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REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON ON THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 163rd meeting held on 22 December 2008, Council extended the mandate of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) for sixty (60) days starting from 16 January 2009. At the same time, Council reiterated its call on the United Nations Security Council to immediately and without any further delay take the steps expected of it, in particular by authorizing the deployment of an international stabilization force and, subsequently, that of a peace keeping operation to take over from AMISOM and support the long-term stabilization and reconstruction of Somalia. Pending the deployment of such an operation, and since the continued stay of AMISOM forces will depend on the availability of the required resources, Council requested the United Nations Security Council to authorize a support package for AMISOM on the basis of the proposals contained in the letter addressed by the UN Secretary-General to the Security Council on 19 December 2008, bearing in mind the provisions of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

2. Council welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the Djibouti Agreement of 19 August 2008, encouraged the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) to intensify their efforts towards the implementation of the Agreements they have reached and urged, once again, all parties that have not joined the peace process to do so. Council decided to endorse the decision adopted by the 30th Extraordinary Session of IGAD Council of Ministers held in Addis Ababa on 18 November 2008, to impose targeted sanctions, including travel ban and asset freeze, against all those hindering the on-going efforts towards reconciliation, peace and stability in Somalia.

3. The present report provides an update on the developments that took place in Somalia since the 163rd meeting of Council and supplements the briefings provided during the 167th, 170th and 171st meetings of Council held on 21st January and 18 and 23 February 2009, respectively. The report concludes with recommendations on the way forward.

II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

4. During the period under review, significant progress has been made regarding the political process in Somalia. Following the resignation of President Abdullahi Yusuf on 29 December 2008, a number of developments took place in the country. First, Somali stakeholders in accordance with the decisions reached within the context of the Djibouti process, expanded the Transitional Federal

Parliament (TFP), by 275 seats, to accommodate the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) and other stakeholders, including the civil society.

5. On 30 January 2009, the expanded TFP proceeded, in a free and fair manner, to elect a new President, in the person of Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. This election, coupled with the expansion of the TFP, crowned the process initiated by the signing of the Djibouti Agreement of 19 August 2008. On 13 February 2009, the newly elected President appointed Omar Abdirashi Ali Shermake as the new Prime Minister. On 22 February 2009, the Prime Minister formed a 36-member Cabinet, representing a broad based Government. The Government and other transitional institutions have since relocated to Mogadishu.

6. It is worth noting that the new President, upon assumption of duty, expressed his commitment to work towards an effective reconciliation among the Somali people and bring on board those elements that are still outside the peace process. He also stressed the intention of his Government to promote close cooperation with Somalia's neighbours.

7. From 26 to 27 February 2009, the International Contact Group (ICG) on Somalia held a meeting in Brussels, Belgium, to discuss the situation in Somalia. At that meeting, ICG underlined the urgent need to provide tangible and coordinated support to the new Somali Government to enable it execute its political and security recovery priorities, including respect for human rights and the rebuilding of rule of law institutions that will result in tangible peace dividends to the Somali population. The ICG also agreed to reconvene in New York on 17 March 2009, to specifically address the financial needs of AMISOM up to September 2009.

III. SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

8. The security situation in Somalia and Mogadishu, in particular, remains very volatile. In February 2009, there were two roadside bomb explosions against the Ugandan contingent of AMISOM and at least eight direct attacks, including mortar and artillery fire, against their positions.

9. On 19 February 2009, Al Shabaab insurgents attacked the Burundi contingent's camp at General Siad Barre Academy at night but were repelled. The following day, the insurgents launched new attacks, killing one Burundian peacekeeper and seriously injuring another one. On 22 February 2009, two suicide bombers infiltrated the Burundi contingent camp and detonated bombs which were followed by mortar attacks. Eleven (11) peacekeepers were killed and 15 injured in the most unfortunate episode for which Al Shabaab spokesman, Muktar Robow, claimed responsibility. Serious clashes occurred on 23 and 24 February 2009 between Hisbul Islam and AMISOM forces at various positions. There were no casualties for AMISOM.

10. In efforts aimed at addressing the heightened level of insecurity, notably the attacks directed at AMISOM, President Sheikh Sharrif met with representatives of a number of armed opposition groups in a bid to open dialogue with them. The President has also established a National Security Committee to oversee efforts to improve security and broaden reconciliation. Furthermore, a number of religious clerics, traditional leaders, businessmen and the influential Hawiye Cultural and Unity Council have also intervened and prevailed on some of the groups concerned to halt their attacks on AMISOM. This has resulted in a cessation of hostilities expected to hold for 120 days effective from 1st March 2009.

11. However, Al Shabaab leaders, despite coming under considerable pressure, have refused to heed calls for cessation of hostilities. Al Shabaab and Hizbul Islam (Islamic Party) continue to actively mobilize against the new Government and AMISOM in Mogadishu. In this respect, the two groups and their allies have stepped up their propaganda campaign against AMISOM, insisting that all foreign troops must leave Somalia. It is worth noting that, in the central region of Galgaduud, other armed groups are battling the Al Shabaab elements, pushing them out of their traditional base in el Buur.

12. AMISOM is working closely with the TFG to operationalise the Somali Joint Security Force. In this regard, AMISOM is providing food rations to the first batch of recruited TFG/ARS forces. Considering the need to fully equip the Somali Joint Security forces with the requisite weapons and ammunitions, the TFG has requested the AU to formally call upon the UN Security Council to grant an exemption to the arms embargo imposed on Somalia, to allow the Government to import arms for its forces.

13. The humanitarian situation remains dire. In fact, considerable progress recorded earlier with the return of a number of IDPs and some refugees back to Mogadishu has been reversed as a number of Mogadishu residents have again been forced out as a result of continued fighting between various armed elements and TFG forces.

14. On its part, AMISOM continues to provide basic humanitarian relief to local communities. The AMISOM Level 1 hospital provides both out-patient and in-patient medicare to a considerable number of Somalis, while AMISOM water tankers supply portable water to communities around the camps and beyond.

IV. STATUS OF AMISOM

15. During the period under review, the Commission has pursued its efforts to enhance AMISOM. The Mission's current strength is 3,450 (two battalions each from Burundi and Uganda) against an authorized strength of 8,000. Steps are underway to deploy the two additional battalions pledged by Burundi and Uganda. The Commission is also engaging other Member States to secure additional troops. In addition, efforts continue to be made to complete the

deployment of the police component of AMISOM, as part of the efforts to train, mentor, restructure and reorganize the Somali police. I would like to seize this opportunity to, once again, extend AU's sincere appreciation to the Government of Algeria, which continues to avail the Mission with airlift support for troop deployment and rotation, and to the AU bilateral and multilateral partners providing financial and logistical support to AMISOM.

16. In spite of the constraints facing the Mission and the challenging security environment in which it is operating, AMISOM has, throughout the period under review, continued to provide invaluable support to the ongoing peace efforts. In this respect, the Mission provides protection for major infrastructure, undertakes regular peace building patrols, and assists in the implementation of the security arrangements provided for within the framework of the Djibouti Agreement. AMISOM also provides protection for the TFG leadership. Also, as indicated above, AMISOM extends humanitarian assistance to communities in the Mission Area.

17. Since my last report to Council, the Commission has convened two meetings bringing together the AU, the TFG, the Troop Contributing Countries (TCC), the UN and other international partners, in Addis Ababa, on 17 January and 16 February 2009, respectively. The meetings provided an opportunity to review the overall situation in Somalia and exchange views on efforts to mobilize further support for AMISOM and the peace process in general.

V. ESTABLISHMENT OF A UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPING OPERATION IN SOMALIA AND UN ASSISTANCE TO AMISOM

18. On 16 January 2009, the Security Council adopted resolution 1863(2009) in which it expressed its intent to establish a UN peacekeeping operation in Somalia as a follow-on force to AMISOM, subject to a further decision by 1st June 2009. In the same resolution, the Security Council approved the proposals made by the UN Secretary General on 19 December 2008, for a logistical package to support AMISOM, including equipment and services. In the same resolution, the UN Security Council also requested the Secretary General to establish a Trust Fund to provide financial support to AMISOM until a UN peacekeeping operation is deployed and to assist in the re-establishment, training, and retention of all inclusive Somali security forces.

19. As a follow-up to this resolution, the UN Secretariat deployed an integrated technical assessment mission to Addis Ababa and Nairobi to collect the necessary information and consult the Somali parties, the AU, including AMISOM, and other partners on the details of the support required by AMISOM and the Somali parties, as well as arrangements for the implementation of the proposals made by the UN Secretary General on 19 December 2008.

20. In a letter dated 30 January 2009 to the Security Council, the Secretary General outlined the details of support to be provided to AMISOM. This support

will include provision of logistics capacity support package to be funded from UN assessed contributions and to comprise the equipment and mission support services normally provided for a UN peacekeeping operation of the same size; and financial support from UN Member States, through the envisaged Trust Fund, which will allow for funding to be channeled to AMISOM to cover reimbursements and, eventually, to help procure necessary contingent equipment. The budgetary approval by the UN General Assembly for the support package is expected in March 2009. In the meantime however, equipments donated by the UN from its now disbanded UNMEE operations have been delivered to Mogadishu.

VI. OBSERVATIONS

21. Over the past few months, significant progress has been made in the political process in Somalia. The commitment of the TFG as demonstrated by the swift relocation to Mogadishu of the President and the Prime Minister, as well as cabinet members and parliamentarians, is an encouraging step towards the restoration of governance structures in the country. I call on all Somali stakeholders to demonstrate the necessary spirit of compromise and accommodation to further peace, security and reconciliation in their country. I reiterate my appeal to all AU partners within the international community to provide all the support required to the Somali Government and parties committed to the restoration of lasting peace, reconciliation, security and stability in their country. This is all the more necessary given the daunting challenges facing the TFG, particularly in terms of security.

22. I would like to, once again, express my appreciation to the Governments of Burundi and Uganda, for their commitment to the promotion of lasting peace and reconciliation in Somalia. I pay tribute to the Burundian and Ugandan contingents for their dedication, sacrifice and invaluable contribution to the promotion of peace, security and stability in Somalia, under particularly difficult circumstances. I, once again, condemn in the strongest terms the criminal and cowardly attacks against AMISOM, humanitarian workers and the civilian population in general, perpetrated by elements bent on undermining the ongoing efforts to promote peace and security in Somalia.

23. The adoption by the UN Security Council of resolution 1863(2009) expressing its intent to establish a UN peacekeeping operation in Somalia as a follow-on force to AMISOM is a welcome development. Equally important is the decision by the UN to provide a logistical support package to AMISOM, bearing in mind the primary responsibility of the UN Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security and the fact that cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations can improve collective security. I look forward to the early budgetary approval by the UN General Assembly of the elements of the support package to be provided through UN assessed contributions. I call on UN Member States to generously contribute to the envisaged UN Trust Fund to provide financial support to AMISOM, until a UN peacekeeping operation is

deployed, and to assist in building the Somali security and rule of law institutions. I express AU's appreciation to all Member States and partners who have so far extended support to AMISOM.

24. In the meantime, the Commission will continue its efforts to mobilize additional troops to reach AMISOM authorized strength. I urge Member States to contribute personnel and other resources to AMISOM. It is crucial that the countries of the region and the AU Member States- in general, continue to do whatever they can to sustain and consolidate the progress so far made and support the Somalis in achieving the peace and stability they have been aspiring to for about two decades now. At the same time, consultations will be intensified with all AU partners to see to it that concrete measures are taken against the extremist elements trying to reverse the progress made in Somalia, including through attacks against AMISOM, and to undermine regional peace and stability. The AU will also continue to work closely with the Somali Government to assist it towards the early establishment and training of Somali security forces.

25. In light of the above, I recommend that Council extend the mandate of AMISOM, as spelt out in communiqué PSC/PR/Comm(LXIX) adopted at its 69th meeting held on 19 January 2007, including protecting its personnel, installations and equipment and the right of self-defence, for three additional months, starting from 16 March 2009.

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