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**REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AU CONTINENTAL
EARLY WARNING SYSTEM (CEWS)**

**30 - 31 OCTOBER 2003
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

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Report of the Workshop on the Establishment of the AU Continental Early Warning System

**30 - 31 October 2003
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SECTION I: INTRODUCTION

1. The decision ASS/AU/Dec. 16 (II) on the Operationalization of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council, adopted by the 2nd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, that met in Maputo, Mozambique from 10 - 12 July 2003, invited the Commission to, inter alia, take the necessary steps for the establishment of the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) as provided for under Articles 2 and 12 of the Protocol.
2. In pursuance of that decision and within the purview of the overall efforts of the Commission to put in place the basic structures and mechanisms envisaged in the PSC Protocol, the Commission organized a workshop at the Headquarters in Addis Ababa, on 30th and 31st October 2003, bringing together academic and research experts, experts from Regional Mechanisms for conflict prevention, and from continental and international institutions dealing with different aspects of conflict prevention, management and resolution.¹
3. The purpose of the Workshop was to bring together a select number of experts to assist the Commission in determining a roadmap for the establishment of the Continental Early Warning System envisaged in the PSC Protocol. The main thrust of the Workshop was to brainstorm on the practical modalities and steps that the Commission could take to establish an effective continental early warning system, drawing lessons from existing regional and international experiences on the establishment and functioning of an early warning system.
4. The Workshop was chaired alternately by Ambassador Sam Ibok, Director, Peace and Security Directorate and Ambassador Ki-Doulaye, Head of the Conflict Management Center, a.i. This report is organized into nine sections according to the issues discussed at the Workshop.²

¹ See Annex III: list of participants.

² See Annexes I & II: The Agenda and Programme of Work, respectively.

SECTION II: **OPENING**

5. The Workshop was officially opened by Ambassador Said Djinnit, Commissioner for Peace and Security. The Commissioner began by expressing the gratitude of the Commission to welcome all the experts to the Headquarters, and particularly to the Workshop. He then situated the Workshop within a historical perspective and the current momentum to establish the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

6. Though recognizing that the prevention of conflicts has preoccupied African leaders for most of the continent's post-independent history, the Commissioner highlighted the Cairo Declaration adopted in 1993, which provided for the establishment of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, as constituting the hallmark or the turning point in continental efforts to establish an early warning system. He purported that the establishment of the Mechanism was to provide the OAU with a robust framework for anticipating and preventing conflicts and wars in Africa.

7. Overwhelmed by the number of conflicts on the continent in the 1990s, epitomized by the Rwandan genocide in 1994, new impetus were given to the need to furnish the Mechanism with the capacity to pre-empt conflict before they erupted. These concerns led to the establishment of the Situation Room within the Conflict Management Center. Increasingly, as the continent grappled with the multifaceted challenges of conflicts, it became clear that the Situation Room was not enough and that there was need for a full early warning system with built-in capacity for early action.

8. He told the participants, that it was against this background, particularly the new emphasis that was given to conflict prevention and the need to provide the continental Organization with a more proactive and robust mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution that the Protocol relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council was adopted. The Protocol provides for an African Standby Force, the Panel of the Wise, Continental Early Warning System and cooperation with Regional Mechanisms.

9. The Commissioner informed the experts that significant progress has been made to finalize the basic documents of these institutions but little has been made on the establishment of the Continental Early Warning System. In this light, the Commissioner noted that the Workshop was conceived as part of efforts of the

Commission to give effect to the Assembly decision on the Operationalization of the Peace and Security Council Protocol, which urged the Commission to take the necessary steps for the establishment of the Continental Early Warning System.

10. In conclusion, Ambassador Djinnit drew the attention of the experts to the main objectives of the Workshop and the expectations of the Commission. He told the experts that the purpose of the Workshop was to assist the Commission develop a roadmap for the establishment of the Continental Early Warning System. He then invited them, to, among others, in the course of their two-day deliberations, examine existing experiences on early warning, how they are funded, how to reinforce the Situation Room of the CMC, and what practical models of early warning can the AU adopt. He concluded by wishing the experts success in their deliberations.

SECTION III: **GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS**

a) A Background to the Continental Efforts to Establish an Early Warning System

11. Ambassador Ibok took the floor and thanked the Commissioner for his opening remarks and particularly, for providing a comprehensive overview of the struggle at the continental level to establish an early warning system. The Director complemented the remarks made by the Commissioner by stressing that the Workshop should not be considered as if it were the first step or the ground zero of initiatives, but that the practical experience, particularly efforts undertaken in the past by the OAU should provide the point of departure for the Workshop.

12. In this context, he highlighted some of the initiatives that have been taken in the past by the OAU. Particular reference was made to the Seminar for the Establishment within the OAU, of an Early Warning System on Conflict Situations in Africa, held in Addis Ababa from 15 - 18 January 1996. That Seminar made a series of recommendations which should be revisited in terms of what was feasible. He also made reference to the meeting of experts held in 1998, to discuss and identify indicators and possible modules that the AU could consider in the establishment of a Continental Early Warning System.

13. Ambassador Ibok also presented some historical reflections on the difficulties encountered to establish a continental early warning system. Among others, he pointed out the followings:

- the barrier of national sovereignty, which often hampered efforts to collect reliable data and information, as well as timely intervention;
- the issue of data ownership, which often created problems on the flexibility of the use and dissemination of data collected;
- the issue of defining early warning modules and their ownership by the OAU;
- lack of adequate technological infrastructure;
- limited financial and human resources;
- lack of political will on the part of Member States.

14. In conclusion, he added that a new dimension has been added to efforts to establish CEWS, which is the link with Regional Mechanisms. In this context, he noted that some RECS have made significant progress to establish EWS in their respective regions. Finally, the Director invited the experts from Regional Mechanisms to share their experiences and recommend a roadmap for the Commission, particularly with regard as to how to establish a better network with Regional Mechanisms. He also urged the experts to reflect on some of the abovementioned roadblocks to efforts to establish a continental early warning system and to propose strategies for overcoming them.

b) The Concept of Early Warning and its Relevance to Conflict Prevention: Theoretical Aspects (presented by Dr. Doug Bond, Harvard University)

15. In his presentation on the theoretical aspects of the concept of early warning, Dr. Bond cautioned against a generic approach to the concept. He contended that in order for early warning to be effective, it must be premised on a concept that identifies clearly the specific issues that need early warning. In this context, Dr. Bond recommended the following questions to be addressed before establishing an early warning system:

- i) early warning on what? For example war, armed conflict, generalized violence, terrorism, pastoral raids, public protest/demonstrations/riots, state failure and coups d'état.
- ii) there should also be clear analysis or diagnosis on the risk propensity of each type of conflict;

- iii) what are the benchmarks for normal social, political, economic and cultural activities on which to measure change?
- iv) what is the ultimate goal for early warning? The purpose for early warning must be clearly defined. For example, is it to protect individuals or groups, public asset or private asset, or to protect national or collective (inter-state) interest?

16. In setting up an early warning system, Dr. Bond further recommended the following consideration:

- Data ownership, control and access must be well defined. Ideally, data ownership should be in the public domain;
- The mechanism or protocol that should remain in the public domain to enable independent evaluation must be defined;
- What are the technological infrastructure to support operations and ongoing maintenance?
- What are the COTS tools for automated and interactive data development, analysis, visualization, etc?
- What system of backward compatibility will be used;
- The system should be based on manual and auto data entry;
- Coordination among various actors is crucial and should have a hub-spokes relationship;
- Need to align expectations with built-in measures for success and failures. The System should not only rely on success but should also expect failure.

17. With regard to the relevance of the concept of EWS to conflict prevention, Dr. Bond noted that the former serves as capacity building for the latter. He stressed that diagnostic linkages should be established between EWS and prevention, pre-emption and capacity building, management, resolution, peacekeeping, etc.

18. In conclusion the speaker recommended that the AU take an incremental process to establish EWS in the following steps: 1) define what you seek to accomplish, 2) define the scope and time you want to accomplish, 3) start data collection, 4) start analysis and 5) provide recommendations.

c) Early Warning: Some Techniques and Other Thoughts (by Henri Boshof, ISS)

19. Mr. Boshof began by defining early warning as the ability to collect and analyze information in the interests of providing strategic options for preventive action or informed response. He observed that the concept of state sovereignty has often impeded efforts to establish vibrant early warning and early response mechanisms. In this context, he further observed that the rhetoric of sovereignty is increasingly losing its significance in our present world, where people have come to the realization that security is a concern transcending borders, and that domestic transgressions may result in threats to regional and even continental security. This new broader concept of security has also necessitated a broader concept of early warning beyond what it consisted in the Cold War years, as national intelligence systems concentrating upon the military threat, potential or actual, posed by other states.

20. Mr. Boshof purported that that international organizations such as the AU should take cognizance of this new broader concept of early warning to include anticipation for drought, desertification or global warming or applied analysis of politico-economic developments that may lead to armed conflict or ethnic cleansing or genocide. He argued that information based solely on military intelligence or limited source could be misleading, and that detailed understanding of a situation based on information collected from multiple and credible sources is crucial for early warning.

21. According to the speaker, the rapid collection, analysis and dissemination of reliable information lies at the heart of an effective early warning of threats to human security. He provided four main activities, which he perceives as the essential elements of early warning. These include:

- the collection and verification of information relevant to the mitigation and prevention of violent conflicts;
- the analysis of that information;
- scenario building and optional responses; and
- communication of all the above to decision-makers.

22. The speaker then outlined some conceptual differences between early warning and other related concepts: (see Tables 1 & 2 below)

Table 1: Early Warning and Risk Assessment

Early Warning	Risk Assessment
Anticipates possible outcomes	Predicts probabilities
Dynamic	Static
Context-sensitive	Generizable
Mostly qualitative analysis	Mostly quantitative analysis
Focuses on particulars	Focuses on general indicators
Traces narrative patterns	Analyses comparative patterns and trends

Table 2: Differences between Early Warning and Traditional Intelligence Systems

Early Warning	Traditional Intelligence Systems
Depends on the collection and analysis of information, scenario-building and the presentation of recommendations to decision-makers	Depends also on the collection and analysis of information, scenario-building and the presentation of recommendations to decision-makers
Focuses on human security	Focuses on state security
Seeks to serve the common good	Seeks to serve state interest
Depends on transparent methods and sharing of information	Rely on secrecy, situation rooms and encrypted communications of classified information
Transparency in information and analysis	Closed system
Decentralized and dependent upon other sources of information and analysis	Centralized and dependent on in-house information and analysis

SECTION IV:
PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES

A. Regional Observation and Monitoring Units

23. In the discussion that followed, participants heard briefings from experts from Regional Mechanisms on the different experiences and progress made in the establishment of an early warning system in their respective regions. The following points were noted:

i) ECOWAS

24. ECOWAS has established a system of observation and monitoring in the 16-Member States. The Observation and Monitoring System is divided into four subregions with its Headquarters in Abuja, which operates in the form of hub-spokes relationship. In this context, the four subregions gather information from their focal area (usually through government authorities, locals, public media and other news agencies). Information gathered is communicated on daily basis to the Situation Room in Abuja, where further detailed analysis and recommendations are done and action anticipated. The system relies on the credibility of information as well as openness in information collection, analysis and dissemination. The main problem is lack of adequate and sensitive technological equipment to enhance and facilitate the process of data collection, processing and dissemination.

ii) SADC

25. SADC has made significant progress toward the establishment of an EWS. Given the history of conflict and insecurity in the region, the SADC region has adopted many security measures including the Treaty of Windhoek and the Mutual Defense Pact, which called for more robust measures to deal with security problems in the region. In was in this context, that the Strategic Plan called for the establishment of an early warning system to boost the capacity of the region for conflict prevention. There was already a strong conviction among many countries of the region that conflict can be responded to diplomatically or politically. This provided a good basis for the establishment of an early warning system.

26. The process of putting in place an effective and functioning early warning unit is at its final phase and the next level will be to define the modalities of linking the SADC early warning system to the continental system. The main objective of

the SADC EWS is to facilitate an early response. Its headquarters shall be in Gaborone, Botswana.

27. The main challenges in the process of establishing the SADC EWS include the need for infrastructural facilities, trained staff, and financial resources or funding. Other challenges include setting benchmarks, building trust and the political will among Member States. The concept of the SADC EWS is based on linkages with national early warning units as well with as networking with the civil society organizations and other regional and international early warning systems.

iii) ECCAS

28. ECCAS is in process of establishing an EWS as envisaged in the Protocol Relating to the Peace and Security Council of the Central African region (COPAX) adopted in 1999. The main challenges at the moment include, identifying the institutional design, funding, and infrastructural needs.

iv) IGAD

29. IGAD has established an early warning unit (CEWARN) with its Headquarters in Addis Ababa. He further informed the experts that CEWARN was conceived as a mechanism that will enable the IGAD countries to systematically anticipate and respond to various conflicts in the region. CEWARN is built on the existing interstate mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution as well as the famine early warning system. that Many questions had to be answered in the initial process of establishing the CEWARN:

30. Given the experience of IGAD countries, cross-border pastoral conflicts were given priority for CEWARN. (see Table 3 below on the concept of CEWARN)

Table 3: The Concept of CEWARN

CEWARN	<p>Conceived as a mechanism for systematic anticipation and response to conflicts in the Horn of Africa. Some initial questions of concept included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how do you link early warning with early action? - Early warning on what? - Where do you start? - How do you put a mechanism in place where Member States have mistrust? - How do you ensure the political will? - How do you collect and manage data?
Focus of CEWARN	Monitoring and anticipation of pastoral cross-border conflicts, particularly livestock rustling and the circulation of small arms.
Institutional basis	<p>IGAD provides the institutional basis at the regional level for early warning and early response. Main legal basis are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Khartoum Declaration of November 2000; - The Protocol Establishing the CEWARN.
How CEWARN Functions	<p>Functions at three main levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - subregional (within the IGAD region and through cooperation with other subregional organizations such as COMESA) - national (through CEWERUs or linkages with in-state mechanisms for early warning) - regional (through the establishment of cooperation with AU and UN mechanisms for early warning) - also emphasizes the need to work with civil society at different levels
CEWARN Model	An open model involving actors other than states in data collection and analysis
Data Collection	IGAD has identified local sources on the ground in each country, who are paid \$100 for providing useful and current information. Other sources include the public domain of information.
CEWARN Funding	CEWARN is funded by GTZ

B. International Experiences

i) Experience of the United Nations (Dr. Kanninen Tapio)

31. In his presentation, Dr. Tapio began by examining the first phase of establishing an early warning system within the United Nations between 1988 and 1992. He described the first phase as a centralized system of Early Warning, that was characterized by the establishment of an Office for Research and Data Collection, and the publication of an Agenda for Peace by the then UN Secretary-General. He noted that the publication of the Agenda for Peace provided guidance on what should be the focus of the UN Early Warning System.

32. The Speaker described the second phase that began in 1998 as a period of comprehensive efforts towards the establishment of the UN Early Warning System. This phase was characterized by the establishment of a Policy Planning Unit within the Department of Political Affairs, the creation of a Conflict Prevention Team.

33. In conclusion, Dr. Tapio alluded to the General Assembly resolution 337 on Conflict Prevention, which provided the mandate for the development of a project on Early warning, as a turning point in efforts, particularly in the demonstration of political will by Member States on the need for the establishment of an Early warning System within the United Nations. He noted that information collected by the UN is conceived as privileged information, which makes the UN reluctant to share such information with other organizations.

ii) Experience of the European Union (by Mr. Javier Nino Perez)

34. At the outset of his presentation, Mr. Perez noted that the concept of early warning is still new to the European Union. He then delved into the practical experience of the concept by the EU. In this context, he informed the experts that the EU Early Warning System consists of a watch list or what is called the "Check List", which monitors situations and developments in a number of countries. The list is managed by a desk officer, who follow-ups on the list by consulting intelligence officers in those countries.

35. The Check List features analysis of risk factors for different kinds of conflicts. The list is adopted and approved by the Council of Ministers and sent to intelligent officers to monitor the countries featured in the list. He also referred to the Crisis Room as an important component of the EU Early Warning System. The

Crisis Room helps in data collection and analysis and keeps developments in different countries. It also helps to take action on early warning signals.

36. In conclusion, the speaker also pointed out some of the challenges confronting the EU Early warning System or the Check List. He pointed out that one of the major challenges of the List is that it contains 96 countries, which poses major difficulties to meet the specific interests of different countries and the general interest of the EU.

iii) Experience of FAST (by Ms. Hannelore Wallner)

37. Ms. Wallner began with a brief historical review of FAST. She informed the experts that the Swisspeace foundation, in 1998, launched a political early warning project called FAST, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. FAST conducts analysis of tension and fact-finding. Its main focus is to warn on flow of arms and armed conflicts. In this context, it conducts monitoring operations in countries in Africa and Europe.

38. Ms. Wallner also explained that FAST uses a combined methodology for data collection. The predominant source or method of data collection is through the use of local folks to collect information from the sources based on standardized criteria. Another source of information comes from the public domain or news agencies. Information collected is analyzed and coded (usually handcoding) based on 56 indicators. She pointed out that the end user of the analysis and recommendations is the Swiss Development Project.

39. With regard to the focus of FAST, the speaker noted that, FAST risk assessments, called "Updates," is to anticipate armed conflicts, which often result in humanitarian disasters and genocide.

40. In conclusion she drew attention to the fact that the FAST model is adaptive and can easily be transformed or modified to meet different focuses. (see Table 4 below on the concept of FAST)

Table 4: FAST Concept of Early Warning

FAST	“Early Analysis of tensions and fact-finding
Developed in 1998	<p>By Swisspeace and the SDC in order to supply the SDC with an external analysis tool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - that is complimentary to the in-house analysis (by SDC desk officers, in-house analysis unit, and embassies) - and that can be incorporated in the decision making process (on the part of the SDC for programming as well as the diplomatic level of the Swiss Foreign Ministry).
Four vital issues for Early Warning	<p>For any Early Warning mechanism it is essential to have a clear definition of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Focus – what do we want to warn of? (What kind of conflicts are we looking at, where is the threshold) 2) End-user of Products – what are their needs? 3) Timeframe (intervals of releasing analysis/products/alerts and how to communicate these to decision makers) 4) Establishing links to decision makers in order to engage in early action (conflict prevention)
Early Warning Components	<p>Linked to the above we can establish four components that any Early Warning system is composed of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information collection, - Analysis thereof, - Scenario building (recommendations and alerts), and - Link to decision makers
Special Characteristics of FAST	<p>Combined methodology plus quantitative analysis which complement each other and are merged in our products—the quarterly risk assessment called FAST Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - each FAST Update is a collection of app. 5 indicators (graphs depicting a trend, e.g. country stability or relative forceful actions) with a qualitative analysis that incorporates the quantitative data-set.

Qualitative Analysis	FAST works with a network of experts, adding to the in-house knowledge of the FAST desk-officers; it is essential to draw from expert knowledge for every country analysis needs to be based on the special context of a given country.
Quantitative/ Events data analysis	<p>We work with so-called Local information Networks (LINs) which are tasked with the collection of information;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LINs consist of local staff (number of people involved depends on the size of the country as well as means of communication); - Collect only open source information; - Information is based on what is called “events data,” meaning every day incidents that can either be conflictive or cooperative; - The LIN of one country collects an average of 30 events weekly which are saved in our data base – thus our data-base is always up-to-date; - Certain indicators can then be displayed in our graphs – e.g., along the distinction of actors (government/civil sector); or on the basis of Goldstein indicators that e.g., display the development of domestic or international conflict vs. cooperation.
Crucial for Information Networks	<p>Sources of Information must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparent, - Credible, - Verifiable, - Be aware of limitations – no one is completely objective! <p>FAST applies standardized coding criteria which enable us to draw from a comprehensive and comparable set of data; essential for the data collection and the quality thereof is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Completeness of information - Balance of topics (cooperation/conflict) - Frequency and consistency (amount of information over a period of time) - Coding quality - Up-to-dateness

Local Information Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National staff collects information - Information independent from western newswires - Constant flow of information - High quality of information (salience of information) - Hand coding (quality control by FAST desk officers) - Reliability of information - Covering the whole country (as opposed to information from western newswires coming mainly from capitals)
Unique Database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only hand-coded information – in correlation with that standardized coding criteria; - Hand-coding also allows FAST to track specific topics – which makes this kind of data collection very versatile
Advantage of Hand Coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No media hypes - Standardized coding criteria (initiator, recipient, plus information on location, data, damage, injuries, etc.) - Selection of salient events – balance of information collected (FAST is interested in cooperative as well as conflictual events) - Minimal error rate in coding (quality control) - Consistent frequency -
Versatile method/tool for Information Collection	<p>The system FAST is using can be modified and adjusted to special needs of the clients – like is has been done with CEWARN</p>
Challenges in EW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data collection in this form is difficult, esp. in the region we are working in -- frequent communication problems, also security concerns for staff; - The link to policy makers needs to be improved – link to early action (compare CEWARN approach) - Promoting the “political will” remains critical, esp. for an EW system run by the AU
Improvements FAST is Working on	<p>Constant, ongoing improvement in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of new indicators (incorporating gender, health, migration, development/humanitarian issues, etc.) FAST is at present working on indicator development which will be especially customized to the needs of FAST’s EW focus - Forecasting – FAST is currently engaged in developing a model for forecasting (quantitative forecasting).

iv. Experience of OSCE (By Mr. Timothy Isles, Head, Operations Planning Unit)

41. Mr. Isles began with an examination of the historical evolution of security concerns, particularly the issues of arms control and disarmament, human rights, election monitoring, economic and environmental conflicts, border control and monitoring as well as intrastate and interstate conflict within the 55 member States of the OSCE, which culminated in the adoption of the Helsinki Act in 1975 and the adoption of the Istanbul Charter for European Security in 1999. He noted that the OSCE took a comprehensive approach to security, which emphasizes the human dimension, politico-military aspects as well as the economic and environmental aspects.

42. With regard to early warning, the speaker underscored that the OSCE concept of early warning was an offspring of growing concerns and emphasis on preventive diplomacy and conflict prevention, which is enforced through OSCE field missions and activities in conflict zones. The speaker further observed that the OSCE is most effective in the early stages of crisis and flexibility in terms of response, is the main strength of the OSCE Early Warning System. (see Table 5 below)

Table 5: The OSCE Concept of Early Warning

Early Warning	Defined as the act of alerting a competent authority about the threat of a new, or renewed, conflict sufficiently in advance for preventive action to be attempted
Early Warning System	Consists of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information gathering, • processing and analysis, and • translation and signaling
Early Warning Tools	Consist of six categories of tool: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field Missions, • Delegations • Institutions: Parliamentary Assembly, High Commissioner on National Minorities, Representative on Freedom of the Media, Office • Personal Representative of the Chairperson in

	<p>Office,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysts/Researchers, • Situation/Communication Room. for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.
Situation/Communication Room	<p>Functions 7days/24hour,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitors news outlets/subscribes to many, • produces daily news briefs for selected departments within the OSCE, • uses search engines on the internet to look for relevant news in the OSCE region, and • provides articles for Mission Programme Officers and the Analyst/Researcher.
Situation/Communication Room	<p>Is staffed by a head, a deputy head and five staff members (total 7).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each staff works on 8-hour shift, • is the first point of contact during off hours for all emergencies and medical evacuations, • provides briefing points on 24hour/day to support the Operation Planning Unit when launching new missions or enhancing existing ones.

SECTION V:
EARLY WARNING MODULES
(Presented by Dr. Doug Bond)

i) System Design Guidelines

43. This proposal is anchored around Article 12 of the Protocol Relating to the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. The system shall:

1. Facilitate the anticipation and prevention of conflicts;
- 2a. Support a Situation Room, responsible for data collection and analysis based on an EW “module;”
- 2b. Provide a direct linkage of regional mechanisms to the Situation Room and “process” their data and transmit it to the Situation Room;

3. Collaborate with the United Nations, its agencies, other relevant international organizations, research centers, academic institutions and NGOs;
4. Be based on political, economic, social, military and humanitarian indicators;
5. Provide the Chairperson of the Commission and the PSC with information to assist them in taking action on potential conflicts and threats to peace and security in Africa.

44. By any interpretation the mandate outlined in Article 12 is quite ambitious, and user acceptance and training considerations would rule out an all-at-once, full-scale deployment under any condition. Thus, a fully extensible modular system that has the capacity to address the full set of mandates outlined above, while it supports incremental deployment, would seem to be recommended. Modularity and extensibility, therefore, are primary criteria for the proposed system design.

45. A second set of primary considerations that guide the present proposal is the recognition of the relative lack of infrastructure within the mandated area in general, but in particular among the designated user nodes or constituency (participating users) of the system beyond the African Union (AU), that is, “the United Nations, its agencies, other relevant international organizations, research centers, academic institutions and NGOs.”

46. The present system proposal therefore is based on Internet or web channels of access for the users, as this approach requires a minimum infrastructural requirement on remote users. It is also recognized that a sole reliance on web access for remote users would not work at times, so simple, paper-based communications are also provided for in the proposed system, primarily via fax and manual processing of field reports to be done at the AU Situation Room.

47. A third set of considerations, and perhaps the most important in terms of the ultimate utility of the system deals with the willingness of intended users to participate. Some, but not all, parts of the system require the active participation of remote users, who will act as “eyes and ears” or remote observers and analysts on the ground around the region. The presently proposed system seeks to provide an incentive to all users to participate by leveraging their efforts with a return of relevant information and analyses well beyond that which they submitted. In

addition, the system is designed to offer technical support for remote users information needs, directly from the Situation Room, to promote and encourage an active ongoing dialogue between the AU and its constituency.

48. A fourth set of considerations involves transparency of the system. The proposed system offers 100% transparency and user specifiability with respect to all parameters in the situation and incident reporting modules. In addition, the peer reviewed IDEA event framework (see (<http://www.vranet.com/IDEA>) proposed for use in the automated monitoring of news reports remains in the public domain. In this way, the operation of the system's approach and methods can be independently tested and its results (to the extent that the data are published) verified.

ii) Proposed Modules:

➤ **Module One: An automated news “clipping” service**

49. Similar to the “Early Bird” news clipping service, this proposed module is comprised of an automated daily search of the Internet for any and all open source news reports on each of the countries within the AU. This system would also support the automated archiving, indexing and distribution of these news reports, as well as their interactive search and retrieval.

50. The distribution system in this module would allow the specification of multiple lists of staff members within the AU, and users within its member states, the regional mechanisms, and others as deemed desirable. This automated system would allow remote (from anywhere on the web for authorized users) customized, interactive search and retrieval of both current news as well as the archives.

51. With respect to the proposed archives, certain intellectual property and copyright issues exist that need to be addressed before finalizing the design. It is also understood that a vendor (News Edge) is already providing some of these services for news retrieval; however, it does not appear that the service is utilized in a way that offers a maximum contribution to the overall mandate. We suggest, therefore, that a thorough assessment of the current contract be conducted, with an eye for either better utilization and integration into the larger mandate outlined in Article 12, or a replacement of the service with a module that does offer the same.

52. We also suggest that it is most important to recognize that most users, especially remote users, benefit from some technical assistance and support to customize their searches and help refine their individual profile used to guide the

distribution of the daily news reports that were automatically “clipped.” Since the automated service is *functionally* equivalent to the current service currently provided by the Situation room staff, the proposed system would free the staff to help the users with tailoring their searches.

➤ **Module Two: An automated news “Early Warning” (EW) system**

53. Module One addresses the first part of the mandate, to “collect” information, but does not address the “analysis” of the same. The presently proposed EW module monitors, analyzes and visualizes one or more international news service feeds.

54. A weekly update service is proposed for the initial deployment, using Reuters World Service and possibly *Agence France Presse*. As with Module One, all AU countries could be covered, and optionally, others could be added as well. Another option would be to add additional news agency feeds could be added as well, such as the Associated Press or the BBC.

55. This module also provides an interactive statistical analysis module that would “push” weekly updates and alters on selected indicators. The analysis provides a baseline measure of events reported in the news from which subtle inflections and anomalies in their incidence are visualized. In other words, the subtle inflections in the baseline of reported activities can be flagged prior to their escalation into a volatile situation and possible violence.

➤ **Module Three: An automated information exchange system service**

56. This module is designed to support the exchange of unstructured information between the AU Situation Room and its remote constituency. This module would support automated archiving, indexing, distribution, search and retrieval of field reports (and any other text-based information) submitted. And like the automated news alert service in Module One, the distribution system would allow the specification of multiple lists of staff members within the AU, and the remote users and constituency as deemed desirable. In other words, this automated service is functionally equivalent to the “collection and processing” of information from the regional mechanisms as indicated in Article 12.

57. The deployment of this module, in particular, would require the cooperation of these remote users for the submission of their reports. The value provided by the AU to these remote locations would lie in the web-based automated archival,

indexing, search and retrieval service provided to them with virtually no infrastructural burden. In addition, a remote user submitting to the AU Situation Room could be provided with an immediate contextualized assessment of the submission as well as those of its immediate surrounds.

➤ **Module Four: An automated Situation Reporting and Incident Management system**

58. An enhanced version of Module Three would include the development of a common framework of indicators and incident parameters to be used as the core of a web-based Situation and Incident reporting procedure that would operate between field offices of the remote users and the AU Situation Room.

59. Such an interactive web-based system would support the exchange of common and comparable data systematically collect and analyzed in real-time with minimal infrastructural requirements and costs. This part of the system is the only part that needs to be customized. One (of several) operational example for this system is the CEWARN system, though its contents would be tailored to AU's broader use and mandate for monitoring conflict in general as opposed to a particular type of conflict (pastoral conflict in the case of IGAD-CEWARN).

SECTION VI:
THE SITUATION ROOM

60. Ambassador Ki-Doulaye gave a brief overview of the Situation Room of the Conflict Management Center. He pointed out that after the establishment of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Management and Resolution in 1993, with the Central Organ as its main decision-making body, there grew an increasing need to understand African conflicts better, in order to prevent them. It was commonsensical at that time that a thorough understanding of African conflicts required timely and reliable information and analysis, providing the decision-makers with actionable options. These growing concerns provided the impetus for convening, in 1998, of the meeting of experts to identify the political, economic, social, and military indicators, which could be considered to qualify a conflict.

61. The Acting Head of the CMC informed the experts that it was following the outcome of that meeting in 1998, that the Situation Room was established, to serve as an initial step to the establishment within the CMC of a full continental early

warning unit, which would strengthen the capacity of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The Situation Room is now serving as the center for the collection, processing and dissemination of data and information on crisis situations around the continent.

62. Ambassador Ki-Doulaye told the experts that with only 6 Situation Room Assistant, the Situation Room now has the capacity to function on 7day/24hour/week.

63. In addition, Ms. Coleman (Head of the Early Warning Unit), underscored the fact that the Situation Room is aiming at establishing focal points and linkages with Regional Mechanisms, and that, currently, it has established its own formal and informal networks with civil society organizations, academic and research institutions, the United Nations and other international organizations. She further explained that the Situation Room monitors developments in all 53 African countries, though much attention is given to zones of conflicts, post-conflicts and potential conflicts.

64. With regard to the methodology of collecting and processing data and information, Ms. Coleman noted that the main source of information comes from the public domain in hard and soft prints, including newspaper both private and public, satellite TV channels, electronic news sites, and from informal sources on the ground. She explained that the information gathered is processed and compiled in the form of "News Briefs," which is forwarded to the authorities three times a day and are posted and circulated through the intranet for all staff of the Organization

65. In conclusion, she pointed out some of the challenges facing the Situation Room and the Early warning Unit as a whole. In terms of human resources, she drew attention to the fact that there are only two professional staff in the Early Warning Unit, which poses a serious challenge to meet the demands and workload of the Unit. She added that with only 6 assistants, it has been an extra challenge for the Situation Room to function as expected and that many of the staff and assistants are stretched to the limit to perform the vital tasks of the Unit. She also mentioned the need for technical equipment including enough computers for the staff and the software tool to facilitate data collection, processing and analysis.

66. With regard as to how to enhance the capacity of the Situation Room, the following recommendations were made:

- It was stressed that the Situation Room was the mitochondrion of the Early Warning Unit and that it was vital for the success of the latter,
- That the AU Situation Room should be linked to all the Regional Observation and Monitoring Units,
- That early warning should not be divorced from conflict prevention,
- That the tasks and assignments of early warning experts should be well defined, clear and precise,
- The need to separate the collection of data from analysis,
- Need to equip the Situation Room with adequate technological resources to enable access to available information,
- The Situation Room should have up-to-date facilities for communication and outreach,
- It should be staffed with trained experts,
- The need to develop and strengthen networks with other institutions and civil society,
- The main source of information should be in the public domain and should be credible and reliable,
- The system should have in-built chances to function even when power is not available,
- Regularly upgrade the Situation Room so that it has the capabilities to support the teams' activities.

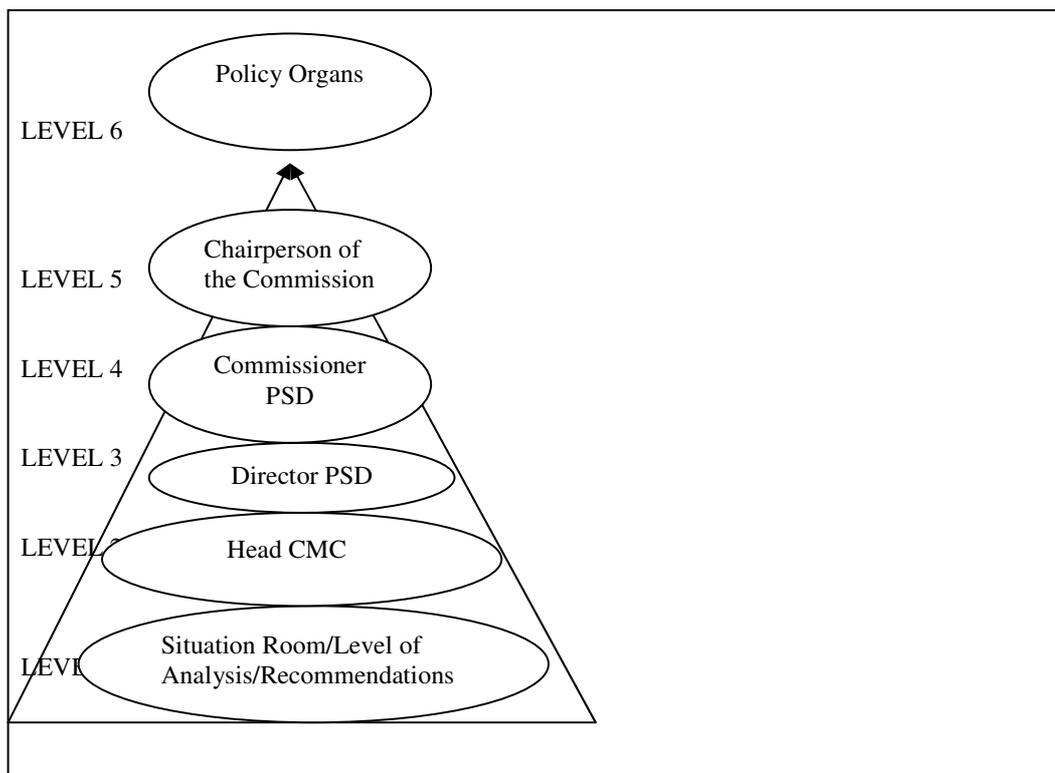
SECTION VII: **EARLY WARNING/EARLY ACTION**

67. Ambassador Ki-Doulaye opened the discussion on this subject with an overview of the experience of the AU. He began by examining the process of early action from the CMC to the Chairperson of the Commission. He stated that the process of early begins with analysis containing recommendations for actions, either from the Situation Room or from the Desk Officer or Analyst. These analysis and recommendations are submitted to the Head of the CMC. At this level, the Head of the CMC has two options: the first is to forward the report to the Director for Peace and Security, and the second option is to request for more information if there is need. From the Director, the report goes to the Commissioner, who will then define the level of action--either to request the Chairperson to act or perform the action himself depending on the level of action.

68. Ms Coleman added that the reports from the Situation Room are forwarded to the authorities containing recommendations on what possible actions the authorities can take to prevent a crisis. In this respect, she pointed out that the Chairperson of the Commission, for example, can take a number of actions. It could be a simple phone call to one of the actors, dispatch a special envoy/representative to deliver a special message or engage the parties, or designate a fact-finding mission to study a detail picture of the situation on the ground. Another action the Chairperson could take depending on the gravity of the crisis, is to bring the issue to the relevant policy organs of the AU, including the Central Organ, The Permanent Representative Committee, the Executive Council or even the Assembly, to take concrete action. (see Diagram 1 below on levels of Action)

69. She noted that one of the recurrent problems of early action is the issue of sovereignty, which Member States often use to keep the Commission away from their internal affairs.

Diagram 1: Levels of Action



70. In the discussion that transpired, the experts had a lengthy exchange of views as to whether early warning should be disjointed from conflict prevention. It was noted that, based on the language of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council, the Continental Early Warning System was meant to enhance the capacity of the AU for conflict prevention. Thus, the CEWS was an integral part of conflict prevention efforts. In this regard, it was stressed that conflict prevention should not be divorced from conflict prevention.

71. Participants also shared the strong view that early warning without an in-built system for early action was meaningless. The following recommendations were made:

- the need to break down early warning activities,
- sources of information should be credible and transparent to eliminate mistrust and hurdles to early action,
- preventive diplomacy should be strengthened,
- early response should be anticipated in the analysis of risk propensity of each type of conflict,
- early action should include political, economic and military measures. In this context, it was stressed that the Situation Room should not only serve the CMC but should serve the whole Organization including the various policy organs.

SECTION VIII:

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A ROADMAP FOR ESTABLISHING THE AU CONTINENTAL EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

72. The following general recommendations were made to guide the Commission in developing a Roadmap for the establishment of the CEWS envisaged in Article 12 of the PSC Protocol:

1. Before setting up an EWS, the AU should decide on the following:
 - clarity on the concept of early warning and the scope of the system it seeks to set up,
 - sources of funding,
 - what is the magnitude of events?
 - what approach/methodology it should take?

- when it seeks to establish the early warning?
 - who will be involved and how?
 - Who is/are the end user(s)?
2. The establishment of an early warning system should be incremental or gradual in approach and operational language.
 3. Focus of Early Warning System should be clearly defined and should begin modestly and build from there if it is successful. In this context, the AU should:
 - start with focusing on the threat of significant armed conflict or loss of life of all types such as coups d'état, wars, political instability, interstate and intrastate conflicts;
 - then expand to other areas for which early warning is needed;
 4. Special consideration should be given to the followings:
 - data ownership,
 - infrastructural capability, that is simple and user friendly,
 - use commercial, off-the shelf and customized tools, and avoid sophisticated high-tech equipment,
 - relevance to conflict prevention with diagnostic linkages between analysis and desired outcomes,
 - data sources must be multi-level, field-based, measurable, verifiable and standard,
 - realistic about the political will of Member States and the analytical capabilities of the EW unit,
 - need for feedbacks from end users,
 - institutional learning and institutional development,
 - need to establish a system of trust,
 - financial implications of data collection.
 5. Employ teams that have expertise on countries or situations that combine early warning, conflict prevention, and if necessary, conflict management functions.
 6. Identify and acquire early warning software to assist the teams in finding non-obvious future trouble spots.

7. Benchmarks for measurement of political, economic, military and social indicators must be established. A procedure should be set up to define appropriate indicators for different types of conflicts and standardized criteria for data collection must be established.
8. The risk propensity for each identified conflict must be established.
9. A separate unit should deal with data and information analysis. Such a unit should be staffed with experts or desk officers organized on regional basis.
10. Allow for users of early warning software to easily test alternative indicators or combinations of indicators.
11. Continue the use of hard and soft print news sources.
12. The system must be open, transparent and all-inclusive with capacity for collaboration with other systems. In this context, it was stressed that CEWS establish linkages or networks with regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society groups and other informal "on the ground" information sources. The AU Should also provide support to those who work with and help the AU.
13. Practical lessons drawn from the experiences of regional mechanisms such as IGAD and ECOWAS and from international organizations such as the UN, EU, OSCE and other research and professional institutions with early warning units should inform and guide the AU in the establishment of CEWS.
14. When necessary, establish the AU's own information sources if regional organizations cannot or will not do it.
15. The AU early warning module should be built on models and scenarios, which are flexible and can be modified through experience to improve predictive capacity.
16. The AU should develop its own capacity for training staff.
17. The AU CEWS should be structured in a flexible manner that uses but does not depend only on each of the five regions as a monitoring mechanism in the said region. The importance of RECs was stressed but it was also

cautioned that RECs should not be the only actors or network partners with the AU both technically and operationally.

18. In order to render RECs more effective in supporting the AU CEWS, it was emphasized that the AU should create and enhance the capacity of RECs for responding to the special demands of the AU.
19. The AU should assist RECs to undertake programmes for sharing of experiences, best practices, and information.
20. The CEWS should be able to continually update risk assessment of each identified conflict. This update should include a short-term risk, that can assess temporary dynamics and structural conditions. The following were should consist some of the elements for risk assessment:
 - get a profile of each country,
 - establish the baselines or benchmarks for the political, economic, environmental, military and social conditions,
 - then identify the possibility of day-today violence,
 - establish clear and concise rules for analysis and action.
21. The AU should undertake on regular basis, field visits to RECs headquarters to encourage cooperation, exchange of information, and to discuss challenges and successes.
22. The need for the AU to establish its own database and information sources.
23. The AU should seek funding from both internal and external sources. Internal sources should include Member States, while external sources should include AU partners and international institutions. Getting national leaders to commit some of their resources to the AU CEWS will help provide the system with credibility required to overcome political inertia.

SECTION IX:

CONCLUSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

73. In the course of the two-day Workshop, participants had an interactive and intensive exchange of views on all aspects related to the establishment of the AU Continental Early Warning System. In addition to the recommendations made, participants also expressed a number of views and observations, which could further guide the Commission in developing a Roadmap for the establishment of CEWS.

74. Firstly, it was felt that there is considerable variation in the explanations of intrastate and interstate conflicts and that, though much discussion was focused on the former, the latter could have serious implications for early warning narrowly focused on intrastate conflicts.

75. Secondly, there was a strong view among the participants that time is an important factor in thinking about early warning. Time constraints associated with early warning drive a) the policy implications, b) extent of the knowledge of the “causes” of a conflict, and c) prospects that an intervention will be successful. At the core, politicians will not invest in a solution if they think the probability of a successful effort is low. This gravitates toward developing a system with a long time horizon.

76. Thirdly, it was observed that there is an inherent tension between the short-term crisis management approach and the long-term structural approach to early warning. The short-term mechanism will approximate a crisis management system. At this level it will be pretty clear that a conflict is underway, but the ability of outside parties to effectively stop it will be greatly diminished. On the other hand, the long-term structural mechanisms will have a higher chance of success with regard to management, but because the source of the conflict will be less visible it will be less likely that anyone will be able to act. Successful outcomes, however, will be more likely. This gravitates toward setting up an early warning mechanism that focuses both on the long and short-term aspects of conflicts and their prevention.

77. Fourthly, many of the participants were convinced that success is not difficult to determine as it may first appear, and that success in crisis management is easier to observe while success in the long-term efforts is harder but increasingly visible over time. It was suggested that two possible indicators the Commission

could consider could include: 1) the rate of indigenous or domestic capital flight and direct foreign investment, and 2) a decline in the number of the incidents of crisis management.

78. Fifthly, it was stressed that how an early warning is funded constitutes an important factor in deciding how and what kind of early warning should be set up. In the long-term, how early warning programmes are funded also determines the level of success.

79. Sixthly, some views were expressed that group dynamics can play an important part of evaluating the information generated by the early warning center, and the inferences that derive from that information. Group thinking, and homogeneity of group makeup can drive the way information is used. The early warning system that is in place should make clear the process for interpreting and acting on the information.

80. In a note of conclusion, Ambassador Sam Ibok expressed the sincere gratitude of the Commission for the quality and depth of the discussion that had taken place in the course of the two-day Workshop. He thanked the participants individually and collectively, and particularly representatives from Regional Mechanisms for their insightful contributions and recommendations to guide the Commission in developing a Roadmap. He closed the Workshop with the hope that the Commission will further follow up with the participants on how to take the process of establishing the AU Continental Early Warning System further.

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