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**REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION
ON THE SITUATION IN DARFUR**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 88th meeting held on 14 August 2007, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) was briefed by Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Special Envoy for Darfur, on the outcome of the Arusha consultations with the leading personalities of the non-signatories of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA); on the Status of the Implementation of the African Union (AU) – United Nations (UN) Roadmap for Peace in Darfur as well as the significant developments that have taken place in all aspects of the AU's involvement.

2. Furthermore, Dr. Salim informed Council of the extensive consultations that have been made with the non-signatories to the DPA and his meeting with Khalil Ibrahim, President of JEM on 8 July 2007. He also reported that the countries of the Region have been active in advancing the efforts to bring about some cohesion among the splintering non-signatories.

3. At the end of its deliberations, Council endorsed the steps outlined by the Special Envoy to follow up on the work accomplished in Arusha, in particular, on the need to engage in serious and constructive dialogue with the Government of the Sudan and with its DPA partners, to finalize the preparations for negotiations. It also commended and encouraged the partnership with the Regional Actors, as being pivotal to the search for lasting peace in Darfur.

4. Council took note of and expressed support to the efforts of the Special Envoy and urged the Commission to extend maximum support to him within the framework of the AU/UN Joint Mediation Support Team.

5. This report is intended to update Council on the activities of the Commission, working with the United Nations, with regard to its efforts to start substantive negotiations in the Darfur political peace process and strengthen the peacekeeping operation in Darfur through the UNAMID deployment.

II. STATUS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DARFUR PEACE AGREEMENT (DPA)

6. The Darfur Peace Agreement Implementation Team (DPAIT) is continuing to closely follow the implementation of the DPA where several provisions of the Agreement relating mainly to power sharing and wealth sharing were implemented. Nevertheless, with regard to security arrangements, concrete measures are yet to be taken. Both the Government and the SLM/A-Minni, as signatories to the DPA, were having direct bilateral meetings to solve some of the pending issues, including the allocation of non-military logistical support by the Government through the Supreme Committee for the implementation of the DPA, a mechanism chaired by a member of the SLM/A-Minni. The DPAIT attended the inaugural session of the said Committee.

7. I wish to note, however, that, of late, the pace of implementation of the DPA had slowed considerably and prompted the SLM/A-Minni to complain to the DPAIT

about the lack of any visible achievement and the urgency to revive the implementation process. In this connection the DPAIT tried hard to convene meetings with the signatories, but was unsuccessful.

8. Although the DPAIT has not been officially notified, until now, of the replacement of the previous Chief Negotiator for the Government, Dr. Majzoub Al-Khalifa, by Dr. Nafie Ali Nafie, Assistant to the President, the DPAIT is still waiting to convene a formal meeting with the DPA signatories to assess the current situation.

9. It is worth noting that while the efforts of the international community were mainly focused on how to bring the non-signatories on board, the signatories are expressing their frustrations on what they perceived to be an abandonment of the obligations of the international community to this process. The long awaited non-military logistical support to the Movements, for instance, had not been provided, except the one the Government had been giving to the signatories on a voluntary basis.

III. THE RELAUNCHING OF THE PEACE PROCESS- ACTIVITIES OF THE JOINT MEDIATION SUPPORT TEAM (JMST)

10. Assisted by the AU/UN JMST, the two Special Envoys, Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim and Mr. Jan Eliasson, accelerated their consultations with the Sudanese Parties as well as with a wide range of Darfur Stakeholders with a view to preparing for the start of the Talks. In this regard, they appointed Amb. Sam Ibok, for the AU, and Mr. Taye-Brook Zerihoun, for the UN, as their Chief Mediators,

11. In order to make the peace process more inclusive, the two Special Envoys engaged, on several occasions, the Signatories to the DPA, both the Government and SLM/A-Minni, the non-Signatories, Regional and International Partners, representatives of the Darfur civil society, including civil society organizations, tribal leaders, Native Administration, Women and Youth groups, intellectuals, and Arab tribes in an attempt to get their views on the best way to move the peace process forward. During these consultations, they requested them to indicate their positions on the venue, agenda, format, participation, and the need for workshops for capacity and confidence building. In this context, the Special Envoys as well as members of the JMST undertook several trips to Khartoum, Darfur, Asmara, Kampala, Paris, London and other places to carry on consultations on these issues.

12. In view of the fact that the Movements' leaders were scattered in many locations making it difficult to efficiently consult among themselves, the Special Envoys had offered them an opportunity to assemble in one place to discuss issues among themselves without any external intervention. It is in this spirit that the Arusha, Tanzania, and Ndjamen, Chad, meetings were organized in August and September 2007 respectively. Leading personalities from the Movements were invited to both meetings. Although the Arusha meeting was well attended, the one in Ndjamen was not.

13. In Arusha, the movements managed to come out with a provisional common position on the issues referred to above but requested additional time to consolidate these gains and to agree on a common negotiating team through further consultations with others who were not present in Arusha, including Mr. Abdel Wahid

Nour. They submitted a five items draft agenda—power sharing; wealth sharing; security; land, and humanitarian issues—for the envisaged negotiations. As to the venue, they stated their first choice was one of the countries of the Region or any other country that the Special Envoys would consider convenient in terms of facilities and logistics. Unfortunately only few of the principal leaders attended the Ndjama meeting, claiming that they were not sufficiently consulted on the date and venue. Therefore, it was decided to postpone this meeting and reconvene it at a date and venue to be communicated by the movements themselves.

14. As part of the preparations for the Talks, the AU and UN Special Envoys, led a three day AU-UN Mediation Support Team working session, in Addis Ababa, from 6 to 10 October 2007. In this meeting they discussed key strategic and process-related issues of the mediation process, including the participation of the parties to the negotiations, the issue to be negotiated, and the negotiation process.

15. In the meantime, the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement (SPLM) went on with its own initiative to bring to Juba all the non-signatories so as to help them reunite under a single delegation and form a common negotiating position. These efforts now known as the Juba reconciliation process took a long time to mature, notwithstanding the exacerbation of insecurity on the ground, with growing tribal clashes and the continued unrest in the IDPs camps as well as the unceasing fragmentation of the movements. The Juba consultations started just before the convening of the talks in Libya.

16. The Talks were officially opened in Sirte, Libya, on 27 October 2007. The international community was represented at a high level and the inaugural ceremony was presided by Leader of the Great Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Col. Muammar Khaddafi, I and the Representative of the current chairman of the African Union, President John Kuoffor as well as other Foreign Ministers from the Regional countries, Representatives of the five permanent members of the Security council, the Secretary General of the League of Arab States, a representative of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and other representatives of international partners attended the opening session. Members of Darfurian civil society also attended the opening ceremony, although with a limited number of representatives due to administrative and bureaucratic procedures. They made positive statements aimed at advancing peace and reconciliation in Darfur. Here, I wish to note my regrets that some of the leaders of the movements were absent under various pretexts. They complained about lack of consultation about the date and venue; the invitations extended to non significant movements and non representative personalities, and their reservations about the venue. Others simply refused to attend any peace talks unless their multifarious and unrealistic pre-conditions were met.

17. In organizing the Talks, the Special Envoys outlined the process having three phases: phase one, inauguration of the Talks; phase two, consolidation of consultations with all stakeholders with a view to crystallizing the positions of the parties; and phase three, the commencement of substantive negotiations.

18. In Sirte, the JMST also organized presentations by experts to familiarize the representatives of the Government and the movements with the issues to be discussed during the negotiations.

19. While the Sirte process was progressing, the JMST also dispatched an AU-UN Senior Officials delegation led by Amb. Boubou Niang to Juba and North Darfur to re-establish channels of contacts and consultations with the various movements which did not come to Sirte, and brief them about the Sirte process and to encourage them to accelerate their consultations and to be ready for the substantive Talks. This mission which was well received by the movements was followed by a higher level joint mission headed by the two AU-UN Chief Mediators, Amb. Sam Ibok and Mr. Taye-Brook Zerihoun who also held discussions with the Highest Authorities of SPLM and leaders of the rebel groups in Juba as well as those of the SLM/A-Unity, led by Mr. Abdallah Yehia, assisted by Dr. Sharif Hariri (in charge of External Relations and Chief Negotiator, and Suleiman Jamous, Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs) in Northern Darfur. The Chief Mediators stressed the need to rapidly conclude the Juba process and allow the Mediation to proceed on the implementation of its roadmap in preparation for the substantive negotiation phase of the Sirte Talks.

20. The Juba process was concluded on 29 November 2007 under the chairmanship of the President of the Government of South Sudan and First Vice-President of the Sudan, Salva kiir Mayardit, who congratulated the movements for their great achievement. In the Juba process, the Movements united the 17 groups (the Group of 5—JEM-Bahr Idriss Abu Gharda, NMRD, URFF, SLM/A-Khamees Abdallah, SLM/A-Adam Bakheet; and the Group of 11, comprising SLM/A political leaders and field commanders, including, Abdul Shafie, Jaral Nabi, Dr Saleh Adam Ishaq, Mohamed Ali Clay, Ibrahim Ahmed Ibrahim, and other individuals) into two groupings. However, both groups requested more time to go back to the field and consult with their other brothers in order to strengthen the Juba gains and possibly come out with a unified negotiating team and positions. The Mediation, which supported the Juba and Northern Darfur processes, is closely following the progress on the two tracks. It is the belief of the Mediation that further consolidation of the Darfur factions into one or at least fewer groups would immensely help the peace process. The Juba participants were flown back, at their request, to the field by the AU and UN, with the cooperation of the Government of Sudan, in order to facilitate their initial assembly at Juba.

21. At the time of the finalization of this report, the consolidation of the Juba process was still going on in Darfur. Both groups are trying to organize themselves as structured movements, conduct internal consultations and negotiations on the substantive and procedural issues and come up with a delegation duly and fully mandated to represent the whole group at the Talks. The challenges ahead are enormous, especially those related to leadership wrangles”.

22. In an effort to assess the current consultation phase of the Darfur Peace Process, following the conclusion of the first phase of the Sirte process, including the outcome of the Juba unification efforts and to decide on the way forward, the two Special Envoys convened the second meeting with the Regional Partners in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, on 4 December 2007. The Foreign Ministers of Chad, Egypt and Libya attended the meeting. Eritrea was represented by a high level delegation headed by the Presidential Adviser. The participants agreed that the Juba Unification Process had ended on a positive note, having led to the formation of two broad coalitions, with significant potential for the formation of the ‘critical mass’ necessary for the start of the substantive Talks. They also appreciated the contribution of the

SPLM in these efforts. They also agreed on the need to give more time to the Movements to enable them finalize their reorganization process.

23. It is worth noting that, during this meeting, the representatives of Libya and Eritrea urged the Government of Sudan to accommodate Mr. Minni Minawi and his movement in the Final Talks. Egypt has also offered to host another Arusha type of meeting which was endorsed by the meeting on the condition that the Movements are consulted and their views taken into account. The participants also took note of the escalation of the situation between Chad and Sudan as a result of recent clashes between Chadian Government Forces and Rebel Movements. It also took note of the assurances given by the Foreign Minister of Chad to continue dialogue between the two countries to contain any escalation.

24. In order to attain a long lasting solution, the Darfur peace process must be as all inclusive as possible. Until November 2007, there were more than 20 movements, out of the original two, namely the Justice and Equality Movement –JEM- and the Sudan Liberation Movement –SLM. More splinter groups have emerged since then. Conducting a negotiation process in those circumstances would not be easy. This is the reason why the Mediation team, with the facilitation of the SPLM, has been encouraging the formation of more compact negotiating teams. For this purpose, intensive consultations took place in Juba, Khartoum and Darfur during the whole month of November 2007. At the end of the process, two groups were formed and the leaders requested for more time in order to go back to their constituencies for further consultations and, hopefully, institutionalization of the new groups.

25. On the 19th January 2008, the two Special Envoys concluded a weeklong visit to Sudan where they met with the Sudanese Government's representatives, the Vice President of the Sudan and the President of Southern Sudan and the movements' leaders and representatives. The two Special Envoys' task was to assess the readiness of the parties for the peace talks. At this stage, it is encouraging to note that five important groups have been identified: the SLM Unity of Abdallah Yahya, the United Resistance Front (URF), the SLM of Abdul Wahid, the JEM of Dr. Khalil Ibrahim and the SLM of Abdul Shafie. While the two first groups have stated clearly that they are ready for the preparatory meetings and the peace talks, the SLM of Abdul Shafie has requested for more time to finalize its unification process. Concerning the SLM of Abdul Wahid, it is not willing to join the peace process, until the time its conditions, mainly related to security, are met. As far as the JEM of Dr. Khalil Ibrahim is concerned, plans are still being finalized to meet with him. Consultations with all the movements are continuing with the aim of convincing all of them to translate their commitment to peace into reality by engaging in the peace talks without prior conditions. All of them, especially the SLM of Abdul Wahid and the JEM of Dr. Khalil Ibrahim, are being vigorously encouraged to accept the other groups around the negotiating table for the sake of a comprehensive peace deal in Darfur.

26. No timetable has been set for the beginning of the substantive negotiations. They will resume only once the parties feel ready and represent a critical mass. Meanwhile, the two Special Envoys are urging the parties to create a more conducive environment by avoiding any further provocation. In order to boost their negotiation skills and to create more confidence, the Mediation team promised to conduct similar workshops to those held in Arusha in the near future if the parties are

interested, before the substantive talks' resumption. It is our sincere hope that at the end of those workshops, the various movements will then have strengthened their coordination and will come up with a joint position and maybe even with a common delegation to the substantive peace talks".

IV. SECURITY SITUATION

27. Direct hostile action against AMIS personnel and facilities increased greatly in the months of March, April and September 2007. The period between 5 March 2007 and 14 April 2007 witnessed the death of 9 AMIS personnel in attacks by armed groups. The mission suffered its deadliest attack when armed groups attacked the Haskanita Camp on 29 September 2007. This attack resulted in the killing of 10 AMIS personnel, 12 seriously injured and one soldier still missing in action. On 30 September 2007, I issued a statement expressing my outrage at the unprovoked attack on the AMIS camp and condemned it in the strongest terms as it occurred at a time when all efforts were being made to convene the Tripoli Peace talks on 27 October 2007. Furthermore, I stressed that this heinous and cowardly act will not deter the determination and commitment of the AU in bringing about a lasting peace and alleviating the suffering of the people in Darfur. A joint AU/UN Board of Enquiry (BOE) has been convened to investigate all aspects of the attack including the identification of the perpetrators of this crime in order to bring them to justice. Final conclusions and recommendations from the Board are pending.

28. The Mission also faced other challenges including the obstruction of patrols, strike action by language assistants and party representatives as well as hostile attitudes by some of the locals in Darfur. AMIS operations were therefore hampered significantly resulting in the reduction of patrols and other activities. Despite condemnations by the international community of these acts against AMIS and NGOs, armed groups in Darfur have continued with these attacks.

29. The general security situation has been relatively calm in Darfur. However, there have recently been bombings in the Jabel Moon area of Western Darfur. The AU is gravely concerned for the safety of thousands of civilians living in this area. The Joint Special Representative has released a statement condemning these bombardments.

30. The insecurity along the Chad-Sudan border is another major issue responsible for the current security situation in West Darfur. Armed groups have continued to operate with relative ease across the border while accusations and military actions by both the GoS and the Chadian Government have been stepped up.

31. The period under review witnessed few cases of inter-party clashes within the AOR. One of them was the ambush of an SLA (M) convoy in Umzaifa by suspected GoS forces, about 50 kms from Nyala on 24 March 2007, where the Head of the SLA Security Arrangements Committee in Nyala and 3 others were killed. There was also clashes between the GoS and JEM/SLA (FW) at Um Dukhum on 22 October 2007; attack by Arab militia on SLA (M) at Muhajeria, on 1 Nov 2007, and clashes between GoS and SLA (United) at Anabegi on 25 -26 Nov 07. North Darfur also witnessed aerial bombardments by the GoS against suspected positions of some of the DPA Non-Signatories.

32. Since transfer of authority from AMIS to UNAMID on 31 December 2007, threats and hostile acts directed towards UNAMID have increased. Of specific note was the GoS attack on a UNAMID re-supplies convoy that occurred near Tine during the evening of 7 January 2008, severely wounding one Sudanese civilian driver. This incident highlights the challenges UNAMID will be facing as it attempts to increase re-supply and 24/7 patrolling throughout the region

V. HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

33. In the period under review, many NGOs have withdrawn from many parts of Darfur due to lack of security guarantees to their personnel and properties. The number of attacks which were directed against NGOs included the snatching of 20 vehicles and had resulted in a scaled-down of operations across the Region. The most affected areas were Graidia and Muhajeria, in South Darfur where the humanitarian situation was really deteriorating. Other affected areas include Birmaza, Muzbat and Anka in North Darfur and Selea, Sirba and Forobaranga in West Darfur. AMIS patrols to these areas were consequently inundated with desperate pleas by locals and IDPs for relief materials.

34. The humanitarian situation was also affected by the insecurity occasioned by violence against IDPs. In many instances, women who ventured out without escorts were molested, robbed and raped, while the men were abducted, tortured or murdered. Armed men have been known to enter IDP camps to either attack or harass the IDPs. These incidents were usually more serious in areas where AMIS Forces could not monitor IDP activities.

35. Improving the humanitarian situation in Darfur will thus depend on a secure environment for humanitarian operations. The absence of this environment in many areas cannot be divorced from the lack of progress in the Peace Process. Currently, both the GoS and the various Movements have given one form of assurance or the other to humanitarian agencies guaranteeing them access and security in their areas of control, but the general insecurity in the region have continued to undermine these guarantees. It is hoped that the envisaged UNAMID deployment would enhance the capacity to secure more corridors for sustained delivery of aid to the needy people in Darfur.

VI. UNAMID DEPLOYMENT

36. I wish to note, with satisfaction, that the AU and UN have made considerable progress with regard to the deployment of the Hybrid Operation, although considerable challenges still remain. It is to be recalled that both myself and the Secretary General of the UN, submitted to our respective bodies, a joint report on the Hybrid Operation highlighting the mandate and the structure for the operation in Darfur and providing details on the various components of the proposed operation and their specific tasks.

37. I last briefed Council on the developments leading to the decisions of AU Peace and Security Council of 22 June 2007, which took note of the AU and UN report on the Hybrid Operation and adopted the decision of the AU–UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur as well as UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1769 (2007),

which was adopted on 31 July 2007, authorizing the deployment of the Hybrid Operation.

38. From 30 July to 1 August 2007, an AU-UN Joint Planning Session on the Hybrid Operation was convened in order to finalize at the working level a number of key issues and guiding documents relevant to the UN Heavy Support Package (HSP) to AMIS and the Hybrid Operation.

39. In the UNAMID deployment plan, it was anticipated to deploy UNAMID military liaison officers in Abeche, Chad. This could be reviewed in view of a request received from the Chadian Government, on 09 January 2008, for the closure of the former AMIS Team Site in Abeche. The Chadian Government based this request on what it considered as its exclusion from the participation in the Ceasefire Commission and the prevailing situation at the Chad/Sudan border.

VII. MILITARY COMPONENT

40. The UN and the AU established a multidisciplinary transition planning team to assist with AMIS to UNAMID transition issues. The Team included a 25 - member military transition planning team in El Fasher and was headed by the Deputy Joint Special Representative.

41. The key UNAMID strategic documents (Strategic Concept of Operations, the Military Command Directive to the Force Commander, and the Rules of Engagement) have been jointly signed by the AU and UN and distributed to those concerned. The UN and AU have approved a pocket size Rules of Engagement card that will be produced and distributed to all UNAMID soldiers.

42. The Force Generation process is in progress at the UNDPKO where the AU has assigned 2 officers (1 Military and 1 Civilian Police) for follow-up coordination. A joint AU-UN High Ranking Operational and Technical Advisory Team (HROTAT) visited 11 African countries in November and December 2007 to assess the viability of the pledges by these countries with a view to enhancing the Force Generation process for the UNAMID. The visit also provided the countries an opportunity to better understand the pledges made and the expectations based on the force requirement for the capabilities pledged.

43. At the end of the visits, it was assessed that the pledges of one infantry battalion made by the Governments of Burundi, Cameroon, Mali and Mauritania, will not be immediately viable to meet the requirements of UNAMID within the planned timeframe. It was proposed that at an initial stage, these countries deploy one Reinforced Motorized Infantry Company to be embedded with another TCC's battalion. Ghana, Senegal, Malawi, Tanzania and Burkina Faso will deploy one infantry battalion in the second half of 2008, whilst Ethiopia and Egypt will deploy one each as from February 2008. The Government of The Gambia having better understood the force requirements of a Recce Company withdrew its pledge for this capability. A gap therefore exists in this critical capability. The Government of Malaysia has pledged to provide the Recce Company. As there is no pledge from an African country, the Malaysian pledge is receiving favorable consideration from the

DPKO. Slow but steady progress is being made in the deployment of those infantry battalions already identified.

44. Critical gaps continue to exist in the area of aviation, (attack helicopters, utility helicopters and Arial recce) Heavy and Medium transport units as well as multi-role logistics unit. Recently, the Government of Jordan withdrew their pledge for a multi-role logistics unit, making already difficult situation worse. To addressing these gaps in aviation, the DPKO is exploring the possibility of transferring tactical helicopters from another UN Mission to Darfur. Discussions are currently ongoing with the Government of Ukraine on this issue. Also, the Government of UK has offered to convene a meeting on 16 Jan 08 in New York, to focus on generating the missing assets.

45. As per the agreement regarding the African character in respect of force generation for UNAMID, a combined AU-UN Special Task Force led by Major General Per Arne Five, acting MILAD DPKO, was dispatched to the Republics of Ethiopia and Egypt from 19 to 21 November 2007, to determine the possibility of the early deployment of one infantry battalion each. Both countries planned to commence troop deployments in February 2008.

46. The Joint Special Representative, Rodolphe Adada, his Deputy, General Henry Anyidoho, the Force Commander of UNAMID, General Martin Luther Agwai, Major General Karake Karenzi, Deputy Force Commander of UNAMID and the UNAMID Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Davison Houston, have been deployed to the Sudan. UNAMID Sector Commanders from the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Rwanda and Senegal as well as the Deputy Sector Commanders from the Republic of Egypt, Pakistan and China have deployed to the Mission area. Interviews for UNAMID high level staffing positions as well as the allocation of Military Observers, Staff officers and Liaison Officers are currently in progress in New York.

47. The AMIS Partners assisted with the strategic airlift for the rotation of AMIS troops starting 01 October 2007 and completed on 27 December 2007. The strategic airlift (by NATO) of the two additional battalions (from Nigeria and Rwanda) of 800 all ranks was also completed, as scheduled, in October 2007. The deployment of the two additional battalions has facilitated the timely implementation of the 3 - sector restructuring process.

48. The Heavy Support Package (HSP) Units are expected to provide increased capacity to UNAMID and enable it to build the in-theatre technical infrastructure needed before the arrival of the main-body. Preparations for the deployment of HSP enabling units are in progress and all reconnaissance visits are completed. Negotiations on the MoU between the UN and TCCs have been held with half of the TCCs providing the HSP units. On 24 November 2007 the first 135 personnel from the Chinese Engineering Company deployed to Nyala, and the main body made of 175 personnel is expected to be on the ground by end March 2008. The Unit has commenced the construction of the super camp.

49. The UNAMID headquarters has indicated that the Mission will not require the services of Chadian military platoon which was deployed in Abeche as part of AMIS. Discussions on this issue are ongoing and the final decision on the issue will be communicated to the Government of Chad.

50. Shortfalls remain in critical mobility capabilities: one heavy and one medium transport units, three military utility aviation units (18 helicopters) and one light tactical helicopter unit (6 helicopters) as well as the reconnaissance company previously mentioned.

VIII. POLICE COMPONENT

51. The established strength of individual Police Officers (IPOs) for UNAMID is 3772. Out of this figure, 39% are already deployed in the Mission area while 50% have been pledged by African countries and 38% by non-African countries. The UNAMID deployment projection for additional police monitors for the first quarter of 2008 is 300.

52. As regards the Formed Police Units (FPUs), 11 African countries have pledged a total of 19 (100% of the number required for UNAMID) while 6 non-African countries have pledged 12. Preparations for the deployment of the first three FPUs from Bangladesh, Nepal and Nigeria within the framework of the Heavy Support Package have been concluded. The first FPU from Bangladesh comprising 140 personnel and equipment was deployed in the Mission area on 21 November 2007, and are based in Nyala, South Darfur. Arrangements for the deployment of FPUs from Nigeria and Nepal are at an advanced stage.

53. The AU and UN have agreed on the selection of the next eight FPUs (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Indonesia, Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan and Senegal), which was accompanied with the decision that the remaining five (5) will be drawn from the African offers. The recce visit of Egyptian and Senegalese FPUs took place from 8 to 13 January 08.

54. With regard to the selection and appointment of the UNAMID Police Commissioner, the AU and UN have conducted interviews and selected a candidate from the Republic of South Africa and one of the Deputy Police Commissioners (Development), from the Republic of Uganda. Both have been deployed in Darfur. Further joint interviews for the selection and appointment of the second Deputy Police Commissioner (Operations) is underway.

55. The two strategic legal documents, namely, Directives for UNAMID Police Commissioner and Directives on Detention, Searches and Use of force for FPUs, have been jointly signed by the AU and UN.

IX. MISSION SUPPORT

56. Administrative Issues concerning UN Personnel Management and Support Services (PMSS) commenced in September 2007 with the process of incorporating AMIS personnel into the hybrid operation in line with the Security Council Resolution 1769. The Commission has authorized a mission in Khartoum to discuss pre-liquidation issues with AMIS Mission HQ for a smooth transition from AMIS to UNAMID. As a result, it has been decided to set up a liquidation Task Force, to draw up a plan for assets disposal, to establish timelines for termination of running contracts, and to reach agreement on financial, operational issues etc...

57. On Financial matters, the UN has assumed responsibility for payment of troop costs from 1st October 2007 in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 1769 (2007). Preparations are far advanced to document outstanding invoices for services provided to AMIS for processing and payment. Payment of Mission Subsistence Allowance (MSA) to Military Observers (MILOBS) and Civil Police Advisers (CIVPOL) have been made up to 30th Sept 07. Finally, request for funds for the payment of MSA to the end of December 2007 has been received from the AMIS Liquidation Team, and arrangements are being concluded for these funds to be transferred to Khartoum.

58. With regard to logistical issues, staff from the UN and AMIS concluded an inventory exercise in September 2007. An evaluation exercise was also conducted to ascertain the percentage of AMIS equipment that will be acceptable to the UN for UNAMID operations. The expansion project for the seven camps to accommodate the two AMIS additional battalions earmarked under the three-sector concept has been completed. These camps are located at Nyala, Zam Zam, Um Kadada, Shangil Tobaya, Khor Abeche, Graidia and El-Genaina. A Task Order has also been provided to Pacific Architecture Engineering (PAE), an American Company, in October 2007, to build four (4) camps at Nyala, El-Fasher, El-Genaina and Zalingei.

59. The UNAMID Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between the Government of the Sudan and the Joint AU-UN Special Representative was signed on 09 Feb 2008. This will facilitate speedy and effective deployment of UNAMID forces. In the same vein, the freedom of movement of UNAMID personnel and Air assets as enshrined in the SOFA will enhance smooth operations in Darfur.

X. JOINT SUPPORT COORDINATION MECHANISM (JSCM)

60. The AU/UN Joint Support Coordination Mechanism (JSCM) is to be situated in the premises of the Commission. This is intended to enhance the operational effectiveness of UNAMID, through the use of dedicated joint staff to facilitate daily AU-UN consultation and coordination necessary to achieve unity of effort and deescalate contentious issues across the spectrum of the Hybrid Operation. The underlying principle of the JSCM is to help resolve matters referred to it, and to present a unified response that reflects both AU and UN views. The Terms of Reference (TOR) of the JSCM have been drafted. The size and composition of the JSCM has been determined in the Financial Report of the UN Secretary General to the General Assembly on 30th October 2007. The UN and AU are in the process of finalising staffing arrangements for the JSCM.

XI. STATUS OF THE DARFUR INTEGRATED TASK FORCE (DITF)

61. The DITF ceased to exist as from the transfer of authority from AMIS to UNAMID. Some DITF/AMIS personnel would be assigned to the JSCM mechanism. In the meantime, a Darfur Desk has been established within the Department of Peace and Security, which has been staffed with some DITF personnel while few others from the Information Analysis Cell (IAC) have been redeployed to the Conflict Management Division to strengthen the team in the Situation Room.

XII. THE DARFUR-DARFUR DIALOGUE AND CONSULTATION (DDDC)

62. I also wish to note that the Chair of Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC) Preparatory Committee (Prepcom) has undertaken intensive consultations with a range of stakeholders and prominent individuals in Darfur. The consultations arose from the realization that the DDDC itself cannot be launched until a measure of peace is established across Darfur. This had led to a new approach aimed at creating an enabling environment for dialogue, through preliminary grassroots consultations with key constituencies that needed to be both inclusive of all political and tribal groups and independent of any political party or group.

63. The consultations included meetings with representatives of the Native Administration, 14 political parties and armed movements, civil society organizations, academics/intellectuals, and IDP leaders. This was part of a series of first-round consultations about the Dialogue covering the three states of Darfur. The meetings with each group provided them with ample opportunity to explore and express their various viewpoints. The participants were asked a series of questions on the situation in Darfur, on their priorities and future roles in resolving the crisis; on the DDDC as well as the political process.

64. The consultations also provided important insights into the crisis of governance underlying the communal and ethnic polarization underlying the Darfur conflict. In general, the stakeholders consulted held that the Darfur conflict was neither ethnic nor tribal, but political in nature. They saw the tribal and ethnic conflicts as by-products of political conflict and Government manipulation. They were also of the view that the DPA needed to be subjected to major amendments to address the concerns of all Darfurians, and considered this necessary for a successful DDDC.

65. Issues relating to compensation, rehabilitation and return were central issues for those consulted, especially the IDP s. Compensation and rehabilitation of the war-devastated areas were essential to enable the return of IDP s and refugees. It was also noted that settlement of IDPs in camps in and around major urban centers had exposed them to an alternative way of life that could result in some choosing not to return to their original homeland in the post-conflict period. Nevertheless, they insisted that they must have the right to return. They also agreed on the need for development as the essential guarantee of sustainable peace. Some suggested that the compensation called for could be incorporated into development projects specifically designed to address the livelihood concerns of the war-affected population.

XIII. ACTIVITIES OF THE DDDC SECRETARIAT

66. From 9 to 19 September 2007, and in anticipation of the start of substantive negotiations in Sirte, a team from the DDDC Secretariat undertook a 10 day exploratory mission to Darfur to discuss with the main stakeholders towards the establishment of a mechanism to enable representatives of non-armed groups to have their voice heard during the talks, and provide feedback to the stakeholders on the ground. They were also consulted on a fair and viable method for stakeholders to select their representatives from their local constituencies.

67. In each of the four towns (El-Geneina, Nyala, Zalingei, and El-Fasher) the Secretariat team targeted the Native Administration, the civil society organizations, the intellectual community, and the IDPs, meeting separately with each of the respective stakeholders to collect their views. In each of the four towns, these groups strongly supported the idea as a measure to involve all Darfurians in the search for solutions. But, the IDPs were reluctant to participate with the other stakeholders. However, they expressed their willingness to participate in a separate council, specifically designated for IDPs.

68. Members of the DDDC, together with an EU representative, undertook a visit to eastern Chad, from 15 to 20 October 2007, to sample the views of refugees and provide an assessment of their overall situation. The main concerns expressed by the refugees related to security, recovery of their land rights, compensation for their losses, and reform of the native administration system. They also called for the disarming of the Janjaweed and other armed militias, including the movements. They were also convinced that a campaign was under way to settle Arab populations from Chad, Niger, and Mauritania in their traditional villages and hawakeers. They call for the removal of these populations before their return to Darfur.

69. The DDDC is also making preparations to launch a 'Common Ground' series of symposiums to facilitate Darfurian consultation towards reaching common ground on core issues affecting Darfur and its people. Taking into account the need for public dialogue to run in parallel to the official peace negotiations, the 'Common Ground' consultations will provide the influential Darfurian Diaspora to contribute to the dialogue while enhancing accountability, public ownership and participation in building peace for Darfur. Arrangements are made for a series of five consultations- in Darfur, Khartoum, Europe, North America, and the Middle East- that will bring together a diverse and representative range of influential Darfurians to discuss how to address the challenges to peace in their region. The process is designed both to establish common ground among participants and their constituencies, and to inform AU-UN mediation.

70. Despite the many activities it had undertaken, the DDDC Secretariat remains understaffed in terms of the coverage that it needs to provide and the urgent need for a DDDC presence in the four main cities of the region. While awaiting the implementation of the heavy support package, the DDDC has launched an effort to better address its current needs through a staff rotation program to ensure its presence across Darfur while also ensuring that their staffs continues to build on their knowledge of Darfur, its people and problems.

XIV. END OF AMIS MANDATE

71. On 24 December, a few days before the end of AMIS mandate in accordance with the 79th meeting of the Peace and Security Council, I, accompanied by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, undertook a visit to El Fasher, Darfur, and Khartoum. In a farewell ceremony organised in El Fasher, I paid tribute to AMIS civilian and military personnel for their tremendous efforts in the service of peace in Darfur. I also seized this opportunity to meet President El Bashir in Khartoum to thank him for the support that the Sudanese Authorities had provided to AMIS for the duration of its mandate. I encouraged him to extend the same cooperation to UNAMID.

72. On 31 December 2007, the Transfer of Authority from AMIS to UNAMID took place in El Fasher that was presided over by the Joint Special Representative for UNAMID, Rodolphe Adada. In attendance were AMIS and United Nations personnel, the Representative of the AU Commission, the Representatives of the Government of the Sudan, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for UNMIS. This marked the end of the mandate of AMIS and the transfer of authority to UNAMID.

XV. OBSERVATIONS

73. As Council is convening in this session, it is the view of the Special Envoys that sufficient time has been given to the Movements for their reorganizations so as to achieve internal cohesion for the resumption of substantive negotiations. We also realize that time is of the essence although we wish to avoid artificial and unrealistic deadlines and realities should dictate the course of action. In this regard, the mediation has already started planning for workshops on capacity and confidence building as well as on substantive issues, before the start of the Peace Talks.

74. With regard to the venue for the Talks, it may be noted that the Group of 11 has so far strongly opposed the choice of Sirte. Others had expressed reservations but are willing to go. Some of the others did not object at all. Others want the Talks to be held at a place close to Darfur to enable the negotiators to remain in harmony with the field and share their visions and positions throughout the process, which was not the case during the Abuja Process, as they stated. The Special Envoys made it clear that the peace process has started in Sirte and will end in Sirte. This does not preclude the holding of consultations and discussions elsewhere if so desired by the Parties. The Regional and International Partners hold the same view.

75. While preparations for the negotiations are gaining momentum, the deployment of the UNAMID forces is raising high expectations in the belief that the presence of a robust force on the ground would help the peace process.

76. While the UNAMID deployment is facing many challenges in the areas of force generation, the Commissioner for Peace and Security has maintained intensive contact and consultation with the UN Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations to overcome these difficulties and make the UNAMID deployment a success.

77. It is my hope that all the parties concerned will demonstrate the necessary political will to take this process forward. In this regard, I would like to express my particular appreciation for the continuous efforts of the two Special Envoys as well as to our regional and international partners in assisting this process. I also wish to thank the Government of the Sudan for the cooperation it has extended thus far and urge it to continue this spirit so as to resolve the remaining outstanding issues and facilitate the early deployment of UNAMID.

78. The bilateral relations between Chad and Sudan are going through a difficult path. Despite repeated assurances from both sides to improve their relations, the two countries are still trading accusations as rebel movements are conducting frequently more and more deadly attacks across the borders in a criss-cross pattern. The recent fights in and around N'Djamena and the subsequent Chadian

accusations against Sudan are a stark reminder that the relations between the two countries are far from any better. It has raised some concerns that the hot-pursuit temptation could lead to further deterioration of the relations between the two countries. It is important to note that it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to achieve peace and stability in Darfur without normalizing the relations between Sudan and Chad.

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