Region and outside the Region. Thus at the invitation of President Frederick T.J. Chiluba, Coordinator of the Peace Process in the DRC, a Summit was held in Lusaka from 14 and 15 August 2000. It brought together the Leaders and Representatives of the Party Signatories of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and other SADC countries. I attended the meeting together with representatives of the UN and SADC.

140. The Summit reviewed the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement particularly the points related to the ceasefire violations, the Inter-Congolese Political dialogue and the deployment of MONUC. It should be recalled that by Note Verbale of 13 June 2000, the Government of the DRC, had expressed its position to the OAU stating that it was withdrawing its trust in Sir Ketumile Masire as the Facilitator of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue. On the other hand MONUC felt that it had not been offered the necessary freedom of Movement for a full deployment in the country particularly in the areas under the control of the DRC Government Forces. In addition the Congolese Government considered that the Lusaka Agreement should be revised in the light of the adoption of Resolution 1304 (2000) of 16 June 2000 by the UN Security Council.

141. In the communiqué issued at the end of its deliberations, the Summit reaffirmed its support for the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement as the only basis accepted by all the Parties for the resolution of the conflict in the DRC as well as for the disengagement and redeployment plan adopted in Kampala on 8 April 2000, as the most appropriate

solution to end the violations of the Ceasefire. It urged the DRC Government to cooperate fully with MONUC and meet the necessary conditions for its speedy deployment. Finally, with the exception of the DRC, the Summit reaffirmed its support for Sir Ketumile Masire as Facilitator of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue.

142. It was in that same spirit that a SADC Summit was held in Maputo, Mozambique, on 16th October 2000, under the Chairmanship of President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa. The Heads of State of the DRC, Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia, Mozambique, Zambia, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi participated in that Summit whose main objective was to provide momentum for the peace process. The Summit discussed the problems related to the disengagement of forces, the inability of MONUC to deploy its peacekeeping forces, the problem of the Interahamwe and Ex-FAR, the Inter-Congolese Dialogue, and the JMC. It took decisions, particularly on the implementation of the Kampala Plan for the disengagement and redeployment of forces, the establishment of a Committee of Defense Ministers from the DRC, Zimbabwe, Rwanda and South Africa to work out a Mechanism for dealing with the problem of the Interahamwe and the EXFAR and requested the Secretary-General to urgently appoint a new Chairman for the JMC.

143. Another Summit, bringing together the Heads of State of the Central Africa Region, was held in Kinshasa on 27 October 2000. The Heads of State of Angola, the Republic of the Congo, Gabon, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Prime Ministers of Equatorial Guinea and the Central African Republic participated in it. At the end of its discussions, the Summit expressed support for the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. It also expressed solidarity with the Congolese people and pledged to do everything to ensure the speedy restoration of peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Summit also demanded the unconditional withdrawal of the « aggressors » from the DRC.

144. The Leader of the Libyan Revolution, Colonel Muammar M. Gaddafi, also organized from 7 and 8 November 2000, in Sirte, a Summit in which the Presidents of Uganda, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Mali and the Representatives of Angola, Namibia, the DRC and South Africa participated. Among other decisions, the Summit

recommended the establishment of a neutral African force to be deployed in the DRC to guarantee the security of the borders of Rwanda and Uganda and to determine the size and number of the Interahamwe and other armed groups operating inside the DRC in order to dismantle and re-group them and work for their integration. According to the Sirte proposals, after the above operations, Rwanda and Uganda should withdraw their forces from the DRC followed by the withdrawal of all foreign forces from that country.

145. On 27 November 2000, another Summit bringing together the Presidents of Rwanda, Uganda, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique and the DRC, as well as the Minister of Defense of Angola, was held in Maputo under the Chairmanship of President Thabo Mbeki. The conference produced encouraging results. Indeed the Summit reached an Agreement on the implementation of the Kampala Plan for the disengagement and redeployment of forces and obtain from the DRC government assurances for the deployment of MONUC.

146. Indeed, it is to be recalled that the United Nations had laid down a certain number of conditions for the effective deployment of its forces including in particular, the need for a total Freedom of movement for its observers and its means of transportation. In particular, MONUC had complained that, one of the difficulties it faced was related to the fact that the DRC Government was limiting freedom of movement of its personnel particularly in the areas controlled by the Congolese Armed Forces.

147. In order to explain the position of the United Nations on the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement and with a view to working out with the Congolese Government, the ways and means to facilitate the deployment of MONUC, the UN Secretary-General appointed on 18 August 2000, the former President of Nigeria, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, as his Special Envoy to the DRC, with the mandate of holding consultations with the Congolese authorities and the other leaders on the Region. Within that framework, he was in the DRC from 20 to 24 August 2000 and was received on 22 August 2000, by the President Laurent Désiré Kabila. On the next day, 23 August 2000, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and of Interior jointly informed the UN Special Representative of the intention of the Government authorize

the deployment of UN Battalions in the areas of Mbandaka, Katanga, Kindu and Kisangani. It was also agreed that the UN could deploy in Kinshasa, a small military Unit to support the MONUC Headquarters. However, at the same time, the Government rejected the deployment of the special logistics units from one contributing country which action further delayed the deployment of the MONUC troops. The same day, another Minister of the Government announced publicly the suspension by the DRC of the implementation of the Lusaka Agreement and called for direct negotiations between the DRC, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda under the auspices of the UN and the OAU and direct talks between the Government and the rebels.

148. It was that context that while presenting his fourth Report to the Security Council dated 21 September 2000, the UN Secretary-General stressed the lack of progress in the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement by the Parties. The Council, at the end of the deliberations of its August 2000 Session, adopted Resolution 1316 (2000) of 23 August 2000, authorizing the extension of the mandate of MONUC by two months only, until 15 October 2000. On the eve of the expiry of that extension, the Council, noting the same fact, on 13 October 2000, renewed the mandate of MONUC for a new period of two months until 15 December 2000 with the hope that the Parties would take advantage of that period to show their good will and commitment to the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement.

149. In a letter dated 5 October 2000, President Frederick Chiluba also informed the Secretary-General of his concern about the continuous violations of the Ceasefire Agreement which were a real threat to the peace process and expressed his fears about the renewal of the mandate of MONUC which was to be discussed in the Security Council at its Session of 13 October 2000.

150. The agreement reached in Maputo by the Heads of State, enabled the Joint Military Commission and the Political Committee to convene in Lusaka on 17 and 18 November and 29 November 2000 respectively to adopt the Sub-Plans of disengagement and deployment necessary for the implementation of the Kampala Plan. The adoption of those sub-Plans, whose official signing by the Army Chiefs of Staff of the Parties, was held on 6 December 2000 in Harare, was aimed at paving the way for the disengagement of each force on the ground by at

least 15 kms in order to establish Disengagement Zone (DZ) of at least 30 kms between the belligerent forces.

151. The adoption of the Sub-Plans of disengagement and redeployment in Harare on 6 December 2000 and the commitment by the Parties during the second Maputo Summit to implement the Kampala Plan, made it possible to the Security Council to adopt, at the end of the consideration of the Fifth Report of the UN Secretary-General on the DRC, Resolution 1322 (2000) of 14 December 2000, which extended for six months, that is up to 15 June 2001. By that same Resolution, the Security Council called upon the UN Secretary-General to consult with the OAU and all the Parties concerned on the possibility of organizing in February 2001, a follow-up meeting the signatories of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and the members of the Security Council. The Resolution called once more for the withdrawal from the territory of the DRC of the Uganda and Rwandans Forces and other foreign forces in conformity with Resolution 1304 (2000) of 16 June 2000 and the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement.

152. At its seventy second Session at Ambassadorial level, held on 8 December 2000, the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, while expressing its concern about the continued violation of the ceasefire Agreement urged the Parties to comply with the provisions of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. It « expressed satisfaction at the Disengagement Plans for the Redeployment of Forces adopted by the JMC on 28 November 2000, approved by the Political Committee on 29 November 2000 and signed by the Chiefs of Staff of the Parties on 6 December 2000 in Harare ».

153. Since the adoption of the disengagement and redeployment of forces, in Kampala on 8 April 2000, the Joint Military Commission, could not make substantial progress in its work. At its 8th Plenary Session, held on 26 and 27 July 2000, the Joint Military Commission was not able either to consider the Reports of the Ceasefire violations nor to prepare and adopt the Sub-Plans for the disengagement and redeployment of forces supplementing the Kampala Plans.

154. Since September 2000 the Joint Military Commission was also facing a financial crisis due to the depletion of the funds contributed

by the OAU and the donors. Indeed, the General Secretariat received from the Commission, many letters drawing attention to the desperate financial situation of the JMC and the threat of the suspension of its activities. In fact, the members of the Regional JMCs and the OAU neutral investigators had not received their allowances for two months while the latter were to return to their respective countries within the framework of the tradition of the normal rotation of OAU Military Observers after one year of service in the field.

155. At its 70th Ordinary Session, held at Ambassadorial level, on 2 October 2000 in Addis Ababa, I informed the members of the Central Organ of the poor financial situation of the Joint Military Commission and the general situation of the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. The Central Organ expressed its concern about the lack of progress in the implementation of the Agreement and appealed to the Parties to cooperate with efforts to ensure its implementation. In that regard, the Central Organ urged the Parties and particularly the Government of DRC to cooperate fully with the United Nations for the speedy deployment of MONUC and also to cooperate with the efforts for the convening of the Congolese Political negotiations. Finally, the Central Organ expressed its concern about the financial situation of the JMC and appealed to the OAU Member States and the International Community for a financial and logistic support for its activities.

156. In his letter dated 5 October 2000, President Frederick Chiluba also drew my attention to the deplorable financial situation of the JMC. In order to enable the JMC to pay the neutral investigators who were about to leave as well as the other members of the Regional JMCs and enable the JMC to carry out some of its operational activities, I authorized the release from the OAU Peace Fund, of an amount of US\$ 400,000. On 9 November 2000 in Lusaka a solemn ceremony was held in honor of the OAU neutral observers who, on that occasion, received medals and certificates for their service to the OAU.

157. Subsequently, I also received a letter from Honourable Stan Mudenge, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zimbabwe, and Current Chairman of the Political Committee, drawing my attention to the same financial problems of the JMC. In his letter dated 15 December 2000, the Minister referred to the non-payment of

the salaries of the members of the JMC and a debt of US\$ 320,000. Finally, he urgently appealed to the OAU and its Member States for contributions to be paid to the JMC to maintain its activities.

158. Considering the urgent nature of the situation, I wrote to all Member States through the Ministers of Foreign Affairs to inform them of the financial situation of the JMC and request them for contributions in order to enable it pursue its activities. The General Secretariat also informed the traditional donors of the OAU about the same problems.

159. In the meantime, I concluded the consultations I had initiated since the Lusaka Summit of 14 and 15 August 2000 as part of the efforts to appoint a new Chairman for the Joint Military Commission. Subsequently, the Parties accepted the nomination of Brig. Gen. Njuki Mwaniki of the Kenya Armed Forces whose appointment I officially announced on 23 January 2001. From 23 to 26 January 2001, the new Chairman undertook a familiarization visit to the OAU Headquarters, and had working sessions with the Departments of Political Affairs and Administration and Finance. As this report was being prepared, Brig. Gen. Mwaniki was getting ready to undertake further consultations with the Parties concerned before taking up his post in Lusaka.

160. While efforts were made in the search for a solution to the conflict in the DRC the whole world learnt, on 16 January, of the attempt on the life of President Laurent Désiré Kabila. His untimely death was officially announced on 18 January 2001 by the authorities of the DRC. I, on the same day, issued a statement in which I condemned the assassination of President Laurent Désiré Kabila, which I considered as a senseless and tragic act which was in total violation of the principles of the Charter of the OAU. I appealed to the Congolese leaders and people for calm and expressed the hope that the tragic incident would not further complicate the efforts aimed at seeking a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in the DRC through the implementation of Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. Finally, I appealed to the Parties concerned to recommit themselves to the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement which aims at bringing about peace, security and reconciliation in the DRC as well as in the rest of the Great Lakes Region.

161. The official funeral of President Kabila took place in Kinshasa on 23 January 2001. Since I was then on another official mission, I requested Ambassador Mahamat Habib Doutoum, Assistant Secretary-General, to represent me at the funeral which was attended by several African Heads of State as well as many Ministers and other Senior representatives.

162. After the death of the President Kabila, the Government of the DRC announced the appointment of Major General Joseph Kabila, as his successor. The Transitional Parliament endorsed, on 24 January 2001, that appointment and the inauguration of the new President was held on 26 January 2001 in Kinshasa.

163. The situation of the DRC was examined during the meeting of the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution held at the level of Ambassadors on 29 January 2001 in Addis Ababa. On that occasion, the Central Organ strongly condemned the assassination of President Laurent Désiré Kabila, which it considered to be a flagrant violation of the principles of the OAU, and Decision 142 on unconstitutional changes adopted by the 35th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Algiers in July 1999. It further condemned the use of force as a means of settling political differences.

164. The Central Organ expressed the hope that this painful event would not further complicate the efforts made to find a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in the DRC through the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and welcomed the encouraging steps being taken to give new momentum to the peace process. It commended the pledge of the new President of the DRC to work towards a peaceful solution to the conflict through dialogue.

165. The Central Organ reaffirmed its support for the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement as the sole basis accepted by all the Parties for the resolution of the conflict in the DRC and expressed satisfaction at the efforts made by the President of the Togolese Republic, current Chairman of the OAU, and commended his initiative to convene, as soon as possible, a meeting of the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention Management and Resolution at Summit level, to consider the situation in the DRC. It also reiterated

its support to the efforts of President Frederick Chiluba of Zambia, Chairman of the Regional Initiative, and other leaders and encouraged them to persevere in their efforts aimed at finding an early and lasting solution to the conflict, in conformity with the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement.

166. The Central Organ called on the International Community to extend assistance to address the humanitarian situation in the DRC and the problems of the Congolese refugees in neighbouring countries and appealed to the Parties signatory to the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement to re-commit themselves to implement the said Agreement in all its aspects and to comply with all its provisions, particularly in implementing the Plan and sub-Plans for the disengagement and redeployment of forces in the DRC and the deployment of the MONUC.

167. Finally, the Central Organ reiterated its appeal to the UN to take all the necessary measures for the speedy deployment of Phase II of MONUC and appealed once again urgently to the Member States and the International Community to give political support to the Peace Process in the DRC and financial support for the activities of the JMC.

168. As this report was being finalized, efforts aimed at giving a new impetus to the peace process were being deployed. I, on my part, on behalf of the OAU, shall continue to do my utmost to continue support and promote the peace process.

B. Burundi

169. Council will recall that at its 72nd Ordinary Session held in Lome, Togo from 7 to 12 July 2000, I briefed it on the evolving situation in Burundi. I indicated that there were encouraging signs, as evidenced by the significant progress made in the Arusha peace process under the leadership of the Facilitator, President Nelson Mandela. Council after consideration of my report adopted Decision CM/2164 (LXXII) by which it among other things, called on the parties to continue to co-operate with the Facilitator to ensure the success of the negotiations; strongly urged the armed groups to fully and effectively participate in the negotiations, so as to facilitate a speedy conclusion of a ceasefire agreement and a comprehensive peace accord; condemned the acts of violence perpetrated by the armed groups against innocent civilian populations and personnel of

humanitarian agencies; encouraged the Government of Burundi to complete the dismantling of the regroupment camps by the end of July 2000, in accordance with the commitment it has already made to this effect; and urged the international community to resume co-operation with Burundi, both during the current phase of the peace process and during the post-conflict period, thereby helping to promote the reconstruction and development of that country.

170. During the period under review, the positive trend observed in the pursuit of the negotiations was maintained. As a matter of fact, the peace negotiations continued from 17 to 22 July in Arusha, punctuated by a Summit of the Heads of State of the Region on 19 July. The ultimate objective of these negotiations was to get the parties to accept the Draft Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi, fruit of the various rounds of discussion among the Burundian parties. The document was later formally and officially submitted to the parties for their views and comments. No doubt there were still some outstanding issues which required more in-depth consultations, such as ceasefire, transition leadership and electoral system.

171. The 19 July Summit, convened at the initiative of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Regional Initiative, Presidents Yoweri Museveni of Uganda and Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania was initially designed to grace and give special glamour to the signing ceremony of the Agreement slated originally for 20 July. In the end, it turned out to be a meeting for the Facilitator to read out his report on the progress made in the peace process, discuss this process and listen to the key players on pending issues.

172. President Mandela gave an overview of the efforts deployed towards the peace process and drew the attention of the Summit to the main points of the Draft Agreement. He also stated that on account of the fact that certain issues remained unresolved, particularly leadership of the transition and ceasefire, the signing of the peace agreement had to be postponed to 28 August 2000.

173. Regarding the issue of leadership of the transition in particular, the Facilitator held the view that a decision devolved on the people of Burundi who should express themselves through their political parties and armed groups. On ceasefire, the Facilitator indicated that

it was hard to imagine any signing of a peace agreement while violence continued. He told the Summit that he had written to the leaders of the armed groups on the matter, and was still awaiting their response.

174. The Heads of State and Government expressed satisfaction at the document prepared by the Facilitation which they saw as constituting a solid basis for accomplishment of the set objectives. They asked the Facilitation to take all appropriate steps to resolve the pending issues, while expressing their firm willingness to assist the Facilitation. The Heads of State and Government unanimously recognized the fact that the response to the question of leadership of the transition should be provided by the people of Burundi, and that the issue should be resolved in the best interest of Burundians.

175. During that meeting, I held intensive consultations with the Heads of State and Government, as well as with representatives of the International Community, notably President Benjamin Mkapa, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, President Pierre Buyoya, and the Belgian Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs who had also come to Arusha. These consultations were aimed at finding the best approach to move the peace process forward.

176. The Arusha Summit which took place on 28 August 2000 witnessed the signing of the Draft Agreement by 16 parties, with a number of reservations by some of the parties. This event was the culmination of the immense efforts deployed, first by former President Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, and then by the new Facilitator President Nelson Mandela and the International Community including the OAU, the UN and the European Union. It was also the outcome of determined negotiations among Burundians who had to confront themselves on critical issues affecting the future of their country.

177. Among the several consultations I had with various personalities, I would like to make special mention of my talks with President Buyoya and then with Dr. Jean Minani to whom I reiterated the need for dialogue and the importance of the spirit of compromise in the higher interest of their country, Burundi.

178. The high-level personalities present at the Summit also invested considerable effort to harmonize the positions of the different Burundian parties, and reconcile these positions thereby arriving at

an acceptable compromise which made possible the signing of the Peace Agreement.

179. The signing of the Peace Agreement was welcomed with much satisfaction by the International Community and with great relief by the people of Burundi. The Government, the National Assembly and the other signatory parties wasted no time to initiate a sensitization campaign designed to explain to the populations the importance of the Agreement concluded in Arusha and the need to strive for consolidation of what had been achieved.

180. However, while it should be recognized that the signing of the Agreement constituted a positive step towards a definitive solution to the conflict in Burundi, it is equally needful to appreciate that a number of issues still remained unresolved, including the critical question of cease-fire.

181. It should be mentioned that, for various specific reasons, four political parties did not sign the Arusha Peace Agreement, namely: RADDES, PSD, ANADDE and PIT. The mediator had to make additional effort to get these parties to accede to the Agreement. On 5 September 2000, the PSD agreed to sign the Peace Agreement in Dar-es-Salaam. The Mediator continued his consultations with the three other Parties (ANADDE, PIT and RADDES) as well as with the Armed Groups, namely: CNDD —FDD and PALIPEHUTU–FNL. These negotiations led to the convening of another Summit in Nairobi on 20 September 2000 with the objective of convincing the three Parties to formally sign the Peace Agreement and consider the possibility of suspending hostilities between the Armed Groups and the Government in order to establish the conducive conditions for a cease-fire agreement.

182. During the consultation held on the eve of the Summit with the Burundi Government delegation and its army on the one hand, and with the Armed Groups (CNDD and FNL) on the other, the Government delegation declared its readiness to discuss with the Armed Groups either severally or all together in order to reach agreement on cessation of hostilities as a prelude to the negotiation of a definitive cease-fire. For their part, the Armed Groups felt that it was not yet time for that kind of meeting and discussion, and that before they did

so, the 1992 Constitution had to be reinstated, the regroupment camps dismantled and political prisoners released.

183. Nonetheless, we were all encouraged by the formal signing of the Agreement by the three Parties that had not yet done so; namely: RADDES, PIT and ANADDE.

184. During the closed session on 20 September, the Heads of State and Government conferred with the various delegations including the Armed Groups. At the end of the meeting, the Summit welcomed the signing of the Peace Agreement by ANADDE, PIT and RADDES and commended them for that crucial act. It regretted that after having entered into negotiations on cessation of hostilities, the Burundian Army and the two Armed Groups, (FDD and FNL) were unable to declare a cessation of hostilities with a view to engaging in negotiations for a cease-fire agreement which is of capital importance for implementation of the Peace Agreement. The Summit therefore appealed to the parties concerned to sign a cease-fire agreement within 30 days. A Communiqué was issued in which the Summit welcomed the signing of the Peace Agreement by the three Parties, (ANADDE, PIT and RADDES). It appealed to the parties in conflict to declare immediate suspension of hostilities pending the conclusion of a cease-fire agreement. The Communiqué stated that the Summit reserved the right to take any action or measure deemed necessary in agreement with the United Nations and the International Community, to put a stop to the cycle of violence. Lastly, the Summit urged the Parties to settle the issue of leadership of the transition at the next meeting of the signatories of the Agreement due to be held in Arusha on 25 September 2000 to open the way for implementation of the Peace Agreement.

185. The Mediator therefore convened another meeting of the signatories to the Peace Agreement to consider the issue of cease-fire and leadership of the transition. These questions had not been discussed earlier, on account of the absence of the Armed Groups and the divergent or contending interests of the Parties signatory to the Agreement regarding leadership of the transition. Participants reached an understanding on the composition of the Agreement Implementation Monitoring Committee which will include a representative of each of the Signatory Parties, six Burundians known

for their moral integrity, patriotism and commitment to peace who would be appointed by the Signatory Parties, apart from the political parties and a representative of each of the following organizations and structures: UN, OAU, the Regional Peace Initiative on Burundi and Donors.

186. The meeting also decided to establish a select Standing Executive Council of not more than 11 members from the Agreement Implementation Monitoring Committee, to which the latter may delegate such powers as it deems appropriate.

187. In view of the fact that the Nairobi meeting of 20 September and the Arusha meeting held from 25 to 29 September 2000, had not met the planned objectives, namely, cessation of hostilities as a pre-condition for a definitive cease-fire, the Mediator organized another meeting of the Parties signatory to the Peace Agreement in Arusha from 25 to 29 November 2000, with the following Agenda:

- the time table for implementation of the Agreement;
- the Transition Institutions and the leadership;
- technical corrections and other shortcomings contained in the Agreement; and
- finalization of proposals for setting up the Agreement Implementation Monitoring Committee.

188. At its 70th Ordinary session held on 2 October 2000, the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution reviewed the evolving situation in Burundi. On that occasion, it welcomed the signing, on 28 August 2000, of the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi, urged the armed groups to sign the Agreement as quickly as possible, put an end to hostilities and engage in substantive negotiation with a view to concluding a ceasefire agreement. The Central Organ also expressed concern over the continued violence, and urged the armed groups to refrain from attacking the civilian population. Lastly, the Central Organ congratulated the Burundian parties for the successes so far achieved, and encouraged them to ensure speedy implementation of the Agreement within the framework of the Monitoring Committee.

189. However, after three days of intense debate, the meeting could not agree on the appointment of the Burundian Civil Society representatives in the Agreement Implementation Monitoring Committee (IMC) nor on the choice of Arusha as host for meetings of IMC, pending creation of the requisite conditions for installation of its Headquarters in Bujumbura.

190. During the official launching of the Agreement Implementation Monitoring Committee on 27 November 2000, the Mediator President Nelson Mandela officially announced the appointment of Ambassador Berhanu Dinka by the UN Secretary-General as Chairman of the Committee in accordance with the pertinent provisions of Protocol 5 (Guarantees) of the Agreement.

191. The meeting did not achieve the expected results. Establishment of the Agreement Implementation Monitoring Committee was beyond doubt, a significant achievement; however, the discussions on issues related to timetable, technical amendments and, in particular, transition, were not conclusive.

192. I would like to mention, finally, that a Donors' Conference for assistance to Burundi was held in Paris on 11 – 12 December 2000. The OAU played an active part in this meeting. The International Donors pledged to provide some US\$ 440 million of aid to Burundi to enable it meet its humanitarian and emergency needs. The Donors made a commitment to increase their aid and assistance over and above this first installment if the peace process continues to make progress and if Burundi puts in place a solid programme of economic development. This assistance provided for Burundi a window of opportunity which should bring about stabilization and boost of the chances of success of the on-going peace process. The priority sectors to be addressed include reintegration of refugees, AIDS control, demobilization and reintegration, and poverty reduction.

193. Furthermore, at the initiative of President El Hadj Omar Bongo of Gabon, a meeting bringing together President Pierre Buyoya, the late President Laurent Desire Kabila of the DRC and Col. Jean Bosco Ndayikengurukiye leader of the CNDD-FDD, was convened in Libreville, Gabon on 9 January 2001. This meeting, for the first time, made it possible for President Buyoya and the CNDD-FDD leader to

have face-to-face discussion. The major issues on the Agenda included ceasefire and withdrawal of Burundian troops from the DRC. The Summit directed both countries' Defense Ministers to pursue consideration of these critical issues in the light of each country's concerns and to come up with appropriate solutions to improve relations between Burundi and the DRC, and in particular, ensure the accession of the FDD to the peace process through negotiation for a ceasefire.

194. The progress in the peace process should normally translate into significant improvement in the security and living condition of the people. Unfortunately, that does not seem to be the case. Insecurity prevails in several parts of the country, and violence is the order of the day in many provinces. Fratricidal clashes are taking place in Makamba province south of the country as well as in some provinces in the hinterland and in the precincts of Bujumbura. The recent months have witnessed an intensification of deadly ambushes laid by the rebellion along major roads, designed specifically for military convoys and civilian transport vehicles.

195. The worsening security situation has had disastrous impact on the humanitarian situation. The national economy in complete ruins is in need of revival so as to restore the social fabric and get on with the war against poverty, famine and the increasing prevalence of endemic diseases such as cholera and malaria which are ravaging the country.

196. Despite the intransigence of the armed groups and their reluctance to join the peace and reconciliation process, and the lack of consensus around the question of who should lead the transition, there are high hopes that a lasting solution will be found to the Burundian conflict. The Mediator, President Nelson Mandela, is working relentlessly to resolve these issues on which the Burundian political class have neither reached a compromise nor a consensus.

197. The setting up of the Agreement Implementation Monitoring Committee constitutes a significant step towards its implementation. The ratification of the Agreement by the National Assembly of Burundi on 30 November 2000 is an important step in the right direction and could bring the parties to demonstrate a spirit of dialogue and compromise necessary for resolution of the contentious issues.

198. The Agreement Implementation Monitoring Committee held its second session in Arusha from 17 to 20 January 2001 to draft its rules of procedure, appoint the members of the Executive Council of the Committee and draw up a minimum work programme, pending the signing of a ceasefire agreement and the designation of the leader of the transition which is the prerogative of the Burundian parties. After four days of debate, the Committee came up with the rules of procedure, without however resolving certain details such as the composition, date and venue of the first meeting of the Executive Council.

199. The Committee mandated its Chairman to submit a request to the signatory parties to review upward (from 11 to 14) the membership of the Executive Council.

200. The peace process has reached a crucial stage and gives rise to optimism which strengthens the International Community in its support, thanks to the effective participation of the Heads of State and Government in the various Summits.

201. The OAU will continue to closely follow the peace process in Burundi. Never before has that country been so close to peace. With a little more effort, political will and sacrifice on the part of the parties to the conflict, the pending issues will be resolved.

C. Ethiopia-Eritrea Conflict

202. During the Lome Sessions, I briefed Council and Summit on the efforts exerted by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika with the view to achieving a comprehensive and lasting peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia. In particular, I informed Council and Summit of the signing in Algiers, on 18 June 2000, of an Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities between the two countries. This Agreement, which brought to an end one of the most devastating conflicts facing the continent, was the culmination of the sustained efforts deployed by the OAU since June 1998, with the active support of its partners, the USA, the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU), initially within the framework of the High Level Delegation led by President Blaise Compaore and, since the July 1999 Algiers Summit, under the leadership of the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

203. It is to be recalled that, under the Agreement, the two parties committed themselves to an immediate cessation of hostilities. The Agreement provided for the deployment by the UN, under the auspices of the OAU, of a peacekeeping mission and the establishment by the OAU and the UN, with the agreement of the two Parties, of a Military Co-ordination Commission (MCC) that will co-ordinate and resolve issues relating to the mandate of the peacekeeping mission. In order to facilitate the deployment of the peacekeeping mission, the return of the civilian population as well as the delimitation and demarcation of the common border, the parties committed themselves to undertake demining activities.

204. The Agreement also provided for the redeployment of Ethiopian troops from positions taken after 6 February 1999 and which were not under Ethiopian administration before 6 May 1998. It further stipulated that the Eritrean forces shall remain at a distance of 25 km from positions to which Ethiopian forces shall redeploy - this zone of separation is referred to as the "Temporary Security Zone (TSZ)". The OAU and the UN committed themselves to guarantee the respect for the security commitments entered into by the two parties.

205. Furthermore, during the discussions on the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, the two parties agreed that negotiations on the pending issues, in particular delimitation/demarcation and compensation, should start immediately after the signing.

206. The Lome Summit expressed satisfaction at the signing of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities. It paid tribute to President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, outgoing Chairman of the OAU, and the OAU Secretary-General for the sustained efforts they made to promote a peaceful solution to the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and expressed its appreciation to the UN, the European Union, the United States of America and other members of the international community for the support they continue to give to the efforts of the OAU. The Summit encouraged the two parties to pursue the negotiations under the auspices of the OAU, in order to reach a lasting and definitive peace. It requested the UN Security Council to take the necessary measures for the speedy deployment of the peacekeeping mission provided for in the Agreement of the Cessation of Hostilities. It further requested Member States to continue to give their support and

assistance to the efforts of the OAU, particularly to enable it assume its responsibilities in the implementation of the Agreement. Finally, it expressly requested President Bouteflika to continue pursuing his role with a view to reaching a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict between the two brotherly countries.

207. I am pleased to report that, immediately after the Summit, and upon the request of the Parties, the OAU and the UN took the required steps for the implementation of the Agreement. In this regard, the Central Organ, meeting at its 68th Ordinary Session in Addis Ababa, on 28 July 2000, authorized me to deploy military and civilian personnel to enable the OAU to assume its role effectively. Pursuant to that decision, an OAU Liaison Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (OLMEE) was established to assist the UN and cooperate with it in the implementation of the Agreement. The mission is composed of 6 capital liaison officers contributed by Algeria, Nigeria and South Africa, and Non Commissioned Officers (communication technicians) from Kenya and Tunisia. The Mission is led by Brigadier General Peter A. Blay from Ghana, who also represents the OAU on the MCC.

208. The liaison officers have been deployed in Addis Ababa and Asmara, starting from September and October 2000, respectively. Since their deployment, they have established close contacts with the military headquarters of the two parties, and have been participating in the regular tripartite meetings of the representatives of the host countries, the UN and the OAU. They also undertake regular operational visits to the border sectors. I wish to express my gratitude to the contributing countries. I wish also to pay tribute to those of our partners who have contributed financially to the funding of OLMEE.

209. On its part, the UN Security Council adopted, on 31 July 2000, resolution 1312 (2000) on the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) consisting of up to 100 military observers and the necessary civilian support staff until 31 January 2001, in anticipation of a peacekeeping operation that was subject to future Council authorization. The mission was, inter-alia, mandated to establish and maintain liaison with the parties; to establish and put into operation the mechanism for verifying the cessation of hostilities; and to prepare for the establishment of the MCC. The Security Council also welcomed the discussions between

the Secretariats of the United Nations and the OAU on cooperation in the implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. It called on the Parties to provide the mission with the access, assistance, support and protection required for the performance of its duties, and facilitate the deployment of mine action experts. It stressed the importance of rapid delimitation and demarcation of the common border between the two parties.

210. Subsequently, on 15 September 2000, the Security Council adopted resolution 1320 (2000), authorizing the deployment, within UNMEE, of up to 4,200 troops, including up to 220 military observers, until 15 March 2001, with a mandate to, inter-alia:

- monitor the cessation of hostilities;
- assist, as appropriate, in ensuring the observance of the security commitments agreed by the Parties;
- monitor and verify the redeployment of Ethiopian troops from positions taken after 6 February 1999 which were not under Ethiopian administration before 6 May 1998;
- monitor the TSZ to assist in ensuring compliance with the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities;
- chair the MCC ; and
- coordinate and provide technical assistance for humanitarian mine action activities in the TSZ and areas adjacent to it.

211. In that resolution, the Security Council called on the Parties to take whatever action may be necessary to ensure UNMEE access, safety and freedom of movement. It encouraged all States and international organizations to assist and participate in the long-term tasks of reconstruction and development, as well as in the economic and social recovery of Ethiopia and Eritrea. The Security Council emphasized that the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities links the termination of the UN peacekeeping mission with the completion of the process of delimitation and demarcation of the Ethiopian-Eritrean border. It called on the Parties to continue negotiations and conclude without delay a comprehensive and final peace settlement. Finally, the Council decided that, in considering the renewal of the mandate of UNMEE, it will take into account whether the Parties have made

adequate progress on the delimitation/ demarcation of their border and on the achievement of a comprehensive and final peace settlement.

212. The deployment, in three consecutive phases, of the UN personnel, started in August, with the consecutive deployment of capital liaison officers and UN military observers. This was followed by the deployment of the bulk of the troops of the peacekeeping mission and of the logistic support units. The whole exercise was expected to be completed in January 2001. On 10 October, 2000, the UN Secretary-General appointed Ambassador Legwaila Joseph Legwaila of Botswana as his Special Representative. The military component of the mission is led by Major General Patrick Cammaert of Netherlands, who assumed duties on 4 November 2000.

213. Against this background, the 71st ordinary session of the Central Organ at Ambassadorial level, held on 23 November 2000, commended the UN Security Council and other members of the wider international community for their continued support towards the implementation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, particularly the deployment of the peacekeeping mission. It also commended the two parties for their cooperation with the UN and the OAU, and encouraged them to persevere in that direction.

214. I would like to stress the very close cooperation and working relations established between OLMEE and UNMEE in the implementation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities. In particular, the OAU and the UN have endeavoured to ensure the smooth functioning of the MCC.

215. So far, the MCC has held two meeting in Nairobi, on 2 and 28 December 2000, respectively. During these meetings, progress was made regarding the improvement of the freedom of movement for UNMEE personnel and the communication to UNMEE of information on known and suspected minefields. This has facilitated the process of deployment of the peacekeeping mission.

216. However, I would like to report that during the last meeting of the MCC difficulties were encountered regarding the definition of the Temporary Security Zone. Indeed, the proposed UNMEE Temporary Security Zone maps could not be agreed upon.

217. In a letter sent to me on 2 January 2001, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi indicated that it appeared to him that Eritrea wants to renegotiate the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities. He stated that the issues that Eritrea is raising with respect to Zalambessa and Badme - including the claims that those areas fell within Eritrea jurisdiction in the pre-May 6, 1998 period - are baseless and made a mockery of the findings of the OAU Committee of Ambassadors. He reiterated that Ethiopia will continue to be scrupulous in its commitment to the full implementation of the Agreement. He stated that he is confident the guarantors and witnesses of the Agreement will not allow Eritrea to continue with the illusion that renegotiations by stealth of the Agreement "will be possible. Eritrea should not be allowed neither to jeopardize the peace process, nor to succeed in undermining the credibility of those who have pledged to ensure its success".

218. On his part, President Isaias Afwerki, in a letter sent to the UN Secretary-General on 8 January 2001, indicated that the Ethiopian redeployment plans presented to the UN, did not reflect the true positions held by Ethiopia prior to 6 May 1998. He further indicated that the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities does not allow Ethiopia to occupy areas where it was not present prior to the conflict. He stressed that Ethiopia's declaration that it will indefinitely postpone the redeployment of its troops from sovereign Eritrean territory is a clear violation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities. He finally indicated that the claims made Ethiopia on areas it has never been before the conflict will prevent the displaced people from returning to their homes and prolong their suffering.

219. As this Introductory Note was being finalized, efforts were underway to resolve this problem in conformity with the commitments made by parties and the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities. In this regard, I have maintained close contacts with the UN, the USA and the EU.

220. Immediately after the signing of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, the Parties started, in Algiers, talks at ministerial level on the pending issues, in particular delimitation/demarcation and compensation, with the view to achieving a comprehensive and lasting

peace agreement. This was followed by an expert level proximity talks between the two parties in Washington from 3 to 6 July 2000.

221. The proximity talks resumed in Algiers from 23 to 27 October 2000. The delegations of the two parties were led by their respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Seyoum Mesfin for Ethiopia and Mr. Said Ali Abdalla for Eritrea. The negotiations were chaired by Minister Abdelkader Messahel, who represented President A. Bouteflika. The OAU Secretariat, the USA and the EU were represented by Assistant Secretary-General Said Djinnit, Mr. Anthony Lake and Senator Rino Serri, respectively. The UN was represented by the Officer who was then in charge of the peacekeeping mission.

222. Regarding substantive discussions, following consultations among the facilitators, a document containing proposals on the mechanisms for the resolution of the outstanding issues was submitted to the two parties. Significant progress was made during those talks on the principles that should guide the peace process and on the mechanisms to be set up in pursuance of the settlement process. It was agreed to maintain contacts with the two parties in order to finalize the framework for the settlement of the conflict.

223. As a follow-up to the Algiers discussions, a delegation of the facilitators, led by Minister Abdelkader Messahel and which included Mr. Anthony Lake, visited Addis Ababa and Asmara from 4 to 7 November 2000. On that occasion, discussions were held with the leaders of the two countries, with the view of narrowing the gap between them and considering ways and means of speedily reaching a comprehensive and lasting peace agreement. This mission was followed by another mission to the region by the same delegation from 17 to 18 November 2000.

224. Subsequent consultations were conducted with the parties which culminated with the signing, in Algiers, on 12 December 2000, of a peace agreement between the two countries, during a solemn ceremony presided over by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. Eritrea and Ethiopia were represented by President Isaias and Prime Minister Meles who signed the Agreement on behalf of their respective countries. President Bouteflika, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, EU Special Envoy Rino Serri and myself signed the Agreement as witnesses.

225. The ceremony was also attended by President Gnassingbe Eyadema, Current Chairman of our Continental Organization, and President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria. In the statements made during the ceremony, the witnesses and the other leaders stressed the need for the strict observance of the provisions of the Agreement, and urged the international community to provide Ethiopia and Eritrea with the requisite financial support to facilitate the implementation of the Agreement and the reconstruction efforts in the two counties. On their part, President Isaias and Prime Minister Meles pledged the commitment of their respective countries to scrupulously implement the provisions of the Agreement.

226. In substance, the Agreement provides for:

- the commitment of the two parties to permanently terminate military hostilities and refrain from the threat of use of force against the other;
- the release without delay and the repatriation of the prisoners of war and all other persons detained as a result of the armed conflict;
- the appointment by the OAU Secretary-General of an independent, impartial body to investigate the origins of the conflict;
- the establishment of a Neutral Boundary Commission with a mandate to delimit and demarcate the colonial boundaries on the basis of pertinent colonial treaties and applicable international law; and
- the establishment of a Neutral Claims Commission to decide, through binding arbitration, all claims for loss, damage or injury by one government against the other and by nationals of one party against the government of the other party or entities owned or controlled by the other party that are related to the conflict that was subject of the Framework Agreement, the Modalities for its Implementation and the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, and result from violations of international humanitarian law,

including the 1949 Geneva Conventions or other violations of international law.

227. Since the signing of the Algiers Agreement, steps have been taken for its implementation. It was within that framework, and as provided for by the Agreement, that I registered, on 22 December, 2000, this Agreement with the UN Secretariat in accordance with article 102(i) of the UN Charter. On their part, the parties, in cooperation with the ICRC, have started the process of the release of the prisoners of war and all other persons detained as a result of the armed conflict.

228. I wish to pay tribute to President Bouteflika for his tireless efforts and commitment, which immensely contributed to the attainment of this Agreement. I would also like to express my appreciation to all the OAU partners, in particular the USA, the EU and the UN, whose close cooperation with the OAU was crucial.

229. I wish to thank all the countries that have contributed in various ways to the OAU efforts, as well as to the ongoing efforts for the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

230. I am confident that the parties shall continue to display the required political commitment for the implementation of the Agreement and extend to the UN and the OAU the required cooperation. It is indeed important that the parties live up to the expectations raised by this Agreement, both among their people and within the international community, so as to usher a new era of peace, stability and development between the two countries and in the region.

D. Somalia

231. Council will recall that at its Seventy-second Ordinary Session in Lome, held on 6-8 July 2000, it has noted the seriousness of the situation in Somalia as a result of the long absence of national authority given the destructive civil strife and the ensuing insecurity in the country.

232. Council has also expressed its support to the initiative for the Somali National Peace Conference launched by President Ismael Omar Guelleh of Djibouti. This initiative, since its inception, had

received the broad support of IGAD, OAU, League of Arab States, and the UN Security Council.

233. Since the meeting of the last Council, I am pleased to note, and thanks mainly to the sustained efforts by the President of Djibouti and his Government, that the Somali National Conference was successfully concluded in August 2000, with the adoption of a Transitional Charter, the establishment of a Transitional Assembly, and the election of Mr. Abdiqassim Salad Hassan, as President of the Transitional Government of Somalia. Indeed, on 27 August, 2000, the President was inaugurated in the presence of Heads of State and Government in the sub-region, including those of Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia, and several Ministers from Kenya, Egypt and Libya; as well as the Head of State of Yemen and Ministers of Saudi Arabia and France. Also in attendance were the representatives of the Secretaries General of the UN, OAU, League of Arab States and OIC.

234. Ambassador Mahamat Habib Doutoum, Assistant Secretary-General, in his address to the gathering during the ceremony, stressed both the historic importance and the dynamics of the outcome of the Arta Conference and the need for the new Interim Somali Administration and the Transitional Assembly to engage in a process of dialogue and national reconciliation in Somalia.

235. I am particularly encouraged by the fact that following the Conference, there have been many encouraging reactions and support from within and outside the Continent for the positive evolution of the situation in Somalia.

236. The welcome accorded to the new President of the Transitional Government of Somalia upon his return to the Somali capital on 30 August, 2000, also reflects the desire of the Somali people for peace, and political stability. To further strengthen and consolidate the achievements of the Arta Conference, the new President has attended the Arab League Ministerial Conference in Cairo, where he delivered a statement on 4 September, 2000, expressing his appreciation for the personal efforts of President Guelleh and described the Somali Peace Conference as a significant turning point to restore normalcy to Somalia.

237. The President has also attended the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000. It is important to note that in both visits of the President to Cairo and New York, he reiterated his preparedness to engage in dialogue with the various political actors in Somalia who had not been part of the Arta peace process; and he urged all those concerned to reconsider their positions and join in. While he stated his Government did "not recognize Somaliland or Puntland," he stressed that he would avoid waging "civil or tribal wars to solve the problem of the northeastern" regions which have managed to establish security within their boundaries.

238. The President also visited Ethiopia and held talks with the Prime Minister on ways and means of sustaining the peace process and Ethiopia's further contribution to help stabilize the overall situation in the country.

239. Meanwhile, Somaliland has reiterated its position of non-adherence to the outcome of the Arta Peace Conference. In a "General Appeal" signed by the President of the self-declared state, Mr. Mohamed Egal, on 19 September, 2000, the OAU was informed that Somaliland would not compromise the territory's previous "undertaking that when a legitimate government emerges in Somalia, we shall negotiate with them a mutually acceptable relations between the two parts, including a possible reunion on fair and equitable terms."

240. Mention should be made that the self-declared autonomous region of Puntland too is also opposed the Arta Conference and its outcome.

241. I continue to be equally concerned by the lack of cooperation being manifested by the various political factions opposed to the Arta Conference. It would be recalled that in the immediate aftermath of the establishment of the Transitional Parliament and the election of a new President, Mr. Hussein Aideed, leader of the Somali National Alliance (SNA), stated his position that though he was for peace, there might be a need to resort to violence if attempts at reconciliation failed.

242. In the hope of bridging the outstanding differences that existed between the new Interim President and the various faction leaders, reconciliation meetings were held on 22 September, 2000, under the

auspices of the leader of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Colonel Muammar Gaddhafi. Although initial agreements to support the Arta peace process was reportedly signed at Sirte between the new President and Mr. Aideed, subsequent developments show, however, that those initial differences still remain, and the lack of participation of the warlords in the peace process is hampering the efforts of the new government to consolidate and strengthen political stability in Somalia.

243. It was against this background that the Seventieth Ordinary Session of the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution met in Addis Ababa on October 2, 2000. At the end of its deliberations, the Central Organ, inter-alia, considered that the time had come for Somalia to take its rightful place within the OAU and recommended, accordingly, that the Council of Ministers takes an appropriate decision in that respect.

244. The Central Organ, noting the existing procedural requirement—that since the Council of Ministers was the Policy Organ of the Organization that had taken the decision to declare the Somali seat in the OAU vacant, it should be the case, that Council will be the competent Organ to revoke its earlier decision. Moreover, a consensus emerged that in following such a procedure and in order to facilitate speedy action on the matter, all Member States of the Organization should be requested to inform the General Secretariat of their respective positions, in writing, on whether Council should allow the newly elected Government to occupy the Somalia seat at the OAU. It was anticipated that once favorable responses are received from Member States in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Council of Ministers, the Secretariat would take appropriate measures even before the next Session of Council to facilitate the participation of Somalia in the activities of the Organization.

245. In the implementation of the decision of the Central Organ, the General Secretariat sent a Note Verbal on 8 November 2000 to all Member States requesting them to inform in writing, the General secretariat of their respective positions, on whether the Council should allow the Government of the newly-elected President of Somalia, Mr. Abdiqassim Salad Hassan, to occupy the Somalia seat at the OAU.

246. Based on an understanding reached during a briefing meeting between the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of Members States in Addis Ababa, a second communication was addressed to all Member States on 25 November 2000 stating that if by 10 December 2000, there are no indications to the contrary, the Secretariat should take it that Members States are in favor of the proposal for Somalia to take its rightful place within the OAU. I wish to note that up till the 10 December 2000, no objection had been raised, and it was therefore concluded that Member States are generally in favor of the proposal for Somalia to take its rightful place within the OAU.

247. Thus, having fulfilled all the procedural requirements, I, on 28 December 2000, formally sent a letter of invitation to the President of the Transitional Government of Somalia, to take the necessary steps to ensure its full participation in all the activities of the Organization including participation at the 72nd Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers.

248. I wish to report that the 8th IGAD Summit welcomed the participation of the Transitional Government of Somalia (TGS) in the deliberation and activities of IGAD, baring in mind that regular and continuing evaluation of progress towards peace and National Reconciliation in the country will be carried out. The Summit urgently called upon the international community to support the rehabilitation in Somalia through direct assistance of the Transitional Government and the regions which had established peace and stability through self administration, as long as they are committed to the peace process.

249. As of now, attempts at reconciliation between the Transitional Government of Somalia and the various warlords seems to be in a stalemate. Certainly, the level of violence in Somalia's major cities, especially Mogadishu, has significantly decreased, although the overall security situation remains still precarious. The disarmament of the militias and the efforts at creating a national army, as envisaged by the Arta Conference is proceeding at a slow rate. It is my earnest belief, therefore, that only with the integration of the faction leaders into the political process that we can fully achieve the process of national reconciliation in Somalia.

250. Recent reports also suggest a deterioration of relations between Ethiopia and the Transitional Government of Somalia. Somalia's Prime Minister Ali Khalif Galaid, on 8 January 2001, accused Ethiopia of arming and training soldiers to undermine the Transitional Government. Ethiopia on its part, dismissed the accusations as groundless. It is my earnest hope that these two neighbourly countries would continue their dialogue so that the conditions for political stability in Somalia and the sub-region will be strengthened.

251. Finally, I wish to underscore my concern over the lack of notable political dialogue between the Transitional Government and the other political actors in Somalia. In this regard, I call upon those political forces concerned to join the peace process. I also wish to urge the Transitional Government of Somalia and all Somali factions to engage in constructive dialogue so as to build on the outcome of the Arta Conference towards an all-inclusive and durable solution to the crisis in Somalia. It is indeed my firm belief that only genuine political dialogue undertaken in a spirit of accommodation between the Transitional Government and the other political forces would lead to a lasting peace and stable political order in Somalia.

E. Sierra Leone

252. Council will recall that its last Session held in Lome, Togo in July 2000, took place against the background of difficulties experienced in the implementation of the Lome Peace Agreement as a result of the actions of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) which resorted to acts of hostage-taking in May 1999. By abducting hundreds of UNAMSIL troops, the RUF not only violated the Lome Peace Agreement of July 1999, but placed in serious jeopardy the implementation of that Agreement whose negotiation the OAU together with ECOWAS, the United Nations and the Commonwealth and other members of the International Community had participated and of which the OAU, together with these other key players, had been assigned the role of Moral Guarantor.

253. Since Lome, I have remained extremely concerned about the impasse in the implementation of the Lome Peace Agreement. That concern necessitated the initiating of consultations on how to move the peace process forward and culminated in my traveling to

Freetown, Sierra Leone, from the 21st to the 23rd August 2000. I was accompanied on that Mission by Ambassador J.N.K. Mamabolo, the Ambassador of South Africa to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the OAU whom I had earlier appointed as my Special Envoy to Sierra Leone as part of efforts to ensure a more effective involvement of the OAU in efforts to break the impasse in the peace process in Sierra Leone.

254. While in Freetown, I had consultations with President Tejan Kabbah and his Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as the Deputy Minister of Defense, during which we discussed issues related to the developments in the sub-region and the peace process in Sierra Leone in particular. In that context, President Kabbah informed me about the visit which President Alpha Omar Konare of Mali, the current Chairman of ECOWAS and President Obasanjo of Nigeria had paid to Sierra Leone just prior to my own. The two visiting Presidents, with the consent of President Kabbah, met Mr. Foday Sankoh to deliver, a letter addressed to him by the RUF High Command, informing him of RUF's unanimous decision to elect Mr. Issa Sesay as the interim leader of the RUF. Mr. Sankoh had, in turn, handed over to the Presidents of Mali and Nigeria a letter indicating his understanding and full agreement with the proposal of the RUF High Command. That development followed the meeting which some ECOWAS Heads of State, held with the RUF High Command in Monrovia during which the Heads of states had stated clearly that the International Community had lost confidence in Mr. Sankoh and that a new leader should be appointed.

255. President Kabbah also informed me that in the interest of achieving sustainable peace, he had taken immediate steps to release from detention, 171 ex-RUF combatants who had been in custody pending investigations for various alleged offenses.

256. President Kabbah observed that the OAU had played a pivotal role in the search for peace in Sierra Leone, as illustrated by the clear position, that the Organization had taken during its Summit held in Harare in 1997, at the outset of the crisis occasioned by the coup d'état.

257. For my part, I pledged the commitment of the OAU to the peace process in Sierra Leone and emphasized that the OAU would continue

to work together with ECOWAS and the United Nations to support it. In that connection, I welcomed the decision taken by the Summit of the ECOWAS leaders the previous day.

258. I also expressed the determination of the OAU to continue to mobilize assistance from the International Community to alleviate the plight of the victims of the war in the country, especially amputees and displaced persons. I also underlined the need for the resumption of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. To that end, I made three contributions on behalf of the OAU: US\$ 100,000 towards the alleviation of the plight of amputees, US\$ 100,000 towards the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration process; as well as US\$ 50,000 to ECOWAS for the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace, at the specific request of the Chairman of ECOWAS.

259. I also took advantage of my presence in Freetown, to meet with some senior members of the RUF detained in prison and reiterated to them the need for the RUF to play a constructive role in the peace process, by respecting the commitments which they had freely entered into, under the Lome Peace Agreement.

260. In addition, I met the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, who informed me of the activities of the UN mission and the problems which it was encountering. Following that, I paid a visit to the UNAMSIL military establishment in Hastings, near Freetown, where I met members of the Air Operations Group, the Field Engineering Unit, and the Rapid Deployment Group. I also visited the camp for amputees in Freetown and the camp for displaced persons in Grafton where I pledged the continued assistance of the OAU towards the alleviation of the sufferings of the people of Sierra Leone.

261. As a follow-up to my mission to Sierra Leone, my Special Envoy undertook in September, October and November 2000, a mission to four countries in the Region, namely Nigeria, Liberia, Guinea and Mali, with a view to holding discussions with leaders of the region on the conflict in Sierra Leone and to explore what further role the OAU could play in that context.

262. In November 2000, my Special Envoy met with the ECOWAS Executive Secretary in Abuja during which they reviewed the

problems and prospects of implementing the Lome Peace Agreement and focused on the role that the OAU could play in advancing the peace process in Sierra Leone.

263. On 8th December 2000, the 72nd Ordinary Session of the Central Organ at Ambassadorial Level, after listening to a briefing by my Special Envoy, on his mission to the sub-region, reaffirmed the support of the OAU for the efforts of ECOWAS to bring about a durable solution to the conflict in Sierra Leone and welcomed the signing of the Abuja Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF and expressed satisfaction that the Agreement had, "so far, held."

264. In the meantime, Council would recall the decision of the Indian government to withdraw its troop contingent from UNAMSIL. Given the critical role that UNAMSIL is expected to play in helping to ensure peace in Sierra Leone, and given especially the fact that the timing of the announcement came at delicate juncture in the peace process in Sierra Leone, I expressed my concern and profound regret at the decision, in a statement which I issued on 28th September, 2000. In that statement, I placed on record the deep and sincere appreciation of the OAU for the commendable and important role that the Indian troops had played in support of the peace-keeping mission in Sierra Leone, and in support of Africa's efforts at large in the promotion of peace, stability and security in the continent. Bearing in mind the serious gap that the withdrawal would create in UNAMSIL and considering the urgent need to reinforce that mission, I appealed to African countries in particular and the international community at large, to provide the necessary forces in order to augment the troop strength of UNAMSIL to the required level. In this regard, I wish to express appreciation to the Member States of ECOWAS, who have consistently offered to place at the disposal of the UN, their contingents to bolster the deployment of the UN to keep the peace in Sierra Leone.

265. As this Report was being finalized, at the end of January 2001, my Special Envoy returned to Sierra Leone, to continue with his consultation with the government of Sierra Leone and other interested parties on the on-going peace process.

266. I wish to recall that following a meeting held in June 2000, between the Committee of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security

Council on Sierra Leone and the United Nations Security Council, which meeting also involved the UN Secretary-General, ECOWAS, and the Government of Sierra Leone, a Coordination Mechanism was established with the purpose of reviving the peace process in that country. The first meeting of this Mechanism was held in New York in September 2000. At that first meeting, which was attended by representatives of the OAU, the relevance of the Lome Peace Agreement was reaffirmed. It was acknowledged, however, that recent developments in the peace process called for a review of some of its provisions.

267. The Second meeting of the Coordination Mechanism took place in Abuja, Nigeria, on 9th November 2000. At that meeting, it was decided that the RUF should be prevailed upon, in particular by ECOWAS, to accelerate the return of all seized UN equipment. The Government of Sierra Leone was also advised to ensure that necessary mechanisms would be provided for within the statutes of the Special Court for war criminals in Sierra Leone (which were still being negotiated) to avoid any adverse impact that the operations of that Court may have on the peace process as a whole. This was with particular regard to the issue of determining which persons would be prosecuted and whether former rebel groups which had since become effective allies of the Government needed to be tried by the court.

268. Further, the meeting, with a view to giving impetus to the implementation of the decision of the Heads of State of ECOWAS to set up the two respective Regional Investigative Commissions on the illegal traffic in diamonds in Sierra Leone and the causes of the renewed hostilities in that country in May 2000, requested ECOWAS Member States and the concerned International Organizations, to send in the names of their nominees to these Commissions.

269. With a view to working towards the conclusion of a formal ceasefire with the RUF, as a stepping-stone to reviving the peace process in Sierra Leone, the Coordination Mechanism examined issues that were to be raised with the RUF, towards the adoption of a ceasefire agreement. These included the return of all UN equipment, the deployment of UNAMSIL troops throughout the country and diamond-producing areas, the disarmament, demobilization and

reintegration programme (DDR) and the restructuring and training of the Sierra Leone Armed Forces.

270. Following a meeting which took place between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF, on 10th November 2000, in Abuja, Nigeria, a ceasefire Agreement was signed between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF.

271. The Ceasefire Agreement provided for, among other things, the immediate deployment of UNAMSIL throughout Sierra Leone; the restoration of the authority of the Government of Sierra Leone over the entire territory and unimpeded movement of persons, goods and humanitarian agencies; the return by the RUF of all seized UN equipment; and the recommencement of the DDR programme.

272. Additionally, it called on both parties, and the RUF in particular, to honour their commitments under the ceasefire Agreement. It reaffirmed that the Lome Peace Agreement of 7th July, 1999, continued to be the framework for the restoration of genuine and lasting peace in Sierra Leone.

273. It also called on the United Nations and the International Community at large to provide ECOWAS with the necessary financial and logistical support to facilitate the deployment of additional troops from the region, within the framework of UNAMSIL.

274. During the 24th Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS held in Bamako, Mali, from 15 to 16 December 2000, and at which the OAU was represented by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, the Authority reaffirmed its support for the Lome Peace Agreement and called on the parties concerned to fully comply with the provisions of the ceasefire agreement. The Authority further urged ECOWAS Member States, the OAU and the International Community to contribute troops to UNAMSIL to enable it carry out its missions successfully.

275. Council may wish to note that the ceasefire Agreement in Sierra Leone continues to hold fairly well, even after its formal expiration on December 10th 2000. It is to be noted however, that important elements were not implemented within the 30-day period provided in that Agreement. Following a meeting between the UNAMSIL Force Commander and the new RUF leader with his field commanders on

8th December 2000, the latter pledged that they would open all roads in the RUF-controlled area; accept the immediate deployment of UNAMSIL personnel throughout the country; allow humanitarian organizations and non-governmental organizations to resume their activities in areas outside Government control, and return the seized UNAMSIL and ECOMOG arms and equipment. Unfortunately however, these arms and the greater part of the equipment continue to remain in the hands of the RUF. On 11th December 2000, it was reported that following the above-mentioned meeting of 8th December 2000, a part of the main highway leading towards the RUF-held diamond fields in the East (i.e. the road between Freetown and the town of Magburaka) had been reopened by the RUF. Since then, it has been reported that UNAMSIL has verified that other major roads leading to the diamond-producing areas have indeed been opened by the RUF.

276. On 13th December 2000, a ceremony was held at Makene and Magburaka with a view to UNAMSIL receiving all the weapons and equipment which had been seized from it by the RUF. However, only 11 armoured vehicles were returned and they had been stripped of all mounted weapons and equipment and left unserviceable. In addition, no personal weapons or ammunition were surrendered.

277. The following day, the RUF reportedly issued a statement in which it announced that UNAMSIL was barred from RUF-controlled territory, until certain "non-negotiable" conditions, such as the release of Mr. Sankoh, were met. Some days later, though, on 18th December 2000, UNAMSIL announced that in a letter, General Issa Sesay had said that the RUF would welcome the freeing of Mr. Sankoh but that it was not a pre-condition for the deployment of UNAMSIL personnel in RUF-held areas.

278. However, a major obstacle to the deployment of UNAMSIL to the diamond-producing areas is the refusal of the RUF to disarm, as provided for under the Lome Peace Agreement and the ceasefire Agreement. In the meantime also, UNAMSIL's Force Commander, General Opande of Kenya, was recently reported as having stated that the deployment of UNAMSIL in RUF-held areas, is constrained by its reduced numbers, a situation which has been brought about by the withdrawal of the Indian and Jordanian battalions, scheduled to be

completed between December 2000 and first half of February 2001. New troops from Bangladesh, Kenya and the Ukraine and additional troops from Ghana were scheduled to arrive by the end of December 2000 and were expected to make up for the shortfall. Nonetheless, there would be less than 13,000 men deployed, thus leaving UNAMSIL far short of its target of 20,500 men. I should also like to recall that Nigeria had undertaken to provide additional troops for deployment in Sierra Leone, within the context of Decisions by ECOWAS.

279. In the light of my concern about the continuing crisis in the Mano River Union, which crisis encompasses the war in Sierra Leone and the conflict between Guinea and Liberia, I paid another visit to the region, this time to Liberia and Guinea from the 3rd to 7th January, 2001, where I met President Taylor and President Conte. The issue of the role of Liberia in the war in Sierra Leone, especially with regard to the allegations which have been made by the international community, including the UN, that Liberia and President Taylor himself have been involved in supporting the RUF in Sierra Leone and illegally trading in diamonds with the RUF in exchange for arms, featured prominently in my discussions with President Taylor.

280. President Taylor denied these allegations and laid emphasis, rather, on the need for an impartial international inquiry, conducted preferably by ECOWAS, into the alleged involvement of Liberia in the illegal trade in diamonds. President Taylor made reference, in that context, to the fact that the United Nations Panel of Experts had recently submitted a report containing these allegations as a result of which Liberia faced the imminent possibility of an imposition of sanctions by the UN Security Council. He expressed a desire that the allegations made against him and Liberia should be substantiated by real evidence, including a trail of facts relating to the transactions in question, rather than be based on perception alone. For my part, I acknowledged the serious effect that sanctions could have, on a country such as Liberia, which had just come out of a civil war; and while I indicated that the OAU would support whatever position ECOWAS adopted on the question of sanctions against Liberia, I also stressed the need for Liberia to address the concerns raised by the international community especially those relating to Sierra Leone.

281. With particular regard to the allegation that he has been supporting the RUF, President Taylor asserted that he had given sanctuary to certain prominent members of the RUF, including Mr. Sam Bockarie, with the knowledge of the international community, including the United Nations and ECOWAS. He stated nonetheless, that he was prepared to expel them from Liberia, if that would facilitate a solution to the crisis. President Taylor recalled that Liberia had in the past requested the international community to take a number of measures including the deployment of monitors by the United Nations at its borders and airports.

282. Since my return, the Government of Liberia has issued a statement indicating that following the recent review and its policy relating to Sierra Leone, it will pursue "a new policy of disengagement"; and that it will not in any way support the activities of "the RUF" and called on the RUF to lay down its arms. The Government also announced the departure of Sam Bockarie from Liberia. The Liberian Government further announced that it was grounding all Liberian-registered aircraft, citing irregularities contained in the report of the Panel of experts that Liberian aircraft have been involved in arms trafficking. President Taylor has also offered to resign, if it is found that he has personally benefited from the illegal trade in diamonds and arms. The Liberian Government has also asked the UN to oversee the sale of Liberian Diamonds.

283. On 12th January, it was reported by the international press that Mr. Bockarie was still in Liberia. Subsequently, it was reported on 23rd January 2001 that a Liberian Government spokesman had been quoted as saying that Liberia was engaged in consultations with ECOWAS to find a third country willing to accept Mr. Bockarie.

284. The finalization of this report at the end of January 2001, coincided with a debate in the UN Security Council on 25th January, 2001, relating to the allegations contained in the above-mentioned report of the UN Panel of Experts. In connection with these allegations, the United States and Great Britain sponsored a draft resolution intended to impose a ban on Liberian diamond exports, strengthen the arms embargo on Liberia, impose a travel ban on senior Liberian Government officials, ground all Liberian-registered aircraft and ban

Liberian timber exports whose proceeds are allegedly used to pay for arms.

F. Crisis between the Countries of the Mano River Basin Union

285. The crisis in the Mano River Basin is of serious concern to the Organization of African Unity, as it has been to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This involves inter alia cross-border raids launched in recent months into the territories of the countries of the Mano River Basin, namely Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone by armed groups on different sides of the borders. I wish to underline that I am particularly concerned about the negative impact that the increasing insecurity and instability is having on all the three countries including the severe humanitarian crisis which has been created as a result.

286. In the light of these developments, and following a communication made by a representative of the Government of Guinea on the armed incursions into Guinean territory from Liberia at that time, the Central Organ, meeting in its Seventieth Ordinary Session at Ambassadorial level on 2nd October, 2000, expressed concern over this development, and condemned the acts of destabilization. It also deplored the attendant loss of life, casualties and displacement of persons.

287. In the meantime, the crisis continued and indeed escalated.

288. On 15th November, 2000, I issued a statement in which I expressed my concern over the continuing hostilities and tension along the border between Guinea and Liberia. I stated that I was particularly concerned that the potential for a further escalation of these hostilities remained high and that the whole of the Mano River region stood the risk of being plunged into further instability that could have devastating consequences for all three countries in particular, and, indeed for the West African region at large. In the light of that, I appealed again to all concerned to exercise maximum restraint and to cooperate with the Economic Community of West African States in on-going efforts being undertaken to resolve the crisis.

289. On the same day also, and following a request made by ECOWAS, I announced a contribution by the OAU of US\$300,000 to assist that sub-regional organisation in the deployment of a force at the borders of the countries of the Mano River Union, in accordance with an earlier decision taken by its Mediation and Security Council, meeting at Ministerial level.

290. I wish to renew to this Session of Council, the appeal that I made in my statement, calling on all Member States of the OAU as well as the wider international community, to lend logistical assistance and moral support to the efforts of ECOWAS to deploy the force, in order to bring about a speedy end to the conflict.

291. In December, 2000, the OAU was represented at the meetings of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council and of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, culminating in the holding of the Twenty-fourth Ordinary Session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS which was held at Bamako, Mali, on the 15 and 16th December, 2000. At all of these meetings, the issue of the hostilities between Liberia and Guinea featured prominently in the discussions. At the meeting of the Authority, attended also by my representative, the Assistant Secretary-General of the Political Affairs, a number of important decisions were taken with regard to the issue. These included, inter alia, the re-affirmation of the previous decision of the Mediation and Security Council of ECOWAS in October, 2000, to deploy interposition forces along the borders of the three Mano River Union countries, as well as the decision to convene, under the auspices of the Chairpersons of ECOWAS and the OAU, a meeting of the three Heads of State of the Mano River Union.

292. As a follow-up to that, the OAU was again represented at two meetings of a technical nature convened by ECOWAS, at Abuja, to consider the practical modalities involved in the immediate deployment of the interposition forces, including logistical requirements. The first of these was the Second Meeting of the ECOWAS Defence and Security Commission, held on the 27th and 28th of December, 2000, and at which it was decided that the mandate of the proposed ECOMOG force would be the prevention of armed incursions in those areas and the restoration of security and confidence. In that regard, the forces would monitor the borders,

neutralize irregular armed groups, ensure the free movement of refugees and displaced persons, and establish a conducive environment for humanitarian assistance. This first meeting decided that there would be a total deployment of one thousand six hundred and seventy-six men in the proposed ECOMOG force. The second meeting, held on the 12th and 13th of January, 2001, brought together Staff Officers of the four ECOWAS countries, namely Nigeria, Mali, Senegal and Niger, which have offered to provide troops for the said deployment by ECOMOG. It was also decided that the deployment of the ECOMOG Guinea – Liberia Force would be effected no later than the 28th of February, 2001.

293. In the light of my own pre-occupation with the situation in the sub-region, and with a view to lending support to the efforts of ECOWAS leaders to bring about an early political solution to the crisis, I paid official visits to Liberia and Guinea from the 3rd to the 5th and from the 5th to the 7th of January, 2001, respectively. During these visits I met and had meetings of a frank and constructive nature with both President Charles Taylor and President Lansana Conte and their Governments, on the crisis.

294. While in Guinea, I was able to see at first hand, the humanitarian crisis caused by these armed attacks which have resulted in loss of life, the huge displacement of Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees who had fled to Guinea in the first place because of conflict in their respective countries. I was also able to see for myself, through a visit which I undertook to the areas of Gueckedou and Kissidougou, near the border between Guinea and Liberia, the general devastation caused by the attacks on property, including the burning of villages in the countryside and of homes and other buildings in the town centre such as the UNHCR office in Gueckedou. My visit to these two areas in southern Guinea was kindly facilitated by the Government of Guinea and the UNHCR.

295. My discussions with both President Conte and President Taylor took place in the context of the above-mentioned decisions of the ECOWAS Heads of State. In my meetings with both Presidents, I underlined the support of the OAU for these decisions.

296. With particular regard to my meeting with President Taylor, we discussed at some length, the criticism which continues to be levelled

at his Government by the international community and the United Nations, in particular, regarding the alleged involvement of Liberia in the illegal trade in Sierra Leonean diamonds and its support for the RUF.

297. With direct reference to the conflict between Guinea and Liberia, President Taylor gave an account of the attacks which had been made by armed persons on Liberian territory, with the attendant damage in terms of human life and property. President Taylor pointed out that very little assistance had been received by Liberia from the international community, on account of the humanitarian situation created by the armed attacks on Guinea. President Taylor expressed a wish to meet President Conte as soon as possible to discuss the conflict between their two countries.

298. In my discussion with President Conte, I urged the need for the leaders of the Mano River Union countries to meet, as recommended by the ECOWAS Summit. For his part, President Conte stressed the need for the international community to assist Guinea in maintaining its sovereignty and territorial integrity. President Conte also drew attention to the double burden which the Government of Guinea had been shouldering, especially since the late 1980s, as a result, of both the attacks by armed groups on the country and of the flood of refugees into the country, a burden which was continuing because of the persistence of conflict in the Mano River region over the years.

299. On behalf of the OAU, I presented a cheque for an amount of US\$150,000 to President Conte, as the OAU's contribution towards assisting the Government of Guinea in the alleviation of the burden of refugees in the country.

300. I would like to note that a few days after my return from the sub-region, on 8 January, 2001, it was reported that the Government of Liberia had, in a statement made on Friday, 12th January 2001, said that following the recent review of its policy relating to Sierra Leone, it had announced a new policy of "disengagement". Accordingly, the Government of Liberia would not support the activities of the RUF and was calling on the RUF to lay down its arms. The Government of Liberia also announced the departure of Mr. Bockaire from Liberia in the same statement.

301. Soon after my return from the region, also, I however received rather disconcerting reports which indicate that my fears about a possible further escalation in the hostilities between the two countries could, unfortunately, prove justified. I wish to mention in this regard, reports to the effect that the Liberian army had been put on high alert near the border with Guinea, in response to troop movements in Guinea.

302. My concern increased when soon after that, as well, I was informed that exactly a week after my visit to the town of Gueckedou in southern Guinea there had been a resumption of armed hostilities as a result of renewed attacks by armed groups and a counter-offensive by the Guinean army on the 13th of January, 2001. As if the humanitarian situation was not already bad enough, these new attacks have given rise to the spectre of a humanitarian catastrophe in the area on an account of the fact that humanitarian workers were compelled to withdraw to the town of Kissidougou, leaving the estimated hundreds of thousands of Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees to whom I had made reference to above, without humanitarian assistance.

303. In the light of the gravity of the situation, I remain seized of the matter and will continue to work together with the leaders of Guinea and Liberia, the Current Chairman of ECOWAS and other leaders in the sub-region, in order to assist in bringing about an end to the crisis.

G. Côte d'Ivoire

304. Council will recall that at its 72nd Ordinary Session held in Lome, Togo, in July, 2000, I had submitted a report on the Situation in Côte d'Ivoire following the coup d'Etat carried out by General Robert Guei on 24th December, 1999. During the Summit that followed, the Heads of State and Government discussed the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. At the end of the debate, they decided to establish a Committee of Ten Heads of State composed as follows : Togo, Nigeria, Mali, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Algeria, South Africa, Djibouti and Senegal with a mandate to visit the Côte d'Ivoire and to meet with the political leaders of that country in order to assist in finding a solution for a peaceful transition safeguarding the unity and the stability of Côte d'Ivoire.

305. The Committee of Ten met in Lomé on 24th September, 2000 and made a series of proposals aimed at ensuring an all-inclusive participation to the presidential elections that were scheduled so as to reduce the tension, to promote understanding among the political actors and to facilitate a harmonious return to normalcy in the country. The Committee thereafter paid a visit in Abidjan on 25th September, 2000 and submitted the above proposals to General Guei and other political leaders. These proposals were not acceptable.

306. At its 70th Ordinary Session, held on 2 October, 2000, I briefed the Central Organ on the outcome of the meetings held by the Heads of State of the OAU Committee of Ten. The Central Organ welcomed the efforts of the Committee of Ten in Lomé and Abidjan and urged the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and the political parties to cooperate fully with the Committee of Ten.

307. For their part, ECOWAS Foreign Ministers, meeting in Abuja, Nigeria on 4 October, 2000, in the context of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council, expressed, *inter-alia*, grave concern and anxiety over the tense atmosphere in Côte d'Ivoire and drew attention to the repercussions of the crisis in that country on the entire region. The meeting lauded the Committee of Ten of the Organization of African Unity for its mediation efforts and urged Ivorians to accept its contribution as a demonstration of the collective will of the continent to promote peace, security and good governance in a Member State.

308. The ruling of the Supreme Court which was made on 6 October, excluded Mr. Alassane Ouattara, the candidate of the RDR, and Mr. Emile Bombei, that of the PDCI, in addition to twelve other candidates.

309. In reaction to that development, the OAU Current Chairman, who is also Chairman of the Committee of Ten, condemned the exclusion of the candidates in question by the Supreme Court. The United Nations Secretary-General also expressed regret about the exclusions. The United Nations and the European Union announced their suspension of financial assistance for the organization of elections.

310. Following the court ruling, the ECOWAS Current Chairman, President Konaré of Mali, as well as the Heads of State of Guinea and Nigeria, President Conte and President Obasanjo, met in Abuja on 9

October to discuss regional issues. At the end of their meeting, the three ECOWAS leaders issued a Communiqué in which, inter-alia, they expressed grave concern at the ongoing transition in Côte d'Ivoire, and called on the Ivorian Government to conduct elections in a free and fair atmosphere in order to ensure peace and stability in the country.

311. I seized the opportunity of the presence of some Ministers of Member States of the Committee of Ten, in Beijing, on the occasion of the China-Africa Forum, to convene an informal meeting of the Committee on the 11th of October 2001 to review the situation in Côte d'Ivoire. Regarding the issue whether the OAU should send observers to the presidential elections, the meeting agreed that it was not appropriate to do so. On 12 October, 2000, an informal meeting of the Ambassadors of the Members of the Committee of Ten was also convened in Addis Ababa by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs. At that meeting, the Ambassadors took note of the decision of the informal meeting of the Ministers in Beijing, to the effect that the OAU should not send an Observer Team to the election.

312. On 19 October, 2000, I issued a Press Release in which I indicated that the OAU, given the circumstances of the presidential elections, would not be in a position to send observers to monitor them. In a statement, I underlined that the OAU remained committed and would spare no effort in doing everything within its means to help the people of Côte d'Ivoire and their leaders to overcome the crisis in the country, and that in the meantime, the Organization was appealing for restraint and calm.

313. For its part, the UN stated that it would no longer provide coordination of international observers for the election. The UN would, however, continue to provide limited technical assistance to the National Electoral Commission (CNE). Other members of the international community such as the United States and the Francophonie also decided not to send observers to the polls. As for the European Union, while it did not withdraw its team of observers, it reduced the original number it had intended to deploy.

314. The election went ahead on 22 October, as planned. On Tuesday, 24 October, it was reported that soldiers, apparently acting

at the behest of the Government, ordered a discontinuation of the counting of the votes by the CNE.

315. Subsequently, the Ministry of Territorial Administration proclaimed General Guei the winner of the election and, further, announced the dissolution of the CNE, which it described as "malfunctioning and of long and slow system", and as having instituted a system rendering the results unuseable."

316. Members of the international Community, particularly the United States, European Union and France, condemned the Government of General Guei and accused it of attempting to trample on the will of the people by trying to legitimize rule through an "illegitimate" election. On my part, on the 24th October, I appealed to all political actors for calm and dialogue in Côte d'Ivoire to avoid confrontation and violence.

317. Subsequently, fighting erupted again in Abidjan, this time between the supporters of Mr. Gbagbo and those of Mr. Ouattara. It was alleged by the RDR that the security forces had sided with Mr. Gbagbo's supporters to attack suspected members of the RDR who had been stripped naked and beaten. There were reports also that churches and mosques were targeted in the violence by the supporters of Mr. Gbagbo, reflecting the increasing religious, ethnic and regional divisions in the country. Clashes were also reported in several cities in the south and centre of the country.

318. With the intensification of the tension and the exacerbation of hostilities between the contending parties in the political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, I issued a Statement on 26 October in which I called on the people of Côte d'Ivoire and their leaders to exercise maximum restraint and ensure calm in the interest of peace, security and stability in the country. I also called on the leaders of Côte d'Ivoire to create the appropriate conditions conducive to the speedy restoration of the democratic institutions in the country. In the meantime, I remained in touch with the Current Chairman of the OAU and members of the Committee of Ten, with a view to charting the way forward.

319. The situation evolved rapidly, especially after General Guei was reported to have left the country. On 26 October, Mr. Gbagbo was sworn in after the Supreme Court confirmed that he had won 59.36%

of the vote, as compared to General Guei's 32.72%. On 27 October, a new Government of national unity was announced by President Gbagbo. It included representatives of the FPI who were given the portfolios of defense, interior and foreign affairs, as well as those of the PDCI and the Labour Party. The RDR, led by Mr. Ouattara, declined President Gbagbo's offer to join the new Government. After meeting with President Gbagbo, Mr. Ouattara stated that he regarded Mr. Gbagbo as the *de facto* President, adding that the RDR would consider whether to join the new government after the parliamentary elections on 10 December, 2000.

320. In the meantime, members of the international Community including the United Nations, United States and some members of the OAU, asked for a re-run of the election.

321. For its part, the new Government of President Gbagbo undertook certain actions with a view to fostering national reconciliation. In that context, the new Government responded to the demands of the RDR for a probe into the killings of supporters of the RDR whose bodies were discovered in a suburb of Abidjan after the violence had ended. Further, the Government designated 9 November, as a National Day of mourning and state funeral for the dead. In addition, the Government set up a Committee for National Reconciliation with the aim of building confidence between the political parties, their activities and security forces. The Committee is composed of representatives of civil society, religious leaders, the President of the National Union of Journalists and the Army Chief of Staff. In the meantime, officials of the RDR joined those of the FPI in appealing to their respective constituents for calm.

322. On 4 November, President Alpha Omar Konare of Mali, Current Chairman of ECOWAS met President Gbagbo at Korhogo, the capital of Northern Côte d'Ivoire. At the end of their meeting, President Konare congratulated President Gbagbo and wished him success in the accomplishment of his exalted mission. The two Heads of State affirmed their adherence to the relevant provisions of the revised Abuja Treaty, which stipulates the promotion and consolidation of a democratic system of government in each ECOWAS Member State. The two Presidents stated that they were comforted by the measures

taken by the authorities and various sections of Ivorian society to restore calm and end the violence.

323. Following all these peace efforts aimed at fostering greater unity and national reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire, it was widely believed that all political actors would participate in the parliamentary elections scheduled for 10th December, 2000. It was against this background that at its 71st Ordinary Session held on 23rd November, 2000, the Central Organ supported my proposal to send a team of OAU Observers to those elections.

324. However, while the National Electoral Commission approved the candidature of Mr. Alassane Ouattara on 22nd November, 2000, the Supreme Court, having examined the petitions against certain candidatures including that of Mr. Ouattara, ruled that the latter was ineligible. This decision prompted demonstrations by the supporters of the RDR Party on 4 and 5 December, 2000, which unfortunately resulted into violence and subsequent loss of lives and destruction of property.

325. The international Community expressed serious concern about these developments in Côte d'Ivoire. The United Nations decided to withdraw its experts who were to coordinate the activities of the international observers, considering that the conditions were not conducive for its participation. The European Union decided to suspend its financial support to the election process and decided also to withdraw its observers. The ECOWAS, France, Mali, Senegal, the United States of America and South Africa expressed their serious concern on the situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

326. The OAU, through its Current Chairman, appealed to political parties to reject violence. Thereafter, in view of the violence that followed the decision of the Supreme Court, the 72nd Ordinary Session of the Central Organ, meeting on 8th December, 2000, advised that the conditions were not conducive for an OAU Team to observe the parliamentary elections.

327. The parliamentary elections finally took place in two stages without the participation of the RDR Party which decided to boycott them : first on 10th December, 2000 and thereafter on 14th January, 2001 in the northern part of the country where elections could not be

held on 10th December, 2000. After the vote, the Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI) obtained, with the support of some independent candidates, the absolute majority in the Parliament.

328. Since then, the General Secretariat has been following closely developments in Cote d'Ivoire. The OAU will continue to support all efforts aimed at promoting the unity, national reconciliation, peace and stability in Côte d'Ivoire.

H. Angola

329. Last July in Lome, I briefed Council and Summit on the alarming situation prevailing in Angola following the resumption of the war in 1998, which jeopardized the already fragile peace process and exacerbated the economic and humanitarian situation of that country. The resumption of the war was due to the refusal by Jonas Savimbi and UNITA to honour their commitments as stipulated in the Lusaka Protocol and the United Nations Security Council resolutions. At the end of its deliberations, Council adopted decision CM/Dec. 521 (LXXII) setting up an Ad-hoc Committee to evaluate the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1295, particularly with regard to the measures contained in Chapters A, B, C, D, E, F, and G, and to submit to the next OAU Council of Ministers a report on the status of implementation of the resolution by Member States. Council also decided to mandate the OAU Secretary-General in the light of the evaluation, to propose additional measures against the States which violate the sanctions, in keeping with the provisions of the OAU and UN Charters.

330. Pursuant to the Decision referred to above, the Assistant Secretary-General in charge of Political Affairs, on 18 October 2000, held an informal meeting with the Ambassadors of the Central African sub-region, initiators of the Lome Draft Resolution, to explore possible ways and means of implementing the Council Resolution. At that meeting, it was suggested that the usual consultations should be carried out within the various subregions with the aim of designating the members of the Committee. It was also decided that the Committee would meet at ambassadorial level in Addis Ababa and submit a report to the Ministers who would in turn report to the Council of Ministers. Lastly, it was agreed that the General Secretariat

would prepare draft Terms of Reference and work programme of the *Ad-hoc* Committee.

331. Following those consultations, the composition of the *Ad-hoc* Committee was decided as follows: Algeria, Equatorial Guinea, Madagascar, Namibia and Nigeria.

332. The first informal meeting of the *Ad-hoc* Committee took place on 22 December 2000. On that occasion, the Committee examined the following items: Election of the Chairman and the Rapporteur; consideration of the Terms of Reference and work programme.

333. During the meeting Nigeria and Namibia were respectively elected Chairman and Rapporteur of the *Ad-hoc* Committee.

334. The meeting also adopted the following Terms of Reference:

- carry out consultations with the United Nations Committee on Sanctions against UNITA charged to monitor and facilitate the application of sanctions against UNITA;
- carry out appropriate consultations with the government of Angola, the countries neighbouring Angola and other Member States on the status of application of sanctions against UNITA, as provided for in United Nations Security Council resolution 1295/2000;
- submit a report to the 73rd Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers in February 2001.

335. Lastly, the *Ad-hoc* Committee adopted its method of work. It was agreed that, initially, information should be gathered from the United Nations Sanctions Committee. It was further agreed that the Committee should hold talks with the Permanent Representative of Angola and other concerned Member States in Addis Ababa. Lastly, it was decided to envisage a visit by representatives of the Committee to the United Nations in New York. Members of the *Ad-hoc* Committee also agreed to contact the Permanent Representatives of their countries to the United Nations to obtain their inputs on the situation.

336. On 29 December 2000, the Chairman of the OAU *Ad-hoc* Committee on Sanctions against UNITA wrote a letter to his United Nations counterpart informing him of the setting up of the said

Committee and requesting him to provide him with the necessary information and documentation that would enable his committee to contribute to the joint efforts aimed at reinforcing the application of sanctions against UNITA. He also expressed his intention to send a delegation to confer with the United Nations Committee after receiving the documentation requested.

337. The Mechanism of the United Nations Committee on Sanctions against UNITA submitted its report on 21 December 2000 in which it denounced the complex trade in diamonds from Angola and Sierra Leone by the top authorities of some African States accused of having allowed and facilitated travels by UNITA representatives in violation of the UN Sanctions. The report highlighted UNITA's arms purchase circuit from Bulgaria. It also underscored the fact that UNITA representatives moved about freely in Europe, trafficking diamond and carrying out financial transactions and other purchases of military hardware. The Commission recommended the strengthening of customs measures including, in the case of diamond trafficking, control of arms export licenses. It also recommended improved control of arms transporting airlines.

338. Meanwhile, the humanitarian situation in Angola is very alarming. UNITA, which uses guerrilla warfare, have in its attacks, targeted civilian populations, resulting in human losses and a growing number of displaced persons estimated at close to 3 million. The latest information speaks of a wave of nearly 350,000 refugees who have fled to the neighbouring countries. The Democratic Republic of Congo hosts about 170,000 refugees, and Zambia about 200,000. Furthermore, these refugees are exposed to all kinds of diseases due to lack of food and the precarious conditions in which they live.

339. I shall continue to accord priority importance to the situation in Angola. The report of the *Ad-hoc* Committee serves as good basis to complement the decisions already taken at the United Nations to further strengthen the pressure on and sanctions against UNITA, thereby reducing its destructive capacity.

I. Sudan

340. Council will recall that, at its Seventy-first Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, in March 2000, the need was expressed for the

Secretariat to provide regular information and updates on developments concerning the peace process in the Sudan. The importance of achieving peace in that country and the positive impact that will result for the stability of the entire region, as well as the need for the OAU to follow up very closely the development in the Sudan and extend its strongest support to IGAD's efforts, have also been stressed.

341. In Lome, in July 2000, I informed Council on the joint efforts deployed by the Governments of Egypt and Libya to find a lasting peace in the Sudan. I also briefed Council on the IGAD peace initiatives. In particular, I informed Council of my discussions with a delegation led by the Executive Secretary of IGAD, Dr. Attalla Hamed Bashir, and comprising IGAD's Special Envoy for Peace in the Sudan, Ambassador Daniel Mboya, as well as the Ambassadors of Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Uganda to Kenya who are also Envoys to the IGAD Sub-Committee on the Sudan.

342. Since then, the Secretariat has continued to closely follow the developments in the peace process in the Sudan. The initiatives undertaken during the period under review as part of the efforts aimed at achieving a lasting solution to the conflict included, in particular, the Assessment Mission of September/October 2000 carried out by the IGAD Partner's Forum (IPF) on the Sudan peace process. They also included the IGAD Ministerial Sub-Committee meeting held in Nairobi on 14th November 2000, on the conflict in Southern Sudan, which adopted some recommendations.

343. It is against this background that the 8th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Inter Governmental Authority on Development held in Khartoum, in November 2000, extensively reviewed the situation in the Sudan and the developments in the peace process. In my address to the Summit, I stressed the OAU's commitment and full support to all efforts aimed at resolving the conflict.

344. On its part, the Summit noted with concern the slow progress in the peace negotiations between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) and the continuation of the conflict in Southern Sudan which has resulted in incalculable loss of lives and destruction of property. The Summit also took note of the four rounds of negotiations that have been

undertaken, on the basis of the Declaration of Principles (DOP), under the auspices of the IGAD Secretariat for the Sudan Peace process. Noting the divergence of views in the negotiation process, the Summit called upon the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) to be flexible in their positions and allow the negotiation process to move forward in the interest of achieving peace in the Sudan.

345. The Summit further took note of the efforts deployed by the Special Envoy, Ambassador Daniel Mboya, and the envoys assigned by Member States, and strongly urged them to redouble their efforts in order to achieve a breakthrough in the deadlock and arrive at an agreed position between the two sides that would lead to a cessation of hostilities and eventual settlement of the conflict.

346. I would like also to add my voice to that of the Summit in expressing my appreciation to those members of the IGAD Partner's Forum (IPF) who have been rendering political support and financial assistance to the IGAD peace process. It is important that such efforts continue in order to fully secure a lasting peace in the country.

347. As part of the OAU effort aimed at strengthening IGAD's role in mediating this conflict, the Secretariat has participated at the Second Working Group for Wealth and Power Sharing in the Sudan organized by the IGAD Secretariat on Peace in the Sudan, in Nairobi from 19 to 25 January 2001. It is to be recalled that the two parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at the First Session of the Working Group, in Nairobi from 14 to 18 November 2000, that defined the guiding principles for wealth sharing in the Sudan that would form the basis for future deliberations of the working Group.

348. The conflict in Southern Sudan is one of the longest and deadliest conflicts faced by our continent. Consequently, it has resulted in untold human suffering, especially for women and children. Thus, I strongly urge both parties to uphold the relevant provisions of the International Humanitarian Law and to create the necessary conditions that will allow complete access to and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the needy, so that their suffering could be alleviated.

349. Finally, I would like to reiterate OAU's commitment to a peaceful and negotiated solution to the conflict.

J. Comoros

350. Over the past years, the OAU has exerted sustained efforts in order to find a lasting solution to the dual separatist and constitutional crisis facing the Archipelago. In July last year, in Lome, I informed Council and Summit of the initiatives taken to that end by the countries of the Region and the Troika, which have been mandated, in close collaboration with the Secretariat, to follow-up the situation on behalf of the Organization. In particular, I stressed the fact that OAU's efforts had reached a critical stage and the need for the policy Organs of our Organization to review the situation in the Archipelago in the light of the recommendations made by the countries of the Region and the Troika and endorsed by Council during its session held in Addis Ababa in March 2000.

351. It is worth recalling that, following the Ministerial Meeting held in Pretoria, South Africa, in December 1999, the countries of the Region decided to impose gradual measures against the Anjouanese separatists for them to sign the Antananarivo Agreement. In pursuance to this decision, measures aimed at isolating the Anjouanese separatist leaders were implemented as of 1 February 2000; they were followed by the implementation, starting from 20 March 2000, of an additional set of measures. It was further agreed that, should these two first set of measures fail to produce the expected results, the Region would recommend to the Lome Summit the implementation of military related-measures.

352. Regarding the return to constitutional rule, the proposals put forward by the countries of the Region provided, among others, for the re-establishment of the October 1996 Constitution, the appointment of a transitional Prime Minister and Government in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Antananarivo Agreement, as well as a role for the Army. These proposals were formally submitted to Col. Azali and to the other Comorian parties in May 2000 by the coordinating country, South Africa, and further discussed with them by my Special Envoy during his visit to the Archipelago in June 2000. However, no progress was made towards the restoration of

constitutional order. As a result, and pursuant to the Algiers Decision on Unconstitutional Changes, the Government of Comoros could not attend the Lome sessions.

353. It was against this background, and following extensive discussions, that the Lome Summit approved the proposals of Council, upon recommendation of the countries of the Region and the Troïka, aimed at putting an end to the separatist crisis in Anjouan, in particular the military related-measures. The Assembly also reiterated its support to the efforts of the countries of the Region and the Troïka to restore constitutional order in the Comoros, and approved the proposals made by Council in this regard.

354. Immediately after the Lome sessions, the Secretariat, together with the countries of the Region and the Troïka, convened, in Pretoria, on 11 August 2000, a meeting of Senior Diplomats and Military and Security Experts. The meeting established a Working Group chaired by South Africa and comprising Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique and Tanzania, with the view to proposing, with immediate effect, ways and means to further enhance the effectiveness of the measures already in force, make a thorough assessment of their impact and initiate the required preparations for the implementation of the military related-measures.

355. However, while these efforts were underway, the Comorian authorities embarked upon new initiatives, in particular the resumption of dialogue with the Anjouanese separatists outside the framework of the OAU-led process. Those initiatives were met with a strong rejection on the part of the Comorian Opposition and a number of civil society organizations.

356. On their part, the Comorian authorities dispatched to Addis Ababa, on 21 August 2000, their Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Souef Mohamed El-Amine, with the view to briefing the Secretariat on the discussions with the Anjouanese party. In the course of the discussions with the Secretariat officials who met him, Minister Souef expressed his Government's concern over the impact of the decision adopted in Lome, if implemented. He further stressed that sanctions should not be regarded as an end to themselves, but rather as a means to an end. He stated that the Anjouanese had changed their attitude and, consequently, advantage should be taken of that new disposition.

357. Minister Souef also seized the occasion to deliver a copy of the agreement then under negotiation, also known as the Fomboni Joint Declaration, which provided for the establishment of a new Comorian Ensemble, and requested the OAU to lend its support and attend the signing ceremony scheduled for 26 August.

358. On 24 August 2000, and at the initiative of the countries of the Region, the Central Organ met to consider the situation in the Comoros in the light of the envisaged signing of the Declaration. In considering the situation, the Central Organ was particularly concerned that, even though the term "Confederation" was not used in the Declaration, the "New Comorian Ensemble" had all the characteristics of such an entity. The Central Organ was also concerned that, unlike the OAU led-process, the negotiations that led to the Declaration were not all inclusive, and that no real provision was provided for the return to constitutional order.

359. Accordingly, in the decision it adopted at the end of its deliberations, the Central Organ stressed that the secret negotiations between the Government and the separatists were at total variance with the Antananarivo Agreement and excluded the great majority of the Comorian people and political stakeholders. It urged all OAU partners to refrain from lending any support to the process and to the Fomboni Joint Declaration, which would have the effect of undermining the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros.

360. Nonetheless, on 26 August 2000, the Comorian authorities and the Anjouanese party went ahead with the signing of the Fomboni Joint Declaration. In conformity with the Central Organ's decision, the OAU did not attend the ceremony.

361. Subsequently, on 7 September 2000, I convened in New York, on the margins of the Millennium Summit, a meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the countries of the Region and the OAU Troika to examine the situation in the Comoros and the way forward. The Ministers concurred with the position taken by the Central Organ and, in view of the rapidly changing situation on the ground, stressed the need for speedy action, including the convening of a Summit of the countries of the Region.

362. While in New York, together with some Ministers from the Region, we met with the French Minister delegate for Cooperation, Mr. Charles Josselin. Minister Josselin conveyed his concern over what he considered OAU's rigid position on the Fomboni Joint Declaration. In response, the Ministers and I explained the principles on the basis of which the OAU has decided to reject the Declaration. At the end of the discussions, we agreed that the OAU would consider the opportunity of convening a meeting of all the Comorian parties and the international community with the view to reviewing the situation in the light of the recent developments, including the signing of the Fomboni Joint Declaration.

363. I also had the opportunity to meet with the Head of State of the Comoros, Colonel Azali on two occasions: first in New York, during the Millennium Summit, and then in Doha, Qatar, on 13 November 2000, on the margins of the Summit of the Organization of Islamic Conference. During the discussions I had with him, Col. Azali stressed what he called the positive developments achieved within the framework of the Fomboni Joint Declaration, and requested the support of the OAU to ensure the success of the process. On my part, while assuring Col. Azali of the OAU willingness to be helpful, I stressed that there are basic principles that the Organization stands for, namely the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros, the need for an all inclusive process, and the need for a return to constitutional order.

364. At the same time, the Secretariat received communications from a number of other Comorian parties, which continued to express their rejection of the Fomboni Declaration and their commitment to the Antananarivo Agreement.

365. During that period, initiatives were also taken by some of the OAU partners. The 114th session of the League of Arab States, held from 2 to 4 September 2000, welcomed the efforts being exerted by the Comorian Government towards national reconciliation, and called upon the international Community to lift the sanctions it imposed on the Island of Anjouan in view of the positive developments that have taken after the signing of the Fomboni Declaration.

366. Subsequently, a delegation from the League visited the Comoros towards the end of November 2000. In a letter addressed to me on 7

December 2000, the Secretary-General of the League informed me that, during its meetings in the Comoros, the delegation stressed, inter-alia, the need to preserve the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros, as well as the need for the Government to open up to the Opposition. The delegation reiterated that the League of Arab States considers the Fomboni Declaration as a positive step in the dialogue among Comorians. At the same time, it stressed that the Antananarivo Agreement still remains the basic framework for dialogue among the Comorians.

367. The Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) also dispatched a fact-finding and contact mission to the Comoros, from 17 to 26 October 2000. On November 7, the Secretary-General of OIF sent to me a copy of the Mission Report. In his transmittal letter, Dr. Boutros Boutros Ghali reiterated OIF's commitment to OAU's decisions on the Comorian crisis. He indicated the disposition of his Organization to contribute to a dialogue between the Comorians. The OIF delegation returned to the Comoros at the end of November 2000, where it strived to facilitate the dialogue between the Opposition and the Government with the view to securing a Framework Agreement on power sharing.

368. On 6 December, I wrote to Dr. Boutros Boutros Ghali. In that letter, I recalled the reasons for which the OAU rejected the Fomboni Declaration and, while expressing my appreciation for the efforts undertaken by other International Organizations to support the OAU, I stressed the need for closer coordination.

369. It is within this context that the countries of the Region and the Troïka met in Bamako, Mali, on 1 December 2000, in the margins of the OAU Ministerial Conference on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons. The Ministers agreed to dispatch to the Comoros an OAU mission led by my Special Envoy and comprising senior representatives from the Region and the Troïka, with the view to assessing the situation in the Archipelago. The delegation visited the Comoros from 10 to 16 December 2000, and made a number of recommendations.

370. The Mission Report and the recommendation contained therein were submitted to the Ministerial Meeting of the countries of the Region and the OAU Troïka that took place in Pretoria on 29 December

2000. After a thorough review of the situation, the Ministerial meeting considered that the time was propitious to intensify efforts aimed at finding a lasting solution to the crisis in the Comoros. The Meeting reiterated OAU's commitment to the search for a peaceful solution to the crisis in the Comoros, based on the respect for the principle of unity and territorial integrity of the country, the need for an all-inclusive process and the return to constitutional order. To that end, the Meeting:

- welcomed the then ongoing negotiations between the Government of the Comoros and the Opposition, and stressed the need for broadening that process to include Anjouan;
- reaffirmed OAU's readiness to facilitate such negotiations, including the convening of an appropriate forum for that purpose;
- decided to dispatch to the Comoros, in early January 2001, an OAU mission to be led by my Special Envoy and comprising senior representatives of the countries of the Region and the OAU Troika to engage all the Comorian Parties, including the Government, the Opposition and the Anjouanese and Mohelian sides, on the basis of i) and ii) above; and
- decided, based on the outcome of the mission, to recommend the review of the measures decided against the leadership of the Anjouanese separatist movement.

371. It is in pursuance to the decision of the Ministerial Meeting, that an OAU delegation led by my Special Envoy and comprising Senior officials from South Africa, Madagascar and Mauritius traveled to the Comoros on 10 January 2001. The delegation has since embarked upon intense consultations with all the parties, including Anjouan, with the view to securing an agreement that will pave the way for an early resolution of the crisis. In this exercise, the OAU delegation is working closely with La Francophonie, the French Ambassador in Moroni and a delegation from the League of Arab States. I would like also to point out that I met, in Paris on 1 February 2001, with the Secretary-General of the OIF, Dr. Boutros Boutros Ghali. During our discussion, we agreed to pursue and reinforce our cooperation and coordination in this issue.

372. The document submitted by my Special Envoy and his delegation provides for the establishment of a new Comorian Ensemble based on the respect for the unity and territorial integrity of the Archipelago. It also provides for the establishment of a Commission for National Reconciliation - that will, among others, be responsible for the drafting of the new Constitution - and an Independent Electoral Commission. The Agreement provides for a transitional period during which the current Head of State will retain his position, and for the establishment a national unity Government four months following the signing of the Agreement. The transition period is to end on 30 September 2001. The Head of State, the Prime Minister and the members of the Government, as well as all those presiding over the institutions involved in the management of the transition period, will not be standing for the elections which will be held within the context of the implementation of the Framework Agreement.

373. As this Introductory Note was being finalized, the delegation was still trying to secure the consent of all the Parties to the document it submitted.

374. The OAU will continue to do whatever is possible to facilitate the speedy resolution of the crisis in the Comoros on the basis of its fundamental principles. In this regard, I would like to stress that, for a solution to be achieved, the cooperation and genuine commitment of all, including the Government, as well as the strong support of our partners are of critical importance.

K. Western Sahara

375. Council will recall that, at its sitting in Lome last July, I had the opportunity of informing that the implementation of the Settlement Plan for Western Sahara had yet again faced a stalemate mainly over the issue of the conduct of the appeals process.

376. It should be further recalled, that after an arduous identification exercise, spanning over a period of five years, a provisional list containing the names of about 86,000 eligible voters had been issued by January, 2000 and the anticipation then was that only a reasonable number from among the rejected applicants would file

application for appeals. That was not to be – as the number of appeal applications received had exceeded 130,000 constraining the UN Secretary-General to regrettably observe that the appeals exercise, if commenced at that time, was unlikely to be completed by the year 2002 or beyond. The UN Secretary-General subsequently took the initiative of once again calling upon Mr. James Baker, his Personal Envoy on Western Sahara, to undertake consultations with the Kingdom of Morocco and the POLISARIO Front with the view to exploring ways and means of achieving «an early, durable and agreed solution to their dispute.»

377. Accordingly, Mr. Baker, having commenced his consultations with the two Parties in April, 2000, had since organized several direct talks with the two Parties; twice in May and June in London, once an experts-level meeting in August in Geneva, and the last, in Berlin, on September 28, 2000. However, I regret to observe in that connection that none of the talks convened were able to achieve any result that would break the deadlock and move the peace effort forward.

378. It had been hoped that the experts-level technical meeting held in Geneva, would address outstanding issues related to the appeals process, prisoners of war, political detainees and on confidence-building measures to facilitate the eventual repatriation of refugees. Even the seemingly straightforward issue of arranging family visits, exchange of personal mail and establishing telephone communication links between the Tindouf camps and the Territory could not be agreed upon. More seriously, also no progress was registered on resolving the divergences on the appeals process.

379. The question of Moroccan prisoners of war had also not been resolved at the Geneva meeting. However, as Council by now knows, the POLISARIO has, in mid-December last, taken a decision and released, on humanitarian grounds, 201 prisoners as a gesture of goodwill.

380. The meeting convened by Mr. Baker in Berlin last September likewise failed to yield any breakthrough. At that meeting, Morocco disclosed that it was prepared to respond to recent Security Council resolutions calling on the Parties “to try to agree on a mutually acceptable political solution to their dispute.” Morocco expressed readiness to engage in a “sincere and frank dialogue with the other

Party on the dispute» to work out a lasting and definitive solution «that would take into account of Morocco's sovereignty and territorial integrity and the specifics of the region, in compliance with the democratic and decentralization principles that Morocco wished to develop and apply, beginning with the Sahara region.”

381. On its part, the POLISARIO Front, rejected the Moroccan proposal and stated that “it would cooperate and adhere to any dialogue that would be within the strict framework of the Settlement Plan, the Houston Accords and the protocols of May, 1999.” It remains the view of the Front that it was the faithful implementation of those agreements that would overcome the final obstacles in the implementation of the Settlement Plan.

382. The Personal Envoy submitted the recommendation to the UN Secretary-General that further meetings of the Parties cannot succeed unless the Government of Morocco, “as the administrative power in Western Sahara, is prepared to offer or support some devolution of governmental authority, for all inhabitants and former inhabitants of the Territory, that is genuine, substantial and in keeping with international norms.” He added that if Morocco is not prepared to present ideas in that regard for discussion at the next meeting of the Parties, then “the Mission should begin hearing the pending appeals from the identification process on an expedited basis, without regard as to how long it might be expected to take to complete them.”

383. The UN Secretary-General, in his last report to the Security Council, supported the recommendations of his Personal Envoy as already outlined and requested that the mandate of MINURSO be extended until 28 February, 2001, in order to provide time to Mr. James Baker to determine which of the above two options could, if at all, be pursued in the continued effort to definitively resolve the dispute. The Security Council has, on 30 October, 2000, adopted Resolution 1324 extending the mandate of the Mission in order to allow further efforts in that regard to be undertaken by the Personal Envoy.

384. The resolution of the problem in Western Sahara has proved to be exceedingly intractable. Although a great deal of work has been accomplished in the identification of possible voters in the referendum, the Settlement Plan, whose implementation was foreseen

to be concluded by February, 92, still remains bogged down – carrying with it the risk of bitter frustration and impatience of the people of Western Sahara, who had all along been promised to be consulted in a referendum to determine their choice of status for their Territory.

385. In the face of the continuation of the stalemate, the international community has of late been repeatedly forewarned on the possibility of the resumption of armed hostilities involving the protagonists of the dispute in Western Sahara.

386. Recently, we have been all concerned of the risk of the resumption of hostilities following the statement made on 22nd December, 2000 by the POLISARIO Front regarding the crossing over of the Territory of the Western Sahara by the Paris/Dakar Rally, which the Front considered as “an insult to the will of the Sahrawi people, a challenge to the United Nations and a support to the Morocco’s colonial ‘fait accompli’ as well as a violation of the ceasefire in force since 6th September, 1991.”

387. However, following the appeal of the OAU Current Chairman and other friendly countries, the Front Polisario decided on 7 January 2001, to suspend the implementation of its earlier decision. Subsequently, in a letter addressed to me on 14th January, 2001, the Permanent Representative of SADR to the OAU indicated that his government considered “the crossing over of the Territory of Western Sahara by the Paris/Dakar Rally without any consultation or previous authorization of the Sahrawi Authorities as a breaking off of the ceasefire.” He further indicated that “since then, the Polisario Front considered itself no more bound to the ceasefire agreement”. He also stated that “the only way to stop the resumption of hostilities was to go back to the UN Settlement Plan and organize the referendum of self-determination for the people of Western Sahara.”

388. On its part, the OAU will continue to support the United Nations in its efforts towards the implementation of the UN Settlement Plan for Western Sahara. It will also continue to appeal to both Parties to fully cooperate with the United Nations in its efforts to organize a free and fair referendum for the people of Western Sahara, in conformity with the UN Settlement Plan. It is my hope that the international community will also continue to support the UN efforts geared towards the implementation of the Settlement Plan.

L. Dispute between the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the United States of America and the United Kingdom

389. In my report to Council in Lome, in July 2000, I gave an account of the evolving developments in the dispute between the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the United States of America and the United Kingdom. I underscored in particular the resumption of cooperation between Libya and several Western countries following the hand-over by Libya of the two suspects for trial in a Scottish Court sitting in The Netherlands, and the suspension of the sanctions by the United Nations.

390. I would like to recall, in this regard, that at their Summit in Lome, our Heads of State and Government called on the Security Council to take a decision as soon as possible for a definitive and total lifting of the sanctions imposed on the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. They also considered as unacceptable any delay or impediment to this process, or any request contrary to international law, such as request for damages prior to the verdict of the Scottish Court on the matter. The Heads of State further reaffirmed Libya's right to compensation for the damages it has suffered as a result of the imposition of sanctions.

391. During the period under review the General Secretariat, through its observer, closely followed the trial of the two Libyan suspects taking place in the Hague (The Netherlands). It will continue to exert the necessary effort to promote a speedy solution to the crisis and the definitive lifting of the sanctions against Libya in accordance with the decisions of the Summit.

392. As this report was being finalized, the Scottish Court sitting in the Netherlands has pronounced the verdict on 31 January 2001 with regard to the two Libyan suspects in the Lockerbie case. Mr. Abdelbaset Ali Mohamed Al-Megrahi was sentenced to life imprisonment, while Mr. Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah was acquitted.

393. On 1 February 2001, in a press release, I recalled the consistent position of the OAU which strongly condemned the terrorist act which resulted in the Lockerbie tragedy and called for the perpetrators of that act to be brought to justice. The OAU also called for a peaceful and just solution to the crisis between the Great Socialist People's

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the United States of America and the United Kingdom based on international law. It was in this regard that the OAU fully supported the call for the trial of the two Libyan nationals by a Scottish Court sitting in a neutral country under conditions that would guarantee a just and fair trial.

394. Now that the judgment had been delivered, I reiterated the position of the OAU that the UN Security Council should take appropriate measures to immediately and permanently lift the sanctions against the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya which had extended full cooperation in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

M. Middle East and Palestine

395. Since the last session of Council, and contrary to the expectations of the International Community, the situation in the Middle East, more particularly the Palestine question, has shown no improvement. The lack of progress in the peace process due to Israel's intransigence has caused considerable frustration among Palestinians and Arabs.

396. The violence which claimed many victims, especially on the Palestinian side, was a source of concern for the OAU and the International Community. One will for ever remember the agonizing picture of young Mohamed Al-Dura, aged 12, dying in the arms of his father after he had been shot by Israeli forces.

397. Such was the escalation of the violence in the occupied territories that the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) appealed to the International Community to prevail upon Israeli to put an end to the bloodshed in Palestine, reactivate the peace process and cease all provocation and humiliation of the Palestinian people. In my Communiqué No 98-2000 I urged the Israeli Authorities to take all the necessary measures to put an end to the massacres in the occupied territories. I reaffirmed OAU's support for the right of the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable national rights. I also appealed to the Israeli and Palestinian Authorities to create the conditions conducive to the cessation of violence and the resumption of direct negotiations to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region.

398. Various initiatives were taken in a bid to find a solution to the crisis. Notable among these were the Paris initiatives under the aegis of President Jacques Chirac, which brought together President Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Ehud Barak on 4 October, 2000; the Sharm El Sheik talks of 5 October 2000, although Prime Minister Ehud Barak did not attend; the emergency session of the United Nations Security Council on the Middle East on 7 October 2000, at the end of which an appeal was made for cessation of hostilities; the Sharm El Sheik Conference of 16 October 2000 attended by Presidents Hosni Mubarak, Bill Clinton, Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Ehud Barak, which culminated in an agreement on the lifting of the blockade and the withdrawal of Israeli forces, as well as in the creation of an International Commission of Inquiry under the auspices of the United States and the resumption of the negotiations in the USA.

399. There was also the Cairo Extraordinary Arab Summit from 21 to 22 October 2000 which lent its support to the struggle of the Palestinian people, recognized the legitimacy of the Intifada and called for a review of relations with Israel.

400. Lastly, mention should be made of the Afro-Arab Parliamentary Conference held in Amman on 1 and 2 November 2000 on the "Al-Qods" issue which is at the core of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

401. In the present circumstances, it is important that any peace process in the Middle East, particularly the Palestinian question, take into account the co-existence of, and reciprocity and sharing between the Jewish and Arab peoples.

402. The OAU will continue to support the Palestinian people and efforts aimed at implementation of the Peace Accords. The OAU will also continue to ask the International Community to bring pressure to bear on Israel to negotiate a just peace with the PLO in good faith, and urge the two parties to make the necessary concessions to this effect.

N. Human Rights

403. In the area of Human Rights, the General Secretariat has continued to sensitize Member States who have not yet signed and ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, as

well as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights relating to the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights to do so.

404. I am glad to inform Council that, in conformity with Decision AHG/Dec.126 (XXXIV) of the Heads of State and Government meeting in their 34th ordinary session in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in June 1998, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights has finalized the Draft Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights relating to the Rights of Women in Africa, and has transmitted same to the General Secretariat for appropriate action. The General Secretariat has, in turn, prepared a working document for consideration by the first meeting of experts charged with drawing up this Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights relating to the Rights of women in Africa in accordance with the existing procedure in our Organization.

405. The General Secretariat is currently engaged in consultations, in close cooperation with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, with a view to convening this meeting as early as possible. To this end, the working document has been forwarded to member States for examination.

406. The experts' meeting will be followed by another experts' meeting which will finalize the document prior to submission for consideration by an appropriate Ministerial meeting. The Draft will thereafter be presented to Council and the Summit.

O. Election Monitoring

407. Since my report to the last session of Council in Lome, Togo, in July 2000, the General Secretariat has continued to be engaged in the activities of election observation to promote the process of democratization in Member States.

408. During the period in focus and upon the invitations from the respective authorities, the General Secretariat participated in observing a Constitutional Referendum and elections in four Member States. These were the Constitutional Referendum held on 23 July 2000 in Cote d'Ivoire and the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections

that took place in Tanzania on 29 October, Ghana on 7 December and the Sudan from 13 to 22 December 2000 respectively.

409. Following some serious political developments in Cote d'Ivoire and after the consultation with the Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government set up at the last Summit in Lome, in July 2000, the General Secretariat could not take part in monitoring the General Elections held on 22 October (Presidential) and 10 December 2000 and 14 January 2001 (both for the Legislature) in that country. It would be noted that the elections were marked by tension and violence, and an attempt by General Guei to manipulate the results. Nonetheless, Mr. Laurent Gbagbo of the Ivorian Popular Front was eventually elected President of the Republic for a five-year term. Meanwhile, the elections in Tanzania were generally smooth except on the Islands of Zanzibar where they experienced some serious shortcomings that led to the re-run of the elections in 16 constituencies on 5th November 2000 and which could not, given the circumstances, be observed by the OAU. The final results placed President Benjamin Mkapa of the ruling party (CCM) at the top position and he was re-elected for another five-year term. In the elections of Ghana and since none of the candidates obtained absolute majority, a second round of the elections had to be organized on 28 December between Vice President John Atta Mills of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and Mr. John Kufuor of the New Patriotic Party (NPP). Mr. John Kufuor was elected President of the Republic of Ghana. With regard to the Sudan, the elections also went on smoothly and President Omar Hassan al-Bashir was re-elected the President of the Republic of the Sudan. I wish to reiterate my congratulations to the Heads of State who have been elected and to pledge my continuing disposition to work closely with them in pursuing the objectives of our Continental Organization.

410. Over all, these elections, in spite of some administrative, logistic and other difficulties that some of them experienced, were important steps towards strengthening the democratization process on the Continent. The elections in Ghana, have reaffirmed that the process of democratization that includes transition of leadership from one political party to another can continue to take place in our continent in a smooth and dignified manner.

P. Situation of Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons

411. Council will recall that at its Seventy Second Ordinary Session, I provided an extensive briefing on the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Africa. At the time, I reported that, while positive developments were taking place in some Member States, new forced displacements occurred elsewhere in the continent. I also drew the attention of Council to the negative socio-economic, environmental and security impact that large scale refugee population movement have had on the countries and communities where they are granted asylum and to the resulting symptoms of "hospitality fatigue". Finally, I also informed Council of the outcome of the OAU/UNHCR Special Meeting of Government and Non-Government Technical Experts on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, held in Conakry, Guinea, from 27 to 29 March 2000.

412. On its part, Council appealed to Member States to continue to address the root causes of the problem of refugees and displaced persons, and urged the countries of origin to continue to create conditions that are conducive for the voluntary repatriation of refugees. It commended the countries of asylum for their hospitality and, given the reported cases of increasing hostility experienced by refugees in some parts of the Continent, urged them to develop programmes aimed at educating host communities on the plight and rights of refugees. Council also urged the international community to provide adequate support and assistance to refugees in Africa, comparable to the quantum of resources available to refugees in other parts of the world. Finally, Council endorsed the Comprehensive Implementation Plan (CIP) adopted by the OAU/UNHCR Special Meeting, as well as the recommendations of the 6th OAU/ICRC Seminar on International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and called upon Member States to ensure their full implementation. Subsequently, the UN General Assembly, in a resolution adopted on 8 November 2000, also encourage African States to ensure the full implementation and follow-up of both the CIP and the recommendations of the OAU/ICRC Seminar.

413. I am happy to report to this Session of Council that since the Lome sessions, some positive developments have taken place, such as

the repatriation to Somalia of Somali refugees living in Ethiopia, as well as the return to their country of the pre-1991 Ethiopian refugees in the Sudan. In addition, the signing in Algiers, on 18 June and 12 December 2000 respectively, of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities and the Peace Agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, is expected to facilitate the return to their homes, of the populations that were displaced as a result of the conflict between the two countries that lasted for more than two years. Similarly, the signing of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement on Burundi on 28th August 2000, was expected to create more conducive conditions for the return of the Burundian refugees. That Agreement contains detailed provisions on, inter alia, the principles governing the return, settlement and reintegration of the concerned populations, the preparatory activities to be undertaken, and on issues pertaining to land and other property. I strongly appeal to the Parties to the conflict to cooperate with the Facilitator of the Burundi Peace Process, former President Nelson Mandela and the wider international community to provide the much-needed momentum for the implementation of the Agreement, which up till now, continues to experience difficulties as a result of unresolved problems linked to the positions of the armed groups.

414. On the negative side, I wish to inform Council that, following the frequent violations of the Lusaka Agreement for a ceasefire in the Democratic Republic of Congo, especially, the renewed fighting in areas close to the Congolese/Zambian border, approximately 30,000 Congolese, among them armed soldiers, arrived in Zambia. This has added a new burden at a time that Zambia is also coping with large and rapid flows of Angolan refugees fleeing the fighting in Angola. The war in the DRC has also led to important movements of population towards the neighbouring countries, in particular the Republic of Congo, Tanzania and the Central African Republic, as well as to internal displacement within the country itself. These populations are living in extremely difficult conditions.

415. It was against this backdrop, that the OAU Commission on Refugees held an emergency meeting in Addis Ababa on 28 December 2000. At the end of its deliberations, the Committee among other things, recommended that an OAU delegation be dispatched to Zambia and the Republic of Congo, with a view to assessing the

situation on the ground and to express the Organization's concern, as well as make token financial contributions to these two countries, to assist them deal with the refugees crisis. The OAU delegation visited Zambia and Congo in January 2001. It met with the authorities of these two countries, as well as with representatives of humanitarian agencies, including the UNHCR. It also visited refugee camps, in the two countries.

416. I also remain deeply concerned over the difficult humanitarian situation prevailing in West Africa. Indeed, following the intensification of cross-border attacks between Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea and the resulting deterioration of the security situation between the countries of the Mano River Basin, thousands of Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees have been forced to seek protection and assistance in safer areas within Guinea or to return to their respective countries. The cross-border attacks also led to the displacement of local Guinean populations.

417. It was against this background, especially, the rapidly deteriorating political, security and humanitarian situation in that region, that I visited Liberia and Guinea from 3 to 7 January 2001. Before that Mission, I had visited Sierra Leone from 22 to 23 August 2000. While in Guinea, I visited Kissidougou and Gueckedou, the areas which were attacked by the armed groups. I seized that opportunity to discuss with the refugees, as well as with the local authorities and UNHCR representatives. The refugees appealed to the OAU to facilitate their repatriation to their respective countries. On my part, I reiterated to them the solidarity of the OAU, and assured them that the Organization, working closely with the Guinean authorities and the UNHCR, shall continue to do its utmost to find a lasting solution to their problems.

418. During my discussions with Guinean authorities, especially, with President Lansana Conte, I expressed my appreciation for the long standing generosity and hospitality demonstrated by Guinea towards the refugees. It is to be recalled that the country currently hosts 375,000 Sierra Leonean and 125,000 Liberian refugees, and some of them have been there for more than ten years. I also reiterated my deep concern over the repeated attacks launched into Guinean territory by armed groups operating from neighboring countries. At

the same time, I appealed to the Guinean authorities and population to continue to extend hospitality to the refugees and to ensure their security, in keeping with the African tradition and the principles enshrined in the OAU 1969 Convention as well as those provided for in other relevant international instruments.

419. Subsequently, and following the decision taken by the emergency session of the Commission on refugees, an OAU delegation visited Sierra Leone and Guinea from 14 to 22 January 2001. In Sierra Leone, the delegation was extensively informed of the steps being taken to facilitate the repatriation of the refugees from Guinea. The Sierra Leonean authorities stressed the need for an increased international assistance in support of their efforts. The OAU delegation assured them of continued OAU support, including through the sensitization of the international community. The delegation also handed over to the authorities a financial contribution on behalf of the Organization.

420. In Guinea, the delegation held extensive discussions with the authorities focusing mainly on the situation of the Sierra Leonean refugees. The delegation urged the Guinean authorities to continue to strictly observe the principles contained in the OAU Convention and other relevant instruments, and to ensure the security of the refugees. The Guinean authorities while highlighting the persistent destabilization of its territory from neighboring countries, reassured the delegation of their commitment to these principles. In this regard, they informed the delegation of the measures that were being taken to identify, together with the UNHCR, new sites for the relocation of the refugee camps.

421. The conflict situations prevailing in other regions of our continent continue to generate significant movement of populations and prevent refugees and displaced persons from returning to their homes. To list but a few, I would like to mention the conflicts in Angola, the Sudan, and the case of the Sahrawi refugees in Algeria.

422. One of most disturbing trends relating to recent forced displacements in Africa, concerns the phenomenon of mixed groups of refugees and armed elements arriving in asylum countries. This has more often than not, resulted in creating instability in the asylum countries, and the deterioration of relations with their countries of

origin. This unacceptable phenomenon, has also contributed to a decline in protection standards. I should like to recall that both the OAU Ministerial Meeting on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons, that took place in Khartoum, The Sudan, from 13 to 14 December 1998, and the OAU/UNHCR Experts meeting held in Guinea, Conakry had expressed concern over this situation and formulated specific recommendations.

423. Against this background, the proposal made by the Standing Committee of UNHCR's Executive Committee, at its July 2000 session, to launch a process of Global Consultations on Protection in the run-up of the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees is timely. The objective of the Consultations is to reaffirm the Convention as the universal foundation for refugee protection, to agree on how to deal with areas where interpretation of existing legal principles differ and to develop approaches, tools and standards to address areas which are not adequately or not at all covered by the current protection regime. The timetable for the Consultations provides for a series of activities to be undertaken throughout this year.

424. I believe that Africa, which is hosting the largest number of refugees in the world and which has, over the years, developed comprehensive policies on the issue, has an important contribution to make. I, therefore, urge all our Member States to fully participate in those Consultations. I also urge the OAU Commission on Refugees to work towards the elaboration of a common African position ahead of the Consultations. In this endeavour, the Commission should build on existing OAU instruments, as well as on the recommendations adopted by the Regional Judges Round-table on the Role of the Judiciary in Refugee Protection, convened by the OAU and the UNHCR in Addis Ababa, from 14 to 15 November 2000, as part of the implementation process of the CIP.

425. I should like to draw Council's attention to another issue that arose over the past few years. This relates to the growing problem of statelessness. Some of the most recent conflicts in the continent have highlighted the seriousness of the situation, as thousands of people have been rendered stateless or their nationality disputed. I would like to reiterate the appeals already made by the Khartoum Ministerial

Meeting and the Conakry Experts meeting for OAU Member States to take concrete steps in order to resolve this problem. In particular, steps should be taken, to ratify the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, as well as the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, and the legislative and administrative measures required for the implementation of these instruments.

426. Finally, I wish to express my serious concern over the increasing attacks against humanitarian workers. The killing of one UNHCR staff in Macenta, Guinea, in September 2000, and the subsequent kidnapping of another staff, bear testimony of the seriousness of the situation and the need to ensure the effective implementation of the recommendations made by various OAU Organs on this issue.

427. I cannot overstate the fact that in our collective efforts to meet the challenges posed by forced displacements in Africa, the contribution of the international community is of crucial importance. This imperative was, once again, reiterated by the OAU delegation at the 51st session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (EXCOM). The delegation appealed to the international community not to abandon Africa in the face of the daunting challenges to be met. It echoed the concern expressed by Council last year on the need to extend to refugees and displaced persons in Africa assistance that is commensurate with their plight, as humanitarian tragedies should be addressed with the same commitment by the international community wherever they occur.

Q. World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

428. The General Secretariat took an active part in the preparations for the World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and related Intolerance to be held in Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 7 September 2001.

429. In this connection, the Secretariat participated in the Regional Seminar of Experts on Prevention of Ethnic and Racial Conflicts in Africa jointly organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 4 to 6 October, 2000. Similarly, the Assistant Secretary-General in-charge of Political Matters

Ambassador Said Djinnit led an OAU delegation to the African Regional Preparatory Conference for the World Conference, which took place in Dakar, Senegal, from 22 to 24 January 2001. The representative of the OAU recalled, on this occasion, that Africa is a continent that has suffered the most from racism and racial discrimination, having experienced slavery, colonialism and apartheid. He stated that the convening of the World Conference on Racism is an important initiative for humanity and especially for Africa whose populations have paid the most to the calamity of racism and experienced the gravest prejudice. The Regional Conference was attended by 43 African States which, at the end of deliberation, adopted a Draft Declaration and a series of recommendations for presentation to the World Conference.

430. I would like to take this opportunity to urge all Member States to participate fully and at Ministerial level in this World Conference in Durban whose importance needs hardly be over-emphasized.

R. Small Arms and Light Weapons

431. Council will recall that, at its Seventy-second Ordinary Session, held in Lome, Togo, from 6 to 8 July 2000, it adopted Decision CM/527 (LXXII) on the preparation for the Ministerial Conference on Small arms and Light Weapons. In that decision, Council welcomed the outcome of the First Continental Meeting of African Experts on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, convened in Addis Ababa, from 17 to 19 May 2000. Council further encouraged all Member States to participate fully in the Ministerial Meeting on Small Arms and Light Weapons in order to facilitate the mapping out of an African common position on the issue before the convening of the international conference by the United Nations in 2001.

432. Prior to the Ministerial Conference, and as part of the preparatory process, the General Secretariat, with the support and collaboration of the Pretoria based Institute for Security Studies and in cooperation with the United Nations Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, organized in Addis Ababa, from 22 to 23 June 2000, an International Consultation on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons. The

Consultation was attended by United Nations specialized agencies, African regional and sub-regional groupings as well as by African and international non-governmental organizations. The objective was to seek the views, comments and suggestions of these organizations on the issue of the illicit small arms trade and transfer. The International Consultation made several important proposals, including on the role of civil society in the prevention, management and reduction of small arms proliferation and illicit trade in Africa.

433. The Ministerial Conference took place in Bamako, Mali, from 27 November to 1st November 2000. It was organized in two phases: an expert preparatory meeting from 27 to 29 November 2000, and the Ministerial Conference proper from 30 November to 1st December 2000. The Experts preparatory meeting provided an opportunity to discuss international and regional priorities in dealing with the issue of the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, including the forthcoming UN Conference on illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. It also reviewed the outcome of the OAU preparatory meetings, namely the First Continental Meeting of African Experts and the International Consultation on the illicit proliferation circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons. Finally, the Expert preparatory meeting considered a draft Declaration on the African Common Position on the UN 2001 Conference.

434. The Ministerial Conference opened on 30 November. It was addressed by various speakers, including the representative of the Current Chairman of the OAU, the UN Under Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and the representatives of the Eminent Persons Group on Curbing the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and the OAU partners. President Alpha Omar Konare of Mali made a key note address in which he stressed the need for Africa to overcome national and regional differences to agree on a common position to be defended at the UN 2001 Conference. He also stressed the need for a comprehensive approach involving both supplier and recipient countries, as well as civil society organizations, in particular women's association. In my statement, I outlined the steps to be taken on the supply and demand sides to address the problem of the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons. I also stressed that, for it to succeed, the campaign against

the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons requires that our Member States display a high degree of cohesion and determination.

435. The Ministerial Conference considered the Report I submitted and the draft Declaration proposed by the Experts' meeting. Following extensive deliberations, it adopted the Bamako Declaration on an African common position on the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons. In the Declaration, the Ministers recognized the progress made at national and regional levels in developing action programmes for the reduction, prevention and management of small arms and light weapons and reaffirmed their respect for international law and principles as contained in the UN Charter. They expressed their grave concern at the devastating consequences that the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons continues to have for stability and development in the continent.

436. The Ministers agreed that it is vital to address the problem of the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons in a comprehensive, integrated, sustainable and efficient manner. In this regard, they stressed the need to ensure that the behaviour and conduct of Member States and suppliers are not only transparent but also go beyond narrow national interests. They called for the promotion of solutions that include both control and reduction, as well as supply and demand aspects, and that are based on the coordination and harmonization of the efforts of Member States and involve civil society. They further agreed on the need to enhance the capacity of Member States to identify, seize and destroy illicit weapons and put in place measures to control circulation, possession, transfer and use of small arms and light weapons.

437. The Ministers recommended a number of measures to be taken by Member States at national and regional levels. In this regard, they proposed to enhance the capacity of national law enforcement and security agencies and officials; to develop and implement, where they do not exist, national programmes for the responsible management of licit arms, the voluntary surrender of illicit small arms and light weapons, the identification and the destruction of surplus, obsolete and seized stocks; the reintegration of demobilized youth; the

adoption of appropriate measures to control arms transfers; and the conclusion, on a voluntary basis, of bilateral arrangements with neighboring countries, so as to put in place an effective common system of control; the encouragement of the codification and harmonization of legislation governing the manufacture, trading, brokering, possession and use of small arms and ammunition; the strengthening of regional and continental cooperation among police, customs and border control services.

438. The Ministers also strongly appealed to the wider international community to, among others, actively support and fund the efforts of OAU Member States in addressing the problem of the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons in Africa. They called for an international partnership and for a realistic and implementable programme of action during the 2001 UN Conference.

439. I would like to commend all the OAU Member States which participated in the Conference for their contribution in the definition of the African Common Position, which will enable our continent to play its rightful role during the 2001 Conference. I would like also to express my gratitude to all our partners, whose support both financial and technical was critical.

440. I urge all our Member States to take appropriate steps for the implementation of the Bamako Declaration, and appeal to the wider international community to lend its strong support to that effect. On its part, the Secretariat will take all the measures required to ensure the swift implementation of the Declaration and the active participation of Africa in the 2001 Conference.

S. Anti-Personnel Mines

441. Council will recall that, at its 35th Ordinary Session, held in Algiers, Algeria, from 12 to 14 July 1999, the Summit adopted decision AHG/Dec. 135 (LXX) on the First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, held in Maputo, from 3 to 7 May 1999. In that decision, the Summit, *inter alia*, commended the rapid entry into force of the Convention and called upon the countries which have not yet done so to sign and ratify

this instrument. The Summit further expressed its firm support for the objectives and purposes enshrined in the Maputo Declaration, and requested me to continue to sensitize member States to contribute to the effective implementation of the Convention.

442. Council will recall that the Maputo Declaration, *inter alia*, recognized that the enduring value of the Ottawa Convention rests in fully realizing the obligations and the promises contained therein, to ensure no new use, to eradicate stocks, to cease development, production and transfers, to clear mined areas and assist victims. It also provided for the implementation of an intersessional work programme with the view to advancing mine action efforts and measuring progress made in achieving the objectives of the Convention.

443. The Algiers Summit decision was a reiteration, at the highest level, of the commitment of our Organization to achieve the objective of eliminating anti-personnel mines and transforming the continent into a landmine-free-zone objective set out in the Plan of Action adopted by the First Continental Conference of African Experts on Landmines, convened by the OAU in Kempton Park, South Africa, in May 1997, and endorsed by the 1997 Harare session of Council. This commitment was also demonstrated by the very active role played by Africa in the Ottawa Process and its successful conclusion.

444. Some two years and half after the Convention opened for signature, significant progress has been made in its implementation, as witnessed by the reduced use of anti-personnel mines, the dramatic drop in the production of anti-personnel mines, the increase in the resources devoted to mine clearance and mine victim assistance, as well as by the measures taken by some non signatories to eliminate their stocks.

445. Another very significant achievement relates to the universalization of the Convention. As of 31 July 2000, 137 countries, that is two-thirds of world's nations, had signed or acceded to the Convention, while 100 of them have ratified it. At the level of Africa, 29 of our Member States are already parties to the Convention, while 14 others have signed this instrument but have not yet completed the ratification process.

446. At the same time, we should recognize that sustained and concerted efforts are still needed to free our continent from the scourge of anti-personnel mines. In this regard, I would like to express my deep concern at the reported use of anti-personnel mines in some of the conflicts tearing apart our continent, adding an additional burden to the future generations.

447. In the years ahead, we, at the OAU, should aim at ensuring full compliance with the Convention by those of our Member States which are already parties to it, including through the destruction of stockpiles; ratification by those countries which have already signed it; and accession by those which have not yet signed the ban Treaty. We should also intensify our efforts at mobilizing further resources for demining and mine victim assistance and at enhancing inter African cooperation and international coordination.

448. The outcome of the Djibouti Conference on Anti-personnel mines in the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Aden, held from 16 to 18 November 2000, in which the OAU Secretariat actively participated, was very encouraging. I wish here to pay tribute to the Djiboutian authorities for their initiative and leadership. Indeed, the Declaration adopted by the Conference recommended the creation of a regional Centre for research and training on anti-personnel mines, to promote collective actions and concerted regional policies and develop inter-African cooperation in the field of mine clearance and mine victim assistance, as called for by the Kempton Park Plan of Action; called on the international community to provide the countries of the region with the required assistance; and appealed to all the countries which have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention.

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Council of Ministers Seventy Ordinary Session;Introductory Note to the report of the Secretary General

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