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The Commission of the African Union (AU) presents its compliments to the members of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU in Addis Ababa, and has the honor to inform them that the Peace and Security Council will convene its 192nd meeting, on **Wednesday 10 June 2009, at 10 a.m., in CR1 of the AU Conference Center.**

The draft agenda of this meeting will be as follows:

- a) Briefing on developments in the situation in the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
- b) Briefing on developments in the situation in the Republic of Guinea
- c) Consideration of the Report of the PSC Mission to West Africa (Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire).

In addition, the Commission would like to send herewith attached the Report of the Mission of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to West Africa (Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire), in english and french. The arabic and portuguese versions will be dispatched as soon as they are finalized.

The Commission of the African Union avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the members of the Peace and Security Council of the AU in Addis Ababa the assurances of its highest consideration. *AMK*

Addis Ababa, 8 June 2009

To: Members of the Peace and Security Council
Addis Ababa



**REPORT OF THE MISSION OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
OF THE AFRICAN UNION TO WEST AFRICA
(GUINEA BISSAU AND COTE D'IVOIRE)
24 APRIL – 2 MAY 2009**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) dispatched a mission to Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire in West Africa, from 24 April 2009, to 2 May 2009, within the framework of the communiqué of its 185th meeting (attached) held on 6 April 2009.

2. The objective of the mission was to gather information on the peace processes in the two countries and to make an evaluation of trends with a view to strengthening the role of the AU in support of the peace processes.

3. The mission was composed as follows:

i) PSC Members

- Ambassador Bruno Zidouemba (Burkina Faso), Chairperson of the PSC for April 2009 and Leader of the mission;
- Ambassador Amadou N'Diaye (Republic of Mali), representing West Africa;
- Ambassador Gaspard Nyilinkindi (Republic of Rwanda), representing East Africa;
- Mr. Baba Togmian, Counsellor (Republic of Chad), representing Central Africa;
- Gaspar Miguel de Carvalho, Counsellor (Republic of Angola), representing Southern Africa;

ii) AU Commission

- Dr. Admore M. Kambudzi, Secretary to the Peace and Security Council;
- Mrs. Aissatou Hayatou, Expert, PSC Secretariat;
- Mr. Mathieu Kinouani, Political Analyst, Conflict Management Division.

II. MEETINGS/CONSULTATIONS

4. The mission successfully visited Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire, from 26 to 27 April 2009, and from 28 April 2009 to 1 May 2009, respectively. The mission encountered a logistical constraint whilst in transit in Dakar, Republic of Senegal, due to the suspension of the operations of Air Senegal, which company was to carry the mission from Dakar to Bissau on 25 April 2009 and back to Dakar on 27 April 2009. The Senegalese authorities assisted the mission to overcome the constraint by providing a military plane to transport the mission to Bissau on 26 April 2009, and back to Dakar on 27 April 2009.

5. Notably, the mission was well received by the authorities and other interlocuteurs in both countries.

A) GUINEA BISSAU

6. The mission arrived in Guinea Bissau at a time when the country was engaged in preparations for the holding elections scheduled for 28 June 2009. The election campaign by the candidates began during the mission's stay in Bissau. The mission held several meetings in the capital, following a programme arranged ahead of its arrival.

i) MEETING WITH THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION

7. According to the Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission of Guinea Bissau, Mr. S.D.L Da Costa, the assassination of President of the Republic on 2 March 2009, just after the assassination of the Army Chief of Staff, plunged the country into a deep crisis; more so because the country no more had effective institutions for the normal conduct of political life. The double assassinations brought a blockage in the country. The Constitution provides that elections be held within sixty days, once the Office of the Head of State becomes vacant. However, in this case, the situation in the country was not conducive for holding national elections within the constitutional deadline. The way out of this blockage was found in the compromise and consensus that political actors reached. The consensus received the support of the population. This consensus provided the basis for moving the transition forward through:

- Election of an Interim President whose role is to lead the country towards elections; however, the Interim President has no power to promulgate laws, pass decrees, or make substantive appointments to State offices;
- The fixation of 28 June 2009 for holding elections.

8. In addition, there was a Round Table to mobilize the international community to support the preparatory process towards the elections. The run up to the elections was designed to pass through three phases:

- Phase 1, which focused on resource mobilization and sensitization of the international community;
- Phase 2, which focused on making arrangements for security, civic education, registration of candidates and launching of election campaigns; the deadline for the registration of candidates was 28 April 2009;
- Phase 3, focusing on putting in place necessary logistical arrangements and infrastructures for the conduct of elections.

9. Furthermore, the Chairman indicated that part of the funding for the elections had already been secured from the international community, with most of it coming from the European Union. In this respect, he called on the AU to make a contribution towards the elections and to deploy election observers on time. He noted that AU Election observers would contribute to boosting confidence within the population in the election process. He further informed that the fundamental problems facing Guinea Bissau include insecurity, lack of trust across the population, economic decline, lack of investment, weak institutions and major gaps in the national budget.

10. Responding to the mission's questions regarding the role of the army in the political process, capability for conducting elections, provision of security and if there was need for an ECOWAS military assistance for the elections, the Chairman of the independent electoral Commission respectively responded that:

- The Guinean army is still living the legacy of the independence struggle; it came from an army of national liberation. The country has not established a professional army. Hence, there was an urgent need for undertaking security sector reform to produce a professional army. But for the essential relating to elections, the army was supportive to the transition;
- Guinea Bissau has held elections in the past and the capability and experience to conduct elections has increased with the successive elections;
- Measures have been taken to provide security during the elections, and generally, for the entire country. The police force will be at work throughout the country;
- What Guinea Bissau would need from ECOWAS is not military assistance in terms of troops, but technical military assistance to help improve security. Thus, ECOWAS could contribute security assistance, particularly for the elections. In the past, the presence of foreign troops has not been viewed positively by the population.

ii) MEETING WITH POLITICAL PARTIES

11. During its stay in Bissau, the mission held separate meetings with Parti de la Renovation Social (PRS), of which former President Koumba Yala is the Secretary – General and Parti for Renewal, Independence and Development (PRID), which was represented by Mr. Namuano Gomes Dias. The Parti Africain pour l'Independence du Guinea and du Cape Verde (PAIGC) was on the programme of the mission's consultations, but did not turn up.

12. Despite their respective views on the present political situation, the political parties consulted raised some common issues of concern and interest:

- The heavy impact of the double assassinations of 2 March 2009;
- Situation of political incertitude in the country;
- Intrusive role of the army in national politics;
- Risk of electoral fraud and post – election instability;
- Pervasive insecurity in the country, both for the elections and for citizens to lead a normal life.
- Widespread poverty and lack of economic opportunities;

13. Appreciating the visit of the PSC and expressing hope that the visit would contribute to the promotion of peace in the country, the parties pronounced themselves for the good conduct of elections and return of peace and security in the country. Providing specifically their respective views, these political parties noted as follows:

- PRS stated that elections in Guinea Bissau have always been marred by violence, especially the 1992 election from which the slain Viera emerged as the winner. The party expressed fear for army interference in the upcoming elections. It also expressed preference for an international inquiry into the assassination of President Viera and the Chief of Staff. It made a call for the AU election observers. The party raised the issue of unpaid salary arrears to the soldiers, which could cause problems. It informed of the increasing problem of drug trafficking in Guinea Bissau and the need for measures to be taken to curb this illicit commercial activity.
- PRID stated that prior to the assassination of President Bernardo Viera, ECOWAS had been requested to assist with protection, but did not provide it. It informed of two detainees of the Air Force, whose whereabouts were uncertain and a woman

belonging to the party with whom contact had been lost. PRID also pointed out to the problem of the army being dominated by officers from one ethnic group at the expense of other ethnic groups.

iii) MEETING WITH THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

14. In its meeting with civil society organizations, the mission exchanged views with the Coalition for Peace, Democracy and Development (CPDD) in Guinea, an association regrouping 124 member civic organizations. The coalition was established in 1995 to help address the then pressing national political, social and economic issues in the country. The main views raised by the CPDD were that:

- The army has tremendous hold on political issues in the country;
- Rampant insecurity prevails in the country and has an impact on upcoming elections in particular, and on the population, in general;
- There must be an international commission of inquiry into the assassination of President Viera in order to establish the truth;
- There is an urgent need for security sector reform aiming to establish a professional national army;
- The justice system should be improved through the provision of more courts, judges and prisons, among other necessities;
- Measures need to be taken to curb human rights violations;
- The AU could help Guinea Bissau in mobilizing investment and in combating drug trafficking;
- It is necessary for the AU to deploy election observers for the 28 June 2009 elections;
- Beyond elections, there is need for Guineans to embark on a national reconciliation conference.

iv) MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE

15. Having recalled the sad events of 2 March 2009, the Minister of Justice, Mr. Antonio da Silva Gomes, addressed the following issues:

- Elections – Preparations for holding elections were in course. The deadline for registration of candidates was 28 April 2009;

- Inquiry into the assassination of the President Viera – There are two Commissions, one being a Judicial Commission of Inquiry, empowered to lay charges against suspected assassins, and a military Commission in the hands of the Army. Whilst the first one is dealing with a national mandate and was given a timeframe to complete its work, the Army – initiated Commission was set up on the basis that President Vierra's assassination took place in an army camp. Its objective is to establish what actually occurred in the barracks leading to the assassination of the President.
- Interim President's role extends only to the fixation of an election date and facilitation of the run up to the elections. He cannot proclaim law or make substantive appointments to State offices. This situation was causing limitations in terms of moving the country forward;
- Abuses on persons – the government condemned the detention by the army of a lawyer. The lawyer's detention followed orders from the interim army Chief of Staff following allegations that the lawyer had published information prejudicial to the security of the State. The Minister stated that the army should have left the issue to be handled through the normal judicial process;
- Rule of law - Guinea Bissau was facing a serious challenge of providing for the upholding of the Rule of Law. There was a pervasive problem of insecurity in the country due to individuals and groups that are in possession of fire arms out of government control. There are armed criminal activities taking place in different parts of the country. Although courts of law exist, they are facing operational problems due to lack of funds, personnel and logistics. There is a serious shortage of prisons, for which the government has gone to the extent of renting private houses to address the shortage, pending mobilization of funds for construction of prison facilities;
- Appeal for international support – beyond support urgently needed for the elections, the Minister appealed for international support to help the country institutionalize the rule of law, reactivate judicial institutions and establish additional rule of law support infrastructures;
- Drug trafficking – Guinea Bissau is caught up in a serious wave of drug trafficking being carried out by international criminal traffickers using the country as a temporary storage and transit point. The deep poverty prevailing in the country and financial greed among some individuals facilitate this illegal trade in the country.

v) MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR

16. In his remarks to the mission during the brief meeting, the Minister of the Interior, Mr. Cali C. Baldé, acknowledged the roles of AU and ECOWAS in helping to find durable peace in Guinea Bissau. He stated that the Government will do all it can, despite its limited means, to provide security for the 28 June elections. He also informed that efforts would be deployed to prevent abuse of persons and violations of human rights.

vi) MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER

17. The Prime Minister, Mr. Carlos Gomes Junior, addressed the issues of security, human rights, role of the army and elections. He regretted that the assassination of the President came after the late President had made appeals to ECOWAS and the larger international community to provide but assistance in form of security personnel for the Presidency and other core State services. There was no positive response to his appeal.

18. He pointed out that the army came from the national liberation struggle against Portuguese rule. Very little professionalization has been done in the army since independence in 1974. There are only about 250 professionally trained officers. Angola had helped in the training of army personnel within the framework of bilateral arrangements. He stressed the need for a major security sector reform. The Prime Minister also raised the problem of the fragility of the State whose institutions need strengthening. There was urgent need for the international community to provide support for the country to address various challenges.

19. He informed that, prior to his assassination in a bomb explosion, the army Chief of Staff had approached him to appeal for the changing of his Aide de Camp. He indicated that he was feeling a threat to his life. The Prime Minister said that the government does not know how many bombs and arms are being clandestinely brought into the country for criminal purposes. He added that arrangements were being put in place to enable elections to take place in conditions of calm and security. Talking about the inquiry into the assassination of the President, the Prime Minister called for international support in the provision of expertise to support the inquiry. Concluding his remarks, the Prime Minister informed that just before the mission's arrival in Bissau, the Guinean authorities had seized a plane which had arrived from Venezuela, loaded with cocaine. He appealed for international support to help the country combat drug trafficking.

vii) MEETING WITH THE INTERIM PRESIDENT

20. Addressing the mission, which had expressed its condolences for the assassination of the former President and the former Chief of Staff, the Interim President, Mr. Raimundo Pereira, informed as follows:

- Guinea Bissau was facing a very difficult situation, particularly since the 2 March 2009 assassinations:
- There is need for broad consensus to enable the country move forward; Consensus building began with all the political actors and civil society agreeing that holding elections was the country's topmost priority. While there was need to uphold the Constitution, the various stakeholders understood and accepted the need to interpret the Constitution in a way that allows progress and not bring about blockage in the process.
- It was in this context of consensus, flexibility and pragmatism that the Interim President was able to appoint an acting Chief of Staff for the army;
- The interim President's mandate is to facilitate a smooth run up to the elections and the proper conduct of those elections; thus far, preparations for elections were on track;
- There is an urgent need to address the problem of impunity;
- The army was not an obstacle to political progress in the country. The Government, political parties, army and civil society enjoyed good relations as the country moves forward to the elections;
- There is a problem of drug trafficking in Guinea Bissau, involving transit arrangements. The UN and Interpol are trying to help the country to overcome this problem;
- The Interim President made an appeal to the AU to provide expertise to support the work of the Commission of Inquiry into the assassination of the former President;
- The country was in the process of putting in place legislation to address the issue of contraband. Seizure of contraband would become possible, once the necessary laws are put in place;
- Guinea Bissau has no political prisoners. Efforts will be deployed to deal with human rights issues through the relevant government agencies;
- Expressing gratitude to the Interim President for receiving the mission, and responding to his appeal to the AU for expertise towards the inquiry process, the mission advised that the Guinean Foreign Minister address a request to the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union.

B) COTE D'IVOIRE

21. The PSC mission stayed Cote d'Ivoire from 28 April to 1 May 2009. It arrived in the country at a time when the direct dialogue involving by President Laurent Gbagbo and the Secretary-General of the Forces Nouvelles, Guillaume Soro, which concluded with the signing, on 4 March 2007, of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement (OPA), was witnessing a political atmosphere. This trend and that of the implementation of the 2nd and 3rd Supplementary Agreements which were signed on the 28 November 2007 resulted in a considerable improvement in the situation. After more than two years of existence the OPA has made it possible for much progress to be recorded despite the difficulties encountered at each stage. With the 4th Supplementary Agreement signed on 22 December 2008, which was devoted essentially to military and security issues but equally to identification, the restoration of State authority and the deployment of the administration nationwide, as well as the funding for the post-crisis period peace has become a reality and holding elections has become a commonly shared aspiration. The mission held several meetings with its interlocutors.

i) MEETING WITH MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR

22. The Minister of the Interior, Mr. Désiré Tagro, informed the mission of the obstacles facing the implementation of the 4th Supplementary Agreement and the preparation process towards elections. According to him, the main obstacles are:

- Lack of political will on the side of Forces Nouvelles to fulfil their commitments in the 4th supplementary Agreement, which was impacting on the operation of the integrated Command Centre, it being the nucleus for the new national army;
- Lack of cooperation from the military administrators of the Forces Nouvelles, which was hampering the re-establishment of State authority and unified national administration in the north of country;
- Slow progress on the part of Forces Nouvelles to bring up the lists of police officers and paramilitary forces to be trained and integrated into the new national army;
- Continuation of a stand – alone revenue collection system in the north of the country, which obstructs the re – consolidation of national revenue collection and the national treasury.

23. The Minister pointed out that the progress thus far made in the implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement could be undermined unless pressure was exerted on the Forces Nouvelles to fulfill their commitments to enable the country move forward.

ii) **MEETING WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR THE SUPERVISION OF IDENTIFICATION (CNSI)**

24. During the meeting, the mission was informed by Mr. Yua Koffi, Chairman of CNSI, about the functioning of the Commission and the outcomes that it has already achieved. Since identification was at the heart of the crisis, it was during the Linas-Marcoussis Roundtable that it was decided that the National (CNSI) be established in order to regulate and ensure the acquisition of Ivorian identity by those entitled to it. It is therefore a neutral institution established in relation to the crisis by a presidential decree in January 2004. It comprises 20 members all belonging to parties that signed the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement with two representatives from each political party. It is chaired by a neutral magistrate. It has branches nationwide and is based on prefectural administration. Its role is to control and supervise the National Identification Office (ONI) which is in charge of issuing identity documents.

25. Applicants are required to present a birth certificate. In this respect, it should be recalled that as from 1964, the law instituted the obligatory declaration of births. People born before that date were allowed a period of two years, up to 31 December 1966, to comply with this law. This period was repeatedly extended up to 1974. Even after 10 years, many people, for various reasons, had not been registered. The procedure was therefore simplified with only a copy of the birth certificate being required.

26. With the mobile court hearings, it was the magistrate who had to go to the population. But at the onset of the operation, many people did not have copies of birth certificates. Another operation was therefore launched for the re-compilation of registers. Towards the end of the mobile court hearings, identification of citizens was coupled with the census. Thus, through a single window, two operations were combined, identification for the issuance of a receipt to be used as an identity card and enrolment for the issuance of another receipt to be used as a voter's card. While identification of citizens is a continuous ordinary State operation, census has to stop to give way to the elections.

iii) **MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE**

27. In his statement, while lauding the merits of the OPA, of which he said he was only a distant joint contributor, the main author being the Prime Minister, the Minister, Mr. Amani N'Guessan, mentioned the difficulties linked to the 4th Supplementary Agreement. He thus cited some examples:

- The Integrated Command Centre (ICC), within which the two former belligerent armies are represented, is the nucleus of unity at military level. Actually, the head of the ICC is not the commander of the army. He is commanded by the two staffs. It is the former belligerent chiefs who command the head of the ICC. This causes a great difficulty because the head of the Forces armées des Forces Nouvelles

(FAFN) recognises only the authority of the Prime Minister which is an act of insubordination to the Minister of Defence;

- In view of providing security for the elections, the presidential camp and the Forces Nouvelles each have to equally contribute 4,000 persons who will serve in the police and gendarmerie. The presidential camp has already submitted its list. The Forces Nouvelles have presented only 2600 names, and 1400 were still expected;
- In the confidence zone, there are six mixed brigades of the Forces armées Nationales de Cote d'Ivoire (FANCI)/FAFN, which are confronted with serious financial difficulties;
- The Agreement makes provision for the creation of the new army but does not define it;
- In conformity with the 4th Agreement, the former defence and security forces (FDS) will join the new army two months after the elections and 5,000 recruits will be stationed in the four identified camps. The Minister will disperse the new recruits in military camps in the country to avoid opening new ones;
- The demobilization of the vigilante groups requires billions of CFA francs since many potential demobilized persons want to be paid the 500,000 CFA francs separation allowance provided for per person;
- Impossibility of restoring State authority in the North- Center -West zone where zone commanders are not ready to transfer power to prefects and sub-prefects.

28. After outlining some of the difficulties, the Minister of Defence underscored that the new army entails the adoption of a defence policy. Taking into consideration the context of elections, he deems that it will be incumbent on the president-elect to define such policy and determine the form of the army. In conclusion, he requested the delegation to intervene with the Force Nouvelles so that they can rapidly submit the expected list.

iv) **MEETING WITH THE UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN COTE D'IVOIRE (ONUCI)**

29. During the meeting, the Representative of ONUCI, Mr. Abou Moussa, recalled the close collaboration between the AU and the UN within the context of the hybrid mission in Darfur, Sudan. Such depth of cooperation should be emulated in accompanying the Ivoirians to exit from the crisis. ONUCI lauded the collaboration between itself and the AU, through the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission in Côte d'Ivoire. Turning to the core issue of the peace process, that is preparation for elections, ONUCI indicated that:

- Funding for elections, based on the assessment previously made by the Government and the international community, had been secured. Thus, lack of funds should not be cited by the Ivorian political actors to delay elections;
- Government demands, for more and more funds was due to its own unplanned activities and related expenditures
- Identification and registration of voters had progressed fairly well, setting the platform to proceed to elections;
- Security in the country has improved; the confidence zone has been removed;
- There is an increased free movement of persons and circulation of goods through out the country;
- Evidently, the presidential camp and the Forces Nouvelles were working in harmony, implementing the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and its Supplementary Agreements, despite incidental obstacles and delays.
- ONUCI called on the AU and the regional body, ECOWAS, together with the larger international community, to assist the Ivoirians conclude the peace process with peaceful election and proceed to address socio-economic challenges.

v) MEETING WITH THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION (IEC)

30. Exchanging views with the mission, the Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), Mr. Robert Beugré Mambé, made a clear point that its work was a decisive factor as far as the holding of the planned national elections is concerned. The IEC comprises membership from the presidential camp, Forces Nouvelles and other significant political formations. Thus, it is representative constituencies. The work of the IEC consists in the:

- Identification and registration of voters;
- Laying out constituencies and polling centres;
- Establishing and operating the national election command centre and constituency command centres;
- Establishing and operating polling stations;
- Recommending the election date to the Government, on the basis of adequate preparations and existence of conducive conditions on the ground, as assessed by the IEC itself;

- Managing the election itself in all its aspects during the election period;

31. Despite its determination to complete preparations on time, the IEC indicated the obstacles that stood on its path:

- Lack of reference statistics on citizens;
- Insecurity in some parts of the country;
- Inadequacy of the allocated funds;
- Inadequate logistical capacity
- Slow provision of data by SAGEM, a technical operator mandated to collect and consolidate national data on citizens;
- Slow progress in the identification and registration of Ivorians living abroad

32. The voter identification process was a complex process which faced many delays due to the need for verification and re-verifications through repeated visits. The movement of persons seeking registration in-between the visits of the IEC teams was also an obstacle. Indicating the progress made in voter identification and registration, the IEC mentioned that:

- Around 5.5 million persons had already been registered for elections;
- 50 000 polling stations were sited;
- Polling officers had been trained and undergoing further training;
- Equipment (computers, transparencies, photocopiers, generators, etc) had been secured to cover most of the needs during the polling process;
- Efforts were being deployed to secure enough vehicles for the polling process.

33. Stressing that the planned elections were a litmus test for the country's ability to emerge from the crisis, the IEC called on ECOWAS and the AU to provide support and to deploy election observers in significant numbers on time on the ground. This would help to inspire more confidence among the voters.

vi) MEETING WITH THE AFRICAN GROUP AMBASSADORS

34. The Group of African Ambassadors that met the mission comprised Ambassadors/representatives of several African countries with Embassies in Abidjan.

Although the mission explained its purpose and the significance of its outcome, the Group was reticent to collectively discuss the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire with the mission. The Ambassadors who spoke raised a confidentiality of information issue and expressed preference for meeting the mission separately. The mission's programme could not accommodate this proposal.

vii) MEETING WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FACILITATOR

35. The Representative of the Facilitator, Mr. Boureima Badini, provided the PSC delegation a complete and objective summary of the implementation of the OPA in general and the 4th Supplementary Agreement in particular. From the start, he stressed that the representation of the facilitator is working under the umbrella of the AU and the United Nations since it was the AU that presented the OPA to the United Nations Security Council.

36. Recalling the strenuous task of the mobile court hearings operation at the time of Prime Minister Konan Banny, he hailed the progress recorded in this area. Neither the 500,000 persons that some parties seemed to imagine nor the 3 million persons expected by others, have been achieved, but a compromise figure of about 700,000 has been arrived at. The identification process started in September 2008 and is continuing to catch up with the operations to give people time to enrol themselves. As for the census, more than 6 million people have been registered. It can be affirmed without any doubt that the current register will be realistic. One of the necessary conditions for holding elections is to have a consensual register accepted by all parties.

37. With regard to the Defense and Security Forces (FDS)S, the Representative recalled that the 3rd Supplementary Agreement had tried to settle some issues, while the 4th Supplementary Agreement specified the terms by bringing in other elements such as the issue of quotas (FAFN units to be integrated into the new unified army) and ranks (harmonization of ranks). The restoration of State authority and the integration of the treasury will be carried out normally, after the handover of duties between the Integrated Command Centre and zone commanders.. He regretted that international community's contribution had not been up to the expectations of Ivoirians and all the regional actors concerned. This will lead to funding difficulties which, however, do not dampen optimism. He said that he was convinced that, in conformity with the 4th Agreement, if the 5,000 troops are stationed and arms are collected and stocked with the support of the impartial forces, peaceful elections could take place.

viii) MEETINGS WITH POLITICAL PARTIES

38. The PSC mission held meetings with several political parties, namely, Front Populaire Ivoirien, Rassemblement Démocratique Republicain, Parti Démocratique du Côte d'Ivoire – Rassemblement Démocratique Allié, Parti Ivoirien des Travailleurs, Union pour la Démocratie et la Paix en Côte d'Ivoire, Union Démocratique et Citoyenne et Mouvement des Forces d'Avenir. Despite their respective specific sentiments, these parties were of the

view that Côte d'Ivoire must definitively emerge from its crisis. The organization of free, fair and transparent elections was emphasized as the way out of the crisis. Security, voter registration and logistics for the elections, as well as the need to re-unify the country and the need to address socio-economic decline were cited as major challenges.

39. A frustration expressed by some of these parties was that the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and its supplementary Agreements only involved the presidential camp and the Forces Nouvelles, excluding other political forces. Thus, the implementation of the Agreements depended solely on the drive of these two parties. But essentially, political parties were forward looking to the elections and the return of normalcy, peace, security and stability in Côte d'Ivoire.

ix) FORCES NOUVELLES

40. The main issues raised by the representatives of the Forces Nouvelles related to identification of citizens and voter registration; national reconciliation and elections. It was pointed out that the notion of citizenship was the main factor that plunged the country into civil war, resulting in the north – south divide. The application of the notion of "Ivoirité" by the political authorities that were in place after 2001 was such that it constituted denial of citizenship to a substantial part of the country's population, especially that in the north. The army, police, intelligence and national administration were deployed by the political authorities to implement ivoirité. One of the effects of this strategy is that some sections of the population have lost confidence in the impartiality of the police, army and civil service in place since the war broke out in 2002. Hence there was need to ensure that all those with right of citizenship obtained it. There was also need to build impartial and professional police. Everything must be done to ensure conducive conditions for the 2009 elections.

x) MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE

41. The Ambassador of France, Mr. André Janier, dwelt on the preparations for the elections and the problems facing the implementation of the 4th Supplementary Agreement. He pointed out that both the presidential camp and the Forces Nouvelles seemed not to be ready for elections. Each side is focusing more on chances of winning the election and when to set the date for elections has become a bargain tool for both sides. He informed that President Gbagbo and the Forces Nouvelles signed an agreement (4th supplementary) that they now find difficult to fully implement. He indicated that some of the provisions in the Supplementary Agreement, such as that disarmament should be completed two months ahead of the holding of the elections, cannot be fulfilled if the elections are to go ahead on the current 2009 schedule.

42. Furthermore, he pointed out that President Laurent Gbagbo and Prime Minister Guillaume Soro were not showing enough political will to move the peace process forward along time frame. Regarding funding for elections, he said that there was no problem as the international community had mobilized the requisite funds. He stressed that the political actors should not use the issue of funding to delay progress towards holding elections. The

Ambassador stressed the need for the Facilitator, the President of Burkina Faso, to renew momentum and assist the parties implement the 4th Supplementary Agreement.

xi) MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

43. In her remarks to the mission, the Ambassador of United States, Madam Wanda L. Nesbitt, dealt mainly with issues relating to the preparation for elections and the overall implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and its supplementary agreements. She indicated that the parties needed to redouble their efforts in order to fulfill the conditions for holding elections. She noted that there was need for President Gbagbo and Prime Minister Guillaume Soro to demonstrate more political will in order to bring to a successful conclusion the implementation of Ouagadougou Political Agreement, particularly its 4th Supplementary Agreement. Turning to the issue of funding for elections, the Ambassador said that the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and the international community had already put in place adequate funding for elections. None of the parties should use the issue of funding to delay elections, she added.

44. Furthermore, she pointed out that the issue of disarmament in itself should also not be allowed to hamper progress towards holding elections. The parties must consult and reach consensus on what level and which aspects of disarmament should be implemented ahead of the elections. She noted that it might not be feasible for the parties to exhaust all aspects and achieve full disarmament throughout the country before the holding of the elections. It is therefore necessary for the Facilitator to assist the parties reach consensus on how to manage the implementation of disarmament as provided for in the 4th supplementary agreement. She concluded her contribution by emphasizing the need for the parties to ensure effective security and other vital arrangements for the elections. She commented the progress thus far achieved in the registration of voters. She indicated that the USA was not in a position to provide assistance to Côte d'Ivoire due to the sanctions still in force.

xii) MEETING WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF ECOWAS

45. The representative of ECOWAS, Ambassador Ralf Uwechue, informed the mission that, despite reports of slow progress and some differences of view among the parties to the Ouagadougou Political Agreement, the peace process was on track. None of the political forces would like to revert to violent conflict. He called for the close involvement of the AU and ECOWAS in accompanying the Ivoirians to the elections. There was need for the international community to support the country's socio-economic recovery.

xiii) MEETING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

46. The civil society organizations consulted by the mission included the following;

- Réseau des Femmes des Partis Politiques en Côte d'Ivoire;
- Coordination des Femmes pour les élections et la Reconstruction post –crise en Côte d'Ivoire ;
- Coalition de la Société Civile pour la Paix et le Développement ;
- Convention de la Société Civile.

47. Despite various points of emphasis, the views and sentiments raised to the mission were almost the same:

- The population is fatigued as it lived the horrors of the war and has been waiting for too long to see the resolution of the crisis. The resolution of the crisis would allow the population to focus on issues of socio – economic development;
- The postponement of elections was a major cause for worry within the population;
- Political actors were focusing too much on their own personal needs and those of their political parties/groups at the expense of the common needs of the population;
- Conducive conditions should be put in place for the elections, and which should be conducted in a fair and transparent manner to give chance to a successful outcome. It was therefore necessary to ensure that disarmament of ex – combatants and militias is completed. Normalcy and security should be restored throughout the country.

xiv) MEETING WITH THE INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATIVE GROUP

48. During its meeting with the International Consultative Group (ICG), the Mission was able to get an overview of the position of the international community on developments in Cote d'Ivoire. The ICG is composed of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Resident Coordinator of the United Nations system, representatives from the World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Union, the 'African Union, the African Development Bank (ADB), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and France. It accompanies the Ivorian political actors and the Facilitator of the Ivorian dialogue in the implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement of 4 March 2007. It meets under the chairmanship of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations to adopt common positions on issues under its purview regarding the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. The main points raised by the ICG were that:

- There was no problem of funding for the planned elections in Côte d'Ivoire. The International Community has contributed generously to this effect.
- International Financial Institutions (IMF and World Bank) have granted Côte d'Ivoire the status of a heavily indebted Country, thereby making it qualify debt relief. In effect, Côte d'Ivoire should be in a position to provide funds for elections;
- The parties to the Ouagadougou Political Agreement need to demonstrate more political will to implement the agreements that they have signed. The Facilitator of the Inter-Ivorian dialogue should assist in this perspective.
- The International Community is committed to continue its support to Côte d'Ivoire.

xv) MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

49. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bakayoko Youssouf, informed the mission that the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire was proceeding well, despite some obstacles and delays in terms of the time frames that had been laid down to complete some of the programmes. He pointed out that the identification of citizens and voter registration has registered real progress, thus preparing the ground for the holding of the elections. The implementation of the 4th Supplementary Agreement, with the view to establishing a unified national army, was on track. He also stated that peace and calm was prevailing throughout the country and there was free movement of persons and goods. He called for ECOWAS and AU support towards the elections and the post-war socio-economic recovery in Côte d'Ivoire.

xvi) AUDIENCE WITH THE PRIME MINISTER

50. According to the Prime Minister, the Ouagadougou Political Agreement signals not only Côte d'Ivoire's intention to take charge of the resolution of the crisis, but also political will and the spirit of reconciliation on the part of the signatories. The achievements thus far made include improvement of the political climate, which led the United Nations Security Council to lower the security index as well as the outcome of the identification process through which more than 700,000 hitherto unknown persons acquired identity.

51. Concerning the date of the presidential election, based on the decree and the calendar proposed by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), which he had duly forwarded to the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister affirmed that it would be difficult to do otherwise than hold the election in 2009. Leaders of the main political parties with whom he had held talks shared the same opinion. Moreover, with more than 6 million voters enrolled, all seems to be set for the elections.

52. Reviewing the various aspects of the 4th Supplementary Agreement, the Prime Minister was reassuring, and stated that the different stages planned before the election were being implemented normally, while other processes would be completed a month or two after the election.

53. In conclusion, the Prime Minister reiterated his readiness to work to consolidate the efforts deployed and to continue being up to the task incumbent upon the President of the Republic and himself when they signed the OPA.

xvii) MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CÔTE D'IVOIRE

54. « We are really getting out of the crisis ». With these words, the Head of State, Mr. Laurent Gbagbo, was reassuring and convincing before dealing with the three priority areas of his agenda, namely the external debt, the unification of the country and the elections.

55. President Gbagbo started with a brief overview of the challenging situation then prevailing in the country in 2001 when he was elected into Office:

- The country was in heavy external debt;
- The economy was in decline;
- The hard negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank;
- The structural adjustment of the economy and other national arrangements in order to meet the conditions required by the IMF and the World Bank.

56. However, when the Government started addressing these issues, the civil war broke out in 2002, dividing the country into two zones and paralyzing the economy, among other devastating effects. Consequently, the government's plans could not be implemented. As we strive to restore peace, the Government has to address a black log of economic issues.

57. The President also referred to the Linas-Marcussis Agreement and the Pretoria Agreements aimed at resolving the conflict in the country, but which saw little progress. The advent of the negotiation for the Ouagadougou Political Agreement came as a blessing. They provided an opportunity for direct dialogue and the search for a real African solution. The Agreement embodies the consensus of the parties.

58. Turning to the 4th Supplementary Agreement and diffusing rumors that there were some difficulties to fully implement it, the President clarified that:

- It took us four months to negotiate and reach the Agreement and we know what it means and our obligations under it. The Agreement is being implemented in good faith;
- The measures for disarmament are being taken and progress is being made in the operationalization of the Integrated Central Command, as the nucleus of the new national army. The armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI) and the armed of Forces Nouvelles, with my guidance and that of the Prime Minister, were working steadfastly to achieve disarmament as specified in the 4th Supplementary Agreement. The delays encountered are due to financial constraints. The national treasury did not have enough funds to pay for all disarmament needs, i.e. paying CFA 500 000 to every demobilized combatant or militiamen. The Government was redoubling efforts to mobilize funds to this effect;
- State authority is gradually extending to the rest of the country. There was a lot to be done to complete this process, but it is on track.

59. On preparations for elections, the President noted the success made in the citizens identification process and a voter registration. The Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) was working at its level best to prepare the ground for elections.

60. In conclusion, and turning to the issue of the election date, the President stated that the CEI was the one to propose a date which the Government would look into. In fact, we did not need to rush to elections without preparing the ground properly. We should avoid mistakes on this issue and get all aspects right, he added. In any case, the elections will take place before end of 2009, the President stated.

61. At the invitation of the President, the mission was represented at the International Workers' Day on 1 May 2009. The occasion provided an opportunity to the mission to get a feeling of the mood among the workers as the country prepares for elections.

III. CONCLUSION

62. The PSC mission to Guinea Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire provided an opportunity for gathering first hand information on the ground from political authorities and other involved stakeholders. The mission was able to get a sense of the trends in the peace processes in the countries visited:

a) Guinea Bissau

63. The country has made notable progress in preparations for the elections scheduled for 28 June 2009. There was a positive mood in the capital city, with the start up of pre-election campaigns by candidates on 27 April 2009. The difficulties in Guinea Bissau should be seen in a historical context, as the country lived one crisis after another since independence in 1965. The political and administrative institutions remain weak. Economic decline is the order of the day, despite rich arable land, high potential for tourism and fishing, as well as cashew nuts production. There is self-evident misery and deep poverty in the country. Hence, it will take real political improvement, through elections and promotion of good governance and respect for human rights, as well as major investments in social and economic development to address these challenges. There is an urgent need for building and strengthening institutions, as well as security sector reform to produce a professional army, police and prison services. It is needless to stress the role of the AU and the larger international community in supporting Guinea Bissau address the challenges.

b) Côte d'Ivoire

64. Based on what the parties to the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and its Supplementary Agreements said, and the sentiments expressed by the different interlocuteurs of the mission, Côte d'Ivoire is on track towards emerging from the current crises. The elections, severally postponed in the past, were confirmed to take place before end of 2009. Preparations showed good progress. The major challenges confronting the country and which will need redressal measures into the long-term, relate to the need to restore a sense of oneness of the country in all aspects, guaranteeing citizenship rights and socio-economic recovery and development. Elections alone will not solve these problems, hence the need for Ivoirians' to engage themselves collectively and for the international community to accompany Côte d'Ivoire to overcome these challenges.

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