

AFRICAN UNION
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REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION
FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY- JUNE 2007

INTRODUCTION

The Eleventh Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the Ninth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union are taking place in the build up to the *Grand Debate* on the theme - *Union Government* – to which the Heads of State and Government of our Union are invited by Decision Assembly/AU//Dec.156 (VIII) which they adopted at the Eight Ordinary Session of their Assembly in Addis Ababa in January 2007.

This debate has become necessary as it will enable our leaders to evaluate the state of the Union and, by so doing, identify the constraints hampering its resolute march towards integration and chart the way forward. While it is true that integration of the Continent is a lengthy and difficult process that has to be pursued with care, it is for Africa an imperative in the face of the globalization of the 21st Century, which unless controlled in time, would weaken our Continent, consign it to marginalization and keep it mired in the condition of under-development.

It is because time is not on Africa's side in this regard, that we must act, and act quickly, in the spirit of the Sirte Declaration, to create the conditions and climate propitious to integration and address head-on its political and economic dimensions which are complementary. As a matter of fact, if we all agree today that under-development and poverty constitute the greatest challenge facing our Continent at this juncture in its history, it behoves us to exhibit African solidarity and invest the requisite collective effort to develop our infrastructure, in all its forms, broaden the Continent's domestic market, build its industrial capacities, process and add value to its produce, create jobs and wealth as well as the conditions for meaningful human security.

To this end, we must recognize the fact that our States cannot individually on their own, attain these objectives; and even if some of them are capable of so doing, they will not be able to stand the pressure from the big powers and the environment of undeveloped neighbours. Their role should thus be that of engine of development. Similarly, the objectives of sustainable development cannot be achieved through aid alone, indebtedness or whatever form of external assistance. We have to build our development on our own human and natural resources.

The period under review was therefore marked by a series of consultations in pursuance of the *Grand Debate*, as prescribed by Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.156 (VIII), namely:

- national level consultations by some Member States;
- regional level consultations by some RECs;
- brainstorming session of Foreign Ministers in Zimbabwe, South Africa from 8 to 9 May;
- follow up on the Extraordinary Session of the Executive Council held on 10 May at the same venue;
- brainstorming session of the Pan-African Parliament;
- continental level all-inclusive consultation between government representatives and those of various segments of the society (army, parliament, professional associations, the academia, the civil society, etc) organized by the Commission from 28 to 31 May; and

- brainstorming session of members of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The focus of all these consultations was the "*Union Government*", its justification, desirability, the way forward and the stages to be adopted to actualize it and its place in the progress towards the United States of Africa. The conclusions of the consultations will certainly be taken into account in the course of the *Grand Debate*.

The period under review was also characterized by the successful conclusion of three major projects as we forge ahead to consolidate our Union and enhance its effectiveness. All the events in this connection were organized at the Headquarters of the Union in Addis Ababa on the occasion of the celebration of Africa Day in 2007. The theme of the celebration was: "*Strengthening Africa's place in the world through strategic, balanced and responsible partnerships*".

That celebration organized under the high patronage of the Chairperson of the Union, President John A. Kufuor of the Republic of Ghana, was graced by his very self and also by His Excellency Meles Zenawi, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The following events were held on that occasion:

- the launching of the African Diplomatic Passport pursuant to Executive Council Decision EX.CL/Dec.337 (X). African Union staff members now have a credible, reliable and secure document for their travels in Africa and, perhaps soon, in partner countries outside the Continent when negotiations would have been concluded for recognition of the Passport. Apart from staff members, the Passport will also be issued to officials of Member States in accordance with modalities to be established;
- the launching of the operational phase of the Union's e-Governance (VSAT) Project which forms part of the institutional transformation exercise and is designed to achieve full connectivity and ensure modern telecommunication service delivery between the Headquarters of the Union, its technical and representational offices, the Regional Economic Communities and Member States through the establishment of satellite interconnection network. It is my pleasure to inform Council that, thanks to this system, the President of the Pan-African Parliament was able to converse with the Chairperson of the Union by video conference during the 25 May celebrations in Addis Ababa; and the President as well as all members of the Bureau of the Pan-African Parliament were able to view the entire ceremony live from Midrand, Headquarters of the Parliament;
- the laying of the foundation stone of the new Conference Center of the Union which the People's Republic of China has offered to build free of charge for the African Union, as a living testimony of the partnership between Africa and China. The first stone was laid by the Chairperson of the Union in the presence of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, a high-powered Chinese delegation led by the Vice-Minister of Trade and myself, Chairperson of the Commission.

Apart from these activities which engaged most of the attention of the Commission during the period under review, the Commission continued to carry out the regular activities contained in its programme of work and in the 2007 budget. These activities are in pursuance of the priorities spelt out in the 2004 – 2007 Strategic Plan, the Commission's framework of action which comes to an end at the close of this year.

I am pleased to inform the Council that within the Commission, we have already initiated the actions that will lead to the evaluation of the implementation of this plan in order to draw the conclusions and lessons necessary for the preparation of the second plan which will be presented for adoption by the Council and the Assembly during their January 2008 Sessions, at the earliest.

One of the priority areas of this plan revolves around conflict resolution, the search for and consolidation of peace, an area in which the Commission has continued to make significant strides especially with regard to the conflict in Darfur for which a ground of understanding has now been found as far as the joint AU/UN mission is concerned; this progress is less conclusive concerning Somalia where much remains to be done; we also deplore the new developments in the Union of the Comoros.

I am also pleased to inform the Council and the Assembly that the Commission continues to work with Member States to consolidate the foundations of our nascent democracies and practices of good governance. In this connection, as well as on election monitoring in Member States, the Commission has initiated the necessary steps for the entry into force as quickly as possible of "The Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance" adopted in January 2007.

Concerning the other areas covered in this report, special emphasis is placed on the activities which are conducive to social, cultural and human development and which can accelerated implementation of Africa's Agenda for Economic Integration. Some of these activities constitute separate items from the Agenda of the Council in the form of reports of sectoral Ministerial conferences and strategic brainstorming sessions for concerted actions at regional and continental levels.

Council will also note that in the administrative and financial spheres, the Commission continues to deploy the necessary efforts to improve our methods of work, particularly with regard to the human and financial resource management of the Union. Concrete actions have been undertaken through the implementation of phase II of the Institutional Transformation Project. Activities relating to this phase are on-going as evidenced by the following projects: VSAT; Integrated Management of Administrative and Financial Systems; Knowledge Sharing Management; The Process Facility; Management Culture..... Once all these projects have reached their operational implementation phase, the Commission will be better equipped to ensure a sound and transparent management of all the resources made available to it.

It should however be noted that although our partners continue to honour their commitments in terms of finances and other forms of assistance, either collectively (EU) or individually through the various partnerships that we are forging in order to make the Union more visible and to consolidate Africa's place in the world, we deploy delays in the payment of Member States' contributions. At the time of finalizing this report, outstanding

contributions for 2007 stood at US\$70,619,460.27 and arrears of contribution for the previous years amounted to US\$37,112,646.47 making a total of US\$107,732,106.74.

I would like to seize this opportunity to:

- make an urgent appeal to all Member States to honour their financial obligations to the Union's budget;
- express our profound gratitude and thanks to our partners for the financial assistance they continue to provide in general to the Union and more particularly to the Commission for the implementation of its programmes.

In our efforts to broaden the bases of this balanced and responsible strategic partnerships, the period under review was marked by joint AU/EU sessions as part of the Africa-EU dialogue in the lead-up to the Lisbon Summit which will be held probably towards the end of this year. The preparations for the Africa-India Partnership Forum are also underway, the second preparatory meeting of which was held in Addis Ababa from 23 to 24 May 2007. Consultations have also been initiated for the convening next year of a Partnership Forum with Turkey. Other partnerships with Russia, Arab States and Iran are in preparation. Lastly, I would like to renew the profound gratitude of the entire Commission to the PRC, to the Council and, through it, to the Assembly for the sustained support they have provided to facilitate the noble work of the Commission in the pursuit of the Union's vision for an integrated and united Africa in charge of its own destiny, and for a better future for its peoples.

Alpha Oumar Konaré

A. LEGAL MATTERS

A.I. DEPOSITARY FUNCTIONS

1. I wish to inform the Executive Council that since the submission of the last report in January 2007, there have not been significant developments with regard to the status of OAU/AU treaties. The pace at which Member States have signed and ratified OAU/AU Treaties has always been rather slow. However, the adoption of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in January 2007 is an important milestone for the continent and yet another testimony of the determination of our Leaders to pursue the march towards the strengthening of democratic processes in our various countries. I am pleased to inform Council that the Charter was opened for signature by Member States and that to date two (2) Member States have already signed it, namely, Guinea and Namibia. I need not emphasise the importance of this Charter and I have no doubt that Member States will ensure its speedy entry into force. Additionally, the Charter will be available for signature in Accra, Ghana. All Member States are encouraged to do so.

A.II. ACCREDITATION OF NON-AFRICAN STATES TO THE AFRICAN UNION

2. In accordance with Part II, Section II (3) of the *Criteria for Granting Observer Status and for a system of Accreditation within the African Union* (the Criteria), adopted by the Executive Council in July 2005, I have continued to receive and consider requests for accreditation from various non-African States, bearing in mind the supreme interest of the Union and the concerns of Member States. I wish to inform Council that since the last reporting period, I have accepted the letters of accreditation of eleven (11) non-African States and one (1) international organization in addition to those that were accredited earlier in line with the provisions of Part II, Section II (3) of the Criteria for the granting of AU Observer Status and a System of Accreditation within the AU. The names of the representatives accredited since my last report and their respective States/organizations are listed in the table below:

No.	Names of Accredited Representatives	Country
1.	H.E. Mr. Kiomars Fotouhi Ghiam	Iran
2.	H.E. Ms. Cindy L. Courville	United States of America
3.	H.E. Dr. Rudolf Agstner	Austria
4.	H.E. Mr. Bruce Goodwin	Antigua and Barbuda
5.	Dr. Roger Salla Ntunga	UNAIDS Representative to the AU
6.	H.E. Mr. Peter Reinhardt	Switzerland
7.	H.E. Mrs. Sigridur Duna Kristmundsdottir	Iceland
8.	H.E. Dr. Vera Maria Fernandes (Ms.)	Portugal
9.	Mr. Iftikhar A. Arain	Pakistan
10.	H.E. Mr. Hector Humberto Valezzi Zafra	Mexico
11.	Mr. Gabriel Irinel Branzaru	Romania

The total number of non-African States accredited to the Union is now forty-seven (47).

A.III. REGISTRATION AND PROTECTION OF NAMES, ABBREVIATIONS, AND EMBLEMS OF THE AU AND NEPAD WITH THE WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION (WIPO)

3. Council will recall that in January 2007, I had the pleasure of bringing to the attention of Member States that the AU paraphernalia had been registered with the World Intellectual Property (WIPO) and was now protected in conformity with the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (Paris Convention). In this regard, I would like to reiterate my appeal to Council for the need for Member States which have not yet done so, to take the necessary measures to assure the protection of the Intellectual Property Rights of the African Union, in their various countries through the enactment of appropriate national legislation and to inform the Commission accordingly. I would like to recall that Article 6^{ter} of the Paris Convention requires Member Countries to refuse registration to conflicting and offending marks, and to prohibit the use of the flag, other emblems, abbreviations and names of the African Union.

A.IV. HARMONIZATION AND RATIFICATION PROCEDURES OF TREATIES

4. Council will also recall that by Decision (EX.CL/Dec. 128 (V) the Commission was requested to conduct a study on the procedures for ratification of Treaties in Member States as well as how to harmonise them with a view to speeding up the ratification process.

5. I wish to inform Council that the Commission has commenced the study and Vide Note Verbales referenced BC/OLC/66.5-1/11/Vol.IV and BC/OLC/24.18/5/Vol.I dated 6 October 2006 and 3 May 2007, respectively, requested Member States to submit to the Commission the procedures for ratification of treaties in their Countries. However, only nine (9) of the fifty-three (53) Member States responded and this has further delayed the finalisation and submission of the study. I further wish to inform Council that it is the intention of the Commission to present the document in October 2007 at the AU Ministerial Conference for Ministers of Justice and Attorney Generals for discussion.

A.V. SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL COMMITTEES (STCS)

6. During the 10th Ordinary Session of Council in January 2007 I presented a Report on the Specialised Technical Committees. Council will recall that it requested Member States to carry out internal consultations with stakeholders and submit any comments and observations to the AU Commission. Additionally, Council requested the PRC and the AU Commission to consider the proposals contained in the report of the Commission and the observations received from Member States and submit concrete recommendations to the next session of the Executive Council.

7. To this end, the Commission invited Member States by Note Verbales referenced BC/OLC/27.2-1/40/Vol.II and BC/OLC/27.2-1/2/Vol.III dated 21 February and 19 March 2007, respectively, to undertake the necessary consultations within their countries and submit any comments and observations to the Commission by 30 April 2007. To date only three (3) Member States have submitted their reactions to the Commission.

8. It will further be recalled that in the 10th Extraordinary Session of the Executive Council held in Durban, South Africa, on 10 May 2007, Council resolved that all Organs of

the AU be audited, approved the terms of reference for the audit and as such the final proposals on the STCs shall be subjected to the audit.

B. WOMEN, GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

9. I would like to draw Council's attention to the fact that, it is one of the primary responsibilities of the African Union, which brings together Africa's policy makers at the highest level, to provide a focal point to sensitize and stimulate African leaders to exert greater effort and have the integration of women issues on their agenda. The Women, Gender and Development Directorate of the Commission (WGDD) is such a focal point that identifies women concerns, and, by effective interventions, incorporate them into AU policies, programmes and activities at the level of the AU Commission, the other Organs, RECs and Member States. The Directorate also coordinates Africa's voice at the continental and international levels.

10. Thus, the two-pronged goal of the WGDD is to (a) encourage and assist AU Member States to implement policies aimed at achieving equity between the sexes by ensuring men and women have equal access to the power structures that control society and determine development issues and peace initiatives; and (b) adopt measures for the effective implementation of existing agreements, recommendations and decisions on issues affecting women from a gender perspective.

11. In that respect, and during the last three and half years, the focus of the Commission has been in the following areas: Putting the necessary institutional fabric in place; Building internal capacity to mainstream gender; Implementing the AU Heads of State *Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa*; Building partnership and advocacy; and strengthening women's voices in peace processes.

12. **In putting the necessary institutional framework in place and building internal capacity to mainstream gender**, I am pleased to inform Council that the Commission undertook the Gender Audit of the AU Commission's Departments. The main objective of the Gender Audit was to establish the extent to which AUC is focusing on institutional frameworks, legal instruments, policies, programmes, and activities in addressing the issues of gender and women's empowerment. The Audit also sought to generate modalities on how best gender and women's empowerment could be mainstreamed within the AU.

13. The **Gender Audit** has laid the foundation for the Draft **AU Gender Mainstreaming Strategic Plan** (2008-2011) for the Political and Social components of AU programmes. An **AU Gender Policy** is being developed. Once adopted, the AU Gender Policy will provide a framework for gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in Africa. In this regard, several Validation Experts' Workshops have been held on these three outputs with participants drawn from the AU Commission, other AU Organs and the RECs. Further Validation processes are envisaged on the AU Gender Policy.

14. The Commission has also published a ***Handbook on Good Practices in Gender Mainstreaming in Africa*** highlighting case studies where positive changes in laws, policies, programmes and budget were achieved. In this regard, the WGDD organized, at

the AUC Headquarters in May 2006, a **Knowledge Fair and a Consultative Workshop** with the theme of “Good Practices in Gender Mainstreaming and Women’s Empowerment”. The Workshop sought to identify strategies, tools and mechanisms that can be adopted for mainstreaming gender issues within the AUC, RECs, other AU Organs and Member States.

15. In the same area, the Commission organized a Curriculum Development Workshop for **Gender-Responsive Economic Policy-Making in Africa Course** in March 2006. This was a joint initiative with the UN Institute for Economic Planning and Development (UNIDEP). This Course, the first of its kind in Africa, has the objective of filling the capacity gap for African economic policy makers, budget planners, development practitioners and policy advocates in designing and implementing gender sensitive economic policies and programmes. It also seeks to bridge the knowledge gap of the economists on gender issues and to improve the economic literacy of gender experts. The first Course was organized in Addis Ababa at the AU Commission Headquarters from 23rd November to 14th December 2006.

16. **Implementation of the AU Heads of State Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA)**- Council will recall that in the Declaration, African Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their commitment to the principle of gender equality as enshrined in Article 4 (l) of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, as well as other existing commitments, principles, goals and actions set out in the various regional, continental and international instruments on human and women’s rights.

17. It was in this connection that the Commission organized the **1st AU Conference of Ministers Responsible for Women’s Affairs and Gender** in Dakar, Senegal in October 2005. At that Conference, the Ministers adopted 2 documents that would facilitate the implementation of the Solemn Declaration by Member States namely, the **Implementation Framework of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa**, and the **Guidelines for Reporting on the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa**. They also considered their own role in the SDGEA process and in shaping the Gender programme of the African Union.

18. According to the schedule adopted by the Ministers in Charge of Women Affairs and Gender and approved by Council and Summit in 2006 in Khartoum, The Sudan, all AU Member States were expected to have submitted their baseline reports on the Solemn Declaration for consideration at the January 2007 Sessions of the Council and Summit. But only nine Member States submitted their reports on time for consideration by that Session of Council and Summit. Some AU partners also submitted their reports, namely ADB, IAC, UNIDO and WFP.

19. It was in that regard that, at the January 2007 Session of the Council and Summit, two reports on the SDGEA were considered, as directed by the provisions of the SDGEA, namely: ***Synthesis of Reports submitted by Member States; and the Second Report of the Chairperson on the Implementation of the Solemn Declaration.***

20. In the same vein, I undertook in 2006, an advisory committee called the **African Union Women’s Committee (AUWC)**. The Committee is to advice the Chairperson and the AUC as a whole on issues of gender and development. The AUWC is also envisaged to be a channel for popularizing the decisions and workings of the AU regarding the promotion

of gender equality and women's empowerment. The Committee also has a special role in monitoring and promoting the implementation of the SDGEA. The AUWC was inaugurated and had its first meeting in April 2006 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Its second meeting was held in April 2007 in Addis Ababa. During the second meeting, the AUWC adopted its work plan and its members had a gender training session.

21. **In the area of building partnership and advocacy**, the AUC organized in November 2006, a CSO Consultation with the theme of “**The role of CSOs in the monitoring and reporting of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA)**”. The purpose of the Consultation was to work out a modality of collaboration between CSO partners and the Gender Directorate in the annual monitoring of and reporting on the implementation of the SDGEA. At the end of the Consultation, the CSOs adopted mechanisms to coordinate their Shadow Reporting on the SDGEA; develop a Directory of CSOs in all sectors of development for the WGDD, to draw upon for policy development initiatives; and, to coordinate women civil society organizations' activities during AU Pre-Summits.

22. Council will agree with met that the adoption and entry into force of the **Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa** constitutes a milestone in the promotion, protection and respect for the rights of women in Africa. African women can therefore use the Protocol for the promotion, respect and protection of their rights.

23. Consequently, the Commission has been building partnerships and carrying advocacy around women's human rights, especially targeted at the early ratification of the Protocol, its popularization and domestication.

24. It is in that regard that, the Commission, in collaboration with “Solidarity for African Women's Rights” (SOAWR), published a book on “**Vulgarisation du Protocole de l'Union Africaine sur les Droits des Femmes en Afrique**”. The Commission and SOAWR also jointly organized a **Regional Consultation on Strategies for Accelerating the Ratification of the AU Protocol on the Rights of Women Across Northern Africa** in April 2007 in Tunis, Tunisia.

25. Since the monitoring, evaluation and implementation of the **African and Global Platforms for Action** were entrusted to the AU and the ECA, among others, the Commission continues to intensify and expand its cooperation with international organizations, development agencies, regional and sub-regional institutions and AU Member States in efforts toward the advancement of the status of African women.

26. **Strengthening Women's Voices in Peace Processes**- As part of the AU's efforts in strengthening women's voices in peace processes, especially in countries emerging from conflict, the Commission, in partnership with the UNDP Regional Gender Programme for Africa, has built a Network on Gender, Peace-Building and Governance. The Network brings together various individuals and institutions to build capacity and promote gender-responsive governance in countries emerging from conflict. In the same vein, the Commission has been working closely with UNIFEM on Strengthening Women's Voices in Peace Processes, especially in the events leading up to the signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement.

C. INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITIES

C.I. ACTIVITIES

27. The role of the Office of Internal Audit (OIA) is to provide assurance and advisory services to the management of the Commission. The Office also supports top management in the effective discharge of their responsibilities by furnishing them with analyses, appraisal, counsel and recommendation on the activities reviewed.

28. Since the Addis Ababa Summit in January 2007, the audit activities undertaken by the Office of Internal Audit include the review of:

- a) Cash and Cash Management for the year ended 31 December 2006,
- b) Recruitment Activities at the Headquarters for twenty four months January 2005 to December 2006,
- c) African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB),
- d) African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) – Facilitate Handover of Finance Officers,
- e) Budget Execution and Expenditure Control at Headquarters for the year ended 31 December 2006,
- f) Southern African Regional Office (SARO) – Lilongwe for the year ended 31 December 2006,
- g) Permanent Mission to the League of Arab States - Cairo,
- h) Project and Special Funds at the Headquarters for twenty four months January 2005 to December 2006

29. In addition, and in accordance with the Strategic Plan of the Commission for the Year 2004-2007, the OIA is in the process of finalizing the preparation of Audit Charter and Audit Manual through the consulting firm Deloitte & Touche.

C.II. IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

30. The Office assists management in the achievement of the vision, mission and objective of the Commission by promoting the establishment of efficient and effective internal control, by assessing risks and recommending measures to mitigate those risks. Thus, the Office is playing a proactive and decision support role in the building of an efficient, transparent and accountable Commission.

31. However, in order to attain its objectives as needed and to provide the necessary value-adding services, the Office of Internal Audit has shortage of manpower. It is believed that this problem will be solved with the current recruitment process and the review of the Maputo Structure.

C.III. THE WAY FORWARD

32. Before the end of the budget year, the OIA will organize a workshop to management of the AUC on the role of Internal Audit, risk assessment and good governance. Deloitte & Touche is contracted to assist the OIA in facilitating the workshop. The workshop would foster a proactive approach to the risk management process and encourage managers to work diligently and positively with the Office of Internal Audit.

D. AFRICAN CITIZENS AND DIASPORA

33. During the period under review, the Commission undertook the following activities with regard to African Citizens, Civil Society Organisations and the Diaspora.

D.I. SUPPORT FOR INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF ECOSOCC

34. Council will recall that since the interim ECOSOCC could not complete its mandate, the 10th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council extended the mandate of the Interim ECOSOCC until 31st December 2007 and requested the Standing Committee to take necessary measures to ensure that the process of elections into the post-interim Assembly is completed by the date. It also requested the Commission to take appropriate measures to support this process. Accordingly, the Commission facilitated a request by the Presiding officer, Prof. Wangari Maathai, to convene a meeting of the Interim Standing Committee (ISC) of ECOSOCC in Cairo, Egypt, from 24-26 February 2007 to establish processes and procedures for fulfilling this mandate. The ISC meeting developed a work programme for the popularization of the ECOSOCC process and the holding of elections between June and December 2007.

35. Subsequently, at the direction of the ISC, the Credential and Works Programme Committee of ECOSOCC, the ECOSOCC Secretariat in the Commission produced a template for elections that was posted on the African Union and ECOSOCC websites and advertised in national, regional and other media outlets. The templates stipulated eligibility criteria and called on interested organizations to apply. At the end of the exercise, the Secretariat of ECOSOCC received about 250 applications from the various regions of the continent. Subsequently, the Credentials Committee of ECOSOCC met in Ghana from 17-18 June 2007 to verify the credentials of the candidates. With this development, the ECOSOCC process can be said to be very much on track. I expect that elections would be completed by the due date of 31 December 2007 so that the post-interim ECOSOCC can be inaugurated in 2008.

36. It is important to note that the ongoing election processes are for regional, national and continental elections. The African Diaspora is also expected to elect 20 representatives into the ECOSOCC General Assembly.

37. However, since the provisions of Article 3 on the composition of ECOSOCC focuses strictly on social and professional groups within the continent, it would be wise to ensure that criteria for Diaspora participation in ECOSOCC are clearly spelt out in a framework

document that would be endorsed by the relevant policy organs to ensure the legitimacy of the process. The African Citizens Directorate should work on this document as early as possible to ensure quick and effective participation of Diaspora representatives in the ECOSOCC process.

D.II. FOSTERING SECTORAL PARTNERSHIPS: THE TRADE UNION FORUM

38. In addition, the Commission has intensified efforts to mainstream civil society participation in the affairs of the Union in general and the Commission in particular. To this end, it has embarked on a programme of fostering partnerships between the Union and different sectoral and professional groups beginning with the Trade Union movement as indicated in the Strategic Plan of Action of the Commission approved by the Assembly in 2007. Thus the Commission, in concert with the Organization of African Trade Union inaugurated the AU-OATUU Partnership Forum in Accra, Ghana, on 3-5 April 2007, for sharing and exchange of information about issues of critical importance to the AU, develop a more structured and institutional framework for association and guidelines for such relationship, as well as an agenda for cooperation and action. The Forum, which was attended by top African Trade Union leaders at national, regional and continental levels elect a 9-member Steering Committee to guide this process and also highlighted specific areas of cooperation in which the Trade Union Movement can add value to the work of the AU. In addition, the Forum decided to hold a strategic workshop late in 2007 to develop the roadmap for this cooperation. It also deliberated on other issues of importance such as the funding of the Union, ECOSOCC and the proposals for Union Government. As a follow-up on this process, the Commission also intends to inaugurate the Ecumenical Council in the second half of 2007.

D.III. AU-EU JOINT STRATEGY CONSULTATIONS

39. As a mark of its commitment to make African CSOs effective stakeholders in the African Union, the Commission has facilitated the effective and enhanced participation of African civil societies in the evolution of an AU-EU Joint Strategy. In this regard, it initiated an African Civil Society Organizations Consultations on AU-EU Joint Strategy for Africa's Development in Accra, Ghana, from 26-28 March 2007 and supported and financed African Civil Society participation in the European civil society consultation in Bad Honnef, Germany, from 23-24 April 2007. The Accra consultation examined the emerging framework document and made concrete recommendations for improvement. It also agreed on a number of decisions including a follow-up process to ensure continuous and active CSO participation in the process up to the Lisbon Summit and thereafter, to facilitate the process of implementation. It also established a Steering Committee to work with CIDO, to ensure effective follow-up on African CSO consultations on the AU-EU Joint Strategy. A Follow-up workshop for a mid-term review of progress is scheduled to be held in August 2007 and there are plans for both AU and EU civil society processes to effectively interact in an intercontinental CSO consultation in October or November 2007.

D.IV. UNION GOVERNMENT

40. I am pleased to inform Council that the Commission has also promoted active CSO participation in the Union Government Debate. The issue has been presented for consideration at various CSO meetings and through the sectoral partnership agenda that is evolving. In addition, CSOs were actively engaged in the All-inclusive Continental Consultations on Union Government held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 29-31 May 2007.

D.V. CONSOLIDATION OF THE DIASPORA INITIATIVE

41. Efforts to develop and consolidate the Diaspora Initiative continues apace. The consolidation of Diaspora networks remain a priority. National networks are being constructed in Europe as a foundation for a continental platform. The South America Network would also be finally established in August 2007.

42. In addition, the Commission has been actively engaged with the Government of South Africa in preparation for the African Diaspora Summit scheduled to hold in South Africa in early 2008. A series of national, regional and Diaspora consultative conferences have already been held in Pretoria, London and New York between March and June 2007. Others are expected to follow in the Bahamas and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Regional consultations, Expert meetings and a Ministerial Conference will be held between October - November 2007 as a lead up to the Summit.

43. Needless to add that the Consultative meetings are generating a wide momentum of support for the Diaspora process within and outside the continent, creating awareness and conscientizing the populations of various continents, as well as exploring strategies and procedures for facilitating effective rules of engagement/modalities for creating auto-centred and fulfilling partnerships. A formal report on this process and its accumulated gains will be presented to the next session of Council and Summit. In the meantime, it is necessary to observe that this process is also feeding into the consolidation of Diaspora networks.

44. During the period under review, the Commission through CIDO has effectively continued the process of mainstreaming civil society and African Diaspora participation in the affairs of the Union. It has done this within the framework of the Strategic Plan of the Commission approved by the Assembly in 2004. Even so, the programme and process has been characterized by innovation, creativity, flexibility and perspective planning. The result-oriented approach has made it possible for the Commission to produce credible results in the midst of capacity constraints.

E. STRATEGIC POLICY PLANNING, MONITORING, EVALUATION AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION (SPPME)

45. I would like to report to Council that activities relating to Strategic Policy Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Resource Mobilization (SPPME) are key for the management of the Commission and the work of its various Departments and Directorates as far as the implementation of their programmes are concerned as well as the mobilization of External resources to support those programmes.

46. During the period under review, the following activities were carried out in the area of SPPME:

E.I. PLANNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

47. I am pleased to inform Council that significant and notable achievements were attained in the areas of planning, monitoring, evaluation, and implementation of programmes of the Commission. To that end:

- A monitoring and evaluation manual has been developed and training is being initiated for the use of the manual;
- The brainstorming process for the 2008-2011 AU Strategic Plan has already started;
- Preparation for the 2007 Programms Budget commenced in earnest early 2006 in collaboration with AUC departments. The outcome of this exercise was the 2007 program budget, which was subsequently, approved during the January 2007 Addis Ababa AU Summit;
- Pursuant to the approval of the 2007 Programms Budget; and in response to requests by member states and partners, the 2007 Programms Budget Implementation Plan has since been finalised and circulated to all directors prior to distribution to member states and partners;
- Development of a computerized Project/Programme Monitoring and Evaluation system is currently at an advanced stage. The system 's first demonstration took place in April 2007, as scheduled.
- **Preparations for the planned Results Based Management Workshop** for AUC directors are almost complete. This Workshop is the first step in the 2nd phase of AUC Institutional Transformation. The workshop is planned for August, with technical assistance from GTZ. This workshop will target Directors of all AUC departments. The main objective of this workshop will be:
 - To strengthen the Monitoring and Evaluation skills of the AUC staff.
 - Better understand the Results-Based Planning and Management process.
 - Common understanding of the planning and monitoring process to various management levels.
 - Support the development of the Mid-Term Monitoring and Evaluation Report for AUC Programms Budget.
- **Kick off AMERT System:** The 2004 – 2007 Strategic Framework of the Commission of the African Union, while providing a guiding framework around which interventions of the Commission could be built on, it did not provide for a mechanism at how the same could be monitored and evaluated. Based on this, the Commission embarked on a process to develop a multi user computerized

Monitoring and Evaluation tool (AMERT) that will assist with not only the monitoring and reporting on implementation of AUC Strategic Framework but also monitoring and reporting on all AU decisions, declarations, policies and programs, including all global and continental consensus, that the Commission is supposed to facilitate and make constant follow up on behalf of the AU. AMERT is being developed thanks to the financial and material support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

48. Recently, the Commission coordinated workshop with UNFPA at Kuriftu Resort, Debre-Zeit, 17 April 2007 for demonstration of the African Union Commission Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Tool (AMERT). The workshop had the following objectives:

- a) To receive comments and suggestion on the way the tool could be improved;
- b) To get advice on how best the tool can make AUC's M&E efforts realized;
- c) To reach a consensus on how best to move on with tool development process now that the demo tool was almost ready for testing.

49. It was a high level half-day meeting that was characterized by inspiring presentations, which were followed by very informative, resourceful and stimulating discussions. The workshop targeted all AUC Directors or their representative who are the principal officials responsible for all day-to-day undertakings of their respective departments/directorates.

E.II. IN THE AREA OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

50. I would like to inform Council that efforts have been deployed to improve knowledge management sharing at the Commission. To that effect, a Knowledge Management System (AUCKMS) has been developed with the view to connecting the various entities (within the Commission and outside) and to be used as interface between the functional departments of the Commission.

51. The design of the project and the handling of all the technical aspects for the implementation of the system have been achieved in May 2007. The Design of the Architecture of the AUCKMS and the development in Open Source Software were successfully achieved. The 1st server is already installed. A Task Force has been established for the first tests on the server– (debugging and adjustment). Currently, the system is operational and the progressive registration of system's users (AUC Staff, Embassies, International Partners, etc.) to enable them to access the AUCKMS is in progress. This system will also integrate the Library and Library services as well as the Archives.

E.III. IN THE AREA OF RESOURCE MOBILISATION

E.III.1. Introduction

52. During the period under review, the activities of the Commission in the area of Resource Mobilisation focussed on following up on commitments made by Partners for the

implementation of the AU's priority activities for 2007 as reflected in the approved programme budget. At the same time, the Commission continued to engage International Partners on ways and means of improving cooperation arrangements as well as the effectiveness in the delivery of development assistance, with the ultimate objective of increasingly moving towards pooled funds with a view to reducing transaction costs on the part of the Commission.

E.III.2. Responses and Framework for Implementation

53. In this context, several key activities were undertaken as follows:

- The monthly dialogue with International Partners established under the new partnership framework was continued. The dialogue aims at enhancing the quality and effectiveness of official development assistance provided to the AU Commission, and as such, is also focused on exploring common support mechanisms to introduce predictability and flexibility of resource flows for the implementation of the AU Strategic Plan. As approved by the PRC, Member States actively participated in these meetings through the Chairperson's of the Advisory Sub-Committee on Administrative, Budgetary and Financial Matters, the Advisory Sub-Committee on Contributions, and the Advisory Sub-Committee on Multilateral Cooperation.
- Structured meetings involving focal points from all AUC Departments/Directorates/Units were organized to prepare detailed work plans and cash requirement forecasts for the implementation of the Euro 55 million EC Support Programme. The First Annual Work Plan for this programme is costed at Euro 12 million and the first tranche amounting to Euro 5.4 million was transferred to the AUC Banks Account on 23 March 2007. This programme is now under implementation and the first half yearly review will be held in July 2007.
- The tools and templates developed in the context of the Process Facility were finalized, and staff recruitment, review of procurement operations, office accommodation, procurement of hard and software initiated and at an advanced stage of finalisation.
- A Joint Financing Agreement aimed at pooling partners funds for financing the Process Facility, IMIS and the VSAT programmes (the key components of the Institutional Transformation Programme), was formulated and is at an advanced stage of negotiation with Partners. The pooled fund arrangement will bring with it benefits in the form of reduced transaction costs as well as predictable and flexible funding. This arrangement will also provide some lessons on the quest of gradually moving away from individual project funding, towards increase pragmatic support and ultimately direct budget support.
- Regular financial and narrative reports were prepared and submitted to International Partners in fulfilment of obligations emanating from ongoing financing agreements.

- Pledges made by International Partners were followed up, and negotiations with the African Capacity Building Foundation finalized for a US\$5 million grant to the AUC. The agreement will be signed shortly.

F. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

54. I would like to inform Council that the Communication and Information sector of the African Union Commission continued to make progressive and significant advancements in terms of its status as well as its means of action and activities carried out. During the first quarter of 2007 concrete results were obtained in efforts to re-establish the visibility of the African Union and to popularise its vision. The following achievements should be noted:

F.I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

55. Despite the structural difficulties and lack of material and human resources, the implementation of the Integral and Comprehensive Communication Strategy taking into account the need to popularize the activities of the African Union, within and outside the Continent, remained at the centre of the Programme of Action of the Communication Division, which redoubled initiatives to bring the Union closer to its users.

56. Many specific and thematic media plans were developed and implemented alongside the activities organized by the Union, including notably the 8th Assembly of the Union, held in Addis Ababa in January, with the participation of nearly 500 journalists, as well as the major ministerial conferences held at AU Headquarters or in other African capitals or outside Africa.

57. In anticipation of the new Strategic Plan (2008-2011), the Commission prepared a document of Terms of Reference for the launching of a consultation on the definition of a new communication strategy to guide the new Strategic Plan. This new strategy, which will be reflected in the sectoral media plans, stems from the determination to establish greater professionalization of the communication and information activity. The implementation of this strategy has already benefited from the support of many of AU partners (EU and UNFPA).

F.II. MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION

58. The Commission ensures the widest possible dissemination of information relating to the activities of all its technical Departments, which involves the promotion and defense of the values and ideals of the Union. In this regard, measures were taken to ensure media coverage of the activities of all the active structures, whether they took place in Addis Ababa or outside the host country. Activities to ensure media coverage were reflected in the publication and dissemination of press releases sent to all African and international media through a database of journalists that the Commission established and updated gradually with new contacts of representatives of African information channels specializing

in African issues and the print media world-wide (press agencies and newspapers), audiovisual (Radio and television), and electronic media (e-media).

F.III. ESTABLISHMENT OF A SERVICE FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF JOURNALISTS

59. In order to ensure temporary accreditation of journalists during all the conferences and meetings organized by the Union, the Commission initiated a project for the establishment of a permanent service for the accreditation of journalists to the African Union Commission, a service which was paradoxically lacking, despite the ever-increasing interest of the media for the activities of the Union. The permanent accreditation service which will shortly begin its activities and is to be tested during the Assembly meetings in Accra, will grant duly accredited journalists all the necessary facilities to effectively carry out their work, including a card allowing access to the headquarters of the organization (person and vehicle), and a press room equipped with computers, internet, pay phones, etc.

F.IV. ACTIVITIES RELATING TO THE EDITING AND PUBLICATION OF CONTENT

60. The Commission is now working to produce a series of periodic publications, within the framework of the communication and information strategy. This activity allowed the production of several information documents bearing the label of the Commission, including:

- THE AU COMMISSION NEWSLETTER: a monthly publication relating the life of the Commission ;
- THE LETTER OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AUC: Volume 1 for 2007 of « The Letter of the Chairperson of the AUC» was published in March 2007. This quarterly information bulletin, intended exclusively for Heads of State and Government, Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Chief Executives of RECs, constitutes a preferred means of communication between the Chairperson of the Commission and the African leadership. Volume 2/2007 will be published by the end of June.
- THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSION: I have the pleasure to inform Council of the publication of Volume 1 of the Annual Report of the Commission for 2006. This new publication, the first of its kind, constitutes an additional and necessary information medium for the popularization of the yearly activities carried out by the different Departments of the Commission. The Annual Report is published in four colours, in two working languages of the Union, that is English and French to begin with.

F.V. ESTABLISHMENT OF A PAN-AFRICAN RADIO AND TELEVISION CHANNEL

61. Council may recall that the Commission, in the implementation of the Communication component of its Priority Strategic Plan, had initiated a Pan-African Radio and Television Channel Project. In this regard, the Commission is now in the process of preparing a study, pursuant to the decision taken by the Executive Council at the Banjul Assembly. The terms

of reference for this study are now ready and the Commission is trying to find the appropriate profile of experts to carry out the study. Once completed, this study will be submitted to the meeting of Senior Officials that will precede the Conference of Ministers of Information and Communication, as recommended by the Conference of Ministers of Information and Communication, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 14 to 15 June 2006 and endorsed by the Executive Council in Banjul, The Gambia.

F.VI. ORGANISATION OF A COMPETITION FOR A NEW AU FLAG

62. Council may recall that by Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.151(VIII), the Assembly urged the Commission to initiate a new process for the selection of a Union Flag. During the period under review, the competition was launched and the announcements were widely disseminated. The deadline for submission has now expired and the proposals submitted will in the coming months be short-listed by a Committee set up by the Chairperson of the Commission; a report will be made to the January 2008 Session.

F.VII. RESTRUCTURING OF THE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION DIVISION

63. Faced with the magnitude of the mission of the Commission in the popularization of the ideals of the Union and the lack of adequate and necessary resources to implement the media strategy worthy of a huge Organization like the African Union, I initiated a plan for the restructuring of the structures responsible for these duties; this new structure was devised on the basis of the new Communication Strategy put in place. This Plan should endow the Union with an effective, modern and integrated communication and information system, and empower the managers of the sector to achieve their set objectives, with the requisite efficiency and professionalism. In due course, I would like to count on the good understanding of Council to approve this restructuring.

G. ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

64. During the period under review, the Commission has carried out the following activities: -

G.I. IN THE AREA OF RECRUITMENT

65. Eighty Five (85) successful candidates were appointed as at 31 May 2007. Furthermore, the Commission has taken the necessary steps to fill the vacant positions of Secretaries and Clerks. Four (4) posts of Director positions were advertised on the AU Web Site and in Member States.

66. In the same vein, wide consultations between Departments of the Commission were undertaken to fill the vacant positions of approved Post Maputo Structure (Part A and B). Job Descriptions are being compiled for advertisement of the posts. It is envisaged that a total number of 261 will be advertised. Similarly, the Commission has been working to

constantly adjust the structure to its mandate. In this regard, Departments have worked towards proposals of a post Maputo Part (c) structure. The proposals have been submitted to the Sub-Committee on Structure for consideration. Council will be seized with these proposals at the appropriate time.

G.II. THE AUC PROCESS FACILITY PROJECT

67. An Inter-departmental working Committee was set up to design, execute and manage the AU Process Facility Project. The objective of this project is to streamline and enhance systems and processes in the AUC with a view to improve Donors/Partners fund handling/accounting and related activities within the framework of the Development Review Cooperation Forum set up with Donors/Partners.

G.III. PENSION AND INSURANCE

68. It is my pleasure to inform Council that the Commission continued its efforts to improve the Pension and Insurance Schemes for the benefit of its staff. Within this framework, a first meeting was held in April 2007 with the Advisory Sub-Committee on Administrative, Budgetary and Financial Matters to examine the study on the Reform of the Social Security Scheme. I hope that a satisfactory solution will be found to this issue. The Commission also introduced the Business Travel Insurance Policy for its staff.

69. Considering the importance for the Commission to have a scheme for its teams of Election Observers and taking into account the risks to which these observers are often exposed, the Commission established a separate travel insurance scheme for this group of persons.

70. Lastly, the Commission closely followed the implementation of the insurance contract by the firm ALICO, particularly concerning the abrogation of the exclusion clause from the HIV/AIDS risk cover. Negotiations on this point are still underway. I will be able to report to Council on the results of negotiations subsequently.

G.IV. STAFF WELFARE

71. I would like to inform Council that I took steps to significantly improve the living conditions of internationally recruited staff in the New York and Washington Offices. It should be pointed out the staff of the Offices concerned experienced great difficulties due to the high cost of living. On the basis of the Decision of the Executive Council adopted in Khartoum in January 2006, I instructed that the principle of calculation of post adjustment adopted for the Geneva and Brussels Offices should be extended to the Offices in New York and Washington D.C. in order to ensure justice and equity. It is understood that these measures are temporary and will be globally reviewed within the framework of the study on the Harmonization of the Remuneration Policy currently being considered by the PRC.

72. Similarly, due to the discrepancies observed in the salary scale, the Commission realized that the salaries paid to staff of Offices established in Europe and in the United

States were below the SMIC (minimum growth wage in France). It is an embarrassing situation, which places the African Union in position of violating internal law. At the same time, the low income of this category of staff puts them in an extremely precarious situation at their duty stations. As part of interim measures, pending the consideration by the PRC of the recommendations on the harmonisation of the remuneration policy, I decided to increase the rate of the special allowance paid to the staff concerned.

73. It is also my pleasure to inform Council that the Advisory Sub-Committee began considering the proposals on the harmonization of the Commission's remuneration policy. On the basis of the Council Decision adopted in January 2007 (EX.CL/Dec.342 (X)), the Commission initiated two studies focusing on: -

- The remuneration of elected officials, the executives of other organs of the Union and Special Envoys and Special Representatives.
- The pilot project on merit-based remuneration.

The studies are underway. The Commission will report on its conclusions at the next session of Council.

G.V. INSURANCE OF STAFF ON PEACEKEEPING AND OBSERVER MISSIONS

74. Attention was focused particularly on the Mission in Sudan (AMIS). I have the pleasure to inform Council that after several months of negotiation, the Commission was able to obtain significant amounts and that it has started paying the victims and their families the capital provided for under the Memorandums of Understanding signed with Troop Contributing Countries. However, Council may recall that the Commission had to rescind the insurance policy in view of its exorbitant cost. The establishment of a Trust Fund is envisaged, which will be financed partly by contributions from partners. The Commission recently concluded the preparation of the regulations for the administration of the Fund. What remains is the elaboration of the modalities for the operationalization of the Fund, of which Council will be seized thereon in due course.

G.VI. APPOINTMENT, PROMOTION AND RECRUITMENT BOARD (APROB)

75. The Maputo Decision of July 2003 had requested the Commission to establish a Committee in charge of Recruitment, Promotion and Career Development. In implementation of this Decision, I decided to establish an Appointment, Promotion and Recruitment Board (APROB). The organic text indicates the composition and mandate of the Board. The primary duty of the Board will be to look into the situation of staff members who have reached the ceiling of their grade and have not been promoted for some years. The Board will be required to make proposals within the framework of existing rules and regulations, particularly the Career Development Plans adopted in 1994 and in 1999 respectively.

G.VII. STAFF RULES AND REGULATIONS

76. The new Draft Staff Rules and Regulations have recently been finalized by the Commission. It will be submitted for the consideration of the appropriate sub-committee. The final text will be submitted to Council in due course.

G.VIII. TRAINING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

77. The Commission gave special importance to the Training and Capacity Development of its staff. Within this framework, efforts are underway to:

- i. Develop the new Training Policy;
- ii. Finalize the Plan of staff training needs.

78. These essential tools are under consideration by the Commission and will be submitted to the policy organs for consideration.

79. In addition, the Commission, with the support of partners, elaborated a new staff performance assessment tool. This tool benefited from wide consultations with the appropriate Departments of the Commission.

G.IX. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM

80. I am pleased to inform Council that, within the framework of improving the computerization and modernization of its working methods, the Commission is implementing a number of IT-based projects as follows:

G.IX.1. Network Infrastructure and E-Governance (VSAT) Project

- This project is aimed at:
 - (a) Establishing a closed Private Corporate Network for the African Union Commission (to link the AUC HQ, the R/O and Recs) that will be - Secure, Dedicated, reliable.
 - (b) Providing Telecommunication Services via video conferencing and IP telephony.
 - (c) Providing a reliable infrastructure to support the AUC business applications
- The benefits of the project include:
 - (a) Provide access to Corporate Management information systems i.e. IFMIS from any regional office
 - (b) Provide Voice, Internet and Video Conferencing services
 - (c) Reduction in telephone communication costs
 - (d) Promote collaboration between AUC staff.
- The Project is being implemented according to the following scope:
 - (a) Construction of a central Hub at AU HQ in Addis Ababa

- (b) Construction of VSAT in 21 sites in Africa(13 Regional Offices, 8 Recs)
- (c) Installation of 4 IPL sites (New York, Geneva, Brussels, Washington)
- (d) Upgrading of LAN and infrastructure telecommunication and in the Regional offices and HQ
- (e) Activation of all services – VOIP, VC, Corporate data

Project Implementation Progress

- During the period of review, the following actions have been undertaken:
 - (a) Hub Construction:
 - The hub equipment and indoor electronics at HQ already finished.
 - Currently alignment and testing is being carried out in readiness for the launch on 25th May 2007
 - (b) Four Remote sites (S. Africa, Malawi, Nairobi, ECOWAS) already completed.
 - (c) Procurement of the IPL lines, VC and VOIP equipment for the 4 remote sites in Europe and USA completed.
 - (d) Procurement of the other 17 VSAT equipment will be completed by 21st May 2007 and other activities will follow as scheduled
 - (e) The site surveys for the LAN and VSAT readiness have been done in 12 sites out of 21.
 - (f) Licensing –Acquisition of VSAT licenses already underway for all 21 VSAT sites
 - (g) Site Surveys Completed in;
 - IGAD
 - ECOWAS
 - SADC
 - COMESA
 - EAC
 - ECCAS
 - (h) License Application process already started in all the RECS;
 - (i) Installation Already Completed in ECOWAS, and to be launched on 25th May 2007
 - (j) Project to be Launched on 25th May 2007, The African Day, by HE the President of the African Union
- The budget breakdown could be summarized as follows:
 - (a) Direct VSAT project cost: US\$4,535,264.00

- VSAT equipment: US\$4,192,074
 - Video Conference equipment: US \$285,810.00
 - VOIP equipment Costs: US \$ 57,380.00
 - **NB: US\$1,317,999 has been financed by Norway and Sweden**
- (b) Indirect cost for sites readiness: US\$582,400.00
- This is the cost of upgrading the LAN and telecommunication equipment in the regional offices
- (c) Travel cost: US\$81,600.00
- This is cost of site surveys carried out by the project teams
- (d) Consultancy fee: US\$173,000.00
- AUC has engaged a consultant to manage the implementation process
- (e) **Grand Project Total: 5,372,264.00**
- The budget for the project is being executed according to the following programme:
- (a) VSAT Equipment Costs -2 Millions USD (90% of equipment cost-) has been spent for the purchase of equipments.
 - (b) By end of May 2007 the remain 10% of equipment cost will be paid
 - (c) After May 2007, subject to installation completion, the monthly recurring charges (10 % of US\$1,571,326- Bandwidth Lease, Internet Connection, IPL connection) will need effected
 - (d) As for items 2, 3 and 4 approximately 10% of the budget has been executed

G.IX.2. Implementation of the Integrated Management Information Systems – Finance and Human Resource Management System

- This project is aimed at improving the administrative and financial management of the Commission. The project is a component of the Institutional Transformation Programme (ITP). The objective of the project is to implement modern technology tools that will modernize the functions of the Finance and Administrative Directorates in order to make them efficient and effective in providing services to the Commission. During the period under review, the following has been undertaken:
- The tendering process has been divided into two lots:
 - Lot 2 - Purchase of the Integrated Finance and Human Resource application
 - Lot 1- Purchase of Hardware and system software to support the IFMIS Applications
- The tender evaluations for both lot 1 & 2 have been completed;
- A vendor has been identified for Lot 2 and will be invited for negotiation and contract signature by end of July;

- Over the month of July, we will be visiting the vendor sites for Lot 1.

G.IX.3. Implementation of an Electronic Medical Records System

- Another project aimed at improving the services of the AUC Medical Centre performance has been put in place. The objective is to Implement a modern medical records management system that will facilitate:
 - Digitization of the Patient medical records and Pharmacy;
 - Automate the workflow process; patient scheduling; patient registration; clinical, and dental encounter reporting; patient account management and billing;
 - Achieve more flexibility, user-friendly, and efficient periodic and ad hoc reporting capabilities providing access to and analysis of all patient and management data.
- At the moment, procurement of the Medical Records system and the technical requirements for the system are being compiled and the launching of the tender bid to initiate the procurement process is under process.

G.IX.4. Implementation of the Computer Aided/Assisted document translation tools in the Conference Services Department

- In order to assist the Conference Services to better respond to the challenges of the translation of Conference documents, as well as to implement modern technology tools that will improve and automate the translation and document processing, the following project is in preparation with the view to:
 - Transforming the present conference services (translation, Interpretation, documentation, reproduction and archiving) into a modern Conference Management System that will use the latest technologies in the market;
 - Automating the workflow procedures, from translation request to translation logout;
 - Capturing, creating and storing the translation institutional memory i.e. Terminology databases, Translation reference test.
- When this project is finalized and implemented, it will help the Commission to respond timely to the translation requirement for its work and that of the Member States.

G.IX.5. Upgrading the Network Infrastructure for the Commission and Regional Offices

- This project has been initiated to implement modern LAN infrastructure within the Commission and the regional offices. This will include:
 - Implementing Local area networks in all AUC regional offices
 - Upgrading the LAN at the Commission headquarters Scope

H. PEACE AND SECURITY

H.I. INTRODUCTION

81. At the 10th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council and the 8th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union held in Addis Ababa in January 2007, issues of peace and security were given in-depth consideration based on the report presented by the Commission. During resumed deliberation, the Assembly adopted a Decision covering specific conflict situations and other related matters including establishment of the Continental Peace and Security Architecture, conflict prevention including structural prevention of conflict through implementation of the African Union Border Programme, the funding of peace keeping operations conducted under the authority of the African Union through United Nations assessed contributions (Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.145 (VIII)).

82. During the ensuing period, the Commission focused attention on following up on the Assembly Decision and, generally, continued to pursue the peace and security agenda of the African Union. The paragraphs hereunder contain an account of the activities undertaken by the Commission in this regard since January 2007. These activities dwelt on the establishment of the Continental Peace and Security Architecture, the African Union Border Programme, post-conflict reconstruction and development, conflict and post-conflict situations and disarmament issues.

H.II. Establishment of the Peace and Security Architecture

H.II.1 African Standby Force (ASF)

83. As Council is aware, the past 18 months have been characterized by efforts aimed at formulating policies in accordance with the Roadmap for the Operationalisation of the ASF. These efforts focused on Doctrine, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Command, Control, Communication and Information Systems (C³IS), Training and Evaluation, and Logistics. Further work was done on the medical and legal aspects, as well as on the civilian dimension of the ASF, all of which had not been clearly articulated in the ASF Policy Framework document. The draft policy documents are to be submitted to the next meeting of the African Chiefs of Defence Staff and Ministers of Defence and Security, for consideration.

84. The Commission has now entered Phase 2 of the establishment of the ASF, which entails, *inter alia*, consolidation of the existing policy documents, development of the concepts of operation in line with the ASF deployment scenarios, and capability development. Further work must be undertaken to refine the legal aspects of deployment, develop the ASF rapid deployment capability and conduct site verification visits to the ASF regions to ascertain their state of development both at strategic and operational levels.

85. Within Phase 2, and based on the outcome of the policy workshops, some work has been specifically undertaken on the civilian dimension and the logistics. An implementation plan has been developed regarding the civilian dimension, addressing issues such as the development of a roster for deployment of civilians in ASF peace support operations and human resource management policies to regulate civilian deployments and gender aspects. On logistics, it should be recalled that the ASF Policy Framework document envisaged the establishment of five ASF logistics depots that would support and sustain ASF deployments. In this respect, a logistics study team began its work in February this year by visiting the five ASF regions with the view to determining the feasibility of the logistics depots, as well as the work done by the regions in this area. The team will submit its recommendations in July this year.

86. In an effort to build reliable and strong partnerships with African institutions of learning, the Commission organized a workshop with the African Peace Support Training Association (APSTA), aimed at focusing African training institutions to the development of the ASF. In the same vein, and within the framework of the 10-year capacity building program of the United Nations to the AU, the UNDPKO deployed a team to work with the AU Peace Support Operations Division on all aspects of peacekeeping. Further, the Commission and the UNDPKO have hosted the first UN/AU Senior Mission Leadership Course on Peace Support Operations.

87. Given the increasing need for the Commission to deploy missions, albeit in the absence of sufficient personnel and appropriate management structures, it has become critical that an adequate and well-staffed structure be put in place within the Peace and Security Department to attend to such contingency peace support operations that arise while the ASF development is underway.

H.II.2 Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)

88. At its 10th ordinary session, Council endorsed the Framework for the Operationalization of the CEWS adopted by the meeting of governmental experts held in Kempton Park, South Africa, in December 2006. Council requested the Commission to take all the necessary steps for the timely and full implementation of the Framework, including the mobilization of the financial and technical resources required from both AU member States and partners, the speedy recruitment of the human resources needed and other relevant steps.

89. As a follow-up to this decision, the Commission has undertaken a number of activities. Among others, steps have been taken to develop an AU specific Strategic Conflict Assessment (SCA) methodology, in order to further elaborate on the generic indicators module agreed upon in the Framework for the Operationalization of the CEWS and facilitate the monitoring and assessment of potential conflict situations on the continent. The methodology will be discussed with the Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, before finalization. Furthermore, efforts have been initiated to review the IT requirements of the CEWS, in light of the relevant provisions of the Framework as endorsed by Council. This will include the acquisition of suitable software to enhance the data collection capacity of the AU Situation Room. Finally, the Commission is

making arrangements for the recruitment, through extra-budgetary resources, of additional staff to enhance its analytical capability.

H.II.3 Panel of the Wise

90. Council will recall that, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) Protocol, the 8th ordinary session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government appointed, for a period of three years, the members of the Panel of the Wise. Subsequently, and based on the provisions of the PSC Protocol, draft Modalities for the functioning of the Panel were developed by the Commission and considered by the 73rd meeting of the PSC, held on 16 March 2007. The Commission is reviewing the draft Modalities in light of the observations made by the PSC, with a view to resubmitting them for approval. The Commission is also taking steps for the formal inauguration of the Panel, as well as for the preparation of a work programme.

H.III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AU BORDER PROGRAMME

91. During its January 2007 Session, I briefed Council on the Commission's initiative to move forward the African Union Border Programme which is one of the components of its 2004-2007 Action Plan as defined in the Vision, Mission and Strategic Framework of the Commission endorsed in principle by 3rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in July 2004. For its part, the 8th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union encouraged the Commission to pursue its efforts towards the structural prevention of conflicts, including through the speedy implementation of the African Union Border Programme.

92. I am pleased to inform Council that the Commission's efforts resulted in the convening, on 7 June 2007, of the First Conference of African Ministers on Border Issues. This Conference which was preceded by a Preparatory Meeting of Governmental Experts from 4 to 5 June 2007 adopted a Declaration on the Border Programme and the Modalities of its implementation. This Declaration centred on the following points: justification for the programme; its objectives and implementation principles; partnership and resource mobilization as well as the initial measures required to launch the Border Programme and follow-up on the Declaration. A separate report on the proceedings and outcomes of that Conference has been submitted to the Executive Council for consideration and appropriate action.

H.IV POST-CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT (PCRD)

93. Last January, I briefed Council on the measures taken by the Commission to implement the Policy Framework for Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development adopted in Banjul in June 2006. I pointed out, in particular, that the Commission had prepared an implementation document which was validated at a Workshop held in Addis Ababa in September 2006.

94. Efforts at translating this Policy Framework and the Banjul Decision into concrete action have since continued. In this regard, the Commission organized in Addis Ababa on 12-13 March 2007 a consultative meeting with African civil society organizations. A second meeting to be organized jointly with COMESA is due to take place in July in Lusaka. The

objective is to sensitise civil society organizations and other concerned stakeholders and involve them in the implementation of the Policy Framework on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development, in accordance with the Banjul Decision. Efforts are generally underway to disseminate the PCRD Policy Framework as widely as possible. It is against this background that a special page dedicated to the PCRD Policy Framework has been designed and placed on the African Union Website, and measures were taken to publish brochures on this issue.

95. I would also like to report that the Commission pursued its effort at elaborating operational guidelines for implementation of the PCRD. In this connection, it paid special attention to preparation of guidelines, currently being finalized, for AU evaluation missions to countries emerging from conflict. Furthermore, the relevant Departments of the Commission prepared a concept document on establishment of a corps of African Union Volunteers as stipulated in the Banjul Decision which endorsed the PCRD Policy Framework. After finalization, this document will be presented to the competent policy organs of the AU for consideration and adoption.

96. On a more practical level, the Commission is getting ready to field an evaluation mission to Liberia and Sierra Leone to identify the needs of the two countries and to make recommendations on the assistance that could be provided by Member States and the Commission to back their post-conflicts reconstruction and development efforts. This mission was the second of its kind following the mission to the Central African Republic in April 2006.

97. Lastly, the Commission, on 17 April this year, organized a briefing session for members of the Peace and Security Council with a view to reviewing the status of implementation of the PCRD Policy Framework. It was agreed, on that occasion, that an expanded briefing session should be organized for members of the Permanent Representatives' Committee.

H.V. CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS

98. The following paragraphs contain an account of the evolving conflict and post-conflict situations in the Continent. The period under review witnessed some progress in the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire. Positive developments were also registered in the implementation of the High Level Consultation on the Darfur conflict held in Addis Ababa in November 2006. With respect to Western Sahara, I would like to mention the direct talks between Morocco and the Polisario Front due to start in New York on 18 June 2007. The peace effort in Northern Uganda is in progress. I am pleased to report, in this regard, the signing in Juba, South Sudan, on 2 May 2007, of a comprehensive peace agreement between the Ugandan Government and the Lord's Resistance Movement/Army. The situation in Somalia continued to claim the attention of the Commission. The efforts deployed during the reporting period focused on deployment of peace support operation and promotion of inclusive dialogue among the concerned stakeholders. The reconciliation process in the Comoros encountered fresh and serious difficulties which could undermine the gains achieved in the reconciliation process.

99. Efforts at achieving post-conflict reconstruction have continued in Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo and in South Sudan. These efforts are crucial to the restoration of lasting peace and should, as such, receive unreserved support from the international community.

H.V.1 The Comoros

100. At its last session, I briefed Council on the developments in the situation in the Comoros. I underscored the fact that, despite the Presidential election of May 2006, conduct of which was commended by all the Comorian parties and the international community, relations between the Union and the autonomous Islands have not evolved as expected. Noteworthy was the lack of progress in the process of reintegrating into the new Comorian Entity the autonomous Island of Anjouan where the military, administrative and institutional authorities of the Union are yet to be established. This state of affairs contributed to the emergence of separatist demands in the other autonomous Islands especially Grande Comore. The 8th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, for its part, underscored the urgent need for all the Comorian parties to take all the necessary steps to consolidate the reconciliation process in their country. It mandated the Peace and Security Council to consider the possibility of deploying a mission in the Archipelago that would contribute to the creation of a conducive security environment during the presidential elections in the autonomous Islands and to undertake other related tasks.

101. It was against this background and in the bid to assist the Inter-Comorian Committee set up to resolve the problem of power sharing among Comorian entities, that I dispatched my Special Envoy for the Comoros, Francisco Madeira, to the Archipelago in January 2007, to explore with the Comorian authorities and the other concerned parties, the ways and means to overcome the difficulties hampering the reconciliation process. My Special Envoy was also tasked to facilitate the conduct of the presidential elections in the autonomous Islands scheduled to take place on 10 June, for the first round; and 24 June 2007 for the second round. It is to be recalled that, at the request of the African Union, experts from the International Organization of the Francophonie and the League of Arab States participated in that mission.

102. It is needful to mention, at this juncture, the disagreement among the Comorian parties on the issue of expiry of the mandates of the president of the autonomous Islands who were running for another term. In the middle of January this year, the Assembly of the Union of the Comores unanimously enacted a law requiring all the candidates for the post of president of the autonomous Islands to give up their official positions three months prior to the date of the election. Furthermore, in a ruling on the petition filed by the presidents of the autonomous Islands, the Constitutional Court rejected the pertinent law as unconstitutional.

103. On 26 April 2007, the Constitutional Court, on request, issued an edict underscoring the fact that the mandate of the president of the autonomous Island of Anjouan had expired since 14 April 2007, adding that it devolved on the President of the Union, symbol of national unity, to assume his role as arbiter and moderator and ensure the proper functioning State institutions. Relying on this edict, the President of the Union appointed an interim president for Anjouan until election could be held. Relations between the Union and the Anjouanese authorities thus deteriorated even further, culminating on 2 May 2007 in armed attack by the Anjouanese State Police on the premises of the office of the president

of Anjouan and on Comorian army elements in the area. Two soldiers lost their lives and several others were arrested and/or wounded.

104. In a press release dated 3 May 2007, I condemned in no uncertain terms, the use of arms against the Comorian national army. I also called upon all the Comorian parties to refrain from any action that could undermine the reconciliation process. Additionally, I dispatched my Special Envoy for the Comoros to the Archipelago from 5 to 16 May 2007 to assist the Comorian parties in overcoming the crisis. His efforts resulted in the signing, on 11 May 2007, of an agreement defining the transitional arrangements relating to the expiry of the mandate of the president of the autonomous Island of Anjouan, applicable up to the assumption of office of the newly elected president. According to the terms of the agreement, Colonel Bacar accepted the decision of the constitutional court on the expiry of his mandate and agreed to vacate the premises of the presidency of the autonomous Island of Anjouan on 11 May 2007. He also agreed to free the soldiers detained at the Anjouan State Police. Lastly, the agreement stipulated that the security of the candidates for Island election should be ensured within the framework of the security plan put in place by the African Union.

105. In the meantime, on 9 May 2007, the PSC met to examine the situation in Anjouan. That meeting was in response to the request made by the President of the Union of the Comoros who had addressed several letters to me drawing my attention to the situation prevailing in Anjouan and requesting deployment of an African Union force to collect the heavy weapons in the possession of the Anjouanese forces, in violation of Union Constitution and the internal security law, and to create the requisite security climate for the holding free, transparent and credible elections. The PSC unreservedly condemned the attacks against the Comorian army by the Anjouanese State Police and mandated me to take all appropriate measures to provide the security assistance needed to facilitate the conduct of elections to choose the presidents of the autonomous Islands, through deployment of an Electoral and Security Assistance Mission (ESAM) comprising civilian police and military components.

106. I am glad to report that, in response to PSC request, several Member States contributed military and police personnel as well as equipment to ESAM at their own expense. I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to South Africa which provided the civilian police component for its unalloyed support to AU efforts in the Comoros, and also to Tanzania which contributed a company. May I also commend Senegal and The Sudan which contributed military observers and civilian police personnel. My gratitude also go to the League of Arab States for its financial assistance towards deployment of ESAM. I also thank the Indian Ocean Commission for its support towards the on-going process in the Comoros.

107. The first round of the presidential election in the autonomous Islands took place on 10 June in Grande Comore and Mohéli, and was deemed to have been held under satisfactory conditions. The second round has been slated for 24 June 2007. With regard to Anjouan, however, the Union President, by decree dated 7 June, decided to postpone the first round election in that Island by one week. The decision was motivated by lack of conducive climate for free, transparent and credible election. In this connection, numerous violations of the 11 May 2007 Agreement especially in relation to freedom of movement of

the candidates opposed to the outgoing president of the Island and serious management problems in the island electoral commission were indeed recorded.

108. In its meeting of 9 June 2007, the PSC endorsed the observations of the Comorian authorities and urged all the concerned stakeholders to show restraint and to lend the African Union the necessary cooperation, thereby creating conducive conditions for the holding of free, transparent and credible elections in the autonomous Island of Anjouan on 17 June 2007. To this end, the PSC warned against any attempt by the Anjouanese authorities to hold the election on 10 June 2007, and emphasised that the African Union and the international community at large would not recognise the results of such election.

109. Despite the presidential decree, the subsequent decision of the PSC and the efforts invested by my Special Envoy, the Anjouanese authorities organized the first round of the Island presidential election on 10 June 2007. The Anjouanese State Police was in charge of security of the election. The local electoral commission announced the victory of the outgoing president in the first round, with over 89% of the votes. It should be mentioned in this connection that all the other candidates had withdrawn from the election in view of the way and manner it was organized. The Anjouanese authorities went on to swear-in Colonel Bacar as president of the Island on 14 June 2007. In a press release dated 11 June 2007, I strongly condemned the Decision of the Island authorities to organize elections and reaffirmed AU's determination to continue to assist the Comoros to overcome the present crisis within the framework of strict compliance with the basic texts governing the functioning of the Union.

110. As at the time of finalization of this report, consultations were underway with the countries of the region to enlist agreement on the way forward, in the face of what was apparently a flagrant violation, by the Anjouanese authorities, of the basic texts governing the functioning of the Union and an act of defiance against the African Union Commission and generally against the international community at large. The PSC was expected to meet to examine the situation. It is absolutely necessary that Africa take all appropriate measures to stand up to the situation given the fact that the intransigence of the Comorian authorities is loaded with negative consequences for continuation of the reconciliation process in the Comoros and the unity of the Archipelago.

H.V.2 Eritrea and Ethiopia

111. During the period under review, no progress has been made in the peace process between Eritrea and Ethiopia, as the demarcation has remained paralyzed, amidst a continued volatile situation in the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ). Furthermore, the Military Coordination Commission (MCC), which is one of the key organs provided for in the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities of June 2000 to discuss important military and security issues, could not meet since July 2006, while the operations of the United Nations Mission in Eritrea-Ethiopia (UNMEE) continue to be seriously hampered by the restrictions imposed on it.

112. In my report of January 2007, I had indicated that, in its resolution 1710 (2006) of 29 September 2006, the UN Security Council expressed its intention, in the event it determines that the parties have not demonstrated progress towards demarcation by 31st January 2007, to transform or reconfigure UNMEE. On 30 January 2007, the Security Council

adopted resolution 1741 (2007), by which it approved the reconfiguration of UNMEE's military component, from 2300 to 1700 military personnel, while stressing the need to preserve sufficient military capacity for the Mission to implement its mandate. In addition, the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of UNMEE for a period of 6 months, until 31 July 2007.

113. In its 23rd report covering the period from 21 December 2006 to 31 March 2007, the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) regretted that the parties had not proceeded as foreseen in its Statement of 27 November 2006 and, in particular, had not by themselves reached the necessary agreement on the emplacement of pillars, nor had they proceeded significantly to implement the Statement or enable the Commission to resume its activity. In this respect, it should be recalled that, in its Statement of 27 November, the EEBC indicated that if the parties did neither of the foregoing within 12 months of the issuance of the Statement, it determined that the boundary would automatically stand as demarcated by the boundary points listed in the annex to the Statement and that the mandate of the Commission could then be regarded as fulfilled.

114. In its resolution 1741 (2007) referred to above, the Security Council, *inter alia*, regretted the lack of progress on demarcation, called upon both parties to cooperate fully with the EEBC, stressed that the parties have primary responsibility for the implementation of the Algiers Agreements, and again called upon them to implement completely and without further delay or pre-conditions the decision of the EEBC and to take concrete steps to resume and complete the demarcation process. The Security Council also demanded that the parties provide UNMEE with the necessary access, assistance, support and protection required for the performance of its duties. Finally, the Security Council called upon the United Nations Secretary-General and the international community to engage with Eritrea and Ethiopia to help them to normalize their relations, to promote stability between the parties, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace in the region.

115. On 8 May 2007, the Security Council issued a press statement, expressing its members' deep concern over the impasse in the Eritrea-Ethiopia peace process and the growing tension between the two countries. The parties were called upon to show maximum restraint and to refrain from hostile public statements and from any threat or use of force against each other. The members of the Security Council indicated that they were encouraged by the statement made by the Ethiopian Prime Minister to Parliament on 29 March 2007, indicating that the Ethiopian Government had accepted the final and binding decision of the EEBC, and demanded that Ethiopia implement fully and without delay the EEBC decision.

116. The situation in the TSZ remains stable albeit volatile. Because of restrictions placed on its movements, UNMEE is unable to effectively monitor the integrity of the TSZ. In its statement of 8 May referred to above, the Security Council reaffirmed, once again, the integrity of the TSZ and urged both parties to withdraw immediately their troops and equipment from positions within and in close proximity to the TSZ.

117. As already indicated, the MCC has not met since 29 July 2006. On one hand, Ethiopia maintains that it will only resume participation in the MCC meetings after Eritrea has withdrawn heavy military equipment from the TSZ. Eritrea, on the other, alleges that Ethiopia's non-participation is a violation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities and

has indicated that it will not participate in MCC activities until UNMEE provides an official explanation for the suspension of the meetings since July 2006. It is worth mentioning here that, in their press statement of 8 May, the members of the Security Council reiterated their support to UNMEE and their demand that Eritrea reverse, without delay or preconditions, all restrictions on UNMEE's movement and operations, and called upon both parties to fully cooperate with the Mission, with a view to resuming the meetings of the MCC.

H.V.3 Somalia

118. In January, I briefed Council on the situation in Somalia, in particular the dramatic developments that took place in that country in December 2006, when the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), with the support of Ethiopia, took control of the areas previously occupied by the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), including the capital, Mogadishu. I also informed Council on the efforts then being deployed by the Commission to assist the TFG to stabilize the situation and enhance the prospects for lasting peace and reconciliation in Somalia. During its 8th ordinary session, the Assembly of Heads of States and Government adopted a decision on Somalia in which it, *inter alia*, noted with satisfaction the positive developments in Somalia, which have resulted from Ethiopia's intervention upon the invitation of the legitimate TFG and which have created an unprecedented opportunity for attaining lasting peace in the country.

119. Council will recall that, in the wake of the developments referred to above, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) met on 19 January 2007 to review the situation in Somalia. On that occasion, the PSC expressed its conviction that there existed a unique and unprecedented opportunity to restore structures of governance in Somalia and bring about lasting peace and reconciliation, which the Somali people, their leaders and the international community as a whole should seize. Accordingly, the PSC decided to authorize the deployment of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), for a period of 6 months, with the mandate (i) to provide support to the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) in their efforts towards the stabilization of the situation in the country and the furtherance of dialogue and reconciliation; (ii) to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance; and (iii) to create conducive conditions for long-term stabilization, reconstruction and development in Somalia. The PSC further decided that AMISOM shall comprise 9 infantry battalions of 850 personnel each supported by maritime coastal and air components, as well as an appropriate civilian component. On 21 February 2007, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1744 (2007) in which it decided to authorize the establishment, for a period of six months, of AMISOM, and encouraged member States to provide resources for the mission.

120. Following the PSC decision, the Commission approached member States for them to contribute troops for AMISOM. In this respect, and in addition to Uganda which had a long standing commitment to provide two infantry battalions for a peace support operation in Somalia, the following member States confirmed their readiness to contribute to the Mission: Nigeria, 1 infantry battalion; Ghana, 350 military personnel; and Burundi, 2 infantry battalions.

121. The deployment of AMISOM began on 5 March 2007, with the direct support of the US Government, which provided assistance in terms of airlifting, equipment and procurement of supplies, logistical support and sustainment in the mission area. Uganda

also benefited from support by Algeria, which provided airlift capability to Somalia. The arrival of the Ugandan contingent was not without incidents. Indeed, during the operation, two of the aircraft carrying equipment and some troops were attacked. In addition, the Ugandan contingent, since its deployment, has suffered some casualties on the ground, while several other soldiers have been wounded in a number of incidents, including attacks by armed elements. Yet, and in spite of the serious logistical and other constraints facing AMISOM, the performance of the Ugandan troops, I am proud to state, has been impressive. Apart from the protection of the governmental institutions, the troops have also gradually extended their activities, providing assistance to the civilian population. By the virtue of their deeds, the AMISOM troops have been generally warmly welcomed by the population.

122. It is against this background that the Commission has intensified its efforts to speed up the deployment of additional troops on the ground. In this regard, from 11 to 15 June 2007, an AU team visited Bujumbura, to assess the level of the readiness of the Burundian troops. A Burundian reconnaissance mission is to travel shortly to Somalia to finalize the preparations for the deployment of the Burundian contingent. I wish to express my gratitude to the United Kingdom, which, in addition to the financial support already provided for AMISOM, has also agreed to support the Burundian reconnaissance mission. I would also like to express appreciation to the US Government, Italy and the European Union, as well as to Algeria, for the support rendered in facilitating the deployment of AMISOM. I also would like to express my appreciation to Nigeria, which, in response to my appeal to all Member States to support the deployment of AMISOM, pledges US\$2 million. It is my hope that the logistical and other required preparations will soon be finalized to enable Nigeria and Ghana to deploy their contingents. Furthermore, the Commission has approached other member States to contribute troops, as well as provide maritime and air assets.

123. While the UIC as an organization has been routed out, certain groups remain active, and some of them are in fact re-organizing as insurgents. This insurgency, driven by extremism and acts of terrorism, is now the major cause of instability, particularly in Mogadishu and some areas of South-Central Somalia. During March this year, the insurgent elements mounted coordinated attacks within Mogadishu. The activities of such elements and the efforts by the TFG and Ethiopian forces to dislodge them resulted in fighting in densely populated areas of Mogadishu, with substantial collateral damage on both the civilian population and property

124. In a Presidential Statement dated 14 June 2007, the Security Council expressed its grave concern regarding the recent pattern of attacks by extremist elements in Somalia, including the increased use of explosive devices, and condemned all attempts to use violence to undermine the political process. The Security Council called on all member States to cease immediately any further support for extremist elements or those who seek to block progress by violent means, and to support the ongoing efforts towards inclusive political dialogue. The Security Council also condemned the attack on the Prime Minister of the TFG, on 3 June 2007, as well as attacks on AMISOM.

125. At the time of the writing of this report, the Commission was taking steps for the relocation of my Special Representative for Somalia, from Nairobi to Mogadishu. The objective pursued through this is to provide political leadership to AMISOM and to further encourage an all-inclusive political and reconciliation process, by opening up channels of

communication with all stakeholders in Somalia, within the framework of the Transitional Federal Charter.

126. As Council is aware, both the PSC and the Assembly, in their January meetings, stressed the need on the part of the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) to embark on an all-inclusive and genuine process of dialogue and reconciliation within the framework of the Transitional Federal Charter. The United Nations Security Council, in its resolution 1744 (2007), also stressed the need for broad-based and representative institutions reached through an all-inclusive process, and welcomed the initiatives of the TFIs to pursue an inclusive intra-Somali political process.

127. In this respect, I am pleased to note that, since its return to Mogadishu, the TFG has initiated efforts to bridge the differences that existed between some of the clans. Concentration has been on dialogue with the Hawiye clan that is dominant in Mogadishu. I am also pleased to report that the TFG has taken the initiative for the convening of a National Governance and Reconciliation Congress. The stated objective of the Congress is to bring together, on a large scale, representatives of all the clans to discuss issues of concern and chart out a roadmap for the remainder of the transitional political process in line with the Transitional Federal Charter. This Congress is to be managed independently and guided by a national governance and reconciliation committee headed by former President Ali Mahdi Mohamed.

128. As indicated above, the PSC, at its meeting of 19 January, stressed that the long term stabilization and post-conflict reconstruction of Somalia would require the strong involvement of the United Nations. In this respect, the PSC urged the Security Council to consider authorizing a United Nations operation in Somalia that would take over from AMISOM at the expiration of its 6 months mandate. In its resolution 1744(2007) referred to above, the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to send a technical assessment mission to the African Union Headquarters and Somalia as soon as possible to report on the political and security situation and the possibility of a UN peacekeeping operation following the AU's deployment, and to report to the Security Council with recommendations covering the UN's further engagement in support of peace and security in Somalia, as well as further recommendations on stabilization and reconstruction.

129. In accordance with this resolution, the Secretary General dispatched a multi-disciplinary technical assessment mission to the region from 15 to 26 March 2007. The Commission held consultations with that mission. In its key findings, as contained in the report of the United Nations Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia, dated 20 April 2007, the mission formulated two possible scenarios regarding the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation. The first scenario envisages a situation in South Central Somalia in which hostilities have ceased and all or most armed groups and communities have signed an agreement that would allow for external monitoring. Under this scenario, United Nations involvement would primarily focus on technical assistance to the reconciliation efforts and reconstruction and development, supported by an appropriate United Nations peacekeeping presence. Under the second scenario, the political process would have made insufficient progress or would have failed altogether. In parallel, the security situation would remain highly volatile or have further deteriorated. The deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation would not be possible or appropriate under this scenario, and alternative options, including peace enforcement, should be considered. The

mission concluded that an operation mandated by the United Nations, mounted by and composed of a coalition of the willing with appropriate capabilities would be better suited to the circumstances of this scenario.

130. On his part, the United Nations Secretary-General recommended that the Security Council review the situation in Somalia again by mid-June 2007, with a view to determining whether the conditions are in place for the deployment of a United Nations peace keeping operation. In its Presidential Statement of 14 June 2007, the Security Council emphasized the urgent need for appropriate contingency planning for a possible United Nations mission, to be deployed in Somalia if the Security Council decided to authorize such a mission. The Security Council is to receive a report from the Secretary General regarding progress in this regard by mid-June.

131. In conclusion, I cannot but again emphasize that Somalia is at the crossroads; the opportunity that exists today to open a new chapter in the history of this country should be fully exploited. Hence, the need to ensure that the governance institutions which are now in place are consolidated and that the ongoing efforts to promote lasting peace and reconciliation in Somalia are fully supported. I appeal to the member States and to our partners to provide the necessary support to enable the Commission to fully deploy AMISOM. I encourage the United Nations to speed up preparations for the deployment of a mission that would take over AMISOM. I urge for greater efforts to be made to provide humanitarian assistance to Somalia, as well as to support the post-conflict reconstruction of the country. I also urge the countries of the region to display the necessary cohesion in support of the ongoing process in Somalia and the efforts of the TFG. As the primary responsibility for achieving lasting peace and reconciliation in their country rests with the Somali people and their leaders, I, once again, urge them to spare no effort in overcoming their differences through an all inclusive political process.

H.V.4 The Sudan

(i) Darfur

132. Since the last ordinary session of Council, the Commission, working with the United Nations Secretariat, has pursued its efforts to re-launch the political process and strengthen the peacekeeping operation in Darfur, through the implementation of the three-phase approach agreed upon during the High-Level Consultation held in Addis Ababa in November 2006. Council will recall that the conclusions of the Consultation were endorsed by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the United Nations Security Council, in November and December 2006, respectively.

133. As part of the efforts to re-launch the political process, my Special Envoy for Darfur, Salim Ahmed Salim, and his United Nations counterpart, Jan Eliasson, have undertaken four missions to the Sudan, the last two of which were undertaken jointly. During these missions, they held consultations with the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) signatories, the signatories to the Declaration of Commitment (DoC), the SPLM, the opposition parties, the non-signatories, including the SLM/A field commanders based in Darfur, as well as their political leaders based in Chad. Others consulted included the representatives of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), tribal leaders, civil society representatives, as well as

representatives of the international community and the regional actors in Chad and Eritrea, Libya and Egypt.

134. Almost all the parties to the conflict expressed support for the AU/UN-led initiative to reenergize the political process, and agreed that there can never be a military solution to the conflict in Darfur. They also converged on the need to have a comprehensive cessation of hostilities in order to create conducive atmosphere for the dialogue, and promote confidence, particularly among the civilian population of Darfur. But there were also areas of divergence. While some of the stakeholders consulted by the Special Envoys agreed and insisted that the DPA should be the basis for the forthcoming dialogue, others rejected the DPA, putting emphasis on the Declaration of Principle (DoP), which was signed in Abuja in July 2005.

135. On their part, the Envoys stressed that AU and UN's concern was, on the basis of the DPA, to conduct a transparent process, that would address the reasons that militated against a comprehensive and lasting peace in Darfur. The Envoys observed that there is a gap between the field commanders of the non-signatory groups and their political leaders who reside abroad, hence the need to help them to unify their ranks and their positions on the contentious issues, ahead of the envisaged negotiations.

136. Subsequently, the Special Envoys developed a joint AU-UN Roadmap for the Darfur Political Process. Apart from the Addis Ababa conclusions and the consultations undertaken by the Special Envoys, this document was also informed by the Tripoli Consensus adopted during a meeting held on 28 and 29 April 2007 at the invitation of the Libyan authorities, and which brought together representatives of the Sudan, Chad, Libya, Egypt, Eritrea, the AU, the UN, the League of Arab States, the EU, US, UK, China, Norway, France, and Canada. The Tripoli Consensus underlined the urgency of finding a comprehensive and sustainable solution to the crisis. Recognizing the value of regional initiatives, the Consensus agreed on the need for coordination and convergence of all initiatives under the AU and the UN lead.

137. As a point of departure for the implementation of the Roadmap, the African Union and the United Nations expect all parties to declare their serious commitment to achieve a political solution to the crisis in Darfur, create a security environment conducive to negotiations, participate in and commit to the outcome of the negotiation effort and cease all hostilities immediately. The Roadmap has the following three major elements:

- convergence of initiatives and consultations phase (May – June 2007) – During this phase, the African Union and the United Nations will work with all national, regional and international actors to ensure that all initiatives currently underway converge and are integrated within the broader AU-UN framework. Simultaneously, the AU and the UN will continue extensive consultations on the political process and parties positions with all stakeholders inside and outside Sudan;
- pre-negotiation phase (June – July 2007) – During this phase, all parties are expected to demonstrate a serious commitment to the political process through accelerating preparations for negotiations in good faith. Simultaneously, the AU and the UN will finalize consultations with all Sudanese stakeholders, with a view to further refining the negotiation strategy; and

- negotiation phase (August 2007) – It is expected that the implementation of phase 2 would have contributed to narrowing the gaps between the respective positions of the parties and determined the parameters of an all inclusive Agreement. The Special Envoys thus envisage invitations to a brief and intensive negotiation session.

138. On the three-phase approach to a strengthened peacekeeping presence in Darfur, significant progress has been made during the period under review. Regarding the Light Support Package, which is designed to assist AMIS in the establishment of an integrated command and control structure and to increase the effectiveness and coordination of its operations, a number of military, police and civilian staff have been deployed by the UN both in Khartoum and in Darfur. In addition, equipment has also been delivered to AMIS.

139. Details of the Heavy Support Package (HSP), which comprises military, police and mission support personnel and equipment, as well as civilian staff to provide support in a range of areas, were communicated to the Government of the Sudan by the UN Secretary-General and myself in identical letters sent to President Omar Hassan El Bashir on 24 January 2007. In his response dated 6 March 2007, President El Bashir, while agreeing to some aspects of the package, expressed reservations with regard to others, proposing that discussions take place to address them. As agreed at the Summit meeting on Darfur, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on 28 March 2007, a High-Level AU-UN team met with a Sudanese delegation, in Addis Ababa, on 9 April 2007, to discuss the issue. Agreement on all aspects of the HSP were finalized at the meeting, with the exception of the issue of the six tactical/attack helicopters, which was eventually settled when the Sudanese Government gave its formal agreement to the inclusion of these helicopters in the package, in mid-April 2007.

140. In accordance with the 30 November 2006 PSC communiqué, which indicated that “the size of the hybrid force shall be determined by the AU and UN, taking into account all relevant factors and the situation on the ground, as well as the requirements for it to effectively discharge its mandate,” a Quick Review Mission was jointly conducted in Darfur from 8 to 19 February 2007. This mission concluded that the force requirement for the hybrid operation would be 19,000 – 20,000 troops, as well as 3,772 police officers and 19 formed police units

141. A number of basic principles regarding the hybrid operation were agreed upon between the UN and AU. These include the appointment of the Joint Special Representative, as well as a Force Commander. The AU and the UN agreed on a framework document on the hybrid operation which was communicated to the Sudanese authorities on 6 March 2007. I am pleased to inform Council that the UN Secretary-General and myself have appointed Mr. Rodolphe Adada, former Foreign Minister of the Republic of Congo, as the Joint Special Representative, on 8 May 2007. On 23 May 2007, after consultation with the UN Secretary-General, I appointed General Martin Luther Agwai, from Nigeria, as the Force Commander for the operation. Pending the deployment of the hybrid operation, he will serve as the new AMIS Force Commander. The Sudanese authorities have welcomed both appointments.

142. From 19 to 26 March 2007 in Addis Ababa, AU and UN multi-disciplinary teams conducted joint planning for the hybrid operation. Subsequently, a joint report outlining the parameters of the hybrid operation was prepared and communicated, in identical letters from the UN Secretary-General and myself, to President El Bashir. At the High-Level AU-UN technical consultations with the Government of the Sudan, held in Addis Ababa on 11 and 12 June 2007, the Government of the Sudan, following the explanations and clarifications provided by the African Union and the United Nations in their presentation, accepted the joint proposals on the hybrid operation contained in the report.

143. In the meantime, the implementation process of the DPA is continuing. Regarding the power sharing provisions of the DPA, a total of 87 senior level appointments have been made at both the States and the national/federal Government levels from among the DPA and the DoC signatories. At the beginning of April 2007, a presidential decree establishing the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority was issued. This was followed by the official launching of the Authority and the inauguration of its headquarters later that same month.

144. With regard to wealth sharing, and as envisaged in the DPA, a number of appointments were announced by the Government. In addition, an amount of US\$ 500,000.00 was provided by the Government to make the Darfur Reconstruction and Development Fund (DRDF) operational. The DPA provides for the depositing of US\$300 million for 2006, US\$200 million for 2007 and US\$200 million for 2008 into the DRDF. The Government has indicated that steps are being taken to meet its commitment to the DRDF for 2006 and 2007.

145. The Darfur Joint Assessment Mission (D-JAM) was operationalized as provided for in the DPA. Substantial work has been accomplished by the United Nations for the quick recovery projects, and by the World Bank and the African Development Bank regarding the longer-term development projects. However the Core Coordination Group (established to oversee the process) took a decision to suspend the work of the technical assessment teams by the end of 2006, citing security concerns. Consequently, the convening of the donors conference that was envisaged to take place at the Hague in October 2006 was postponed indefinitely.

146. Even though the Government had committed itself to depositing an initial amount of US\$ 30 million into the Compensation Fund envisaged in the DPA, at the time of finalizing this report, neither the Fund nor the Compensation Commission had been established. In addition, the Chairman of the Compensation Commission had not yet been appointed.

147. AMIS has not been able to protect civilians and IDPs as expected, due to manpower and logistics problems. Its military strength remains grossly inadequate to cover the vast area of Darfur, and it still does not have the requisite weapon systems and force multipliers/enablers to provide the required protection and undertake combat operations, if necessary. Worse still, AMIS has not been able to fully protect itself, having suffered a number of casualties during the period under review. Humanitarian aid workers and convoys continue to be attacked. All this poses serious threats to the future of humanitarian assistance in Darfur, as the aid organizations are threatening to withdraw *en masse* from the region.

148. This situation is further compounding the myriad problems being faced by the DPA ceasefire mechanisms (the Ceasefire Commission – CFC - and the Joint Commission). Indeed, while the signatories to the DPA have refused to sit down with the non-signatories on account of the latter's non-recognition and non-acceptance of the DPA, the non-signatories have insisted on working under the framework of the N'djamena Ceasefire Agreement that was incorporated into the DPA. To address this problem, a proposal was made to establish a second Chamber of the CFC to enable the Force Commander to deal with ceasefire violations by both signatories and non-signatories. Thus far, this Chamber has not functioned adequately.

149. While the verification of the positions of the various parties is a major requirement of the DPA, it continues, however, to be undermined by problems of access, particularly in areas controlled by the non-signatories. Nonetheless, the CFC has fully verified Sector 2 (Nyala), in South Darfur, while the mapping for other areas has been completed and presented to the representatives of the parties in the CFC.

150. With regard to the disarmament of the Janjaweed, and following the submission of a disarmament plan by the Government and comments by the CFC, a Joint CFC-Government of the Sudan military team has been established by the Joint Commission to review the plan and finalize steps for its implementation.

151. The implementation of the security provisions of the DPA calls for the provision of non-military logistical support to the fighters of the Movements after the assembly, limited arms control, and redeployment of forces. Indeed, it was indispensable to support the former combatants who agreed to end their fighting following the signing of the DPA. However, due to developments on the ground in Darfur, it has become imperative to fast track this process. Indeed, the non-provision of support has been given as one of the factors contributing to the desertion of combatants, mainly from SLM/A (Minni), to the National Redemption Front (NRF) and the attacks against commercial and humanitarian convoys. AMIS is currently compiling the needs of the Movements, with a view to undertaking demarches, together with the SLM/A and the Government, to the international community, to secure pledges for the provision of non-military logistical support to the Movements. Although it has no legal obligation under the DPA to do so, the Government has helped the Movements by meeting some of their needs, but such assistance is not sufficient and needs to be augmented.

152. I am pleased to inform Council that, in the period under review, 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, Khartoum, and Europe. The purpose of these consultations was to see how best to position the DDDC, given the prevailing security and political circumstances, and how best to prepare the ground for an effective dialogue and consultation. The main finding is that no meaningful dialogue and consultation can proceed until there is a peace agreement that commands support from all communities in Darfur. However, a consultation about the Dialogue can and should proceed to build confidence and explore the issues.

153. Clearly, with the elaboration of the a joint AU-UN Roadmap and the acceptance by the Government of the joint proposals on the hybrid operation, the period under review has seen significant progress in the efforts aimed at bringing the conflict to a definite end. 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 appreciation to the Government of the Sudan for the cooperation it has extended to the AU and the UN, particularly with respect to the implementation of the three-phase approach.

(ii) Implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)

154. The period under review has witnessed commendable progress in the implementation of the CPA. The parties have taken a number of steps in furtherance of their commitments. In this respect, it is worth mentioning the formation of the “Commission for Protection of non-Muslims rights in the National Capital”. The structure of the Commission was approved by the Sudanese Presidency in August 2006, and its membership appointed by Presidential Decree on 15 February 2007. The major function of the Commission, which held its first meeting on 12 April 2007, is to ensure that the rights of non-Muslims are not adversely affected by the application of the Sharia Law in Khartoum.

155. Meanwhile, the Technical *Ad hoc* Border Commission, which was established by the Presidency in November 2005 to demarcate the North/ South border of 1/1/1956, continues to meet and consult with communities along the border. The Committee is expected to present its final recommendations to the Presidency in October 2007. The outcome of the Commission’s work is critical as it will have major implications on the CPA Protocols on the three contested areas, security arrangements, power and wealth sharing.

156. In April 2007, following discussions between President El Bashir and his two Vice-Presidents, the national pilot census project was launched. The National Census process is one of the necessary precursors to a successful electoral process as required by the CPA. On the other hand, while the Political Parties Act has been passed, thereby allowing the Sudanese political parties to focus on their preparations for the coming mid-term elections slated for 2009, the National Electoral Bill is yet to be passed. According to the CPA implementation modalities, the law was to be enacted within six months from the start of the interim period. This period elapsed on 9 January 2006. Nonetheless, the national stakeholders and the National Constitutional Review Commission (NCRC) have been consulting on the draft electoral law. Once the National Electoral Bill has been passed, the National Electoral Commission shall be established.

157. The fourth session of the National Assembly convened on 2 April 2007, and is expected to end in June 2007. During that session, the Assembly is expected to discuss the National Elections Bill, the National Security Service Bill, the Police Service Bill and the Armed Service Bill. Meanwhile, the third session of the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly convened on 14 May 2007 to discuss a number of bills, including the Criminal Procedure Code, Civil Procedure Code, and the Penal Code, amongst others.

158. In March 2007, the National Congress Party (NCP) and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) Joint High Political Committee established a sub-committee, *inter alia*, to prepare a strategy for their partnership and to tackle contentious issues in the CPA. In May 2007, the two parties met to resolve the outstanding issues in the implementation of the CPA. The parties established an Executive Committee chaired by the Government of National Unity (GoNU) Vice President Ali Osman Taha and Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) Vice President, Dr. Riek Machar, to deal with issues which

required special attention. The parties reported having made progress in a number of issues, including the Abyei impasse and matters relating to the oil contracts.

159. During its meeting held in Yei River County in February 2007, the SPLM-Interim National Council (INC) decided to relocate its headquarters to Khartoum. These are efforts geared towards turning the SPLM into a national political party. The SPLM-INC stated that it had “rededicated itself to the vision of the new Sudan characterized by a free, just, democratic, secular, and decentralized system of government based on the free will of its diverse people”.

160. The SPLM-led GoSS, on the other hand, experienced some challenges in implementing the CPA. During the celebrations of the second anniversary of the signing of the CPA on 9 January 2007, allegations emerged of corrupt practices by some members of the GoSS. President El Bashir, therefore, enquired on how funds advanced to the SPLM before the swearing of GoNU were spent. As a result, the GoSS Minister of Finance and Economic Planning was eventually relieved of his duties, while investigations on the matter were ongoing. For his part, the President of the GoSS has called upon all forces in the Sudan to mount a vigorous campaign against corruption at all levels of the Sudanese society.

161. During the period under review, the Second Sudan Consortium was held in both Khartoum and in Juba from 19 to 21 March 2007. The Consortium meeting, which the AU Commission attended, was convened to review the performance of the CPA in light of the Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) commitments. Particular focus was placed on the budget, transparency and good governance. It was generally agreed that progress had been made in 2006, but that more needs to be achieved in 2007.

162. I am pleased to report that, during the period under review, there have been no reports of any major violations of the ceasefire agreement. The Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), with the assistance of the United Nations, continue to convene meetings of the Ceasefire Joint Monitoring Commission (CJMC) and the Ceasefire Political Commission (CPC). These meetings have greatly assisted in resolving possible problems in the implementation of the ceasefire agreement.

163. These meetings have also assisted the Sudanese forces in their ongoing efforts towards redeploying their troops. According to the CPA, the SAF are expected to have redeployed its forces from Southern Sudan by 9 July 2007. The SPLA is reported to have completed redeploying its troops from eastern Sudan. Nonetheless, by April 2007, UN reports indicated that the redeployment of the SPLA from Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile was yet to begin. This delay has been attributed to the slow progress in the establishment of the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs). It should, however, be noted that the Joint Defence Board (JDB) has finalized the JIUs common military doctrine and code of conduct.

164. The Other Armed Groups (OAG) which have not yet joined the SPLA and continue to operate in southern Sudan remain a source of insecurity. These groups were expected to have incorporated into either the SPLA or the SAF by 9 January 2006. In May 2007, the SAF reported that it no longer has any OAG aligned to it operating in South Sudan. In June, reports indicated that the largest number of the South Sudan Defence Forces (SSDF) finally merged with the SPLA. Meanwhile, reports also indicate that security in Southern Sudan

was hampered by the activities of the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), during the period under review.

165. I also wish to report that the meeting of the IGAD Council of Ministers held in Nairobi, on 13 April 2007, discussed the CPA implementation process. The Council recommended an urgent extraordinary meeting of the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State, to review the implementation of the CPA. On its part, the AU Ministerial Committee on the Post-Conflict Reconstruction of the Sudan met on the margins of the Foreign Affairs Ministers brainstorming session held in Durban from 7 to 11 May 2007. The Committee stressed the need to open an AU Liaison Office in Juba. It also agreed to visit the Sudan, in August 2007, to assess the progress made in the implementation of the CPA.

166. In conclusion, I would like to encourage the Sudanese parties to pursue and intensify their efforts to ensure the faithful and successful implementation of the CPA. I also urge the international community, including AU member States, to continue supporting the CPA implementation process.

H.V.5 Burundi

167. The period under review was characterised by continued efforts at achieving post-conflict reconstruction and development in Burundi. I would like to report, in this regard, that the Round Table of Burundi's partners met from 24 to 25 May 2007 on the funding of the three-year Poverty Reduction Strategic Framework (PRSF). More specifically, the objective of the Round Table was to review the situation in the country, discuss the PRSF and its operational instrument, namely the 2007 – 2010 priority action programme and agree on the human and financial resources required to implement this programme as well as the mechanism to follow-up on the outcomes of the Round Table.

168. I am pleased to report that Burundi's partners made the commitment to back the reconstruction efforts in that country with additional amount of US\$665.6 million, with US\$175.2 million thereof set aside as budget support. As a matter of fact, the pledges made by the donors went beyond the request of the Government which had costed its priority action programme as US\$1,320 million, of which US\$785 million had already been programmed as at the time the Round Table was taking place. This Round Table, the fourth in the series organized for Burundi, saw the participation of many countries and organizations. On the African side, there were South Africa, Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, The Sudan and Tanzania, as well as the African Development Bank (ADB), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the African Union Commission. I would also like to mention the adoption, on 13 June, of the strategic framework for consolidation of peace elaborated by the Government with the support of the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi within the framework of the peace consolidation commission.

169. Regarding integration and international cooperation, it is encouraging to note that Burundi has regained its rightful place in the region. In this connection, the country hosts the Secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and has since become a member of the East African Community.

170. At the same time, difficulties have continued to be encountered in the implementation of the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement signed on 7 September 2006 between the Government of Burundi and Palipehutu/FNL. The implementation which Kicked off on 19 February 2007, six months after the signing of the Agreement, was deadlocked a month and a half later, that is on 26 March 2007, the consequence being the indefinite suspension of the activities of the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism (JVMM). Continued efforts were deployed at various levels to reactivate the process. In this regard, I addressed a letter to President Yoweri Museveni in his capacity as the Chairperson of the Regional Initiative for Peace in Burundi, President Jakaya Kikwete, Vice-Chair of the Regional Initiative and to President Thabo Mbeki whose country was mediating between the Government of Burundi and Palipehutu/FNL, drawing their attention to the difficulties encountered in implementing the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement and encouraging them to take all necessary measures to overcome these difficulties. The United Nations Secretary General also took similar measures; while on the ground, my Special Representative was working closely with the Facilitator and the Head of BINUB to reactivate the peace process. I am pleased to report that the JVMM resumed its work on 1 June 2007 and that a meeting between President Pierre Nkurunziza and Agathon Rwaswa leader of Palipehutu/FNL is due to take place in Dar-es-Salaam on 17 June 2007.

171. As part of the process of implementing the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement and pursuant to the Decision of the 65th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council (PSC), eight (8) military observers drawn from Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Mali, Chad, Tunisia and Zimbabwe, respectively, were deployed in Burundi to serve on the joint liaison teams which are subsidiary organs of the JVMM. Niger for its part provided the military advisor of the mission and he represents the AU in the JVMM alongside the AU Special Force Commander. This Force currently has 752 South African troops and it is planned to upgrade this strength to 1,088 troops.

172. Lastly, during the period under review, a number of initiatives were undertaken on the issue of transitional justice in Burundi. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights who was in Burundi from 19 to 23 May 2007, indicated that the Government and the United Nations had reached a consensus on the nature of the national consultations to be held with a view to establishing the truth and reconciliation commission, and on the principle of non-applicability of the amnesty to war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide. The national consultations which will precede establishment of the truth and reconciliation commission will be conducted by a steering committee comprising the Government, the United Nations and the civil society. This commission will possibly start its work in July.

H.V.6 Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

173. Following the elections held in 2006 and early in 2007, the institutions of the 3rd Republic are being progressively put in place. Thus, after the inauguration of the National Assembly on 22 September 2006, the swearing-in of President Joseph Kabila on 6 December 2006, the Senate elected by the provincial assemblies held its inaugural session on 3 February 2007. On 11 May 2007, this institution elected its Bureau chaired by Mr. Léon Kengo Wa Dondo, former Prime Minister. Furthermore, and following intense

consultations, the Prime Minister Antoine Gizenga, appointed by President Kabila on 30 December 2006, announced the formation of his government on 5 February 2007.

174. On 24 February 2007, the National Assembly adopted the government programme for 2007 – 2011. This programme was articulated around five “action areas” defined by President Kabila on the occasion of his inauguration, namely: infrastructure, employment, education, water and electricity, and health. These action areas form part of a package of programmes anchored on consolidation of peace, building of the State and re-establishment of State Authority, reactivation of the economy, combating poverty and social inequalities and re-establishment of the family and of moral values.

175. Donors made commitment to support this programme, provided serious efforts were deployed to ensure good governance and reduce poverty. May I point out that these two issues were part of the major themes of the seminar organized for members of government from 2 to 4 April 2007. That seminar whose objective was to bring about homogeneity in government’s perception of the political, economic and socio-cultural challenges facing the country, also addressed other issues such as deontology and synergy in government business. The government has since submitted its 2007 draft budget to the national assembly.

176. In February 2007, the independent electoral commission flagged off preparations for organizations of local, municipal and town council elections. Its experts have, for several weeks, been holding working sessions to plan and prepare the budget for the electoral process. For its part, the government recently sought the technical and logistics assistance of the United Nations as well as its support towards mobilizing the sources required for preparation and organization of the elections.

177. The period under review was further characterized by bloody clashes between the Congolese army and the bodyguards of a former Vice-President and Senator Jean Pierre Bemba, which occurred in Kinshasa on 22-23 March 2007. The clashes which claimed very many victims among the civilian population came in the wake of the tension arising from the controversy over the protection of Jean Pierre Bemba.

178. In reaction to the aforesaid incident, I issued a press release on 23 March expressing serious concern and condemning the violence in Kinshasa. I called upon the parties to show restraint so as to preserve the peace and maintain the significant progress achieved during the long years of transition in the DRC. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) meeting on 24 March 2007 also unreservedly condemned the violence. It called upon the concerned parties to show restraint so as to preserve the peace and avoid undermining the enormous progress made during the transition. The PSC underscored the need for all Congolese to strictly respect the supremacy of the constitution of the DRC and to uphold the primacy of the rule of law in the country as well as the role and prerogatives of Congolese institutions including the defence and security forces. The PSC further underlined the need to find a solution to the crisis through dialogue and by peaceful means.

179. Furthermore, thanks to the efforts deployed by MONUC, the former President was authorized by the Senate interim Bureau to proceed to Portugal with his family for a duration of sixty days. However, the relations between the Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC) of Senator Jean Pierre Bemba and the government remained difficult. For example,

in a Press Release on 8 April 2007, the MLC denounced the “arbitrary arrests and acts of intimidation against its personnel and militants” as well as the occupation of its headquarters by elements of the Congolese armed forces. On 13 April 2007, deputies of MLC suspended their participation in the national assembly in protest against the occupation of the headquarters of their party and the radio and television channel supporting Senator Jean Pierre Bemba. They also sought security guarantees following a series of searches of the homes of some members of the opposition.

180. Meanwhile, on 10 April 2007, the Chief Prosecutor of the Republic addressed to the President of the Senate interim Bureau a request to lift the immunity of Senator Jean Pierre Bemba accused, among other things, of “high treason and murder”. There has so far been no response to this request, which came in the aftermath of a judicial hearing in the prosecutor’s office on 23 March following the bloody clashes of 22 – 23 March 2007.

181. I am however pleased to report that the political situation now seems to be thawing. On 20 April, following a meeting between the deputy minister for security, the national executive secretary of MLC and the President of the National Assembly, the occupation of the premises of MLC and the media houses supporting Senator Jean Pierre Bemba was lifted. The opposition parliamentarians have since taken up their seats once again in the national assembly. It is noteworthy that the deadline for the return of Senator Bemba expired on 11 June 2007.

182. With regard to security, the situation in the East of DRC has remained volatile especially in Kivu region. For instance, in the night of 26-27 May 2007, the town of Kaniola situated some 50 kilometres from Bukavu in South Kivu, was attacked by assailants identified by villagers as Rwandan Hutu rebels. Clashes have also continued between the Congolese armed forces and units of FDLR/Interahamwe who have continued unabated to perpetrate acts of rape, looting and kidnapping against the civilian population.

H.V.7 International Conference on the Great Lakes Region

183. Last January, I reported on the developments in the process of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. I informed Council, in particular, that the second Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region was held in Nairobi from 14 to 15 December 2006 and had resulted in the adoption of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development of the Great Lakes Region as well as a Declaration on Implementation of the Pact before it became effective.

184. In the intervening period, the joint African Union/United Nations Secretariat which provided technical and material assistance to the field countries towards organization of the Second Summit, extended support towards establishment of the Executive Secretariat of the Conference headquartered in Bujumbura. May I point out that the mandate of the joint Secretariat expired on 31 March 2007. Furthermore, the joint Secretariat availed the Executive Secretariat with technical support to organize the regional parliamentarians meeting which took place in Kinshasa from 26 to 28 February 2007. That meeting made it possible to sensitize the region’s parliamentarians on the Pact was adopted in Nairobi and to discuss how best to ensure its speedy ratification. The meeting adopted a Declaration in which the parliamentarians reaffirmed their commitment to contribute to implementation of the Pact.

185. On 12 March 2007, the Peace and Security Council considered the conclusions of the Second Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. On that occasion, the PSC welcomed the adoption of the Pact and urged Member States to speed up its ratification process. It further expressed satisfaction at the work accomplished by the AU/UN joint Secretariat and commended AU's partners and the partners of the countries of the region for their contribution to the process of the conference. It particularly commended the countries and international organizations members of the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region for their support to the process of the conference. The PSC urged them to accompany implementation of the Pact with similar generosity. It requested me to explore, in concert with the United Nations, the type of partnership that could be established by the two organizations to accompany and support the Executive Secretariat in implementing the Pact, while abiding by the principle of ownership of the process by the region. At the same time, the PSC mandated me to end the activities of the Liaison Office for the Great Lakes Region based in Nairobi and strengthen the AU Office in Bujumbura to enable it, for a start, to provide needed support to the Executive Secretariat of the Conference.

186. Pursuant to the above decision, the African Union Liaison Office for the Great Lakes Region in Nairobi was effectively closed at the end of April 2007. Arrangements are underway to strengthen the AU Office in Bujumbura to enable it to provide the necessary support. Furthermore, it should be noted that the Executive Secretary of the Conference's Secretariat has, since mid-February 2007, been operating from Bujumbura where the government of Burundi has graciously made offices available to the Secretariat. However, the Secretariat is yet to be operational due to lack of resources and staff.

187. A Regional Inter-ministerial Committee (RIC) met in Bujumbura from 3 to 4 May 2007. The objective of that meeting, which was preceded on 1-2 May by that of national coordinators was to inaugurate the headquarters of the Secretariat of the Conference and officially launch its activities. To this end, the RIC meeting considered, among other things, a) the activity programme of the Secretariat for 2007; b) the ordinary budget of the Secretariat of the Conference for 2007; c) modalities for recruiting the international staff of the Secretariat of the Conference; and d) the report of the task group on the operations manuals of the Secretariat of the Conference. My Special Representative in Burundi stood in for me at that meeting.

H.V.8 Chad – Sudan

188. The relations between Chad and The Sudan claimed the attention of the Eight Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union which expressed serious concern at the tension between the two countries and requested the Peace and Security Council to examine the issue as a matter of urgency.

189. Pursuant to this Decision, the PSC met on 12-13 February 2007 to look into the relations between Chad and The Sudan. In a Communiqué issued at the end of deliberation, the PSC noted that the tension between Chad and the Sudan remained high with continued insecurity along their common border, despite the efforts deployed by the AU, CEN-SAD and the International Community to improve the situation. It underscored the importance of adopting a coherent and integrated regional approach to the issue as a way

of promoting sustainable peace and stability in the region and, to this end, encouraged the Commission and the relevant regional organizations, in concert with the United Nations and other concerned stakeholders, to work together to organize a regional consultation on the problems facing the region. The PSC underscored the need for Chad and The Sudan to scrupulously respect their commitments and called upon two countries to establish implementation and follow-up mechanisms as stipulated in the agreements and to ensure their effective operationalization.

190. The PSC decided to field a mission as soon as possible to Chad, Central African Republic and The Sudan and, if need be, to other countries of the region for exhaustive assessment of the situation and of the obstacles hampering implementation of the agreements concluded between the two parties, especially the Tripoli Agreement, and to come up with recommendations to facilitate sustainable and comprehensive resolution of the problems facing the region. The PSC further decided that the report of this mission would be submitted to a meeting of the PSC at appropriate level.

191. In accordance with that Decision, a PSC delegation visited The Sudan from 21 to 24 May 2007; Chad, from 5 to 7 June 2007; and CAR from 8 to 11 June 2007. In the meantime, Chadian authorities on 22 March 2007 reported that Sudanese aircrafts had bombarded the Chadian villages of Guregui, 25 kilometres from Tine; and the village of Kanari, 35 kilometres from Bahaï. On 31 March 2007, the Chadian villages of Tiero and Marena were the target of attacks which reportedly claimed between 200 and 400 lives, according to UNHCR, and forced nearly 9,000 Chadians to flee from their homes. The Chadian government pointed accusing fingers at the Janjaweed militia from The Sudan.

192. Chad launched a counter offensive against these militia starting from 4 April 2007. The offensive also were directed against the rebel groups stationed in the East of the country. A major confrontation with these rebels occurred on 9 April 2007. At a press briefing on the situation on 10 April 2007, the Minister of Communication and Spokesperson of the government intimated that the Chadian national army had pursued the rebels to the Sudanese borders, in application of its right to hot pursuit, but added that “the defence and security forces had the surprise of coming into direct contact with the Sudanese armed forces”.

193. On the same day, the Chadian Foreign Minister received in audience the Sudanese Ambassador in N'djamena to express his government's regrets at the clashes that took place the previous day. The Minister also indicated that he would lead a delegation to Khartoum to personally explain to the Sudanese authorities his country's position on the incidents. The delegation in question indeed proceeded to Khartoum on 14 April 2007. For my part, I expressed serious concern at the clashes and called upon the two governments to show restraint and resume dialogue in the spirit of the Tripoli Agreement and other previous agreements signed by the two parties.

194. In the same vein, Leader Muammar Kaddafi dispatched a delegation to N'djamena on 11 April 2007 to register his concern. The Libyan delegation, on that occasion, indicated that Chad and The Sudan had set up a military and security committee as part of implementation of the Tripoli Agreement of 8 February 2006 and that CEN-SAD observers would be deployed along the border between the two countries.

195. The above state of affairs was discussed at several meetings. May I recall, among other things, that at the Eighth Summit of CEMAC held in N'djamena from 24 to 25 April 2007, a special Declaration expressing support for Chad and CAR was adopted. Furthermore, the meeting on Darfur which took place in Tripoli towards the end of April, encouraged the two countries to continue to deploy efforts towards implementation of the 8 February 2006 Tripoli Agreement. Lastly, Presidents Idriss Déby Itno and Omar Hassan El Bashir signed an agreement in Riyadh on 3 May 2007, in which they made commitment to work with the AU and the United Nations to put an end to the conflict on Darfur and in Eastern Chad.

196. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Libyan Leader for the tireless efforts he has been investing to normalize the relations between Chad and The Sudan in sustainable manner, and to facilitate implementation of the agreements concluded by the two parties. I hereby encourage the two countries to pursue and intensify the efforts underway to promote peace and stability in the sub-region, and to continue to muster the political will required to implement the said agreements.

H.V.9 Central African Republic

197. During the period under review, the Commission devoted its attention to implementation of the Decision adopted by the PSC at its 7 December 2006 meeting, especially in regard to the post-conflict reconstruction and development endeavours in the CAR. I am pleased, in this regard, to underscore the measures taken by some Member States in response to PSC appeal. Apart from the countries of the region whose assistance to the CAR is undeniable, I would like to inform Council about the Decision of the Senegalese authorities to dispatch a military delegation to the Central African Republic to assess the assistance that Senegal could provide to that country in the areas of security and defence. I would also like to underscore the conclusion of a bilateral cooperation agreement between South Africa and CAR. I encouraged the other Member States, in a position to do so, to extend their support to the efforts deployed by the authorities of the Central African Republic.

198. The socio-economic situation in the country has been showing rather encouraging signs since the last Council Session. The economy registered a modest 2.9% growth in 2006. The general budget of the country for 2007 which was adopted by the national assembly on 21 December 2006 and promulgated by the Head of State on 28 December 2006 amounted to nearly 125.3 billion CFA Francs. Around 40 billion CFA Francs, accounting for 32% of total budget was expected to be provided by the country's external partners. Additionally, two agreements covering the period 2008-2013 and amounting to a total of 68.5 million Euros were signed between the European Union and the Government of the Central African Republic in support of the economic recovery efforts in the country. Some other bilateral partners of the CAR similarly availed it with budget assistance.

199. The security situation on ground was, in January 2007, characterized by clashes between the armed forces of CAR and rebel elements of the "people's army for re-establishment of the republic and democracy" which operated mainly in the North-East of CAR, notably in Kaga Bandoro and Paoua. These clashes resulted in massive exodus of the local population some of whom took refuge in Southern Chad and Cameroon. Fighting was, on 4 March 2007, also reported in Birao between the rebels of the union of democratic

forces (UFDR) and the French troops positioned in the region since the October 2006 attacks.

200. It is in this context that one should situate the initiatives of the Libyan Leader Muammar El Kaddafi, high permanent mediator for peace and security in the CEN-SAD space, which led to the signing in Sirte, on 2 February 2007, of a peace agreement between the government of the Central African Republic and the Central African people's democratic front – *Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement* (FCPD) of Abdoulaye Miskine. In the CAR *per se*, the panel of the wise established in February 2007 was given the responsibility to initiate consultations with the political parties, workers' unions, civil society organizations and associations as well as with the Ambassadors accredited to CAR to find the way out of the crisis. Most members of the panel advocated an inclusive political dialogue. President François Bozizé signified his acceptance of this proposal and mandated the panel to prepare and organize the said dialogue. To this end, the panel pursued its consultations abroad with former President Ange-Félix Patassé and the leaders of political/military movement in order to ensure an inclusive dialogue.

201. Following the signing of another agreement between the government and the leader of the UFDR, Zacharia Damane, at Birao on 13 March 2007, the panel of the wise requested the government to free Abakar Sabone and Michel Djotodja, the two UFDR leaders arrested in Cotonou. The government then set up a contact group to pursue the consultations with the armed groups, particularly UFDR.

202. The multi-national force (FOMUC) of the Central Africa Economic and Monetary union stationed in the country since December 2003 has continued to carry out its activities and to play an active role in stabilizing the security situation, with EU financial support through the Peace Facility for Africa. FOMUC extended its activities into the hinterland with a third site which has become functional at Kaga Bandoro, following the earlier sites at Bria and Bozoum.

203. A joint AU/EU FOMUC evaluation mission was in CAR from 26 April to 3 May 2007. That mission concluded that it was necessary to extend the mandate of FOMUC till December 2007 as against 30 June 2007, the date previously set for expiry of the mandate. The mission further highlighted the need to put in place, with effect from January 2008, a fresh activity plan for the force which would take account of the role expected of FOMUC in the political process and the dialogue with the various rebel groups; a reform programme for the security sector being prepared by the government and the "development areas" project planned by the EU for 2008 under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF).

204. On 11 May 2007, President El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba, in his capacity as Chair of the *Ad Hoc* committee on CAR set up by CEMAC, addressed a letter to me on the issue of financing FOMUC. He solicited AU support to get the EU to continue to finance FOMUC under the Peace Facility for Africa. President Bongo pointed out, at the CEMAC Summit held in N'djamena in April 2007, that the Heads of State and Government of that organization had decided to retain FOMUC for at least one more year so as to consolidate the results achieved and effectively ensure the requisite transfer of responsibility to the State of CAR. Furthermore, the Commission formerly approached the European Commission to support CEMAC's request and solicited mobilization of additional resources to enable FOMUC to continue its activities.

205. May I conclude by informing Council that, as part of implementation of PSC Decision taken at its 12 February 2007 meeting, a PSC delegation visited CAR from 8 to 11 June 2007. During the mission, it had fruitful working sessions with government executives and other concerned stakeholders. The delegation's report will be presented to an appropriate level of the PSC.

H.V.10 Liberia

206. Since my last report, the overall situation in Liberia has been marked by continued progress in the efforts to consolidate peace and reconstruct the country. The Government has intensified its efforts to ensure growth of public revenue, progress in the creation of economic opportunities, provision of basic social services, respect for justice, human rights and good governance.

207. In my last report to Council, reference was made to the ethnic tension created as a result of the return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees to their localities. While the risk of localised inter-ethnic conflicts resulting from property and land disputes remains a concern, it is gratifying to note that the Presidential Commission that was established to investigate the inter-ethnic land and property disputes in the affected area (Nimba County) submitted its report to the President and the recommendation regarding that county, i.e. the urgent institution of mechanisms to reconcile feuding communities, including the need to formulate a land use policy and to establish a Commission on Land Use, was accepted.

208. The security situation in Liberia remains calm and stable. Criminal activities, including armed robbery, have decreased significantly in Monrovia and its environs. The reduction in criminal activities and the containment of public protest from escalating into full-blown public disorder reflects the effectiveness of the UNMIL CIVPOL and the reformed Liberian National Police (LNP). The restructuring and training of the LNP has indeed recorded a high level of success. To date, 2,610 Liberian National Police Officers have completed training. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Nigeria and Ghana for their continued role in equipping and training the police force.

209. The reformation and restructuring of the Armed Forces of Liberia is continuing, albeit with a slight delay. Following the graduation of the first batch of 106 soldiers, the training programme for the second batch of recruits was postponed from January to April 2007. However, security personnel, particularly those dismissed from the military, continue to question their discharge from the army. They question the interpretation of the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement with regard to the restructuring of the Armed Forces of Liberia, and feel that former members of the force ought to be given priority in recruitment rather than being discharged. It should be mentioned that 23,000 ex-combatants have yet to benefit from the rehabilitation and reintegration programme. It is estimated that \$US18 million is needed to complete this programme.

210. On the economic front, Liberia continues to show strong signs of recovery. The Government's financial position is adjudged encouraging, as medium-term prospects have improved considerably. The country's growth is estimated at about 7.8% of the GDP, driven mainly by construction, recovery in the agriculture sector and donor funded expenditure.

211. These achievements were made possible thanks to the continued support of the international community. In this respect, it is worth mentioning the successful outcome of the Liberia Partners' Forum convened in Washington D.C. last February. I welcome the pledges, as well as the debt waivers announced at that meeting, and encourage the multilateral financial agencies to emulate the bilateral creditors in further waiving Liberia's debt burden.

212. Liberia has met the requirement for the lifting of the sanctions on diamonds. The Government has joined the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme, and a review mission was dispatched to the country. It is in this light that, on 27 April 2007, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1753 (2007) in which it decided to lift the over three-year-old ban on diamond imports from Liberia. The Security Council applauded the Government of Liberia continuing cooperation with the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme and noted Liberia's progress towards putting in place the necessary internal controls and other requirements of the Kimberly Process.

213. Regarding the humanitarian situation, as of 1st March 2007, about 89,344 refugees had voluntarily returned to their places of origin with the assistance of UNHCR, while a total figure of 36,000 returned on their own. There are currently about 107,348 refugees still awaiting repatriation from the sub-region. On the Liberian side, there are still 16,168 refugees residing in Liberia, mainly from Sierra Leone, Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire.

214. Finally, I am pleased to announce that, following the decision of the 60th meeting of the Peace and Security Council, held on 18 August 2007, a multidisciplinary team is to be dispatched to Liberia shortly. The purpose of the mission will be to consult with Liberian authorities on the ways and means of supporting the country's post-conflict recovery efforts.

H.V.11 Côte d'Ivoire

215. The year 2007 started on a positive note in Côte d'Ivoire. Indeed, in his statement on the occasion of the New Year, the Secretary General of the New Forces, Mr. Guillaume Soro, signified his agreement in principle for direct dialogue as proposed by Laurent Gbagbo in his message to the Nation on 19 December 2006. It would be recalled that, in that message, the Ivorian Head of State put forward five crises exit proposals, namely: direct dialogue with the rebellion with a view to disarmament and reunification of the country; abolition of the confidence zones, creation of a national civic service, general amnesty and an assistance programme for the return of those displaced by the war.

216. The New Forces and their allies – the rally of Houphouëtistes for democracy and peace (RHDP) – held a meeting on 18 January 2007 to harmonize their positions. At the end of that meeting, the leaders of G7 (RHDP and the New Forces) signalled their agreement for the Secretary General of the New Forces to accept the proposal for direct dialogue with the Head of State, but in strict compliance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1721.

217. I would like to recall that, at the ECOWAS Summit held in Ouagadougou on 19 January 2007, the leaders of the region welcomed President Gbagbo's initiative to engage in dialogue with the Secretary General of the New Forces, and requested ECOWAS current

Chairman to facilitate the dialogue in order to infuse fresh impetus into the peace process. In the same vein, the Assembly of the African Union meeting in its 8th Ordinary Session in Addis Ababa, in January 2007, urged the Ivorian parties to redouble their efforts so as to successfully conclude the peace process on the basis of Resolution 1721, through direct dialogue as proposed by President Laurent Gbagbo.

218. The direct dialogue between the presidential side and the New Forces opened in Ouagadougou on 5 February 2007 under the facilitation of President Blaise Compaoré who was appointed by the parties to this role and duly mandated by ECOWAS. The Facilitator started with separate consultations with each of the two delegations and with some international community players. He also held consultations with *RDR* and *PDCI-RDA*. These efforts which were conducted with utmost effectiveness and discretion paved the way for the dialogue to arrive at the signing, on 4 March 2007, of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement between President Laurent Gbagbo and the Secretary General of the New Forces, Guillaume Kigbafori Soro. The Ouagadougou Political Agreement was favourably received by the population and all the Ivorian political parties. It represented a compromise in the search for a solution to the major obstacles in the way of the peace process. With respect to identification and electoral process, the agreement defined simplified modalities for obtaining national identity card as well as the voter's card, and clearly spelt out whose responsibility it was to issue these documents. With regard to the defence and security forces, the agreement provided for integration of the former combatants and creation of an integrated command centre (ICC) with the task of unifying and restructuring these forces. The agreement also stipulated the progressive removal of the confidence zones and collaborative consultation between the two signatory parties on key appointments, as part of redeployment of the Administration. Among the important arrangements contained in the agreement, it is needful to mention the creation of two agreement follow-up mechanisms and the adoption of a ten-month implementation calendar.

219. The international community reacted positively to the signing of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement. It was against this background that the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council meeting on 16 March 2007 put forward recommendations as a result of which the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, meeting on 19 March 2007, decided to give its full endorsement to this agreement. For its part, the United Nations Security Council similarly welcomed the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and issued a presidential statement stated 28 March 2007 in this regard.

220. By virtue of the provisions of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and the supplementary agreement signed on 27 March 2007, Mr. Guillaume Kigbafori Soro was appointed Prime Minister on 29 March and a new government comprising all the signatories to the Linas-Marcoussis agreement was formed on 7 April 2007. The PSC at its 74th meeting on 29 March 2007 endorsed the supplementary agreement and the appointment of Guillaume Soro as Prime Minister.

221. I take this opportunity to commend the President and the Prime Minister for the messages of peace, forgiveness and reconciliation, which they addressed to the people on different occasions, stressing that the war was over and underlining their determination to fully implement their commitments. Other initiatives undertaken, notably by the Congress of Young Patriots (*COJEP*) which, over a period of three months, organized a peace caravan through several towns in the country in the government held area and plans to undertake

the same activity in the area under the control of the New Forces. The Government, for its part, organized a government seminar on 2 May 2007 with a view to creating the conditions for ownership of the Ouagadougou Agreement and to translate it into a coherent road map.

222. Many measures were taken in the field of security, and in pursuance of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement. I would like, in this connection, to mention the signing on 11 April 2007 of an agreement between the joint chiefs of staff of the armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire, the armed forces of the New Forces and top officers of the neutral forces on the progressive dismantling of the confidence zone; the signing on 12 April 2007 by the Head of State of an edict declaring amnesty for offences and crimes against State security; and the inauguration on 16 April 2007 of the ICC and the start of dismantling of the confidence zone through removal of the Tiébissou check points and the inauguration the joint state police brigade of N'gattadolikro.

223. During the period under review, the international task group (*GTI*) continued to hold its monthly meetings, with three meetings taking place on 12 January, 2 March and 13 April 2007 respectively. In addition to its recommendations regarding implementation of Resolution 1721, the *GTI* welcomed the direct dialogue and encouraged President Blaise Compaoré to pursue his efforts to assist the Ivorian parties to reach an agreement that could reactivate the peace process, thereby meeting the expectations of the people of Côte d'Ivoire. In light of the new reality created by the Ouagadougou Political Agreement, the *GTI* at its 13 April 2007 meeting, requested the two co-presidents to carry out consultations with the competent ECOWAS and African Union policy organs on the status and role of *GTI* and to put forward recommendations for the attention of the United Nations Security Council.

224. A technical evaluation mission led by the United Nations Under-Secretary for Peace-keeping Operations, Hédi Annabi, was in Côte d'Ivoire from 9 to 22 April 2007 to define the role of the United Nations in the implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement. That mission was in response to the Security Council request to the United Nations Secretary General to submit to it, before 15 May 2007, recommendations on the role that UN could play in backstopping implementation of the peace process in light of recent developments in Côte d'Ivoire.

225. May I also report that during the period under review, the country witnessed several security related incidents. These include the attacks, in the night of 11-12 January 2007, on the Noé customs post at the border with Ghana which claimed five lives with several people wounded; demonstrations by young soldiers recruited in 2002 expressing discontent, who fired gunshots into the air on 2 – 3 February 2007 in some towns in the country, over non-payment of their allowances and non-integration into the defence and security forces; the inter-communal clashes in the Western region as a result of land tenure disputes and the escalating criminality in the confidence zone.

226. The social climate was characterized by strikes which paralysed professional activities in several sectors including the educational sector. Difficulty in obtaining drinking water in some areas of the North and West led to water-borne diseases. Meningitis and yellow fever epidemics were reported in several Ivorian towns and villages, but were combated by vaccination teams fielded to the areas concerned. Concurrently, the country was progressively engulfed in the damages arising from the dumping of toxic wastes in the

Abidjan district in August 2006, leading to over ten deaths with thousands of others affected. An amicable agreement was reached on 13 February 2007 between the Presidency and the multinational company, TRAFIGURA, which agreed to pay 100 billion CFA Francs in lieu of any further litigation against the company.

H.V.12 Mauritania

227. In January 2007, I reported on the positive developments in Mauritania leading to a return to constitutional legality. The major development since then was the holding of the first and second round presidential elections on 11 and 25 March 2007, respectively, which marked the end of the electoral process, with the victory of Sidi Mohamed Ould Cheikh Abdellahi. My Special Envoy and AU observer mission led by Honourable Benjamin Bounkoulou, former Foreign Minister and incumbent Vice-President of the Senate of the Republic of Congo, monitored the presidential elections. In the statement published at the end of the two rounds, the AU mission affirmed that the elections had been credible, free, democratic and transparent.

228. Furthermore, the Peace and Security Council met on 10 April 2007 to examine developments in Mauritania. On that occasion, it noted with satisfaction the developments that occurred in that country since the coup d'état of 3 August 2005, the successful conduct of the democratic transition process and the return to constitutional legality. The PSC congratulated the President and members of the Military Council for Justice and Democracy (MCJD) as well as the Prime Minister and members of the transition government on having honoured their commitments and the successful conclusion of the process of return to constitutional order. The PSC also congratulated the President elect and encouraged him to leave nothing undone to consolidate the gains of the transition, strengthen the rule of law and good governance, deepen the democratic process and take all the necessary measures to strengthen national unity and cohesion. The PSC further decided to lift the suspension imposed on Mauritania by its 36th meeting of 4 August 2005.

229. Following the inauguration of the President elect on 19 April 2007 the Government was formed on 28 April 2007 and the two chambers of parliament – the national assembly and the Senate – held their inaugural session on 14 May 2007. I take this opportunity to commend the political class and the people of Mauritania for the maturity and sense of responsibility they exhibited throughout the process of return to constitutional legality. For its part, the AU will continue to support and accompany the government in its efforts at consolidating and deepening the progress achieved.

H.V.13 Western Sahara

230. During the period under review, the Commission, through my Senior Representative to the United Nations Mission in Western Sahara (MINURSO), has continued to follow developments in Western Sahara. On 13 April 2007, the United Nations Secretary-General submitted a report on Western Sahara to the Security Council. In that report, he, among other things, indicated that he had received two proposals from the parties to the dispute: the *Frente POLISARIO* submitted a Proposal for a mutually acceptable political solution that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, while the Kingdom of Morocco put forward an Initiative for negotiating an autonomy statut for the Sahara region.

The Secretary-General recommended that the Security Council call upon the parties, Morocco and the *Frente POLISARIO*, to enter into direct negotiations, without pre-conditions, with a view to achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

231. For its part, the United Nations Security Council adopted, on 30 April 2007, resolution 1754 (2007). While taking note of the proposals submitted by the two parties, the Security Council, *inter alia*, called upon them “*to enter into negotiations without pre-conditions in good faith, taking into account the developments of the last months, with a view to achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara*”. The Security Council also requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on progress in that respect, by the end of the current month. At the same time, the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of MINURSO until 31 October 2007.

232. Pursuant to the resolution of the Security Council, and on the basis of consultations with all concerned, the United Nations Secretary-General has since announced that the direct talks between Morocco and the *Frente POLISARIO* would now be convened in New York on 18 and 19 June 2007. The talks would be held under the chairmanship of his Personal Envoy, Ambassador Peter van Walsum.

233. It is my hope that the planned direct talks will enable both sides to proceed and discuss, in good faith, their differences, within the context of the principles and resolutions of the United Nations, in order to reach a settlement of the dispute whose persistence for decades has not only caused suffering to the people of Western Sahara, but has also hampered any meaningful cooperation amongst the countries of the sub-region. The international community should spare no effort to encourage the parties to seize this opportunity.

H.VI. DISARMAMENT

234. During the period under review, the Commission convened a meeting jointly with the European Commission to assess the status of disarmament in Africa, 10 years after the adoption of the Mine Ban Treaty. Participants included all AU member states, EU member States, the Regional Economic Communities and other African regional organizations, as well as other relevant regional bodies. The meeting focused on the interrelationship, or the continuum, between demining and other forms of disarmament, including small arms and light weapons (SALW), and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes.

235. It concluded that a continuum does indeed exist between demining and SALW and DDR, and that there should be greater integration of these programmes by Member States, as well as greater integration of funding programmes by the EU. The meeting acknowledged that commonalities exist between African and European positions within the international disarmament debate, and called on the AU and the EU to ensure greater harmonization of their respective African and European positions in international fora.

236. 2007 marks the tenth anniversary of the Chemical Weapons Convention. To date, 48 African States have deposited their instruments of ratification with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and a further two countries have ratified the Convention but have not yet deposited their instruments. Africa has, therefore, almost reached universality for the Convention. To mark this event, and in the spirit of cooperation between the Commission and the OPCW, which has been formalized by an MoU between the two organizations, the Commission is planning to invite the OPCW to mount a display and other activities in Addis Ababa in the coming months, as part of their 10th Anniversary celebrations and to further the cause of disarmament on the continent.

H.VII. FUNDING THE PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS UNDERTAKEN BY THE AFRICAN UNION OR UNDER ITS AUTHORITY BY UNITED NATIONS ASSESSED CONTRIBUTIONS

237. In its Decision Assembly/AU/Dec. 145 (VIII) adopted at its Eighth Ordinary Session held in January 2007, the Assembly of the African Union indicated that maintenance of international peace and security is the primary responsibility of the United Nations Security Council. It therefore called upon the United Nations to examine, within the context of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the possibility of funding, through assessed contributions, peace keeping operations undertaken by African Union or under its authority and with the consent of the United Nations. The assembly further directed Member States, working closely with the Commission to follow-up on this Decision.

238. Pursuant to this Decision, South Africa availed itself of its presidency of the United Nations Security Council in March 2007, to organize a debate on the theme: "Cooperation between the United Nations Organization and Regional Organizations, particularly the African Union, in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security." The Commissioner for Peace and Security participated in that debate. After deliberation, the Security Council while underscoring its pre-eminence in matters of international peace and security, emphasized the importance of supporting the African Union and ensuring sustainable improvement of AU resources and capacities. In this connection, Council requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with relevant regional organizations, particularly the African Union, present to it a report on proposals defining how the UN could more effectively support the mechanisms that could strengthen cooperation and coordination with the regional organizations in terms of the arrangements under Chapter VIII, the objective being to contribute to finding solution to the common security problems in conflict areas and promote comprehensive and extensive dialogue and cooperation between the United Nations Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

239. This issue was discussed at the annual consultation between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, G8 member countries and other partners, held in Addis Ababa on 14 May 2007. The meeting took note of the need to pay attention to the proposal of the Assembly of the Union for the funding the peace support missions conducted under AU authority and with the consent of the United Nations Security Council, by the United Nations assessed contributions. In this regard, the meeting welcomed the debate organized by the Security Council in March this year and indicated that it awaited with

interest the report which the United Nations Secretary-General would submit in pursuance of the presidential statement of 28 March 2007.

240. At the G8 Summit held in Heiligendamm, Germany, on 8 June 2007, the G8 countries indicated that they would do their utmost, in concert with the other players to identify, agreed on and support durable solutions to the issue of sustainable financing as well as operational support planning and management of the peace-keeping operations conducted by the continent. In the coming months, the Commission will, in collaboration with Member States, pursue effort aimed at sensitising AU partners to the need to provide lasting solutions to the issue of funding the peace-keeping operations conducted by the continent.

I. POLITICAL AFFAIRS, DEMOCRATIZATION, GOVERNANCE, HUMAN RIGHTS, HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

241. It is my duty to bring to the attention of Council that Democracy, elections, governance and human rights are fundamental issues that need to be monitored closely and constantly. Today, Africa is confronted with the challenge of consolidating democratic values and practices and also restoring the culture of peace and reconciliation – after long years of conflict. Free, transparent and fair elections constitute one of the prerequisites for the installation of democratic governments and the promotion of good governance.

242. Electoral processes, as part of a democratization process and also as a means of stability are steadily unfolding in Member States, albeit not without inherent challenges. The peoples of Africa and their leaders are striving to address the challenges to be able to achieve success of these processes.

243. As regards governance and combating corruption, the Commission has over the period under review, concentrated its efforts in the promotion of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (and Related Offences) with the view to securing increased levels of ratification. It has also continued to pursue the provisions of the Addis Ababa Declaration of the 5th Conference of Ministers of Public and Civil Services.

244. The promotion and protection of human rights, essential for the establishment of an efficient democratic system, is also being steadfastly pursued through increased advocacy and domestication of the provisions of the various international and regional treaties on human rights as well as the strengthening of the African Union human rights mechanisms in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant human rights instruments.

245. The following details key activities that the Commission has carried out in the areas of democracy, governance, human rights and humanitarian affairs.

I.I GOVERNANCE, DEMOCRACY, ELECTIONS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

246. I am pleased to inform Council that, the Commission (AUC) provided active leadership within the terrain of Governance, Democracy, Elections and Human Rights. Central to the work of the Commission was the organisation of a number of conferences and meetings.

I.I.1 Governance and Democracy

247. I would like to inform Council that the International Conference on Sustaining Africa's Democratic Momentum was held in South Africa, from the 5th to the 7th March 2007. In addition to reflecting on democratic progress in the Continent, the Conference provided a platform for detailed engagements on governance, democracy and election issues within Africa. The Conference was convened in partnership with the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).

248. The Conference served to build momentum for the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and hence provided a very important opportunity for the AUC to popularise the said instrument. As there was substantive focus on the Charter, the Conference served to further enhance the urgency required towards ensuring that the Charter is ratified and becomes a key instrument of the AUC in its engagements with Member States on matters relating to Democracy, Elections and Governance.

249. The Commission has also started the process of mapping governance initiatives across the Continent, as a basis for guiding the strategic role of the AU within the governance realm. This mapping will serve to identify the role of all partners active in governance and pave the way for stronger cooperation, partnerships and alignment of governance interventions in the Continent.

I.I.2 Anti-Corruption

250. A series of anti-corruption activities have been implemented during this period. Central to these engagements was taking forward the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating of Corruption (and Related Offences).

a) 2nd Meeting of National Anti-Corruption Bodies

251. The Commission organized, in South Africa, the 2nd Meeting of National Anti-Corruption Bodies on 23rd and 24th February 2007. The Meeting was in line with the overall plan of the Commission to take forward the implementation of the Africa Union Convention and the establishment of the required monitoring mechanism. The Meeting received a guiding presentation from the AUC and reflection on the status of implementation across Member States.

252. The Declaration adopted at the end of the Meeting placed specific emphasis on the need for immediate ratification of the Convention by all Member States. In addition, it provided detailed guidance on the establishment of the AU Anti-Corruption Advisory Board and assigned a specific mandate to the Bureau of the Meeting to take forward its

recommendations, which included developing a Plan of Action that prioritises support to Member States on the implementation of the Convention.

b) Africa Forum on Fighting Corruption

253. The African Forum on Fighting Corruption was held in South Africa, from the 28th February to the 2nd March 2007. In addition to consolidating an African perspective on the fight against corruption, the Forum was directed at enhancing Africa's partnerships and efforts in the fight against corruption.

254. The meeting was significant for the AUC because it enabled it to clearly influence the emerging perspective regarding approaches aimed at preventing and fighting corruption in the Continent. Through the Forum and its evident success, the AUC has re-affirmed its place as a credible and capable champion for collective efforts, which will propel a common African agenda.

255. The meeting adopted the Ekurhuleni Declaration, which established a wide partnership for the African anti-corruption effort. The Declaration also called for the ratification and implementation of the AU Convention. Emphasis was further placed on the harmonisation of regional and international anti-corruption instruments.

c) 5th Global Forum on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity

256. Council will recall that the 5th Global Forum on Fighting Corruption and Safeguarding Integrity was held from 2nd to 5th April 2007, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The meeting was a landmark occasion, since it was the first time a meeting of this magnitude on issues of combating corruption and safeguarding integrity was held on African soil and with active AUC participation.

257. The Commission actively led the Africa region in negotiations of the conclusions and recommendations of the Forum. Specifically, the Commission was able to affirm the role of the AU, on the global stage, as central for driving collective efforts that put forward a common perspective towards anti corruption endeavours on the African Continent.

258. The key conclusions of the Forum included: the need to further reinforce efforts to ensure ratification of the relevant instruments on preventing and combating corruption; strengthening regional and sub-regional bodies that have responsibilities for preventing and fighting corruption; and the need for effective coordination and harmonisation of reporting requirements in relation to multi-lateral and regional instruments on preventing and combating corruption.

d) Anti Corruption Research

259. A wide research initiative focused on the scope of corruption across the Continent is currently under consideration. The intention of the research is to build a broader understanding of the realities of corruption rather than the anecdotal and perception-based evidence that is commonly used to describe levels of corruption in Africa. Detailed planning and mobilisation of partnerships to support the implementation of this research is underway.

I.I.3 Public Service

260. During this period, two meetings of the Bureau of the 5th Conference of Ministers were held in order to report on and assess progress in the implementation of the Addis Ababa Declaration of the 5th Conference of Ministers of Public and Civil Services. In addition, a Ministerial Meeting was held with the aim of providing a comprehensive briefing on the activities within the terrain of Public Service.

a) Charter on the African Public Service

261. As part of the review process on the current draft Charter, consultative initiatives are planned under the overall leadership of the Bureau of the 5th Pan African Conference. An updated Charter will be presented at the Meeting of Government Experts prior to the 6th Pan African Conference of Ministers of Public and Civil Services. The Charter will establish standards for effective, efficient and responsive public service delivery across Africa.

b) Public Service Innovation Awards

262. The planning processes related to the Public Service Innovation Awards have been completed. The Innovation Awards are currently being actively marketed across Member States. The first awards will be presented at the 6th Pan African Conference of Ministers of Public and Civil Services. In addition to recognising innovation across the African public service, the awards will also serve to communicate and replicate good public service practices in Africa and globally.

c) Africa Public Service Day

263. Africa Public Service Day is celebrated on the 23rd June of each year. The purpose of Africa Public Service Day is to recognise and promote the value of public service for Africa's development. This year the overall theme of the celebration will be *Promoting Good Governance with the Emphasis on Anti-Corruption and Ethics*. The theme and the sub-themes were communicated to all Member States to guide celebrations across the Continent and it is hoped that as in previous years there will be active participation across the regions in celebration of this important occasion.

d) African Management Development Institutes Network (AMDIN)

264. The recently launched African Management Development Institutes Network serves to provide a base for enhancing of Member States management development institutes as a basis for strengthening their public services. In addition to being instrumental to the launching of the network, the AUC also continues to provide on-going guidance to the further establishment of the network. During this period, AMDIN has conducted a training-of-trainers programme and is preparing for its First All Africa Conference in August 2007.

265. The Executive Council of AMDIN held its 3rd Ordinary Session from 10 to 11 May 2007. The Commission participated. This session revealed the difficulties with which

AMDIN is confronted due to lack of means of autonomous financing, although the will to successfully fulfil the mandate entrusted to this network was obvious. It is incumbent on the African Union to provide financial assistance for this institution in the implementation of its programmes. The Commission will endeavour to do so.

e) Capacity Development Programme

266. Concern was expressed about the time taken to access the funds for the implementation of the capacity building activities in Governance and Public Administration. Efforts are underway to facilitate the transfer of the funds pledged by the European Union to the AUC for further programme implementation. Further partnerships are also being established for capacity building.

267. A broad cross-sectoral capacity building programme was presented by the NEPAD Secretariat. The challenge of such a programme is the nature of its integration into already existing capacity interventions within the AUC and across the Continent. Engagements have taken place with the NEPAD Secretariat in order to establish the parameters for capacity development interventions with the aim of enhancing ongoing and unfolding capacity development efforts.

f) 6th Conference of Ministers of Public and Civil Services of Member States of the African Civil Service Observatory (OFPA)

268. The Commission participated in this Conference, which was held in Ouagadougou from 17 to 18 May 2007. The aim of this participation was to build a bridge between the African Union, through the Pan-African Conference of Ministers of Public and Civil Services on the one hand and the OFPA, to explore to what extent a synergy could be developed between the two institutions, through coordinated and harmonized actions. The need for such interaction is all the more pressing since the two institutions have the same objective, that of modernizing African public and civil services through reforms, aimed, *inter alia*, at good governance in the area of public administration. Moreover, the theme of the Ouagadougou Conference was « Public and Civil Services and Good Governance».

I.I.4 Election Observation

269. I wish to inform Council that the Commission sent missions for the observation of legislative elections in The Gambia, Lesotho and Burkina Faso.

- In The Gambia, the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction, the ruling party, won the legislatures of 25 January 2007, with 42 out of 53 seats.
- In the Kingdom of Lesotho, the Lesotho Congress for Democracy, the ruling party, won the legislative elections of 17 February 2007, with 61 out of 120 seats.
- In Burkina Faso, the ruling party, the Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP) won the legislatures of 6 May 2007, with 73 out of 111 seats to be filled in the National Assembly.

270. The electoral processes were generally conducted in a satisfactory manner.

271. On the other hand, the Commission was unable to send observers to the presidential elections of 25 February 2007 in Senegal, 27 April 2007 in Nigeria, and 29 April 2007 in Mali, in implementation of the relevant provisions of the Durban Declaration of July 2002 on Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa, particularly because of the deadline of two months imposed on Member States to invite the African Union to observe elections.

I.I.5 Future Actions

272. In the next few months, activities on democracy, governance and elections will focus on the promotion of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, in close collaboration with the Regional Economic Communities and our partners concerned; the objective being to obtain the signing and speedy ratification of this important instrument. The Commission will also carry out an evaluation of election observation by the African Union to determine how this observation can be improved by giving it more credibility. In this regard, the need to monitor electoral processes before and after the election itself is crucial. Lastly, the Commission will continue the efforts it has embarked upon to successfully implement the agenda on the organization of the public service.

I.I.6 Human Rights Promotion and Protection

273. During the period under review, the African Union Commission carried out the following activities:

a) Resource Centre for Democracy, Governance and Human Rights

274. The Resource Centre for Democracy, Governance and Human Rights continues to make progress in the areas of acquisition of relevant publications, cataloguing of these publications, official visits from potential donors and interested organizations, acquisition of audiovisual materials, access to free internet facilities. The overall activities of the Resource Centre are intended to facilitate the achievement of its goals, namely:

- i. Providing multi-sectoral audience with first hand information;
- ii. Contributing to the building and consolidation of the African Union institutional capacity; and
- iii. Serving as a reference point for access to physical and interactive specialized information on human rights, democracy and good governance in Africa.

275. The Resource Centre is also in the process of introducing access to new services such as Digital Library. The Digital Library will focus on e-resources on democracy, governance, human rights, election, and gender; the African Virtual Library and Information Network (AVLIN) and the PressDisplay (a Web-based portal that provides same-day access to more than 450 newspapers and magazines from around the world in 38 languages).

276. These enhancement initiatives are undertaken in a bid to offer effective customer service to diverse and increasing users, including representatives of Member States, National Human Rights Institutions, Civil Society organizations, researchers, scholars etc.

The Commission appreciates the efforts of all its partners that have contributed to these developments and solicits their further cooperation.

b) Workshop on Realising Women's Rights through Human Rights Education

277. The African Union Commission, in collaboration with the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) organized a Sub-regional Workshop on Human Rights Education for North Africa on the theme "Realising Women's Rights through Human Rights Education", which was held from 17th to 20th March 2007 in Algiers, Algeria.

278. The overall objective of the Workshop was to contribute to the implementation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education and create awareness about the African Human Rights mechanisms and instruments in the promotion of Human Rights Education. The Workshop was attended by representatives of Member States from Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic as well as representatives of the African Union Commission, African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), ECA, The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO), Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR) and Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) .

279. The Workshop called for the reinforcement of the partnership among the Member States of the North African Region in the promotion and protection of human rights through education for all and also called for the inclusion of gender in all policies and programmes.

c) Commemoration of the Rwanda Genocide

280. On 7 April 2007, the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the authorities of the Republic of Rwanda, commemorated the 13th Anniversary of the Rwanda Genocide at its Headquarters. The Commemoration included a minute of silence, prayers and presentations on the theme "Understanding and fighting Genocide Ideology."

281. The event was attended by representatives of the Diplomatic Corps, African Union Commission, African Union Organs, UN Agencies, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Rwandan Community in Ethiopia, Humanitarian organizations and civil society organizations.

d) Supporting the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)

282. The African Union Commission continues to prioritise support to the ACHPR as one of the Continent's main human rights mechanism.

283. The Commission organized a brainstorming between the Permanent Representatives Committee and the ACHPR from 4- 5 May 2007 in Maseru, the Kingdom of Lesotho with a view to strengthening the relations between the two organs and reinforcing the ACHPR for the effective discharge of its mandate. The Meeting recommended the

organization of similar fora to enhance the relations between the ACHPR and AU Organs in the promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights.

e) Meetings on the Margins of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights

284. The African Union Commission organized various events on the margins of the 41st Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Accra, Ghana, namely:

- Workshop on the implementation of the African Union Decisions related to human rights
- Workshop for National Human Rights Institutions on the Monitoring and Documenting human rights violations in Africa
- Media Experts Consultative Meeting on Press Freedom in Africa.

285. These events were attended by representatives of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, National Human Rights Institutions, Media Experts and Civil Society Organizations.

286. The Meetings called for the strengthening of African Human Rights Mechanisms - the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child – and building the capacity of the National Human Rights Institutions and Civil Society Organizations in the promotion and protection of human rights on the Continent.

287. They also called for the organization of annual meetings that bring together the AU Organs, National Human Rights Institutions, Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Media Professionals, Regional Economic Communities, Civil Society Organisations, to exchange information and explore ways of reinforcing collaboration in the promotion and protection of human rights.

288. The African Union Commission appreciates the support of all its partners in the organization of these events, including the technical and financial support from the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Development Program through their Offices in Addis Ababa. The Commission will continue to support the African Human Rights Mechanisms in order to enable them effectively discharge their mandates in the protection and promotion of human rights on the Continent.

f) Future Plans

289. The human rights related activities for the next semester, include:

- Strengthening the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ongoing)
- Workshop on Conflict Prevention through the Promotion of Democracy, Good Governance and Human Rights for Countries in or emerging from Conflicts

- Commemoration of Africa Human Rights Day & CSO Forum on the Promotion of Human Rights and Good Governance
- Launching of Annual Publication of thematic reports on Press Freedom and Death Penalty as well as Commemoration of International Tolerance Day
- Workshop on Strengthening African Mechanisms for Human Rights Promotion and Protection
- Human Rights Capacity Building for AU Staff & Celebration of International Human Rights Day.

I.II HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

290. During the reporting period, I would like to inform Council that even though the situation of displacement remains a great concern, some Member States created conducive conditions for the return of their nationals in safety and dignity. Organized and spontaneous repatriation operations in Member States were recorded. Burundians, Rwandese and Congolese from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudanese and Somalis from the northern part of Somalia returned home and as a result, some refugee camps were closed. The Commission will continue to urge countries of origin to create conducive conditions for the return of their nationals.

291. However, despite the return of thousands of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), Africa continues to host the largest number of refugees estimated to be about 3 million and over 15 million IDPs who most often lack basic necessities.

292. Council will recall that the Commission drew its attention to the persistent deteriorating humanitarian situation in The Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic - the Darfur region in The Sudan, being at the center as the crisis is expanding into neighboring Chad and the Central African Republic and has caused new waves of displacement in the two countries. There is ongoing forced displacement, occupation of villages, and security incidents in and around IDP camps. To make matters worse, the delivery of humanitarian assistance is severely hampered by the prevailing insecurity in these countries.

293. The Commission has been very active in carrying out its programmes and activities, in particular in accordance with the recent decisions of the Executive Council and Summits. This had been done in close cooperation and collaboration with our partners namely: Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and other aid agencies.

294. Within the framework of the Programme of Work of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, an assessment field mission to Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire was undertaken in May 2007. The mission met with Government Officials, Representatives of the African Union Offices, UNHCR and other UN and Humanitarian Agencies and exchanged views on the humanitarian situation. Useful information was gathered, which gives a true picture of the humanitarian situation on the ground in the two countries and contributes to the accurate reporting to Member States.

295. The PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees and its Bureau met and reviewed the situation of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons as well as other activities in favour of victims of forced displacement.

296. Other series of meetings were also held; many of them with our partners to map out the way forward in the search for durable solutions to the problem of forced displacement. They included the AU Consultative process on the African Union Draft Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, the AU Meeting with partners for the implementation of joint specific activities up to July 2007 as well as Meetings of African Ambassadors with the ICRC which concentrated on the promotion of International Humanitarian Law.

297. I would like to make mention of the very important Draft Convention on IDPs, which the Commission has been working on since last year. The Meeting on the Draft Convention with partners and other key stakeholders was constructive and enriching. In addition to providing useful comments that will be taken on board in the Draft Convention to be presented to Member States Legal Experts for consideration in September, this year, the consultations also contributed to further enhancing the relationship between the AU and its partners.

298. At this juncture, I would like to particularly draw the attention of Council to the two decisions of Council EX.CL/Dec. 289 (IX) and EX.CL/Dec. 319 (X) with regard to holding the Special Summit of Heads of State and Government on Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in 2008. Preparations are underway in close collaboration with the duly constituted Task Force comprising the Bureau of the PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees, Regional Representations of Member States and AU/Partners and some members of the Coordinating Committee on Assistance and Protection to Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons (CCAR). The Summit will be of great importance not only to the Continent but to the international community as well. Therefore, the African Union is faced with the challenge of ensuring its success.

299. Council will recall that World/Africa Refugee Day is commemorated annually on 20 June. The theme this year is “Refugee Children and Sports”. Joint activities of AU/UNHCR and PRC Sub-Committee on Refugees were organized in the refugee camps in Ethiopia and the African Union gave a donation of US\$10,000 to assist the needy children in the camps. The activities at the AU Headquarters included an exhibition and cultural activities.

300. While concentrating on victims of forced displacement, we should also not lose sight of other categories of mass movements of people because of natural and man-made disasters, illegal and irregular migration in the Continent as well as the problem of food insecurity which WFP reported was affecting thousands of victims of forced displacement mainly due to donor fatigue. The African Union continued to show solidarity with the countries affected by the disasters. During the reporting period, Burundi and Mozambique each received a donation of US\$50,000 to alleviate the suffering of victims of natural disasters. This problem was very much emphasized in the meetings with partners and with their collaboration, the Commission would soon put in place some mechanisms to manage such disasters in Africa. On the other hand, the Commission will promote and encourage Member States to follow the approach of cooperation and partnerships with non-state

entities in order to effectively guarantee and address the humanitarian needs of migrant populations.

301. Finally, I wish to report to Council that the Commission implemented its Decision on Free Movement of Persons in Africa, EX/CL.Dec.337 (X). Following intensive preparations and several meetings at the level of the Committee of Member States Experts on Free Movement of Persons, and the In-House Committee comprising representatives of various Departments and Units, the African Union Diplomatic and Service Passport were launched on Africa Day, 25 May 2007, in Addis Ababa. The first recipients of the Diplomatic Passport were the African Union Chairperson H.E. Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, the President of the Republic of Ghana and H.E. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

302. In the coming months, efforts will be geared essentially towards the continuation of evaluation missions on the ground, the elaboration of a Draft Convention on Displaced Persons, the preparation of the Special Summit, the implementation of the Agenda of the Union on free movement in Africa, and the revival of the Coordination Committee for Assistance to Refugees and Displaced Persons.

I.III. AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION

303. During the period under review, the Commission has maintained the momentum in implementing the Afro-Arab Cooperation Programme. It provided effective supervision and follow up to the **Study on “Development of an Institutional Mechanism for Afro-Arab Strategic Studies/Redefinition of the Role of Afro-Arab Cultural Institute”**, which commenced in November 2006. The study, being jointly undertaken by the African Union (AU) Commission and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States (LAS) consultants is at its final stage of completion.

304. The consultants met twice, in Addis Ababa and Cairo, with relevant staff of the AU Commission and the LAS and officials of the Afro-Arab Cultural Institute and exchanged views and opinions, after which they submitted a draft report, which is currently under consideration by the two parties.

305. Council would recall that a **Memorandum of Understanding between the African Union Commission and the Arab Fund for Technical Assistance to African Countries (AFTAAC)**, was signed in December 2006. Similarly, the Commission is currently considering draft instruments with the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD) and Arab Authority for Agricultural Investment in Agriculture (AAAI), while discussions are underway on modalities for implementation of the provisions of the previously signed MOU with the AFTAAC. Such direct arrangements with specialized Arab institutions would help the Commission to effectively and efficiently coordinate Africa's cooperation with the Arab world.

306. The Commission also embarked on preparations for the **Evaluation Study of the Afro-Arab Trade Fair Project**. The study will assess the impact of the Fair on trade and investment exchanges, examine its contribution in facilitating direct links between business communities of the two regions and identify organizational and practical problems that

hindered progress of this project with a view to improving its efficiency and effectiveness in the future. The Commission has now finalized the necessary preparations and submitted its proposal for financing to BADEA.

307. As a follow up to the recommendation of the Second AU/LAS Inter-Secretariat Meeting, for the AU to facilitate the setting-up of “**Afro Arab Committees of Ambassadors**” in Addis Ababa, Brussels, Cairo, Geneva and New York, the Commission in collaboration with the Chairperson of the Multilateral Sub-Committee of the PRC and the Permanent Delegation of the League of Arab States to the AU and ECA has started the process for the establishment of an “Afro Arab Committee of Ambassadors” in Addis Ababa. The aim is to strengthen political and diplomatic relations between the African and Arab regions and enable them consult each other and adopt common positions on major regional and global issues of common concern to the two sides.

308. Based on the understanding reached between the AU and the LAS, to create a standing **Afro-Arab Development Forum** to facilitate closer contacts and open and frank dialogue between African and Arab intellectuals, academics, researchers and civil societies on issues of common concern, the Commission has finalized preparations of the necessary background documents for the consideration of the meeting of relevant officials from the African Union and the League of Arab States, which shall soon take place at the office of AU Permanent Delegation to LAS in Cairo.

309. I led an African Union Commission delegation to **the 19th Arab League Summit** which took place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from 27 to 29 March 2007. The Riyadh Summit raised and discussed several issues of concern to Africa and Afro-Arab Cooperation.

310. On the margins of the Summit, I also proceeded with signing of a new “**General Agreement on Cooperation between the African Union and the League of Arab States**” with my counterpart in the Arab League, H.E. Amre Moussa, Secretary General of LAS. This Agreement is intended to replace the previous one signed in 1986 between the then Organization of African Unity and the LAS and reflects changes and new developments since then.

311. The Agreement calls upon the AU and the LAS to adopt common policies on regional and international issues, through regular consultations and exchange of information. It also provides for organizing meetings, seminars, workshops, trade fairs, exhibitions, etc., aimed at coordinating and strengthening cooperation and brotherhood ties between Africa and the Arab world. The two sides have also agreed to grant mutual observer status to each other’s delegations in meetings at ministerial level, summit and other conferences that are not open to observers but which will discuss agenda items identified and agreed upon as being of common interest to the two organizations.

312. This Agreement shall enter into force after its adoption and exchange of the relevant ratification documents, and I wish therefore to request Council to endorse the Agreement.

313. During the coming six months, the Commission will devote its attention to further advancing the Afro-Arab Cooperation Programme for the benefit of the two regions. Focus would be on completion of the above-mentioned initiatives and processes already started including:

- Pursuing the recommendations of the Study on the Afro-Arab Cultural Institute and facilitating the envisaged transformation process;
- Carrying out the Evaluation of the Afro-Arab Trade Fair Project and preparing for the next edition of the Fair;
- Finalising the Memoranda of Understanding between the AU and BADEA, AOAD and AAAID;
- Facilitating the establishment of the Afro-Arab Committees of Ambassadors in Addis Ababa and other capitals with AU Representational Offices; and
- Facilitating the establishment of the Afro-Arab Development Forum.

J. AU REPRESENTATIONAL OFFICES

J.I. AU PERMANENT MISSION IN BRUSSELS

314. I am pleased to inform Council that in addition to our usual activities, our Permanent Mission in Brussels had a very busy agenda during the reporting period. Indeed, the year 2007 is a crucial year for the future of AU/EU cooperation. Several important events requiring constant monitoring took place. The following, among others, are worth mentioning:

- Programming of the 10th EDF, which has to be concluded by December 2007; one of the stakes for the AU is the African Peace Facility (APF);
- EPA negotiations scheduled for conclusion in December 2007;
- Elaboration of the AU/EU Joint Strategy with a view to its adoption at the EU-Africa Summit planned for December 2007 at Lisbon, Portugal;
- the European Commission Support Programme for the AU Commission, etc.

315. All these actions which have to be undertaken jointly require not only the mobilization of the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels but also lobbying with all partners at the level of both the EU and the ACP States.

316. For all this work to succeed, the Mission has to ensure the sound flow of information between the AU Headquarters and the various actors involved.

J.I.1. Traditional Activities

317. One of the greatest challenges was the creation of a dynamic team spirit within the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels. The following activities were carried out in this respect:

- regular holding of the Group's statutory meetings (at least once a month);

- multiplication of discussion opportunities on themes with added value for Group activities (debate on the social conditions of the African Diaspora and Belgium, notably on the issue of HIV/AIDS, as well as on the role of the African Diaspora within AU Commission Structures, etc.);
- organization, in collaboration with the Embassy of South Africa, of a meeting with representatives of the African Diaspora in Brussels, with the aim of sensitising them and receiving their contributions towards the organization of the Diaspora Summit scheduled to be held in South Africa;
- organization on 24/5/07 of a meeting between H.E. Mr. J. Kufuor, President of Ghana and current Chairperson of the AU, who was on mission in Brussels, and the Bureau of the Group of Ambassadors, within the premises of the Permanent Mission;
- celebration of Africa Day on the night of 24 to 25/5/07 at "Palais de Tervuren", in the presence of many distinguished guests, including the European Union Commissioner for Enlargement, who delivered a solidarity message from H.E. Mr. Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission. The evening was livened up by the cultural groups from Ghana and Rwanda;
- organization, from 2 to 3/6/07, at Oostende, of a retreat for the Group of Ambassadors and REC Representatives accredited to Belgium (ECOWAS, COMESA, UEMOA). This event, which was a first, was held thanks to financial support from the ECA, and gave rise to a frank and fruitful exchange of ideas on the revitalization of the Group and other issues of interest to the continent. The conclusions of the retreat have been forwarded to the AU Commission in the form of contributions on topics under discussion with the EU, particularly the Draft Joint Strategy, EPA negotiations, etc.

J.I.2. Programming of the 10th EDF

318. I am pleased to remind Council that one of the main stakes for the AU in the 10th EDF is the renewal of the African Peace Facility. Accordingly, following an AU Commission request dated 26 February 2007, the Permanent Mission sent a Memorandum to all AU Missions to raise their awareness to this issue. It further lobbied the ACP Development Financing Committee and the European Commission Directorate General for Development.

319. All these initiatives came to support prior commitments made by the partners, and attracted not only the allocation of the sum of 100 million Euros for the African Peace Facility for 2007, but also the programming of 600 million Euros in the 10th EDF for the periods 2008-2010 and 2011-2013 respectively. The contribution of the ACP Bureau chaired by the Ambassador of Lesotho and its Development Financing Committee chaired by the Ambassador of Djibouti should be commended.

320. In conclusion, as concerns the African Peace Facility (APF) there is need to stress the decision to associate the ACP Secretariat General in the Committee overseeing the management of APF funds.

J.I.3. EU/Africa Joint Strategy

321. Council will recall that since the Khartoum Summit, the AU Commission and the EU Commission were mandated to prepare, under the supervision of the AU/EU Troika, a draft EU/Africa Joint Strategy to be submitted at the 2nd EU/Africa Summit for adoption. Since then, a series of discussions in the form of meetings have been held alternately in Brussels and Addis Ababa.

322. However, one problem confronting the Permanent Mission in Brussels is the demobilization of the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels since they were sidelined from discussions with the EU on the Draft Strategy whereas they are the main interlocutors of the European partners. The Permanent Mission has now formally instituted meetings for the exchange of ideas between the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels and the delegation of strategy negotiators a day before each meeting with the European party is held. This mechanism has since been working well.

323. Moreover, the AU Permanent Mission, which plays an interface role, sends the conclusions of each meeting between the negotiating delegations forthwith to African diplomatic missions in Brussels. This method has made it possible not only to fill the information gap but also for the African party to harmonize their stands without any dissension. On the eve of the EU/Africa Troika meeting of 15/5/07, the Mission organized a briefing meeting chaired by Ghana's Minister of Foreign Affairs, which enabled the African Party to make a coherent and well-structured contribution.

324. The Permanent Mission further participated in a seminar organized by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) on 23 and 24 April 2007 in Bonn, Germany. The seminar, which dealt with the Draft Joint Strategy, was aimed at informing civil society of the strategy and knowing their concerns.

J.I.4. EPA Negotiations

325. I wish to draw the attention of Council to the fact that there was a misunderstanding between our Commission and the Group of African Ambassadors, but following some explanations, things seem to be returning to normal, and today the Group is becoming more involved in EPA issues. Moreover, at all meetings, it defends and upholds the AU Commission's role of coordinating the EPA negotiations which is crucial for the agreement to be harmonious and in the interest of Africa. This is why, at the initiative of the Commissioner for Trade and Industry, the Group of African Ambassadors in Brussels was invited to attend the 3rd Extraordinary Session of African Union Ministers of Trade, held at Addis Ababa on 15 and 16 January 2007. Four (4) Ambassadors representing the four ACP African regions, designated by the Group, attended the meeting under the sponsorship of the Department of Trade and Industry of the AU Commission. They made a very positive contribution to the meeting.

326. During the reporting period, the AU Permanent Mission participated in all ACP meetings on EPAs such as that of the technical committee on the mid-way review of the EPAs held in March 2007 in Brussels. The Mission also attended all meetings of African Ministers responsible for the EPA discussions which are held at the ACP Headquarters.

These include the recent meetings of the Committee of ACP Ministers and the ACP-EU Joint Ministerial Council which were held from 22 to 25 May 2007 in Brussels. A seminar was equally organized in Cotonou, Benin, by the ECA on Sensitive Products and Special Products in EPA negotiations.

J.I.5. Other Activities

327. In a bid to popularise the AU and give it more visibility in Europe:

- 1) During the 7th Session of the ACP-EU Parliamentary Assembly held in Brussels, at the invitation of the Bureau, the Permanent Representative on 21 March 2007 hosted a Conference Debate on the **Draft Joint Strategy, targeting Parliamentarians**.
- 2) At the invitation of the Director of the "Institut des Hautes Etudes de Défense Nationale (IHEDN)", the Permanent Representative took part at the 8th Forum on the African Continent (FICA) which was held in Paris on 4/6/07, at which he hosted a debate on the theme: **"The African Approach to Strategic Partnership"**.
- 3) At the invitation of the President of the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD), the Permanent Representative hosted a Conference Debate on the theme: **"The Future of EU/Africa Cooperation"**, on 7/6/07 at the holding of their General Meeting.

J.I.6. Conclusion

328. In conclusion, I wish to draw the attention of Council to the fact that the premises currently hosting the Office of the AU Permanent Mission in Brussels are becoming inadequate on account of the growing number of Member State Representations in Brussels. There is urgent need to acquire another building with a large meeting hall that can accommodate all the Group of African Ambassadors.

J.II. PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF THE AFRICAN UNION IN GENEVA

329. During the reporting period, the Commission through its Permanent Delegation in Geneva carried out intense activities both in terms of support to, and coordination of, the African Group as well as representing the African Union Commission. Activities vis-à-vis international organizations were diverse and the results obtained were quite satisfactory, apart from the WTO where negotiations are making no headway. The African Day celebration was attended by over eight hundred guests. During the Conference/Debate, high ranking officials of international organizations reiterated their readiness to forge strategic partnerships with Africa and the African Union.

330. As part of the reform of the United Nations system and with the creation of the new Human Rights Council, the activities of our Representation in the areas of promotion and

protection of human rights and humanitarian affairs increased and became more and more creative and productive, thus lending a dynamic impulse to the African Group in Geneva.

331. It is worth pointing out that the 5th Session of the **Human Rights Council (HRC)** has begun its deliberations. This Session is considered critical for the establishment and the future of this new organ. All the delegations and Regional Groups have entered a phase of intense activities to try and find a consensus on a number of outstanding issues.

332. With the constant support of the Geneva Office, the African Group held several consultative meetings at the level of Experts and Ambassadors, and managed to come up with a common position regarding particularly the need to elect officers to serve on the HRC to which they are answerable.

333. This procedure was firmly resisted by the Westerners who insist that the office holders be designated by the Chairman of the HRC from a list which will be drawn up by the High Commission for Human Rights. The African Group also stressed that each office holder should be given a clear and precise mandate and that an end should be put to mandates that are lost in generalities and are often sources of deviation.

334. As regards the **Code of Conduct for office holders**, which is a concrete contribution by the African Group, backed by the African Union Commission, to the establishment of new institutions, the draft code has already been communicated to the HRC Secretariat. However, consultations are underway with the various Regional Groups to enlist their support in the event of voting.

335. Through this exercise, it was possible to infer that the great majority of delegations support the African text and believe that safeguards are necessary to control the behaviour of some special rapporteurs whose independence was not called into question by the Code. The delegations are of the view that the new institutions should be based on a spirit of dialogue and constructive cooperation in accordance with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution establishing the HRC.

336. Concerning the crisis that continues to bedevil Darfur, the HRC had, through a resolution adopted by consensus, set up a Group of Experts which buckled down to business. The latter submitted to the Government of Sudan a series of recommendations of the Commission and of the Human Rights Council on Darfur, to be implemented in the short and medium terms. A high level mission was dispatched from Khartoum to Geneva to hold discussions with the Group of Experts which will submit its report to the 5th Session of the HRC. There is no doubt that the HRC will encourage the Experts Group to continue with its efforts.

337. As regards the activities of the **High Commissioner's Office for Refugees** and their impact on Africa and Africans, the African Group adopted a position vis-à-vis the extension of the mandate of the UNHCR to cover **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)**. In order to meet the humanitarian emergency needs, the UNHCR is carrying out activities aimed at assisting and protecting the IDPs estimated at more than 15 million in Africa out of a total of 21 million. This is being done with no international legal instrument. Displaced persons are the responsibility of the State in which they find themselves. The UNHCR or any

humanitarian agency wanting to provide assistance to this population in distress should seek the consent of the Government concerned.

338. In this process, two principles are likely to clash namely, the principle of sovereignty of States and the principle of the international community protection responsibility. There is need therefore to strike a balance between these two principles, bearing in mind the welfare of the victims. In this connection, the African Group has begun to make its voice heard by stressing the need to respect the rights and interests of refugees as well as the right of asylum, and to always uphold the principle of non-interference.

339. During this 2007 semester, the areas of activity of the Intellectual Property, Technologies, Telecommunications and Posts were marked by several important events. Concerning the **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)**, two sessions of the Standing Committee on Copyrights and Related Rights devoted to the protection of broadcasting organizations were held and efforts are being made to convene a diplomatic conference to negotiate and conclude an up-dated treaty to protect broadcasting organizations in the traditional sense.

340. However, because of reticence on the part of some developed countries no headway was made concerning the work of the inter-governmental committee tasked to prepare legal mechanisms and a whole range of practical instruments to protect traditional know-how and traditional cultural expressions (folklore) against their illicit appropriation and abusive use, as well as intellectual property aspects relating to access and sharing of profits arising from the use of genetic resources.

341. The deliberations of WIPO Provisional Committee on Development Agenda which aim at taking on board development dimension in all the activities of this Organization and which are still on-going have already made important recommendations. As a matter of fact, on issues pertaining to WIPO, the African Group with the logistical and technical support of the Geneva Group was able to achieve remarkable results, hence the need to organize seminars in 2008.

342. Within the context of the activities of the **International Telecommunications Union (ITU)** and since the appointment of an African at the helm of this Organization, there have been many meetings and discussions between the new management, the African Group and our Representation. The new ITU Secretary General has many projects for the African continent and counts very much on the African Union Commission to serve as bridge for a number of his projects, notably cyber security, inclusion of the optic fibre in all infrastructure projects, the ownership of the network of African Telecommunications Regulator, the implementation of activities agreed in the ITU-African Union memorandum of understanding, mobilisation for an active participation in the Connect Africa Meeting to be held in Rwanda from 29 to 30 October 2007 etc.. In order to consolidate the partnership with this important Organization, the Geneva Office plans to organize a workshop in 2008 to strengthen the capacity of the African Group to enable the latter to become really pro-active on issues dealt with by ITU.

343. As regards the **Universal Postal Union (UPU)**, the African Union Commission has very good relations with the management of this Organization which is increasingly consolidating its activities in Africa. The results of the UPU Postal Operations Council have

shown that in the organization's strategy, about 83 projects were identified, some of which are in the process of being implemented. Nevertheless, it was also noted that despite the positive results and for want of resources, all the projects will not be implemented due to the zero growth of the UPU budget. Africa is the region where the post is least developed and the UPU is most willing to make efforts in this direction. It would be advisable for African countries to militate in favour of the removal of this zero growth measure concerning the UPU budget. It will also be necessary for **African countries to mobilize themselves to grant the necessary facilities to the UPU project and to participate actively in its Nairobi Congress scheduled for 2008.**

344. I would like to inform the Council that with regard to **trade issues and the status of the negotiations within the World Trade Organization (WTO)**, the Commission's priority was the preparation and success of the 3rd Session of the Extraordinary Conference of African Ministers of Trade held at the Headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa from 15 to 16 January 2007, which contributed in no small measure to the resumption of the negotiations.

345. The Members of the WTO are worried about the slow pace of the negotiations. The American decree on trade promotion ends in June and this is a source of great concern. Consequently, the Members demanded that the multilateral process of the negotiations be intensified and pursued.

346. This resumption did not made it possible to achieve the expected progress despite the repeated commitments on the part of the major partners to bring the cycle of negotiations to its conclusion by December 2007. The commitment of all the Members of the WTO is crucial for the multilateral process taking place in Geneva. The Chairmen of the Negotiating Groups must demonstrate their willingness to negotiate, which means that even if they defend their positions, they must also show some degree of flexibility.

347. The AU delegation also made its contribution to the African Group's participation in the high level WTO meeting on cotton. The Member of the WTO and the international community were called upon to do everything possible to ensure that the mandate of the WTO on cotton is fully and scrupulously implemented.

348. Africa must also mobilize all its energy and capacity to exert greater pressure on the negotiations to show case its interests. This would the occasion to test the will of the international community to give concrete expression to international cooperation and political coherence and to translate into deeds development efforts in favour of Africa.

349. I am pleased to inform the Council that as far as Africa is concerned, the second challenge to be addressed at the level of the **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** lies in the preparation of **UNCTAD XII** due to take place in Accra in April 2008. Differences have emerged between developing and developed countries on issues relating to the impact, content and implications of globalisation. After two years of intense negotiations, an agreement was reached on the sub-themes and on the theme of the Conference, namely, **"Globalisation Prospects and Challenges for Development"**.

350. The African Group and the G77 are busy preparing the G77 Summit scheduled to take place in Muscat from 3 to 5 September 2007. During this Summit, the Ministers will air

their views on the expectations of the Group on the key aspects of development within the United Nations system and will evaluate the aftermath of the 2nd G77 Summit held in Doha, Qatar in 2005.

351. In the area of social affairs, the period under review witnessed important negotiations both at the **World Health Organization (WHO)** and the **International Labour Organization (ILO)**.

352. At the 120th Session of the WHO Executive Council, Africa unequivocally expressed its position on the need to access essential medicines at affordable prices for the prevention of diseases. This position was reiterated when Africa supported the draft resolution on malaria which urged Member States to make full use of the flexibilities contained in the Agreement on the Aspects of the Intellectual Property Rights relating to trade to promote access to medicines. Divergent views on this particular issue continued during the deliberations of the 60th Session of the World Health Assembly. However, after a lengthy debate at the level of drafting committee, Africa succeeded in rallying other partners to its cause and the resolution was finally adopted by the World Health Assembly.

353. According to the established practice, the Ministers of Health of the AFRO Group and the Heads of delegation held daily coordination meetings prior to opening of the 60th Session of the World Health Assembly. It is worth pointing out that among the issues of concern to the African delegations, we have retained the United Nations' reform programme on Development and Relations between the WHO and institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Bretton-Woods Institutions.

354. The issue of "harassment" to which some high ranking African officials attending International Conferences are subjected at European airports and other destinations was raised. The African delegations called on the African Union Commission to ensure that the issue is discussed by the AU Assembly.

355. During the 121st Session of the WHO Executive Council, the issue of geographical rotation for the post of Director General was also discussed. The AFRO Group which supported this position informed the meeting that the 3rd Session of the AU Conference of African Ministers of Health held in Johannesburg in April 2007 called on the African Union Commission to seize WHO of the matter.

356. As regards the ILO, it is worth mentioning that during the 298th Session of the Governing Body held in Geneva from 8 to 13 March 2007, the African Group held daily coordination meetings to examine issues of common interests. At those meetings, the African Group raised the issue of two permanent posts (at least) for Africa within the ILO Governing Body. The revision of the working method of the Committee on the Application of Standards and the increase in the number of the Members of the Trade Union Freedom Committee were at the heart of the discussions.

African Day Celebration

357. In Switzerland, the African Day celebration was marked by several events under the high patronage of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. The events were

graced by distinguished guests including the Ghanaian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Cooperation and NEPAD, Directors and Secretaries General of International Organizations, many international civil servants, representatives for the private sector, representatives of the civil society and the Diaspora. These guests estimated at around 800 attended various events: Conference/Debate on the theme: Let us strengthen Africa's place in the world through strategic, balanced and responsible partnerships. An exhibition of African works of art, traditional African costume parade and African music featured prominently among the events. Lastly, the outcome of the study conducted by OECD and ADB in Africa on access to water and health care was the subject of fruitful discussions during a Round Table.

358. In a nutshell, the activities of the Geneva Office as in the past were intense. Significant results were achieved thanks to the support of the African Group. With a programme budget the results could have been more significant. As a matter of fact, for want of personnel, many important activities were not covered, like, for example, the Disarmament Conference. Adequate support in terms of human and financial resources will make it possible to give greater visibility to the African Union Commission and better defend Africa's interests. One way of achieving this is through the celebration of the Africa Day, for during the events of this year's celebration, promises to strengthen partnerships with the African continent were reiterated and we believe that it is necessary to multiply such occasions of dialogue and exchange of views and follow them through.

J.III. AFRICAN UNION OBSERVATION MISSION IN NEW YORK

J.III.1. Introduction

359. During the reporting period, the Commission through its New York Representation, monitored UN activities, soundly coordinated the process of candidatures for United Nations organs for 2007 and fully supported the African Group in New York in the organization of more than 35 meetings held at the level of Ambassadors and experts.

J.III.2. Political Matters

a) Promotion of Peace and Security in Africa

360. The Representation devoted much of its work to the monitoring of issues considered by the Security Council, concerning Darfur, Somalia, Côte d'Ivoire, Western Sahara, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Chad, Central African Republic and the situation in the Middle East, particularly Palestine.

361. In this respect, several consultations, meetings and briefing sessions were held at various levels. Those worth mentioning include the briefing session held by the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security with the Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO) and Members of the Security Council on 27 February 2007; his participation in the public debate and at the Security Council Conference on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly the African Union, in maintaining international peace and security held on 28 March 2007; the high level consultation between the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the United Nations Secretary General held on 17 April 2007; the briefing sessions held on 19 April

2007 by the Permanent Representative of the African Union in New York within the context of the DPKO meeting with countries that can contribute military and police contingents to the AMIS; the Security Council informal meeting on AMISOM on 24 April 2007 and the DPKO/AU meeting of 13 June 2007 on the AMISOM.

362. As concerns Somalia, efforts were geared towards harnessing support for AMISOM, and ultimately deploying a UN Mission. The constant focus was on the importance of intensifying cooperation among the AU, the UN and other international partners to deal with peace and security issues in Africa in general.

b) Peace Consolidation and Post-Conflict Reconstruction

363. The Representation also closely monitored the work of the Peace Consolidation Commission as concerns Sierra Leone and Burundi, where missions were sent. Their choice as pilot countries resulted from intense lobbying by the African Group. It should also be stated that significant progress has been recorded in Liberia and in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), following the elections organized in the latter.

J.III.3. Reform of the United Nations

364. Council will recall that this issue is of capital importance to our organization and our whole Continent. Today, there has been renewed interest in the issue of Reform of the Security Council, with debates and new consultations taking place in the General Assembly. There has been wide support in this direction, and various proposals have been made including the need to proceed with concrete negotiations. In this respect, the African Group is of the view that African Heads of State and Government should reconsider this issue.

J.III.4. Non-Proliferation, Disarmament and Counter-Terrorism

365. The Representation participated in the deliberations of the 2007 session of the Disarmament Commission. It equally monitored the preliminary phase of the draft convention on trading in unlawful arms as well as issues relating to counter-terrorism and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

J.III.5. Economic and Social Issues

366. The Representation actively participated in various activities of the ECOSOC, notably the high level UNAIDS meeting which was attended by the African Union Commission for Social Affairs in February 2007; the 51st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in February – March 2007; the 46th Session of the Social Development Commission in April – May 2007; the 15th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in April 2007; the 15th Session of the UN High Level Committee on South-South Cooperation in May 2007; the Meeting of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations from 14 to 18 May 2007 as well as the World Bank briefing session on its 2007 World Report on 5 June 2007. The Representation further issued a declaration within the context of the debate on the theme: “Civilizations and the Challenges of Peace: Obstacles and

Opportunities” on 10 to 11 May 2007, during which the importance of dialogue in handling peace and security issues was highlighted.

367. Furthermore, the Representation in New York, in collaboration with UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), participated in the deliberations of the Steering Committee preparatory to the forum of regional organizations on the protection of civilians during armed conflicts which was held in Dakar. Besides, the Representation contributed to various meetings and events organized by American NGOs, civil society and Diaspora, which underscored the role of the African Union in the face of the challenges in Africa.

J.III.6. Facilitating the Work of the African Group

368. The New York Representation lent full support to the African Group for the organization of its meetings which focused mainly on issues relating to the reform of the UN, on the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous populations as well as on the resolution relating to AU/UN cooperation. There was significant increase in the number of papers presented to the African Group by various personalities.

369. Similarly, the African Group Troika maintained close contacts with its peers from other regional groups, notably CARICOM and the European Union, as well as with the United Nations Secretary General and the President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly with whom it discussed issues of common interest.

J.III.7. African Candidatures for Posts in UN Organs

370. True to its duty, the Representation in New York efficiently coordinated African candidatures for various positions within organs of the United Nations for the 2007 elections, in collaboration with the African Group which lived up to its unique spirit of organization and cohesion. Many victories have been scored in the elections that have already taken place, notably with respect to the Committee on the Rights of the Child; various ECOSOC organs; the Human Rights Council, the sixteenth Session of the Sustainable Development Commission; the United Nations Commission on International Business Law; the six major Commissions and the Bureau of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly.

J.III.8. Bilateral and Multilateral Relations

371. Upon assuming duty in January 2007, the AU Permanent Representative actively undertook bilateral consultations with high officials of the United Nations and of its various institutions, Permanent Representatives to the UN and other representatives of civil society organizations based in New York. These exchanges helped to enhance the strong links binding Africa and the international community.

372. The Representation in New York facilitated the participation and gained the support of the African Group during commemoration of the bicentenary of the abolition of slave

trade on 26 March 2007, thereby highlighting the importance of relations between Africa and the Caribbean community.

373. The commemoration of Africa Day in New York was jointly organized by the Group of spouses of African Ambassadors, the African Group and the AU Mission in New York. The commemoration included a cultural event known as “Beauty and the African Spirit” which was held in the General Assembly Hall on 31 May 2007. More than 2,000 guests, including the United Nations Secretary General, attended the event which paid great tribute to African cultural heritage in all its richness and diversity, and also highlighted international community support for peace, integration and sustainable development in Africa.

J.III.9. Observations and Recommendations

374. The on-going reform of the United Nations has given rise to a remarkable increase in the volume of work of the system and led to the creation of new organs responsible for issues of vital importance to Africa. Such is the case of the Peace Consolidation Commission, the Human Rights Council and other UN reform mechanisms. For its part, the Security Council continues to devote great attention to conflicts in Africa. It should be stated that the AU Vision of global human security and socio-economic development has greatly impacted on the United Nations agenda.

375. The issue of African representation in positions of responsibility within the UN Secretariat is still of vital importance. However, the nomination by the Secretary General, of an African lady to the high position of Assistant Secretary General was warmly acclaimed.

376. Given its inadequate capacities, the AU Representation in New York was forced to restrict its activities to the monitoring of important priority issues such as peace and security, consolidation of peace, reform of the Security Council, and key economic and social issues. All the same, the Representation actively pursued its representation duties, and its increased participation in various activities of interest to Africa was recognized and highly commended. Considering the Mission’s basic duties and its responsibilities there is the crucial and urgent need to strengthen its capacities.

377. In light of the foregoing, we recommend that a mechanism be put in place to better coordinate relations between the African Group and the AU Representation in New York.

J.IV. AFRICAN UNION MISSION TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

J.IV.1 Introduction

378. The African Union Mission to the United States is mandated to, develop, maintain and consolidate constructive and productive institutional relationships between the African Union and the Government of the United States of America, the Bretton Woods Institutions, non governmental/civil society and academic organizations (think-tanks), engaged in African issues and promoting US policy toward Africa as well as the African Diaspora.

I.IV.2 Activities carried out during the period under review

379. During the period under review, the African Union Mission developed and submitted to the AU Commission, its Strategic Work Plan which identified key activities to be carried out during the biennium.

380. The foremost priorities of the African Union Mission for the biennium include:

- **Public Relations, Outreach & Visibility** to profile and "brand" the new African Union Mission;
- **Building a strong political constituency** to help shape and influence US policy toward Africa as well as strengthening the African Diaspora;
- **Establishing/Strengthening institutional working relationships**

381. During the period under review, the AU Mission initiated contacts with the Dean and Members of the African Diplomatic Corps, Senior Officials of the US Administration of both the Executive and Legislative branches of the Government, The Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Africa and Global Health, Congressional Staffers, Representatives from Africa focused civil society organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, including faith-based and the Academia. Contacts were also initiated with the Organization of American States and the Bretton Woods Institutions. The African Union Mission also engaged with the Corporate and Business Community. The Mission also participated in speaking engagements, Congressional Hearings and other foras with the central objective of projecting the African Union's presence in Washington, as well as articulating and promoting Africa's priorities and interests.

382. In the **areas of trade, investment and, economic development**, the AU Mission initiated contacts with the US Trade Representative for Africa and, the Office of Millennium Challenge Account. These meetings provided unique opportunities to exchange views and highlight some of the concerns associated with inherent challenges related to, the eligibility criteria for the MCA on the one hand and, on the other hand, the lack of capacity within most African Countries to effectively access US markets in the context of the AGOA. The Mission also participated, along side the AU Liaison Office in Liberia, in the Liberia Partners Forum and ensured the recognition by the Forum, the African Union's goodwill gesture towards Liberia regarding its longstanding arrears of contribution and the inclusion of this recognition in the final communiqué of the forum.

383. In the area of Peace and Security, the AU Mission's engagement with the Africa Bureau of the US State Department and the Department of Defense provided insights on the US's Policy toward Africa, in general and, in the area of peace and security, in particular. The central message in the political discussions was the commitment to strengthen partnership and working relationship with the African Union at all levels, the recognition of Africa's leadership role and Africa's renewed to solve its own problems within the context of established internal mechanisms and, the US Government's continued commitment and support to AU Peace efforts on the continent. The Mission participated in the consultation session organized by the Department of Defense on the proposed Africa

Command (AFRICOM) and duly advised the Commission on the need for in-depth discussions between the AU Commission and African Union Member States on the implications of this proposed US initiative for Africa.

384. In the area of strengthening multilateral relationships, the AU Mission initiated contacts with the Organization of American States, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund with a view to exploring opportunities for establishing formal institutional working relationships between the African Union Commission and these multilateral institutions. Borne out these contacts are expressed commitments for a more systematic engagement with the AU Commission.

385. In the area of speaking engagements, the AU Mission honored a number of invitations for speaking engagements and other important events. These events offered unique opportunities for the articulation of the overall vision of the African Union and the promotion of various initiatives and programmes, as well as the vision of the African Union Mission to the United States of America;

- Keynote Address, African and American Business Women's Alliance Ambassadors' Luncheon;
- Roundtable Discussion by the Corporate Council Roundtable;
- Keynote Address at the African American Unity Caucus Retreat;
- Guest Speaker Commemoration of Africa Day, Marking Ghana's 50th Anniversary and 15th Africa Achievement Awards in Los Angeles, California;
- Keynote Address US Africa Air Transportation Summit, Miami, Florida;
- Guest Speaker, Mayor's Committee on African/Caribbean Immigrant Affairs of the City of Philadelphia

386. The Mission also participated in Regional Diaspora consultations organized by South Africa in, New York and The Bahamas in preparation for the 2008 Summit to be held in South Africa.

387. A major highlight of the AU Mission's activities covering the period under review is the joint commemoration of the International Day of the African Child with the Global Health Council on June 14 on Capitol Hill, the House of Representatives. The Event, sponsored by Congresswoman Betty McCollum a democrat from Minnesota focused on, the African Union theme for this year, "**Combat Child Trafficking**" and Panelists addressed the issues of health, nutrition, as well as the Education of the Girl Child.

J.IV.3 Observations

388. The establishment of the African Union Mission to the United States of America is so far the first African Union accreditation to a bilateral country. This has generated enormous interest and great expectations. Equally important is the establishment of a US Mission

accredited to the African Union thereby raising the profile of US engagement and relationship with Africa, in general and, the African Union, in particular.

389. The success of the African Union Mission to the United States can therefore only be assured if necessary conditions are created to ensure the desired impact of the AU presence in Washington. Without the underpinnings of financial and human resource capacities, the goals and objectives of the Mission cannot realistically be achieved. Particular attention would also be paid to improving communication and coordination between the AU Commission and the AU Mission to the United States of America.

K. HUMAN RESOURCES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

K.I. HUMAN RESOURCES AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES

K.I.1 African Youth Charter

390. Council will recall that, for the January Session, I reported about the adopting and launching of the African Youth Charter. After its adoption by the Heads of State and Government in July 2006 and its official launch in November 2006, the African Youth Charter is being popularised through advertisement, sensitisation and official advocacy processes. The Department is using the developed strategies for popularisation to involve all the relevant social and political actors including the youth for the popularisation of the Charter at national and local levels within Member States. Only four countries have signed so far: Mali, Burundi, Togo and Benin.

391. Two regional workshops for stakeholders and experts in Central and West Africa were organized in Brazzaville and Monrovia. In Brazzaville it involved meetings with national Parliament Chairperson and Ministers; while in Monrovia there were meetings with the Vice-President and Head of State. The meetings received much radio and TV publicity within the regions. The delegates committed themselves to accelerate the signature and ratification process. Many youth organizations are promoting the Youth Charter through different activities. 25 May 2007, the African Day was used by a number of youth organizations in countries including Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Congo, DRC, Togo, Cameroon, Djibouti and others to promote youth activities and to popularise the Youth Charter. The Pan African Youth Union and other international organizations and UN Agencies are giving support to Member States where it is needed.

K.I.2 Revitalization of the Pan African Youth Union

392. The Banjul Decision EX.CL/Dec.292 (IX) recommended the revitalization of the Pan African Youth Union and its utilization as a continental youth structure. In October 2007, the Steering Committee meeting, followed by the meeting of the Bureau of the AU Ministers of Youth will consider, among other documents, the Strategy developed to revitalize the PYU. The main missions of the PYU are to work in collaboration with the AUC in the field of Youth

empowerment, to continuously advocate for the Charter, to ensure its popularisation and implementation, to lead and facilitate communication between the youth and the African Union Commission. The proposed strategy includes proposals on measures to ensure sustainable technical and financial provisions for the Pan African Youth Union.

K.I.3 Capacity Building in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

393. One of the key areas of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006-2015) is Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), to be addressed through formal, non-formal and informal education programmes. In the non-formal education programme, TVET is presented as a means to address skills development for a large numbers of unemployed and out of school youth in Africa. TVET will also address uneducated or low-educated youth to provide them with technical and professional skills and livelihoods. The Department is in the negotiation process with the African Development Bank and other partners towards the development of a venture capital fund for African youth to be trained in TVET, in order to support self-employment initiatives.

394. Regional TVET workshops for post-conflict areas were held in Central and Western regions of Africa (Brazzaville and Monrovia) to assess the available TVET training facilities and human resources, to develop with key stakeholders frameworks for Non Formal TVET pilot-projects, and to disseminate strategies for revitalizing TVET in Africa. The youth are key actors and targets of the workshop, as TVET will be used to involve them in the development and reconstruction of their countries. The Department is planning to develop an implementation plan to ensure resource mobilization to support the training courses, provision of equipment and tooling development. Strong partnerships are needed for the planned pilot-projects, which will include adult literacy, especially in Liberia where the number of illiterate youth is very high.

K.II. EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

K.II.1 Implementation and Monitoring of the Second Decade of Education for Africa

395. I have informed Council, in my previous report, that *“the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education for Africa”* was launched in Maputo in September 2006. The Plan of Action informs all Education programmes of the Commission. It consists of the following areas of focus:

- Gender and Culture.
- Education Management Information Systems
- Teacher Development
- Higher Education
- Technical-Vocational Education and Training
- Curriculum and Teaching-Learning Materials

- Quality Management.

396. The Commission has begun to establish strategic partnerships with key stakeholder institutions for the implementation of the Plan of Action in these areas of focus. Implementation strategies have also been developed in the areas of Teacher development; Higher Education, particularly in the areas of harmonisation and quality; Technical and Vocational Education and Training. Progress in the implementation of the Plan of Action has been reported to the COMEDAF Steering Committee and Ministerial Bureau meetings that were held in Addis Ababa from 29th to 31st May 2007.

K.II.2 Higher Education

397. To assist in the implementation of this area of focus, the Commission has signed a memorandum of agreement with the Association of African Universities. This will allow the two sides to join efforts towards the harmonisation of higher education in Africa

398. To that effect, the Commission has organised two meetings of African Experts in February and May 2007, to review draft strategies for harmonisation of higher education, and for developing a quality rating mechanism for higher education in Africa. The two strategies were presented to the COMEDAF Steering Committee and Ministerial Bureau meetings held in Addis Ababa in May 2007. Processes to take these initiatives forward will involve extensive engagement with the relevant communities of experts. Every effort is being made to bring on board, harmonise and co-ordinate other relevant initiatives. In particular, close collaboration will be sought with UNESCO in the review or re-drafting of the Arusha Convention for harmonisation of African higher education. Initiatives by CAMES and RECs are also being taken on board.

K.II.3 Curriculum and Teaching and Learning Materials Development

399. This work begun in January 2007 with the University of South Africa's Centre for African Renaissance Studies (CARS), comprehensive reports have been produced on the educational publishing industry in Africa; and on updating science text books for schools, using new knowledge generated from academic journals from African Universities. Formalisation of collaboration with UNISA-CARS begun with a workshop of experts from the African Publishing Industry, held in Pretoria in January 2007. Through the same partnership, the department will organise a biannual conference of African Publishers and Writers, starting November 2007.

K.II.4 Teacher Development

400. The Commission has begun discussions with the Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEA) in Nairobi Kenya, with support from the Government of Kenya and Japan International Corporation (JICA), to establish collaboration in enhancing the teaching and learning of Science, technology and Mathematics in African schools. CEMASTEA is already successfully training teachers from a number of African

countries in this area, and helping to build capacity with sponsorship from JICA. This collaboration will be concretised in the Second Semester of 2007.

401. The Commission is also collaborating with the UNESCO Institute for capacity Building in Africa (ICBA) in Addis Ababa to develop a holistic implementation strategy for teacher development, using contemporary and well as open and distance learning methods, for pre-service as well as in-service training of teachers and other educational professionals. A meeting of experts and potential partners will be held in September 2007, to allocate roles and responsibilities for implanting the Plan of Action in this area.

K.II.5 The Mwalimu Nyerere African Union Scholarship Scheme

402. The attention of Council is hereby drawn to the fact that the implementation of the Mwalimu Nyerere Scheme, a flagship programme of the African Union, has progressed with applications having been received from students from all the regions of Africa. The next stage is to organise a Selection Committee meeting to make the final selection of successful students for the first batch. The next advertisement will be for students pursuing graduate and post-graduate studies in African Universities. To ensure that the students will be admitted to 'leading' African universities, quality criteria have been developed which will be used to determine which institutions will qualify to receive students under the Mwalimu Nyerere Scheme.

403. Meanwhile, the European Union has provided funding for recruiting a Senior Officer to manage the scholarship scheme. The late arrival of the funding, and the slow recruitment is likely to delay implementation of the next phase of the scheme, which involves establishing and implementing collaboration with the European Erasmus Mundus programme. Under the collaboration, there will be exchange of students and staff among leading European and African universities.

K.II.6 Education Observatory of the African Union

404. In order to begin capacity building of the Pan-African Institute for Education for Development (IPED), an interim memorandum of understanding has been draft with the Commission. The draft MOU has been presented to the Chair of IPED (Minister of Education for the Republic of Angola), for endorsement. A new structure for IPED has been drafted and will be approved through the next Summit of the African Union.

K.III. IN THE AREA OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND ICT

K.III.1 Implementing Decisions of the January 2007 Summit of Heads of State and Government

405. Council will recall that the January 2007 Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union had the theme "Science, Technology and Research for Africa's

Development". Important decisions were made by the Summit and the following are actions taken for their implementation:

i. Assembly/AU/Dec.138 (VIII)

406. In this decision the Assembly took note of the need to establish a single Pan- African Intellectual Property Organization (PAIPO), in view of the fact that there are currently two Intellectual property organisations in Africa, which have basically divided the continent, on linguistic basis, while leaving out a number of African countries.

407. Preparations are underway for an inter-departmental meeting to brainstorm on the establishment of the PAIPO. There-after, a meeting with the World Intellectual Property, African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) and The African Intellectual Property Organization (AIPO) will take place in the next semester, at which meeting the Commission will present its implementation strategy for discussion, and to develop buy-in from these important institutions.

ii. Assembly/AU/Dec.161 (VIII)

408. This decision supported the declaration of 2007 as the launching year of building constituencies and champions for science, technology and innovation in Africa and strongly urged Member States to allocating at least 1% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of national economies by 2010 as agreed by Khartoum Decision (EX.CL/Dec.254 (VIII)).

409. Concept documents have been prepared for the following activities, and presented to the Steering Committee and Ministerial Bureau of AMCOST meetings held in Pretoria in June 2007:

(a) Programmes based on Assembly/AU/Dec.161 (VIII) decision for launching the building of S&T Constituencies in 2007

The African Science and Technology Day

410. The African Science and Technology day, observed on the 30th of June, of each year, provides an opportunity to highlight the role of Science and Technology in Africa's socio-economic development. It also provides an opportunity to salute all scientists, past and present, for having contributed so much to the betterment of their countries and the continent at large. In this context, the Commission is preparing to share programmes to raise community awareness of the central role that science and technology in Member States through exhibitions, seminars and workshops. At the headquarters, the department is discussion with the Ethiopian agency of Science and Technology to celebrate the African Science and Technology Day.

(b) Programmes based on Assembly/AU/Dec.161 (VIII) decision for Achieving 1 % GDP for Science and Technology by 2010

411. Towards the achievement of 1% GDP investment in science and technology, a sound science and technology policy infrastructure will create national confidence to make this investment. Thus the Commission has initiated a programme to facilitate the

development and harmonization of optimal science and technology policies in African Union Member States. This will entail the development of an African Union policy framework based on indicators agreed to by Member States. The Commission plans to have policy development training programme for officials of Member States in partnership with some international partners. The Commission is also in the process of facilitating the production of African S&T policy framework, and capacity building initiatives in Member States, in collaboration with RECs.

K.III.2 Information and Communication Technology

412. The meeting of the Steering Committee and Bureau of ICT Ministerial Conference took place in Cairo, Egypt on 25-26 March for the Steering Committee meeting and 27 March for the Bureau meeting. The meetings discussed and made their recommendations on ARAPKE flagship projects; Resource mobilization; DSF 1% Principle; Policies and Regulatory framework conducive to the development of telecommunications, information and communication (ICT) Networks and Services in Africa. The Steering Committee formalized a working group to undertake the process of identifying the flagship projects of ARAPKE. The group has selected 11 projects and the resource mobilization process will determine the implementation phase and its modalities for the selected projects.

K.III.3 Biosafety Unit

413. The primary aim of the AU Biosafety Project is to incorporate the biosafety topic into the political and institutional frameworks of the Member States. In order to meet this goal, among the objectives of the Project is the development of an African Strategy on Biosafety to implement the provisions of the UN Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and the revision of the African Model Law on Safety in Biotechnology and its application at national and regional levels. The Project has developed the African Strategy on Biosafety, which was endorsed along with the Report of the High Level African Panel on Biotechnology through the Cairo Declaration (EXT/AU/EXP/ST/Decl/13(II)\Rev.1) and the AMCOST (EXT/AU/MIN/ST/Rpt. (II)) in November 2006.

414. The AMCOST also recommended that issues of biotechnology and biosafety should be handled together in a complementary manner whilst harmonizing regulations within the continent. In the same token the Heads of State and Government Summit in January 2007 also considered and adopted these recommendations of the AMCOST.

415. In the same vein, and in order to adapt the African Model Law of 2001 to the current challenges and latest developments in the fields of biosafety and biotechnology, a Document outlining the details of the trends taken to revise the Model Law have been prepared and discussed at the AMCOST Steering Committee and Bureau Meetings in June 2007. The revision of the Model Law is hence well underway.

L. SOCIAL AFFAIRS

L.I. HEALTH, NUTRITION AND POPULATION

416. I would like to report to Council that the Commission successfully convened the Third Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Health in Johannesburg, South Africa from April 9-13, 2007 which adopted the Africa Health Strategy, Plan of Action on Violence Prevention, Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa and the Monitoring Framework for the Implementation of the Abuja Special Summit on HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB Outcomes. In preparation for the Conference the Commission organized an Experts Meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to finalize the drafting of the Africa Health Strategy.

417. The Commission also managed to organize a Bureau meeting of AU Conference of Ministers of Health in Geneva, Switzerland on the fringes of the 60th World Health Assembly which adopted a Work Plan for the implementation of the outcomes of the Third Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Health.

418. In December 2006 the AU Commission organized an Experts meeting to harmonize the NEPAD and AU Commission nutrition programmes. The outcome of this meeting was a time bound work plan for the implementation of the African Regional Nutritional Strategy (2005-2015). The Commission is now in the process of revitalizing the Africa Nutrition Task Force which will oversee the implementation of the work plan among other things.

419. I am also pleased to inform Council that, with respect to population, the Commission has finalized the publishing of the State of African Population Report 2006 which will be launched during the 6th Ordinary Session of the African Population Commission General Assembly scheduled for July 16 and 17, 2007 in South Africa.

L.II SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR)

420. It will be recalled that the Maputo Plan of Action (2006) for the operationalization of the Continental Policy Framework on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (2005) was adopted during the January 2007 Summit.

421. Since then, the Commission was engaged in the promotion, dissemination, and follow-up of the implementation of the Policy Framework on SRHR. In this regard, the major activities undertaken in the reproductive health sector included (a) advocacy and promotion of the Continental Policy Framework as well as the Maputo Plan of Action and (b) participation in regional and international fora where sexual and reproductive health and rights were themes or important agenda items of debates.

422. Regarding advocacy and publicity, the Commission, in collaboration with UNFPA, IPPF and other partners, had re-printed and distributed a large number of copies of both the Policy Framework and the Maputo Plan of Action to reproductive health experts, institutions and policy/decision-making bodies both in Africa and elsewhere. Besides, using all the available fora, concerted efforts were made to publicize these instruments and create

awareness among a wide range of partners and stakeholders about these document as well as about the need for addressing the challenges posed by unmet reproductive health needs including HIV/AIDS.

423. Concerning participation in regional and international fora, mention could be made of the following events:

- In March 2007, the Commission took active part in the Southern African Population Conference under the theme “Institutionalization of the Dialogue between Population Research & Development Policy in Africa Venue where a Report on “Mother and Child Health” was presented to the Closed Meeting of African Population Commission (APC) Member States of the Southern Region of the African Union (AU).
- The AU Commission was also represented, along with some Member States, by a high-level delegation at the “Technical Meeting on Sexual and Reproductive Health Policies in Africa” in Barcelona, Spain, from 27 February to 3rd March 2007. The Commission used this occasion for advocacy and mobilizing international support for the implementation of the Maputo Plan of Action.
- Moreover, as part of its plan to hold a series of subregional consultative fora on the implementation of the Policy Framework on SRHR, the AUC participated in a Regional Conference on Advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, organized by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) for the Arab World, including Northern Africa from 19 to 21 May 2007.
- The AU Commission also collaborated with IPPF Africa Region and UNFA to organize a Consultative Planning Meeting with RECs, key UN- Agencies such as WHO and other partners in the field of reproductive health. This Meeting was held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 21 and 23 June 2007 with the objective to:
 - coordinate efforts in the implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of the Maputo Plan of Action on SRHR;
 - to review and agree on the draft Monitoring and Evaluation tool developed by the AU Commission; and
 - to identify roles between the AU Commission, RECs, and other partners the process of implementing the Plan of Action.

424. In summary, it can be stated that sexual and reproductive health and rights issues are being addressed by the African Union based on the Continental Policy Framework and the Maputo Plan of Action. The Commission is guided by the relevant summit decisions of the 2006 and 2007 of AU Heads of State and Government.

L.III. HIV/AIDS, TB AND MALARIA INCLUDING AIDS WATCH AFRICA

425. In implementation of recommendations of AIDS Watch Africa (AWA) Heads of State and Government Committee, a meeting of Advisors to AWA Members was held at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 19-20 February 2007. This 2nd meeting aimed not only at reviewing activity reports and plans for action for each AWA Member but also at identifying the difficulties experienced by the Advisors and the Secretariat in performing their mandate as well as the ways and means to overcome them. The input of AWA into

the 3rd Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Health held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 9-13 April 2007 was also discussed and three AWA advisors participated in the Conference. As an advocacy platform, AWA Members and Advisors need to play a more visible role in the continental response against HIV/AIDS.

426. During that meeting, time was devoted to reviewing the Commission's HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan 2005-2007 and AWA Strategic Framework, and to developing monitoring and reporting frameworks both for those plans and for the implementation of the Abuja 2006 Commitments on HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria Services. In this regard, a draft Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism was presented to the 3rd Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Health and adopted. This spells out the roles of all stakeholders and plans for preparing progress reports in 2008 and 2010. Action to develop a 2007/2008 Implementation Plan for the Commission and AWA HIV/AIDS related Strategic Plan and Frameworks began in January-February 2007 and was undertaken. The final document will guide the Commission and AWA in playing their respective roles in efforts to reverse a continental emergency.

427. I am pleased to announce to Council that, as part of the African Union's efforts to contribute to the acceleration of universal access to HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria Services, I launched a renewed Continental Malaria Elimination Campaign on 10 April 2007 during the 3rd Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Health with a slogan: *"No one needs to die from Malaria!"* On that occasion, an advocacy document on Malaria Elimination developed in partnership with Roll Back Malaria Partnership and WHO was widely disseminated. However, all stakeholders need to show renewed commitment in the campaign to eliminate and eventually eradicate malaria, a disease that is preventable and curable.

428. In the same vein, to increase advocacy for implementation of strategies against Malaria, Africa Malaria Day was marked continent-wide on or around 25 April 2007. The activities focused on the theme: "Leadership and Partnership for Results" and slogan: "Free Africa from Malaria Now!" The Commission participated in the Ethiopian National Malaria Day Programme.

429. Regarding the issues of Gender, Youth, Violence and HIV/AIDS, and joint efforts to assess the situation of women and girls in conflict torn and post-conflict situations in several regions of the continent, a multi-sectoral and inter-agency team have been initiated. Focus will be laid on the threat or reality of HIV/AIDS and other sexual and reproductive health and rights issues. An Inter-agency meeting was called end of May 2007 to consider the proposal with relevant Commission Departments, UN agencies and RECs the TOR, determine what is already being done on the issue to avoid duplication, assess the feasibility of the project and finally allocate tasks to each stakeholder for its realization. It is hoped that the outcome of the assessment will be used for evidence-based policy and programme advocacy in conflict-ridden countries and in those undertaking post-conflict rehabilitation and integration activities.

430. Finally, throughout the period under review, the Commission undertook some missions in the framework of collaboration with various partners from the UN family, RECs, international Civil Society Organizations and NGOs. Amongst others, they have taken the opportunity to promote and disseminate African Union Policies and Programmes as well as disseminating, popularising the work of the AIDS Watch Africa. They also mobilised the

involvement of concerned stakeholders in the work of AWA and programmes and activities of the AU Commission.

L.IV. LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT AND MIGRATION

L.IV.1. Informal Sector in Africa

431. The informal economy in Africa remains a labour market challenge in the continent. The formal segment in Africa employs only 10% of the labour force and the rest are in the informal sector economy. Women represent a large number of the informal economy and often at the bottom of the pyramid. The sector lacks the legal recognition, social security protection, which is enjoyed by the formal economy segment. The Commission had recruited a consultant to examine the possibilities of extending the coverage of social protection schemes to the workers in the informal sector and advise the AU Commission accordingly; this work is in progress.

L.IV.2. Social Protection

432. The vision of the Commission is “Social Protection for all” as social security is a key tool in promoting harmonious economic and social development. Social security system organize the sharing of the risks confronted by the working people at various stages in their lives providing medical care and death benefits. There are a number of countries in the continent, that are already have strong social security system and it is anticipated that other countries will learn from these good practices.

433. In that regard, the Commission has realized that a long-term social security policy needs to be designed and adopted by member states within the framework of broader national tripartite dialogue. To this end plans are underway to undertake a study to examine the possibilities of giving social protection to all working people of the continent.

L.IV.3. Labour administrations and employers’ and workers ‘organizations

434. Ministries of Labour employment and social affairs, alongside with employers and workers organizations, have a key role in the development and implementation of the policies on poverty alleviation and employment promotion. They are at a core of poverty alleviation and have to make policy coherence and integration of poverty alleviation and employment promotion priorities into national development plans a reality. The AU Commission organized a tripartite 5th Session of Labour and Social Affairs Commission, which took place in Addis Ababa in April 2007. A number of recommendations were reached in the field of labour and social affairs, including the creation of more programmes and employment for youth of Africa. The Report is on the Agenda of Council for its consideration.

L.IV.4. Migration

435. Council will recall the instruments on migration and development adopted by the Heads of States and Governments of the Union, thus Migration Policy Framework for Africa, Joint Africa-EU Declaration on migration and development and the Africa Common Position on migration and development need to be implemented. Therefore the Commission and its partners are taking steps for their implementation. Plans on the roadmap on the implementation of these instruments are at the advanced stage and is anticipated to finalize the road map before the next troika meeting in October 2007. Member States are been sensitized to attend the Global Forum on migration and development, which will take place in Brussels in July 2007.

L.V. SOCIAL WELFARE DIVISION

L.V.1. Child Survival, Protection and Development

436. The Commission has continued to put children issues high on its programme of activities. In implementing these activities, it has collaborated closely with UNICEF, Plan International and other related development partners. However, the major challenge is still the low ratification of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. To-date only 39 out of the 53 Member States have ratified the African Charter. The Commission continues to use all available opportunities to appeal to Member States, which have not yet done so, to accelerate the ratification process of the Charter. I would like to once again use this opportunity to appeal to Member States which have not yet done so, to ratify or accede to the Charter without further delay.

L.V.2. African Common Position on Children – Africa Fit for Children

437. Council will recall that it is now five years after the adoption of the African Common Position on Children - Africa Fit for Children which was Africa's contribution to the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Children in 2002. Preparations are now underway to hold a Mid-Term Review meeting in September 2007 to assess progress made in achieving commitments made in the Declaration and Plan of Action. In this regard, a questionnaire has been developed and sent to all AU Member States to report on the implementation of the priority areas identified in the Plan of Action. The reports received will be utilized in drafting a consolidated progress report which will constitute the main working document of the meeting. A concept note has also been prepared and will be sent to all Member States in due course. Member States are requested to fill in the questionnaire and return it to the Commission as soon as possible. The other document which will be considered by the meeting is the Roadmap on Child Survival. The main outcome of the Mid-Term Review will be a Call for Accelerated Action for Child Survival, Protection, Development and Participation will be Africa's contribution to the UN Special Session on Children to be held in November 2007.

L.V.3. African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

438. It will be recalled that the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) was established in 2001 to monitor the implementation of the provisions of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Six years after its establishment, and in spite of a lack of a full-fledged Secretariat, the Committee has managed to adopt a number of important documents to enable it carry out its mandate effectively. The Committee held its 9th Session from 29th to 31st May, 2007 during which it adopted a number of pertinent recommendations including a framework for conducting the pre-session for examining state party reports. So far, the Committee have received reports only from five Member States. I would like to urge other Member States to follow suit and forward their reports to the Committee. A detailed report on the activities of the Committee would be presented to the Executive Council separately.

L.V.4. Disability Issues

439. Council will be recall that issues related to disability on the continent are coordinated by the African Rehabilitation Institute (ARI), a Specialized Agency of the African Union. As a Member of the Governing Board of ARI, the Commission participated in its 6th Technical Advisory Committee and 18th Governing Board Meeting held in Lesotho from 27th February to 3rd March, 2007. The meeting once again recognized the problems faced by ARI and its limitation in carrying out its mandate effectively. The meeting requested the Commission to assist the Institute by getting a Consultant to carry out a survey and make concrete proposals on how best to revitalise and strengthen ARI and make it more efficient. Thereafter, an Extraordinary Session of the ARI Governing Board will be convened to look at the report of the Consultant and agree on the way forward. In the meantime, Member States are called upon to assist and support ARI in whichever way possible and those which are members of ARI, to fulfil their financial commitment to the institute to enable it function normally.

440. I would also like to remind Member States that 1999-2009 was proclaimed as the African Decade of Disabled Persons. In this regard, a Continental Plan of Action was also adopted to implement the objectives of the Decade. However, as the Decade nears towards its end, it would seem that no much progress has been achieved in implementing the Plan of Action. There is need, therefore, for Member States to accelerate actions at national level to implement the objectives of the Decade and send their reports to the Commission.

L.VI. DRUG CONTROL

441. I would like to draw Council's attention to the fact that the trafficking and abuse of illicit drugs has escalated on the African Continent. A position of "Senior Policy Officer, Drug Control" was provided for in the structure of the Commission, within the Department of Social Affairs; the post was filled since 1 July 2006. Subsequently, assessment missions were conducted to six (6) REC Secretariats on the status of implementation of the AU Revised Declaration and Plan of Action on the Control of Drug Trafficking and Abuse (2002-2006). The recommendations of the mentioned assessments will feed into the elaboration of

the next AU Plan of Action on Drug Control (2007-2010), to be submitted to the 3rd AU Ministerial Conference on Drug Control during the latter half of 2007. The Commission has conducted a series of meetings with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime for technical backstopping on the forthcoming Ministerial meeting and implementation of the future PoA, including a project to be implemented from the DSA. The Commission was represented at the 50th Session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in Vienna, Austria, from 16-20 March 2007. The outcome was, after 3 years of absence, renewed networking with the Africa Group based in Vienna with regard to drug and related crime control. A Memorandum of Understanding between AUC and UNODC was drafted and revised by both parties and is in the finalization stage.

L.VII. SPORTS

442. Since the AU Launch of the International Year of African Football 2007 (IYoAF), at the 8th Ordinary Session of the Assembly, Addis Ababa, in January 2007, the Commission has organised a workshop in Pretoria, South Africa, to flesh out the Programme of Activities for both the IYoAF, and the 2010 FIFA World Cup African Legacy Programme, to be rolled out until 2010. In implementation of the Assembly Declaration on the International Year of African Football, the Commission also organised the 1st Session of the AU Conference of Ministers of Sport, in June 2007, in Addis Ababa, where, important decisions were taken with regard to, among others, the AU Policy and Programme on Sport, the relations between African Governments, National Sport Movements and International Sports Organisations and on the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa. A full report of the Ministerial meeting is on the Agenda of Council for its consideration.

L.VIII. CULTURE

443. The Commission has followed-up on the resolutions of the 1st Pan-African Cultural Congress which took place in Addis Ababa from 13 to 15 November 2006. The 8th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Addis Ababa in January 2007 endorsed the report of the Pan African Congress and the Commission is following up with member states on the implementation of the recommendations of the Congress.

444. Similarly, in the context of the Year of African Languages, and in cooperation with the Cultural Association “Stories Across Africa”, the AU launched a project of publishing books for children, which are available in four official languages of the Union.

M. INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY

M.I. INTRODUCTION

445. I am pleased to inform Council that, during the period from January to June 2007, the Commission embarked on a number of activities of strategic importance in the area of infrastructure and energy. Priority was placed on the elaboration of policies and strategies in the fields of railway transport, electricity, oil and gas, Telecommunications and ICT as well as on the implementation of specific projects aimed at the development of ICT infrastructure and services in Africa. These included the e-Governance VSAT project for the African Union Commission and his Regional Offices, the Pan-African e-Network project for Tele-education and Tele-medicine in cooperation with the Government of India and the Unified Telecommunication Numbering project.

446. In the course of strengthening cooperation with partners, the Commission participated in meeting regarding the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa (ICA) and the Europe-Africa Partnership on Infrastructure as part of the efforts to support and accelerate development of infrastructure in Africa. In the same spirit, a coordination mechanism for the development of infrastructure in Africa was adopted. This mechanism was elaborated with key partners including the Regional Economic Communities, the African Development Bank (ADB), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the NEPAD Secretariat.

447. Furthermore, the African Union – European Union dialogue on cooperation in the development of transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructure in Africa advanced significantly with the African Union Commission-European Commission as well as the 8th EU - Africa Ministerial Troika Meeting, which took place in Brussels, 15 May 2007.

M.II. ACTIVITIES IN TRANSPORT AREAS

M.II.1. Preparation of the Transport Infrastructure Master Plan for Africa

448. Elaboration of an integrated transport master plan for Africa as a strategic tool in the planning, promotion and facilitation of transport programmes in the continent African Union Commission is ongoing. Significant progress has been attained with particular regard to the development of the Geographical Information System (GIS) data base for the various transport corridors in the continent. The master plan will be an important technical component of the infrastructure Medium to Long Term Strategic Framework MLTSF.

449. In view of the need to ensure that all stakeholders are duly involved in the elaboration of the master plan, the Commission convened the First Coordination Meeting on the Elaboration of an Integrated Transport Master Plan for Africa (ITMP) with key African stakeholders including the RECs, UNECA and specialised agencies to review the work accomplished to-date and the way forward for the project. The meeting was held on 12 to 13 April 2007 at the Headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Regular coordination meetings have been planned for this undertaking in order to ensure its

ownership by all continental stakeholders and, hence, sustainability as far as implementation is concerned.

M.II.2. First Meeting of the Bureau of the Conference of the Ministers responsible for Transport

450. The Bureau of the Conference of the African Ministers responsible for Transport met in Algiers, Algeria from 6 to 7 April 2007 to review a number of activities being implemented and planned in the transport sector under the African Union. The current Bureau was elected for a period of two (2) years (2006 – 2008) during the First African Union Conference of the Ministers responsible for Railway Transport held in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo in April 2006. It comprises of the following Member States:

Chairman	:	Congo (Central Africa)
1 st Vice-Chairman	:	Algeria (North Africa)
2 ^o Vice-Chairman	:	Djibouti (East Africa)
3 ^o Vice-Chairman	:	South Africa (Southern Africa)
Rapporteur	:	Burkina Faso (West Africa)

451. In Brazzaville, the sector Ministers had decided to establish a Conference of African Ministers of Transport as the central organ for continental coordination of transport sector policies and strategies. In that regard, the Bureau, during its first meeting, considered at length and made amendments on the Draft Rules of Procedure of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport as an important step towards its operationalisation.

452. The Bureau also reviewed the work accomplished and under preparation by the Ministers responsible for the various transport sectors and made recommendations. The following main items were particularly considered:

- Implementation of the Plan of Action of railway transport;
- Implementation of the Plan of Action of air transport;
- Implementation of the Plan of Action of maritime transport;
- Integrated Continental Transport Master Plan;
- Railway Development in Africa: Vision 2025;
- Preparation of the 3rd African Union Conference of Ministers responsible for Air Transport;
- Preparation of the Professional Conference on the interconnectivity and interoperability of African railway networks; and
- Preparation of the 3rd African Union Conference of Ministers responsible for Road Transport.

M.II.3 Air Transport

a. Joint AU/ICAO/ATAG/WB Forum on Air Transport Development in Africa

453. A development forum on **Maximizing Civil Aviation's Economic Contribution in African Skies** jointly organised by the African Union, the International Civil Aviation

Organisation (ICAO), the Air Transport Action Group (ATAG) and the World Bank (WB) was held at the headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa from the 23rd to the 25th of April 2007.

454. The objective of the Forum was to promote close cooperation between African stakeholders and the international civil aviation community for the development of Africa's air transport industry. Also, the Forum underscored the need for private/public partnership in air transport development as a catalyst for economic growth in Africa. Key issues including policy, managerial and regulatory reforms to address operational and technological constraints were discussed.

455. The Forum provided substantive input for the ongoing effort of the African Union in elaborating an appropriate air transport policy, regulatory and institutional framework as well as promoting the enhancement of aviation safety, security and environmental protection in Africa within the context of the 1999 Yamoussoukro Decision on the liberalisation of air transport markets in Africa.

b. Third Conference of African Ministers responsible for Air Transport

456. I am pleased to inform Council that the Commission, in collaboration with the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, organised the Third Conference of African Ministers responsible for Air Transport. The Conference was held in Addis Ababa, from 7 to 11 May 2007 under the theme: *"Achieving a single, safe and secure airspace for Africa's development and integration"*. The conference considered and took decisions on the following major issues:

- Implementation of the 1999 Yamoussoukro Decision on the Liberalisation of Air Transport Markets in Africa:
 - Setting up of the Executing Agency provided for in the Yamoussoukro Decision
 - Harmonisation of air transport competition rules
 - Establishing a dispute settlement mechanism for civil aviation
 - Formulation of a criteria and evaluation of the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision
- Strengthening of the capacities of the African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC);
- Elaboration of a African common external air transport policy: Guidelines for negotiation of air services agreements between African Union States and European Union States;
- Development of an African common civil aviation policy; and
- Strengthening of civil aviation security, safety and environmental protection in Africa.

457. The Ministers also adopted the following main outputs of their conference:

- Resolution on Entrusting the Functions of the Executing Agency of the Yamoussoukro Decision to African Civil Aviation Commission (AFCAC) ;
- Declaration on Civil Aviation Security in Africa; and
- Consolidated Air Transport Plan of Action.

458. A report on the conference has been submitted as a separate agenda item to the Executive Council.

c. **Ninth Meeting of the COMESA Directors of Civil Aviation/Aeronautical Authorities**

459. The Commission participated in the Ninth meeting of the Directors/Aeronautical Authorities of the COMESA region which took place from 4th to 5th April, 2007 at the Prime Holdings in Kigali, Rwanda. The significance of this meeting to the air transport industry in the continent was in relation to the various developments taking place at regional, continental and global levels. In particular, the advances in air transport liberalisation which COMESA in collaboration with SADC and EAC have made for the Eastern and Southern Africa region have provided a significant input to the work of the AU Commission on the same are issue at continental level.

460. At the meeting, it was noted that the three RECs had jointly completed and adopted Competition Regulations and that preparation of Implementation Provisions was at an advanced stage. The meeting also recognized the progress made by the African Union at the continental level in the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision with particular regard to the harmonisation of competition rules, elaboration of a dispute settlement mechanism, strengthening of the Monitoring Body and setting up of the Executing Agency.

461. At the global level, the meeting was kept abreast of new developments with particular regard to the EU common external air transport policy for which Africa under the leadership of the African Union was preparing a common position that will guide African countries in collectively safeguarding their interests in the negotiations of air service agreements with third parties. In that regard, the meeting expressed the wish of the region to support continental endeavours spearheaded by the African Union so as to ensure that the entire continent speaks with one voice on matters of civil aviation.

M.II.4. Maritime Transport

462. The Commission in collaboration with the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, organised the First African Union Conference of Ministers responsible for Maritime Transport under the theme: *"The role of maritime transport in the development of Africa"*. The Conference was held in Abuja, Nigeria, from 19 to 23 February 2007.

463. The Ministers considered and made decisions on the major current issues in maritime transport sub-sector in Africa including:

- Revision of the African Maritime Transport Charter;
- The need to establish a continental maritime transport organisation;
- Strengthening maritime security, safety and marine environment protection;
- Enhancing the efficiency of shipping and port services;
- Human resources development in maritime transport; and
- Forging strong cooperation with key international players in the maritime industry particularly the International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

464. Finally, the Ministers adopted the following key outcomes of their deliberations:

- Abuja Declaration on Maritime Transport in Africa; and
- Maritime Transport Plan of Action 2007-2010.

465. A report on the conference has been submitted as a separate agenda item to the Executive Council.

M.II.5. Rail Transport

466. I would like to inform Council that the Commission, on 6 April 2007 in Algiers, Algeria, signed a Protocol Agreement with the International Union of Railways (IUR) to seal the framework of cooperation between the two parties.

467. Two activities were undertaken under the Brazzaville Plan of Action on Railway Development in Africa (First Conference of African Union Ministers responsible for Rail Transport : Brazzaville, April 2006, endorsed by EX.CL/Dec.294 (IX)) in the context of AU-IUR cooperation, namely :

- The African Union and the International Union of Railways, in collaboration with the South African government, are making preparations for the Professional Conference on Interconnectivity and Interoperability of African rail networks (November 2007) ; and
- Preliminary study on Africa's rail transport development Vision for 2025.

468. Preparation of the Terms of Reference for the study on African Rail Development Fund, in accordance with the Brazzaville Plan of Action, has been finalized. The study is expected to be launched during the second half of 2007.

M.III ENERGY

M.III.1. Hydrocarbons (Oil and Gas)

469. I would like to draw Council attention to the fact that, as part of implementation of the Decisions of the 7th AU Assembly on the Conclusions of the First Conference of African Ministers in charge of Hydrocarbons (Oil and Gas), held in Cairo, Egypt, on 14 December 2006, the following actions have either been concluded or are under implementation:

- Finalization in May 2007 of the joint AU/ADB study on (i) the impact of oil price rise on African economies, (ii) prospects of hydrocarbons sector (Oil and Gas) in Africa, and (iii) the mechanism for establishment and operation of the African Petroleum Fund. A workshop to validate these studies took place at the temporary Headquarters of ADB in Tunis from 11 to 12 June, 2007. The outcomes will be transmitted to AU Member States as prescribed by the Cairo Conference;

- Study on African Continental Hydrocarbons Development and Cooperation Policy : preparation of the Terms of Reference and financing negotiation with African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) are in progress ;
- Study on new and renewable energies, particularly bio-carbons: preparation of the Terms of Reference and preparations for a Seminar on Bio-Carbons scheduled to take place from 30 July to 1 August 2007, are on course.

M.III.2. Electric Energy

470. I have the pleasure to inform Council that the study for formulation of a Continental Policy and Master Plan for Africa's electricity sector development has been commissioned. The major activities under implementation are as follows :

- Evaluation of the current status of the sector;
- Formulation of a continent-wide policy; and
- Preparation of the specifications for formulation of development Master Plan for the sector.

471. The study should, as a matter of fact, draw from the policies and programmes of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and, indeed, with respect to definition of both a Continent-wide Policy and Master Plan, it will be needful to build on the regional policies and Master Plans existing, in preparation or envisaged at the level of the regions, in view of the role of the RECs as the building blocks of African integration.

472. To this end, missions were undertaken to the RECs, the Power Pools and river and lake basins organizations between March and June 2007, to be followed by a validation workshop for this segment of the study which will be staged from 1 to 4 October 2007. The workshop will bring together representatives of the RECs, the Regional Power Pools and the specialized institutions of the sector such as ECA, ADB, NEPAD Secretariat, AFREC and UPDEA.

473. Regarding establishment of a Coordination Commission for the Large-Scale Integrating Hydroelectric Projects, the Commission has launched a legal and institutional study to avail itself of an appropriate and reliable framework for use by all the stakeholders in the development of large-scale integrating hydro-electric projects such as the Grand INGA project in the DRC.

474. The study, additionally, provides for formulation of the outlines of a strategy for implementation of the Grand INGA project. A validation workshop for this study will also take place from 1 to 4 October 2007.

M.IV. TELECOMMUNICATION AND THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (ICTs), POSTS

M.IV.1. Proposed Pan-African On-Line Services Network for Tele-Medicine and Tele-Education

a. A Recap of the Project

475. Council will recall that the proposed establishment by India of a Pan-African fibre optics and satellite on-line service network is intended to provide the 53 Member States of the African Union with tele-education and tele-medicine services.

476. Two Agreements have been signed between the African Union Commission and India in this regard. The first Agreement signed between the Indian Government and the African Union Commission relates to the general aspects of establishment of the Pan-African Network; the second concluded between the African Union Commission and Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL) concerns the supply, installation, operationalization and maintenance of the network by TCIL for a 5 year period. Furthermore, the Agreement to be signed between TCIL and each Member State was initialled by the two parties.

477. Additionally, the Agreement between India and the Member States desirous of participating in the project, was initiated by the two parties.

b. Implementation of the Project

478. The Commission contributed to implementation of the project through the following major activities :

- Preparation of the texts of the pertinent Agreements and Protocols in the four working languages of the Union, and their transmission to Member States for signature with a view to participating in the project. The Commission has, so far, received the Protocol Agreements signed by twenty-two (22) Member States; and
- Sensitization of States and the key stakeholders to participate in the project.

479. Construction of the Earth Hub Station is underway. A work plan (project implementation plan) will be formulated between the AU Commission, the beneficiary States and the project executing company to ensure effective follow-up and monitoring of the project.

M.IV.2. E-Governance Project (VSAT)

480. I am pleased to inform Council that the African Union e-Governance Project (VSAT) aimed, within the context of the AU institutional transformation, at ensuring full connectivity and providing modern telecommunication services between the Headquarters of the Commission and its Regional and Representational Offices, the Regional Economic

Communities and Member States, through establishment of a satellite interconnection network, has been actualized. The network was officially inaugurated on 25 May 2007 on the occasion of Africa Day.

481. The project will enable the African Union to have its own communication system and, hence, greater autonomy in terms of services and their availability. The network will provide the African Union with video conference capacities, high speed internet access, IP telephony and integrated data management facility. Construction of the Master Station (HUB) at the Commission Headquarters has been completed.

482. Project implementation is at advanced stage. The Master Station (HUB) has been completed; and the network was officially inaugurated on 25 May 2007 on the occasion of Africa Day.

M.IV.3. Harmonization of Telecommunication as well as Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) Policies and Regulatory Frameworks

483. The Commission carried out a study to formulate harmonized reference policy and regulatory framework for harmonious and rapid development of regional and continent-wide telecommunication and ICT services and networks.

484. The expected outcomes of the study are as follows:

- Definition of a shared regional and continent-wide vision on the role and expectations of and the needed impetus for the telecommunication and ICT sector ;
- Harmonized reference policy framework for development of the telecommunication and ICT sector, the regulatory practices applicable at regional level and, indeed, at continental level, especially strategic orientations and issues requiring future community directives, etc;
- Identification of cross-cutting studies to be carried out; and
- Appropriate mechanism for cooperation and collaboration among the key players and partners, particularly to foster community approach in the development actions of the sector ;

485. An experts' committee was set up in July 2006 and work commenced in August of the same year. The interim report of the consultants was presented and discussed at a meeting of the Steering Committee held from 8 to 9 April 2007. Furthermore, a summary of the deliberations was presented to the Bureau of African Communication and Information Technologies Ministers at their meeting in Cairo on 27 April 2007.

486. The final report will be submitted to the Extra-ordinary Session of the Conference of African Communication and Information Technologies Ministers due to take place in Addis Ababa in October 2007.

M.IV.4. Project for Creation of a Unified Telecommunication Numbering Space in Africa

487. The main objectives of this project are:

- Arouse the interest of operators to build federative regional networks with African Internet exchange points ;
- Boost the inter-connectivity of the networks and foster creation of continent-wide services;
- Provide a powerful symbol of African unity and integration ;
- Contribute to upscaling competition as well as the telecommunication and ICT services market in Africa ; and
- Help to bridge the digital gap.

488. The preliminary study carried out in 2004 proposed the following options for actualization of the Unified Numbering Space :

- In accordance with recommendation E164, obtain from the International Telecommunication Union a common country code (+28 or 288) or code for group of African countries, to be used by the countries *in tandem* with the current individual international codes;
- Use this common country code mainly for continent-wide ICT oriented services ; and
- Create an African Telecommunication Numbering Space (ATNS) comprising all the countries participating in the project.

489. The conclusions of the preliminary studies were, in March 2005, presented to Member States' experts who approved the option as well as the stages of, and the methodology for, creation of the unified numbering space, and recommended as follows :

- Take the necessary measures to mobilize resources towards the launch of preliminary/preparatory activities;
- Carry out economic feasibility studies to enlist the commitment of Member States to participate in the project;
- Devise public relations plan to promote the project with a view to sensitizing all the players and stakeholders and enlisting the support of the other regions of the world; and
- Undertake sensitization and information campaigns during regional, continental and international telecoms sector events.

490. The project implementation status is characterized by the following main accomplishments :

- Awareness-building and information activities carried out by the Commission in 2005 on the occasion of telecommunications sector events;
- Preparation and transmission to Member States for signature, a Memorandum Agreement for participation in the project; and

- Ongoing study on potential services and on the opportunities offered by the ATNS project.

491. The signing of the Memorandum will pave the way for constituting the group of countries on behalf of which a request for a numbering code will be submitted to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). I hereby invite Council to provide substantial support to this project which is of crucial importance to Member States.

M.IV.5. Harmonization of Postal Service Policies and Regulations, and Strategies to strengthen Africa's Postal Sector

492. The Commission flagged off a study on harmonization of postal service policies and regulations and on strategies to strengthen the postal sector. The study *per se* started on 15 January 2007.

493. An experts' meeting to examine and appropriate the outcomes of the study has been slated for the fourth quarter of 2007.

M.V. OTHER ACTIVITIES

M.V.1. Infrastructure Consortium for Africa (ICA)

494. The third Senior Level Meeting on the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa (ICA) was held in Berlin, Federal Republic of Germany, on 17 and 18 January 2007. It was preceded by an Africa side coordination meeting on 16 January 2007.

495. The ICA meeting discussed the Coordination Mechanism for the Development of Infrastructure elaborated by the African Union which defines the roles of the various actors including the Member States, RECs, specialised institutions, NEPAD Secretariat, ADB and the African Union were defined. This was one of the issues that needed to be addressed as a priority in order to eliminate the apparent overlap and duplication of efforts.

496. Also, the need to strengthen the capacities of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the African Union Commission (AUC) to promote and facilitate the implementation of regional and continental infrastructure projects was underscored.

497. Another key issue raised was the need for the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa to meet the expectation of Africa by making a difference in facilitating resource mobilisation. The Consortium was requested by the African side to focus on new strategies that would bring about a radical departure from traditional funding arrangements and lead to massive increase in funding commitments and effective disbursement procedures.

M.V.2. Workshop on G8 Capacity Building Initiative to Strengthen the Pan African Governance Architecture for Infrastructure

498. The Commission with support of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the African Development Bank (ADB), organized a workshop to consider strategies for the implementation of the capacity building initiative for the RECs at the AU Headquarter in Addis Ababa on 5 and 6 March 2007.

499. During the workshop the following main issues were discussed:

- Clarification of the role of each actor;
- Definition of capacity building needs basing on the roles and competencies of each actor;
- Harmonisation of donors' activities in supporting regional integration.

500. Specifically, the workshop considered the roles and needs of the various institutions at national, regional and continental levels with regard to elaboration and implementation of infrastructure policies, strategies, regulations, programmes and projects. Later in May 2007, ADB hosted a working meeting to clarify technical details for the capacity building initiative relating to governance structure, institutional and legal issues as well as target funding levels and implementation timeframe. It was generally agreed that the proposed Capacity Building Facility be integrated into the NEPAD-IPPF Special fund in view of the need to avoid the creation of new instruments.

M.V.3. NEPAD Medium to Long Term Strategic Framework (MLTSF)

501. The NEPAD infrastructure Medium to Long Term Strategic Framework (MLTSF), currently under preparation, is a successor framework programme to the ongoing AU/NEPAD infrastructure Short Term Action Plan (STAP). The Commission is a key stakeholder in the formulation of the MLTSF, which would constitute the overall continental framework programme for infrastructure development in Africa in the medium to long term. In that context, the African Union Commission has overall leadership role as the Chairperson of the MLTSF Steering Committee.

502. A team of consultants has been engaged by ADB to conduct a study for the elaboration of the MLTSF. The team has already submitted Part 1 of the study which comprised of proposals to speed up implementation of STAP projects, analysis of infrastructure and services gaps affecting the competitiveness of African economies and development of continental infrastructure data base.

503. Regional Workshops were conducted to review and validate the study outcome prior to the commencement of the next phase. The workshops in which the Commission participated and officiated were held in Libreville, Gabon for Central Africa in March 2007, Tunis, Tunisia in early April 2007 for North Africa, in Arusha, Tanzania in late April 2007 for Eastern and Southern Africa and in Abuja, Nigeria in early May 2007 for West Africa. A continental workshop to be hosted by the African Union has been scheduled for Addis Ababa in late July 2007 to conclude the review of Part 1 of the study.

M.V.4. Adoption of Coordination Mechanism for Infrastructure Development

504. The mechanism was developed by the Commission in concert with ADB and NEPAD Secretariat, and broadened to include the RECs and AU Specialized Institutions.

505. The document was presented at several meetings, including that of the ICA (G8) in Berlin on 17 January 2007. The final version of the mechanism was adopted by the ICA (G8) meeting held in Addis Ababa, Headquarters of the Commission, from 6 to 7 March 2007.

M.V.5. European Union-Africa Partnership on Infrastructure Development in Africa

506. The African Union Commission and the European Commission plan to officially launch the activities of the EU-Africa Partnership and the African Infrastructure Steering Committee at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa on 5-6 September 2007.

507. The objective of this Partnership is to fast-track infrastructure development in the transport, energy, water and sanitation sectors, as well as in ICT sector with a view to achieving better connectivity at national, regional and continental levels.

508. Continental and regional level investments will be facilitated, thanks to establishment of a Trust Fund constituted by nine EU Member States, and lodged at the European Investment Bank (EIB). The donations made into this Fund which has already been set up amount to 87 million Euros.

M.V.6. Launch of the African Energy Commission

509. I am glad to inform Council that the minimum number of ratifications (15) required for AFREC to become operational was attained as far back as December 2006. Three more instruments of ratification have since been deposited with the Commission; thus enabling the experts to commence consideration of the legal and regulatory texts for establishment and functioning of the organs of AFREC.

510. Pursuant to the Convention establishing the Commission, its official launch will take place at its Headquarters in Algiers, Algeria, on 22 October 2007. Two experts' meetings are to be held before that date, under the auspices of the African Union Commission. The first took place in Addis Ababa on 21-22 May 2007; and the second will be held in August or September 2007 in Algiers.

511. With AFREC operationalized, it is planned to hold, in Accra, Ghana, in November 2007, the First General Assembly of the African Electro-Technical Standardization Commission which is a subsidiary organ of AFREC. Two technical preparatory meetings have already been held under the auspices of the African Union Commission, the second of which took place at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa from 16 to 18 April 2007. I take

this opportunity to appeal to Member States to all sign and ratify this important instrument which has a crucial role to play in regard to African infrastructure.

N. RURAL ECONOMY AND AGRICULTURE

512. Since the submission of the last report in January 2007, there have been significant developments with regard to the implementation of the African Agriculture Agenda within the framework of the Comprehensive Africa's Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the Sirte Declaration on Agriculture and Water, and follow up on processes in the implementation of previous African Union Summit Decisions. The Commission has continued to work with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and its partners and has focused its interventions on key selected areas of comparative advantage where its leadership has value addition and could make significant impact on Africa's agricultural growth and rural development, and management of the environment and natural resources.

N.I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL AGENDA WITHIN THE CAADP-SIRTE FRAMEWORK

513. Following the endorsement of the CAADP-Sirte Integrated Plan by the Summit of Heads of State and Government during its seventh ordinary session in Banjul, 2006 under Decision Ex.Cl/Dec.297 (IX) and in order to operationalize the integrated Plan, the Commission, NEPAD and RECs held a consultative meeting in order to build and reinforce their coordination capacity, alignment of efforts, definition of roles, collective effort to mobilize resources for agriculture agenda and investment in Africa. The three institutions have agreed to hold and institutionalised two meetings every year between the Commission, NEPAD and RECs agricultural teams with aim to provide the platform for the three key institutions to: report on progress, achievements and challenges in the implementation of the agriculture agenda in Africa; address collective understanding and alignment of goals and targets of the agriculture programme at continental, regional and national levels; internalise and institutionalise interactions between the Commission, NEPAD and RECs for an ultimate smooth coordination and reporting of progress on the Africa's agriculture agenda, among others. The first meeting that was planned for May 2007 has been postponed to take place 26 to 28 September 2007. Terms of Reference for the Reporting Meeting and the Guidance Note have been prepared. The outcome of the meeting will feed into AU Ministerial Meeting in March 2008. Other major issues agreed upon for collective efforts under this framework include: developing a coherent communication system and joint strategy for resource mobilization from domestic and foreign sources.

514. The most significant achievement has been the launching of the CAADP Country level process. The first country that has undertaken this process is Rwanda. The Rwanda CAADP Country Round Table took place in March 2007. The significant output of this process included: 1) Investment frameworks within the CAADP Pillars and early action programmes; 2) Rwanda CAADP Compact to support the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the transformation of agriculture under its economic development and poverty reduction strategy.

N.II. MAPUTO DECLARATION ON THE ALLOCATION OF AT LEAST 10% OF NATIONAL BUDGETS TO THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

515. As a follow up to the implementation of the 10% national budget allocation to the agriculture sector, the AU and NEPAD jointly continue to monitor the implementation of this decision by member states and collect and analyse data regularly from member states. In order to improve the quality and accuracy of data collected at the country level, the AUC and NEPAD mobilized \$50,000 from the World Bank to be used by the FAO to enhance and build capacity of member states in data collection and analysis. Following initial data collection from 19 countries, the AU/NEPAD in collaboration with the FAO have obtained data from 36 Member States comprising four consecutive years from 2002 to 2005. Analysis of this data is ongoing and advocacy for implementation of the Maputo Declaration is also ongoing

516. More specifically within the CAADP-Sirte Framework, the Commission through the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture has undertaken its priority activities as follows:

N.II.1. IMPLEMENTATION OF CAADP: PILLAR 1: Extending the Area under Sustainable Land Management and Reliable Water Control Systems

a. Climate Change

517. Following the adoption of a Decision on Climate Change by the 8th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union in January 2007, the Commission embarked on the elaboration of a programme of implementation of the Climate Change for Development Strategy and Action Plan. This exercise is being undertaken in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). When concluded the Programme of Implementation, designed to enhance implementation of adaptation and mitigating measures to increase Africa's resilience to Climate Change and Variability, will be submitted to the development partners for assistance in its implementation.

b. Green Wall for the Sahara Initiative

518. In January 2007, the Assembly in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, adopted a Decision endorsing the Green Wall for the Sahara Initiative. Since the adoption of this landmark Decision, the Commission initiated a process for the development of a master plan that will focus more specifically on Transboundary issues regarding the implementation of the Initiative. Efforts are also underway to encourage the Member States concerned, to proceed with the implementation of the Initiative at the national level.

c. Disaster Risk Reduction

519. I would like to inform Council that the Commission has received Technical Assistance from the Secretariat of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UN/ISDR) for the implementation of the Africa Regional Strategy for

Disaster Risk Reduction. Through collaboration with the UN/ISDR and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) in the World Bank, an ECOWAS experts and Ministerial meeting was held on 17 and 18 May 2007, to look into modalities for translating the ECOWAS Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction, adopted in January 2007, into action. The Commission will continue to consult with other RECs to review their strategies or develop new and also develop regional programmes of implementation.

d. Transboundary Water Management

520. In efforts to enhance the implementation of the “*Sirte Declaration on the Challenges of Implementing Integrated and Sustainable Development in Agriculture and Water in Africa*” the Commission continued to work closely with the African Ministers’ Council on Water (AMCOW) to strengthen existing River and Lake Basin Organizations (R/LBOs) by bringing them together, under one organizational body. To this end, The Commission, in collaboration with the African Network of Basin Organizations (ANBO) organized a meeting for the Chief Executives of River and Lake Basin Organisations in South Africa in March 2007. Consequently, ANBO’s revised its statutes membership structure to give the river and Lake Basin organizations center stage membership and to provide technical support to AMCOW on matters of transboundary waters management in the continent.

e. AMESD (African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development)

521. With regards to implementation of the African Monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable Development (AMESD), significant process has been registered. The Commission and the EU are currently in the process of identifying a company or consortium to provide Technical Assistance and it is hoped that project implementation will take off in earnest in the last quarter of 2007.

N.II.2. IMPLEMENTATION OF CAADP: PILLAR II: Improving Infrastructure and Trade-related Capacities for Market Access

Establishment of an African Common Market for Food Products

522. Council will recall that, at the Assembly of the Heads of State and Government that took place in Lusaka in July 2001, it was decided that a possible solution to Africa’s food insecurity problem was the creation of an African common market for agricultural products. The Commission, in partnership with the FAO started the process for the establishment of the African Common Market for Basic Food Products. Following the project inception workshop in September 2006 at the AUC, the project is now in its crucial phase; consultants have been engaged and are working on various project components such as identification and analysis of trade and market constraints, analysis of agricultural commodities flows within and among Regional Economic Communities, identification of products with great potential and analysis of legal issues affecting trade in Africa. The final report is expected to be produced by the end of June 2007; then a consultation workshop will be held for key stakeholders to review the report and develop a strategy and action plan for the establishment of the African Common Market for Food Products.

N.II.3. IMPLEMENTATION OF CAADP: PILLAR III: Increasing Food Supply and Reducing Hunger

a. African Seed and Biotechnology Programme (ASBP)

523. During the 5th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union (AU) in Sirte, Libya, in July 2005, the need to formulate an Africa-wide seed and biotechnology programme was recommended as one of the priority areas for the development of Africa. Consequently, the AUC and FAO developed a concept document for the proposed African Seed and Biotechnology Program (ASBP). The programme concept proposes an integrated approach and aims at providing a strategy for the comprehensive development of the seed sector and appropriate biotechnology techniques and products for Africa. The ASBP concept was presented to Member States Experts and at the Abuja Food Security Summit and was finally endorsed by the 8th General Assembly of the AU session in January 2007. The programme document has been circulated to all Member States and letters have also been written to potential donors informing them about the ASBP proposal and soliciting their support in the implementation of this decision. A training programme at the FAO headquarters in Rome on May 28-June 1, 2007 will further address the strategies and framework to be used in developing project profiles necessary for the implementation of the programme in Member States.

b. Implementation of the Abuja Declaration on Fertilizer for the African Green Revolution.

524. I would like to remind Council that the Abuja Declaration on Fertilizer for the African Green Revolution was adopted on the 13th of June 2006 in Abuja, Nigeria. Since then, a number of activities have been carried out towards the implementation of this declaration in the continent. At the continental level, 30 countries and 4 Regional Economic Communities (RECs) have developed country and regional strategies, a monitoring and evaluation tool to assess and report on progress has been developed and is in the process of being disseminated to member states to obtain information on the progress made towards the implementation of this decision. As a first step towards the implementation of Resolution 8 of the declaration, The Southern African Development Community (SADC) and The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) are developing an action plan for regional procurement and distribution of fertilizer. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has already initiated steps to harmonize regional policies and regulations to ensure duty and tax free movement of fertilizers across regions in the implementation of Resolution 2 of the declaration. The Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has submitted a concept paper to the African Development Bank for a 1-year study to develop a regional fertilizer policy. The Economic Community for Central African States (ECCAS) is currently holding discussions with AU/NEPAD to identify key priority action and develop a project proposal for the implementation of its regional strategy. The East African Community, (EAC), The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD) are yet to develop regional strategies.

525. At the country level, Resolution 3 (Developing and scaling up input distribution networks, Resolution 5 (Granting targeted subsidies) and Resolution 10 (Improving farmer

access to complementary inputs) have generated the highest level of response at the country level. For example, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Swaziland are improving farmer access to fertilizer by developing and scaling up input distribution networks. Madagascar, Egypt, Botswana, Tanzania and also Swaziland are improving farmer access to complementary inputs and services.

526. Regarding the private sector initiatives for fertilizer production, Malawi is building a fertilizer granulation plant with assistance from the Taiwanese Government. This plant is to begin production around this year. A private company plans to produce specialty compound fertilizers to meet growing demand for crop specific products in Kenya while in Nigeria, the Nigerian Fertilizer Company is being rehabilitated and will produce fertilizer during the 2nd quarter of 2007.

527. In accordance with Resolution 11, which states inter alia “The African Development Bank with the support of the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union Commission is called upon to establish by 2007 an African Fertilizer Development Financing Mechanism”, The ADB drafted a framework and legal instrument for the establishment of the African Fertilizer Financing Mechanism (AFFM). On the 2nd of May this year, the ADB convened the first joint ADB/Partners Consultation Meeting of the Africa Fertilizer Financing Mechanism. The outcomes of the consultative meeting include a follow up meeting later in July on the AFFM, the Board of the AfDB is expected to consider the AFFM by September 2007 and then a partners pledging conference is to be organized under the aegis of AUC/ECA by the AfDB by October 2007.

N.II.4. Implementation of the CAADP Companion Document

a) Fisheries

528. The Sirte Declaration of 2004 calls for the AU Commission to “*promote the development of fishery resources, develop fishing methods and equipment, improve facilities for their preservation, storage, distribution and processing, and encourage regional cooperation in the field of fishing, including the protection of fishery resources in our exclusive economic zones*”. In this context the AUC is working with African Regional Fisheries Organizations, RECs and Member States to harmonize policies especially as pertains to negotiating Fisheries Access Agreements.

i. Fisheries Access Agreements

529. Fisheries access agreements are often presented as being unfair to the respective African coastal states with most of the benefits accruing to the foreign countries involved. It is also argued frequently that these agreements have contributed to the over-exploitation of fisheries resources and the use of unsustainable practices. The Commission has been working with the FAO on a study to assist member states to negotiate agreements that reflect the rights and interests of African coastal states, through the development of negotiating materials/guidelines as well as through training of personnel of member states with a view to improving their negotiation skills. During the months of February-March, consultancy missions were carried out in several countries in West Africa, East Africa and Southern Africa. The draft report, strategy and action plan have been finalized and will be

reviewed at a workshop on July 10-11, 2007 by selected Member States and key Stakeholders.

ii. Strategic Partnership for a Sustainable Fisheries Investment Fund in the Large Marine Ecosystems in Africa

530. The Strategic Partnership for a Sustainable Fisheries Investment Fund in the Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs) of Africa is a new initiative to make additional financing from the GEF (Global Environment Facility) and other partners available to coastal countries in Africa to help support sustainable marine fisheries. Essentially, the initiative includes: (i) the Sustainable Fisheries Investment Fund, which is a financing mechanism to make available US\$60 million in GEF grants over the next 10 years to co-finance country-level projects aimed at sustainable marine fisheries, and (ii) the Strategic Partnership of stakeholders, donors and regional organizations which is chaired by the African Union. During the Months of January to June 2007, a proposal by Senegal was accepted for funding and one for Kenya is being considered. The Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) which the AU Chairs also negotiated a grant of \$1,000,000 for its activities over a three year period.

N.II.5. Cross-cutting Issues

a) A Framework and Guidelines for Land Policy in Africa

531. During the period under review, the efforts by the African consortium comprising three of African's sister institutions namely, the African Commission (AUC), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Development Bank (ADB), under the leadership of the African Union Commission (AUC), continued to pursue and strengthen its partnership to lead the process of developing an Africa-wide Land Policy Framework and Guidelines as well as modalities for its implementation at country, regional and continental levels that is aimed to secure land rights, increase productivity, improve livelihoods, enhance natural resource management and contribute to broad-based economic growth on the continent. The consortium has built and consolidated its partnership and collaborative efforts with institutions that are leading regional land policy and land reform initiatives. The consortium continues to mobilize resources for the initiative.

532. Two major tasks have been undertaken during the period under review. 1) An expert group meeting was held in May 2007 to create an approach for developing national and regional land indicators, which will be used for the measurement of the performance of countries in the implementation of their land policies and related reforms. The meeting also aimed to get an initial list of benchmarks and indicators for measuring progress in addressing the key land issues in Africa. A consensus was reached on the elements of the roadmap for the development, review and advocacy for the benchmark and indicators in relation to the pan African land policy framework. 2) Work is underway to undertake regional assessments in collaboration with SADC in Southern Africa, which will document the regional specificities and realities on the ground. Other similar work will follow in the other regions. The findings from these assessments will form the basis for discussions during the forth-coming regional consultations in all the five regions of the continent. The main outcome of regional consultations will be an enriched draft continental framework and guidelines of the land policy and land reform with clear Benchmarks and Indicators.

b) Establishment of an African Farmer's Forum (AFAFO)

533. I would like to report to Council that, during the period under review, the process towards the establishment of an African Farmers Forum (AFAFO), which will build on existing national and regional initiatives, is underway. The Commission will facilitate to ensure farmers and their organizations drive the process. The goal and the objective of the Forum is to mobilize collective strengths and capabilities of small to medium scale farmers and promote and strengthen their capacity including women and the youth and their organizations. Specifically, the Forum will: promote regional integration in Africa through the development of a networking platform of farmers' organizations to allow farmers across Africa interact through meetings, workshops, bulletins, media and other means so as to build common understanding of their problems and resolves in order to reduce hunger and poverty and contribute to Africa's prosperity; forge partnerships in priority areas of cooperation and build the capacity of farmers' organizations in these areas of cooperation; share, promote and scale-up best practices, and develop and harmonize common standards for Africa's agriculture; advocate for increased investment in rural economy and collectively hold accountable and reinforce transparency and good governance of all the agricultural and rural development service providers; and promote global integration by carrying the voice of Africa to the global level through contacts with organizations and countries of the other continents such as the G8, European Union, OECD, WTO and bilateral organizations. The Commission has commenced the process to undertake an inventory and assessment on the status of national and regional farmers' organizations, cooperatives and their networks.

c) Pastoral Policy Initiative

534. Following the approval of an action line on Pastoral Policy Initiative for 2007, the Commission embarked on the development of a *Policy Framework on Pastoralism in Africa*. This is in response to an advocacy tool to promote development and improve livelihoods in pastoral communities of Africa. The policy framework will define the principles, guidelines, strategies and practical approaches for articulating clearly the unique needs of pastoral communities and their institutions and how the efforts of key stakeholders and their institutions can be harnessed and interventions tailored to address them in a sustainable manner. It will add value to the development process by providing a vision, strategy and road map for achieving multiple/multi-sectoral development objectives in pastoral communities of Africa.

535. During the period under review, the Commission in collaboration with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) Pastoral Communications Initiative (PCI) has engaged a consultative process for developing the Policy Framework. A concept note to chart the way forward has been finalized and an Inception/Planning Workshop is planned for June 2007 to bring together key stakeholders, institutions, experts and policy makers dealing with pastoral issues in Africa. This important workshop will define the road map for the process.

N.III. SPECIALIZED PROGRAMMES

N.III.1. PATTEC (Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign)

536. 2006 saw the initiation of activities in the execution of tsetse and trypanosomiasis eradication projects in several countries within the framework of the PATTEC initiative. As a result of these activities, Botswana and Namibia were rendered tsetse and trypanosomiasis-free. During the Assembly in the Summit that was held in Addis Ababa in January 2007, the Presidents of Botswana and Namibia were each presented with the *African Union Trophy of the Last Tsetse Fly* to acknowledge this achievement. As a follow up to this success, aerial spraying operations will, beginning May 2007, be carried out from a new tsetse eradication front that has now shifted to Zambia and Angola, without which Botswana and Namibia will be in danger of being re-infested by tsetse flies.

537. The 6 countries (Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali and Uganda), which received support (totalling US\$70 million) from the African Development Bank (ADB) have now entered the second year in the execution of projects aimed at the creation of tsetse and trypanosomiasis – free zones in these countries; and the PATTEC Coordination Office has now entered a new phase of monitoring and evaluating the progress in the different countries where action on the ground is gathering speed.

538. In February 2007, a special donors' conference on PATTEC, jointly organised by the Commission and the ADB, was held in Addis Ababa, from which over US\$320 million was pledged mainly by tsetse-affected countries. The ADB pledged US\$75 million, which has been allocated for use in supporting tsetse eradication projects in the next set of 12 countries, namely: Angola, Zambia, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Central African Republic, Togo, Benin and Cameroon. The PATTEC Coordination Office has organised several technical planning workshops to discuss the details of the project proposals in these countries as well as modalities of cooperation between countries that will undertake action in areas of a common tsetse belt.

N.III.2. AU-IBAR (Inter African Bureau for Animal Resources)

539. Recognizing the role of livestock in Africa as a viable pathway out of poverty, the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) continues to exercise its mandate of improving the continents livestock sector. The following are the activities undertaken during the period under review:

a) Fight against HPAI (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza) – Government of China/AU-IBAR collaboration

540. Control the scourge of the HPAI from the dreaded evolution into a pandemic has been a major concern to IBAR during the first half of 2007. The AU-IBAR has spearheaded the continent's concerted effort to control the HPAI epidemic through many channels available to it. The cooperation and communication on HPAI between the Government of China and the African Union is on course. The Chinese Ministry of Agriculture is providing

five experts from the Chinese Animal Health and Epidemiology Centre in support of African Union initiatives on Avian Influenza prevention and control through AU/IBAR in Kenya and Mali. This collaboration with China will also help to establish epidemio-surveillance systems and Avian Influenza diagnostic laboratories. In addition, training courses for senior technical officers engaging in prevention and control of AI in member states especially in the National Emergency Response Action Plans (ERAP) with a view to provide some suggestions or guidelines for updating the Action Plans.

b) Multi-institutional collaborations

541. In collaboration with ILRI, CDC, FAO OVI and FAO/OIE, AU-IBAR the first of two major training exercises on advanced laboratory training courses in the diagnosis of highly pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) was implemented in April/May 2007 in South Africa. The ultimate objective of these courses is to have a network of laboratories in Africa that are capable of carrying out confirmatory diagnosis of HPAI as one of the crucial pillars of implementing national integrated action plans for the prevention and control of HPAI.

c) Pan African program for the Control of Epizootics (PACE)

542. This was the most successful and largest program carried out by AU-IBAR. The programme was officially closed in February 2007. Executed at a cost of 77 million Euros over a 7 year period in 32 African countries, with remarkable achievements of eradicating Rinderpest from 95% of the continent as well as the establishment of epidemio-surveillance systems and improved veterinary service delivery systems in member states. The programme was executed with the financial support of the EU.

d) Somali Ecosystem Rinderpest Eradication and Control Unit (SERECU)

543. This project is concerned with the eradication of the dreaded Rinderpest disease from Africa. The last pocket of the disease is suspected to be in the Somalia ecosystem and phase I of the project has identified the last remaining 27 focal points. Phase II which costs 3.9 million Euros was signed with the EU and about to commence. It will put the final end to Rinderpest worldwide, a great achievement for AU-IBAR.

e) International Scientific Council for Trypanosomiasis and Control (ISCTRC)

544. The International Scientific Council for Trypanosomiasis and Control (ISCTRC) is an initiative that identifies information gaps, coordinate research, disseminate scientific information, follow up recommendations to member states to improve strategies for addressing human sleeping sickness, nagana (animal trypanosomiasis) and tsetse flies that seriously hinder economic development of 37 affected member states in Africa. During the period under review, the Council has finalised preparations for the 29th biennial scientific conference that will be hosted by the Government of Angola on 17th-21st September 2007 with estimated attendance of over 350 participants including scientists, representatives of member states, international organisations, private sector and donors. Seven satellite capacity building trainings sessions by international organisations and 32nd Meeting of the Council will be organized in Angola.

f) **Pan African Animal Health yearbook**

545. The 2005 edition was released in Feb 2007. This is a compilation of all reported Livestock diseases on the continent in 2005. Copies have been sent to all directors of Veterinary services and partners. It is the basis for information and data on Livestock diseases in the continent and it is anticipated that Animal production data will also be collected for the 2007 edition.

g) **Dryland Wildlife Livestock Environment project**

546. The Dryland Wildlife Livestock Environment project seeks to demonstrate that the mixed wildlife livestock based livelihood system is more sustainable than wildlife or livestock alone, and provides the basis for more sustainable livelihoods than more settled agro-pastoral systems in African Drylands. Between January and June 2007, the project has assessed the status and conflicts on natural resources use, land policies and non sustainable use of wildlife and natural resources in its pilot sites (Burkina Faso and Kenya). Community's conservation initiatives have also been supported through capacity building and provision of communication materials and engagement in micro-livestock production.

h) **USAID-funded activities**

547. AU-IBAR provided disease surveillance materials and reagents worth \$52,000 to the veterinary department in an effort to enhance its ability to provide screening services to livestock. In addition, during the recent rift valley fever outbreak, AU-IBAR contributed to the efforts of the Government of Kenya through the provision of logistics (three mobile laboratories and 2 passenger vehicles) for vaccinations, treatment and purposive surveillance to guide the vaccination teams. This effort, together with inputs of other partners, enabled the outbreak to be controlled within three months.

N.III.3. AU-IAPSC (Inter African Phytosanitary Council)

548. The Inter African Phytosanitary Council ensures coordination of Member States in preventing the introduction, establishment and spread of pests of plants and plant products, and promotes appropriate measures for their control in Africa. It helps the 53 member states of the African Union to adopt International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures, reinforce capacity building of human resources in phytosanitary measures, and together with National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPO's) of the continent let them adopt or set up modules in the areas of phytosanitary legislation, pest diagnostic capabilities, pest risk analysis, surveillance, pest free areas, places and sites of production,; pest reporting and eradication, inspection systems at points of entry and exit, export certification and institutional aspects.

549. During the period under review, the IAPSC office planned and undertook the following activities:

- Organization of training workshop in Eastern, Southern and Central Africa;
- Contact with NPPO (National Plant Protection Officers) focal points;
- Participation to the 20th ordinary session of Sahalian Pesticides Committee (CSP) in Bamako;
- Visit to Croplife Cameroon members and HYDRAC at Douala.

a) **Organization of a Training Workshop in Eastern, Southern and Central Africa**

550. Within the context of executing a formulated recommendation from the General Assembly, Yamoussoukro, (Ivory Coast), in April 2002, the IAPSC head office instructed the Department of pests and pesticides (DPP), to prepare from the preliminary study, a Seminar/workshop project on the Phytosanitary control and plant quarantine in favour of member States of East African countries sub-region. This study has indicated that the training of plant quarantine and phytosanitary control agents is important and of vital need in the chosen sub region. This project has been prepared by the Inter-African Phytosanitary Council of African Union to response to the need of those member States.

551. With the support of a part of Solidarity Funds three training workshops have been successfully organized in Eastern Africa (Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania from 18th to 20th December 2006); Southern Africa (Harare, Zimbabwe from 24th to 26th January 2007); and Central Africa (N'djamena, Tchad from 28th to 30th March 2007). The Theme of the three workshops was "Training Workshop for Phytosanitary Inspectors and Plant Quarantine Officers. Countries that participated in the East African workshop included Burundi, Commoros, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Uganda, Zambia, and Tanzania. The following countries participated in the Southern Africa workshop: Namibia, Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana, Madagascar, and Zimbabwe. Countries that participate in the Central African workshop included: Congo Brazzaville, Sao Tome and Principe, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, and Chad.

b) **Contact with NPPO (National Plant Protection Officers) Focal Points**

552. In the margin to the training workshop organized at N'djamena from 28 to 30 March 2007, the director and the Senior Scientific Officer held this opportunity to discuss with NPPO focal point coming from Congo, Cameroon, Central Republic of Africa, Gabon and Chad. The main item of the discussion were the implementation and problems encountered. During the meeting the Director inform them about the idea of organizing a training workshop with the participation of all IAPSC focal point.

c) **Participation in the 20th Ordinary Session of Sahelian Pesticides Committee in Bamako, Mali**

553. IAPSC took part in the 20th ordinary session of Sahalian Pesticides Committee (SPC) in Bamako, Mali. As associate member, the IAPSC participated at the sub-committee in charge of physico-chemistry file and the sub-committee for biological efficacy test.

d) **Visit to CropLife Cameroon Members and HYDRAC in Douala**

554. IAPSC paid a short visit to the pesticides partners of Cropelife Cameroon and HYDRAC (Hydrocarbons, Analyses and Controls) from 08 to 12 May 2007. The main goal of that visit was just strengthen the good relationship between CropLife Cameroon and HYDRAC. The Director of IAPSC also held that occasion to inform the above mentioned partners about the opening at IAPSC of the Department in charge of Pests and Pesticides

heading by the Senior Scientific Secretary, entomologist. At the end of the visit the following recommendations were retained:

555. With Croplife Cameroon:

- Prepare an agreement between Croplife Cameroon and IAPSC
- Prepare a leaflet for pesticides uses between IAPSC and Croplife Cameroon
- Jointly organization of different training workshops between IAPSC and Croplife Cameroon

556. With HYDRAC:

- Prepare an agreement between HYDRAC and IAPSC to strengthen the file of the creation of two reference laboratories for residue analyses and formulation of pesticides.

N.III.4. PANVAC (Pan African Veterinary Vaccine Centre)

557. During the period under review, PANVAC in line with its missions renewed all the laboratory equipment and consumables of the quality control laboratories and undertook International Independent Quality Control of Veterinary vaccines from the national veterinary vaccine producing laboratories of Cameroon, Ethiopia and Kenya. The repository of biologicals has been maintained and cell lines and vaccines seeds were sent to national veterinary laboratory of Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Cote D'Ivoire, Sudan and Kenya. In line with the promotion of the transfer of appropriate vaccine production technologies in Africa PANVAC established a contact with the Vaccine and Injectable Business Unit based in France in order to introduce to national vaccine laboratories the use of new adjuvants for the production of vaccines in Africa.

558. PANVAC provided technical advices to veterinary vaccines laboratories of Burundi, Chad, Cote D'Ivoire, Libya and Uganda. With regards to the production and distribution of essential biological reagents for animal disease diagnosis and surveillance the feasibility study has been completed. PANVAC is strengthening working relationship with international technical organizations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), The FAO, The World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), the OIE reference laboratories in France and UK and the International Laboratory for Molecular Biology (USA). The main constraint of PANVAC is related to the slow process of recruitment of the regular staff as per Maputo approved structure.

O. ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

559. Between January and July 2007, the Economic Affairs Department carried out a number of activities in pursuance of its mandate and within the limits of its budget. Given the nature of the activities in question (premised on preliminary studies), most of them will come on stream in the second half of the current year.

560. With respect to the period under review, the activities undertaken by the Department centre around the following issues:

O.I. AFRICA-EU DIALOGUE

561. In the framework of the Africa-EU Dialogue, the 8th Ministerial Meeting of the Africa-EU Troikas was held in Brussels, Belgium, on 15 May, 2007. This meeting was preceded by Senior Officials meeting from the 12-13th May, 2007. The meeting considered the Draft Outline for a Joint Africa-EU Strategy, the preparations for the Second Africa-EU Summit of Heads of State and Government scheduled for December 2007 in Lisbon, Portugal and reviewed issues pertaining to the strengthening of the Africa-EU dialogue, peace and security, good governance, regional integration and trade, and key development issues. The Ministers endorsed the Outline for a Joint Africa-EU Strategy and adopted a communiqué.

562. The issues that were discussed and considered by the Troika Ministers were the following:

- a) **Enhancing the dialogue between Africa and EU:** The ministers agreed to endorse the outline for a Joint Africa-EU Strategy as a basis for the elaboration of a fully-fledged strategy that should be submitted to the next Ministerial Troika to be held in Accra, Ghana in October 2007. The Strategy will be accompanied by an action plan. The Troika Experts were mandated to work on this urgently as the two documents will be needed for endorsement by the Lisbon Summit.

Ministers once again reiterated the need to expedite work towards the holding of the second Africa-Europe Summit in Lisbon, Portugal in December 2007, where the Joint Africa-EU Strategy would be adopted. The meeting appealed for high-level participation at the Summit by all AU and African States and all EU and EU Member States.

- b) **Peace and Security:** Ministers welcomed the progress attained by the Peace and Security Council and the efforts being made by different parties to bring peace and stability in conflict countries. They exchanged views on the situation in Darfur, the Sudan, Somalia, Cote d'Ivoire and the Great Lakes. The EU pledged to continue supporting AU led efforts in peace making in the conflict areas and to provide financial assistance to the African and Security Architecture including the African Peace Facility. The EU informed the African side of its intention to develop the RECAMP as one of its instruments. Ministers also exchanged views on the situation in Kosovo.
- c) **Governance:** Ministers underlined the need for collaboration between AU and EU on a broad range of governance issues and improving governance in the public and corporate sectors. It was also agreed that there was need to exchange information on the EU Governance Initiative for all parties to have the same understanding on governance issues. The EU indicated its readiness to assist the APRM process from

the assessment phase through to the reform stage. Ministers agree that the two Commissions should convene a meeting of experts on human rights as was agreed in the previous Troika Meeting and to also convene a meeting of experts on cultural goods. It should, however, be noted that the meeting on cultural goods was not budgeted for in the current budget.

- d) **Regional Integration and Trade:** Ministers welcomed the impetus on the on going negotiations Economic Partnership Agreements with a view to complete the negotiation by the agreed deadline. However, the Africa side recalled the Declaration of the AU Summit of January 2007 calling on the EU to consider extending the deadline for the EPA negotiations beyond 2007. Ministers agreed that the EPA process should ensure development and regional integration in Africa. In this regard they agreed to work towards supporting infrastructure for trade and building Africa's productive capacities and addressing the supply side constraints.
- e) **Key Development issues:** The Troika discussed three key issues, migration, energy and infrastructure, and climate change. Ministers welcomed the Declaration of the Joint EU-Africa ministerial conference held in Tripoli in November 2006. They called upon the two Commissions to work on an Action Plan to implement the provisions of the Tripoli Declaration and they agreed that the Action Plan should be presented to the next meeting of the Troika in Accra, Ghana.

On energy and infrastructure, the Troika Ministers noted with appreciation that Partnership called for in the Brazzaville Communiqué from October 2006, in particular at the Africa-Europe Energy Forum held in Berlin 6-7 March 2007. Ministers welcomed the commitments of the EU towards the Energy Partnership, and its integration of the further dialogue into the Joint EU-Africa Strategy, building on the overall framework of the EU-Africa Infrastructure Partnership.

The Troika Ministers noted the information by the EC and the AUC about the launch in September 2007 of the EU-Africa Infrastructure Partnership and Steering Committee to support AU/NEPAD-infrastructure Short Term Action Plan (i-STAP) and Medium to Long Term Strategic Framework (MLTSF) programmes in the sectors of transport, energy, water and sanitation and Information and Communication Technologies to facilitate interconnectivity and access to services at continental, regional and national levels in Africa.

With respect to Climate change, the meeting noted with concern the recent findings of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which provide indisputable evidence that human-induced climate change is happening, and will lead to very negative effects particularly in developing regions, including the African continent. The EU welcomed the discussion on climate change at the AU Summit of January 2007, and stands ready to support the African Union in addressing the climate change challenges. Climate change will be one of the main areas of cooperation under the Joint EU-Africa Strategy, and be discussed as a priority item at the forthcoming EU-Africa summit. "Climate change and development" will also be

the theme of the second European Development Days, taking place in Lisbon 7-9 November 2007.

563. Ministers also agreed that the issues of ODA, debt and the return of illegally acquired funds be reflected upon and worked on for discussion in future.

O.II. AFRICA-EU JOINT STRATEGY

564. Executive Council decided that the African Troika be enlarged to include the “*chef de file*”, and any other interested Member State to follow-up on the cooperation mechanisms and preparations for the Lisbon Summit as well as to finalize the joint Africa-Europe Strategy based on Cairo documents, including other relevant documents, to be presented to the next Ordinary Session of the Executive Council scheduled for July 2007. Pursuant to this decision, the Commission of the African Union and the European Commission worked tirelessly on the outline of the Africa-EU Joint Strategy through a number of brainstorming workshops, consultations with stakeholders such as civil society and the Pan African Parliament on the African side.

565. In drafting the outline, the Drafting team and the Troika Experts recognized that Africa and Europe are bound together by history, culture and geography as well as by a community of values to which they all subscribe. These include: the respect of human rights, freedom, equality, solidarity, justice, the rule of law and democracy as enshrined in the relevant international agreements and in the constitutive texts of the respective Unions. The Africa-EU relationship was strengthened through the institutionalisation of the dialogue, at the historic first EU-Africa Summit held in Cairo, Egypt in April 2000. Since then, there have been fundamental changes in both continents. Considerable democratisation and reform processes have been undertaken and are being deepened in both Africa and Europe, and efforts have continued in both continents to address conflict and crisis situations and, most importantly, the continents have supported one another in dealing with these conflicts and crisis situations.

566. At the same time, integration processes in both continents have accelerated – the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has been transformed into the African Union (AU) and has integrated the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) as its socio-economic programme, while the European Union (EU) has nearly doubled in size. Clearly, these are critical developments that warrant a re-look at our partnership with a view to strengthen and deepen it. It also important to take into account the vast and complex changes that have taken place in the world. In this context, new international and global challenges have surfaced in multilateral trade systems, financial systems and socio-political developments; globalisation has moved forward rapidly and the world has become increasingly interdependent. This makes it imperative that a new relationship based on real partnership of equals be developed and a Joint Strategy is meant to concretise this strategic partnership.

567. The outline for the Africa-EU Joint Strategy contains four main chapters, namely:

- I . Context, shared vision and principles;
- II . Objectives

- III . New approaches
- IV. Strategies, Actors, Implementation and Follow-up Mechanisms

568. The first chapter articulates the context and the imperatives of developing the joint strategy. It also provides the shared vision of the two partners and the principles that govern the strategic partnership. The second chapter outlines the common objectives, which are meant to add value to the strengthened partnership. These objectives are:

- (i) to reinforce and elevate the EU-Africa political partnership to address issues of common concern;
- (ii) to continue to promote peace, security, sustainable development, human rights and regional and continental integration in Africa
- (iii) to jointly address global challenges; and
- (iv) to facilitate and promote a broad-based and wide-ranging people-centred partnership.

569. Chapter three outlines the new approaches to the partnership, which effectively is being elevated at political, social and economic level as well as making it people centred. Chapter four is the operational chapter, which has the key strategies that should be pursued in order to meet the objectives. The other component of the chapter touches on the fundamental importance of involving all stakeholders in the process in particular in the implementation of the strategy. The last component in this chapter addresses the issue of implementation, monitoring and evaluation, financing and follow-up mechanism.

570. The Africa-EU Ministerial Troika at its meeting in Brussels, Belgium, on 15 May 2007 endorsed the outline of the Africa-EU Joint Strategy. In this respect, the Troika mandated the Troika Experts to work on the elaboration of the full-fledged Strategy for its consideration at the next meeting in Accra, Ghana. The Experts will also prepare the first implementation plan with specific targets and time frames.

O.III. PARTICIPATION IN STATUTORY MEETINGS OF COMESA

571. The Commission of the African Union attended the 12th Summit of the COMESA Authority of Heads of State and Government that took place in Nairobi, Kenya, from 22nd to 23rd May 2007. The Summit was preceded by experts and Council Meetings from 14 – 15 and 17 – 19 May 2007, respectively. There were also meetings of the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) Council of Ministers and Committee on Peace and Security comprising Ministers of Foreign Affairs.

572. Amongst others the Summit focused on the following: Trade and Customs Development; Multilateral Issues; Cooperation between COMESA and other RECs and the African Union; Peace and Security.

O.III.1. Trade and Customs Development

573. In accordance with Article 47 of the COMESA Treaty, which stipulates the gradual establishment of a Common External tariff, the Summit adopted the COMESA Common External Tariff structure of four band category as follows:

- Raw materials : 0 %
- Capital goods : 0%
- Intermediate goods : 10%
- Final goods : 25%

574. This is part of the work to be undertaken in preparation for the COMESA Customs Union planned to be launched by December 2008. The Summit agreed to allow Member States to implement these rates with a provision for flexibility on policy space to include sensitive products from the CET with their national policy objectives.

O.III.2 Multilateral Issues

575. The Summit noted the progress on the on-going EPA negotiations between 15 countries in Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) and the European Union since 2004. It was noted that the EPA negotiations were behind schedule with only few months to go before being concluded by December 2007. To this effect, the Summit considered the recommendations made in the study undertaken by the ESA Group, which emphasized the following:

- A temporary continuation of the current trade arrangement;
- A partial agreement on selected issues; and
- An extension of the waiver granted to the European Commission (EC) under the World trade organization (WTO).

576. Further, the Summit was informed that EU is expected to allocate about Euro 465 million to the ESA region for regional projects under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF), which is an increase from Euro 287 million currently being provided for in the 9th EDF.

O.III.3. Cooperation between COMESA and other RECs and the African Union

577. The Summit discussed the on-going work on rationalization of the RECs, currently being implemented by the African Union, as mandated by the Heads of State and Government during the Banjul Summit in July 2006. A document entitled "***Roadmap towards convergence of Regional Integration Programmes in Africa***" was presented and discussed.

578. The document proposed the following recommendations, which were adopted by the Summit:

- The need for the African Union to re-define clearly the timetable for the integration of RECs set out in Article 6 of the Abuja Treaty with the aim of accelerating the vertical integration of the RECs into one Continental programme;
- For Africa to advance the Continental integration, it should start with concrete programmes of harmonization and co-ordination of the activities of the different RECs;
- The African Union should embark on the convergence of integration programmes in Africa to ensure smooth implementation of Africa's integration;
- The harmonization of trade regimes of the different RECs should be structured to focus on attaining an African Common Market;
- Efforts should be taken to protect and consolidate the gains made by such RECs as COMESA, ECOWAS, EAC, and SADC as platform for attaining Continental integration; and
- RECs in the Eastern and Southern region should be encouraged to maintain their efforts towards harmonization of their programmes aimed at attaining convergence, taking into account the ultimate objective of achieving Continental integration.

O.III.4. Recommendations

- Close collaboration is needed between the African Union Commission and the RECs in implementing activities leading to Continental integration;
- The AUC to be part of the COMESA, EAC and SADC Joint Task Force which is aimed at enhancing harmonization and co-ordination of common policies and programmes in order to avoid duplication of efforts;
- Strengthen the linkage between the African Union and the RECs regarding participation of the meetings; and
- All Departments of the Africa Union Commission to work very closely with all the RECs.

579. There is need for a close collaboration between the Panel of the Wise of the AU and the Committee of Elders of COMESA Secretariat, and also between the Continental Early Warning System of the African Union Peace and Security Architecture and the COMESA Early Warning System.

O.IV. CEN-SAD SUMMIT

580. Within the framework of coordination of RECs, Commission participated in the 15th Session of the Executive Council of CEN-SAD and the opening of the 9th Ordinary Session of the Conference of Leaders and Heads of State, held in Sirte, Libya, from 28 May to 3 June 2007.

581. Among the key issues discussed at the Conference were the following. The Summit was informed about the progress made regarding the establishment of a Free Trade Area within the CEN-SAD Community and that the Third CEN-SAD Meeting of Ministers of Trade to be held in the Kingdom of Morocco would further discuss this matter; while taking note of the planned construction of the Al Gaddafi Trans-Saharan Road Project aimed at linking CEN-SAD Member States and underscoring the role played by Afriqiyah Airlines in linking African capitals, the Summit decided that the CEN-SAD Transport Development Masterplan be submitted to the next meeting of CEN-SAD Ministers in charge of Transport and Infrastructure; the idea of a single currency within the region was initiated, and the setting up of a working group comprising Ministers of Finance and Governors of Central Banks was advocated; on the proposed merger of CEN-SAD, ECOWAS and AMU, the Summit requested the Secretariats of the three institutions to work on the fusion of the three constitutive texts.

582. In his address to the meeting, the Commissioner for Economic Affairs thanked CEN-SAD for the ongoing efforts in accelerating the integration efforts of the continent. He underscored the need for a strategic reorientation of the continent in light of the challenges of globalization. In particular, CEN-SAD's initiatives of establishing a Free Trade Area, the promotion of free movement of persons and development of transport infrastructure were noted. He also highlighted some of the key integration endeavours of the African Union, among them, ongoing studies on the rationalization of the Regional Economic Communities, the launch of a Virtual Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) Project on 25, May, 2007, and the mapping out of a strategy for forging inter-regional cooperation. He further announced the proposed signing of the Protocol on the relations between the African Union and the RECs in July 2007.

583. The following are some important AUC recommendations:

- Representation of the Commission of African Union at RECs Summit/Meetings should be emphasized in order to help clarification of issues during the meetings;
- The Technical Committees of financial institutions to examine very carefully the funding modalities and implications of non payments by Member States to these institutions before the setting up of these institutions;
- The issue of rationalization of RECs to be fast tracked as many countries continue to be members of many Regional Economic Communities.

O.V. ELABORATION OF THE AFRICAN STATISTICS CHARTER

584. You may recall that at its 10th Ordinary Session held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January 2007, the Executive Council of the African Union took Decision N^o

DOC.EX.CL/308(X) in which it mandated the Commission to take all the necessary measures to elaborate the African Statistics Charter, in collaboration with the ECA, the ADB, the RECs and regional and national statistics institutes. The draft of this Charter, which constitutes the regulatory framework for the development of statistics in Africa, should, according to the decision of the Executive Council, be submitted to its session in Accra, Ghana, in July 2007.

585. The African Union Commission therefore, in conformity with the decision of the Executive Council, prepared a draft Charter which it submitted to a meeting of experts held in Rubavu, Rwanda from 4 to 6 June 2007. This meeting brought together the senior officials of National Statistics Institutes of Member States, the representatives of statistics units of Regional Economic Communities and partners.

586. After in-depth consideration, the participants adopted the draft Charter with a few amendments and issued a declaration in which they recommended that:

- the representatives of Member States take the necessary steps to promote the draft Charter among their respective authorities;
- the African Development Bank, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the Chair of the current meeting (Rwanda) and the other experts assist, where possible, the African Union Commission in the process of adoption of the Charter by the appropriate policy organs of the Union;
- the African Union Commission evaluate the African Statistical System prior to establishment of the implementation mechanisms of the Charter;
- the African Union Commission take the necessary steps for establishment of a fund for sustainable financing of statistics;
- the members of the African Statistical System ensure promotion of the Charter once it is adopted.

O.VI. ECA CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (29 MARCH-3 APRIL 2007)

587. The main theme of the Conference focused on : « Accelerating Africa's Growth and Development to Meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Emerging Challenges and the Way Forward ». Five challenges were highlighted: growth, employment and inequality, investment financing in the private sector, the decision-making and planning environment, partnership and globalization, peace and security.

588. Analysis showed that the economic performances recorded were uneven and below the objective of 7% set to achieve the MDGs. Recommendations were made to reduce energy dependency, promote renewable energies, mobilize internal and external resources, enhance State action and partnership with the private sector, and provide assistance for elaboration of development strategies.

589. The ECA Business Plan 2007-2009, launched jointly by the UN Secretary General, the Chairperson of the AUC and the President of the ADB, and approved by the last Assembly of the Union in January 2007, represents the strategy for a development vision. In order to achieve the MDGs, the strengthening of statistics and the launching of the Regional Employment Forum should integrate national poverty reduction plans. The International Comparison Programme (ICP) of statistics will enhance the capacities of countries in this area. Collaboration of AU, ECA, ADB and UNDP is a necessity.

590. Autonomous mechanisms should be encouraged to consolidate the financial base of RECs and the efficient exploitation of the resources of the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa established by the G8. A consideration of WTO "Aid for Trade" facility revealed the importance of training and expertise in development. Despite the difficulties encountered in the implementation of the decisions of conferences in Africa, the International Community should honour its commitment in regard to assistance, debt cancellation and the increase of foreign direct investments.

591. In spite of the inadequacies observed in the analysis of poverty in rural areas and the impact of the effects of mass redundancy plans on education and health, the need to align poverty reduction strategies with the MDGs was underscored. These strategies should be based on consolidation of peace, democracy and the rule of law, expansion of the private sector and priority to investments in infrastructure, agriculture, health and education. The Conference made a call for mobilization of African resources. Monitoring and evaluation should be ensured by the AU, ECA, ADB, UNDP, etc.

592. Governance, democratic institutions and social dialogue are the levers of the poverty reduction strategy. Regional integration and training in new technologies are essential for accelerated and sustainable growth. For the inter-governmental mechanisms, three points were noted: (i) – the Joint Annual Conference of Ministers of the AU and the ECA, (ii) – the replacement of inter-governmental committees of experts by sub-regional ministerial conferences, and (iii) the organization of subsidiary organs into 7 sectoral committees.

593. The partnership between the two institutions (AU/ECA), was facilitated by the establishment of a joint secretariat that successfully coordinated the organization of this Conference. This experience will create the necessary conditions for organizing in 2008 the Joint AU-ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development as decided by CAMEF II in November 2006.

O.VII. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS PROVIDED FOR UNDER ARTICLE 9 OF THE CONSTITUTIVE ACT OF THE AFRICAN UNION

594. The process flagging off establishment of the African Financial Institutions provided for under Article 19 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union is in progress. Following the designation of the headquarters of these institutions, the African Investment Bank (AIB) in Libya, the African Central Bank (ACB) in Nigeria and the African Monetary Fund (AMF) in Cameroon respectively, discussions are underway with the different host countries on the Protocol Agreements for establishment in each country of the Steering Committees to do the necessary spadework.

595. At the same time, contacts are being pursued on the strategy to be adopted for establishment of the African Financial Institutions and the creation of a common African currency as well as the participation of the stakeholders, notably the central banks and the Association of African Central Banks (AACB).

O.VIII. THE AFRICAN INTEGRATION REVIEW

596. The African Integration Review is an international multidisciplinary journal aiming to give an opportunity for a wide range of discussion of integration issues in Africa. It considers theoretical research and short articles, and book reviews. It is a bilingual publication (English and French) and comes out twice a year, in July and January.

597. To ensure the quality and the scientific credibility of the journal, the editorial team is comprised of an Editorial Committee from different departments of the Commission, and a Scientific Committee comprising renowned professors from different universities and research institutions across Africa.

598. The first issue of the journal was published in January 2007 and was distributed to Heads of State and Government and Ministers during the 8th Summit of the Commission and to universities and research institutions across Africa. The second issue of the journal will be published and ready for distribution by July 2007.

O.IX. PROTOCOL ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THE AFRICAN UNION AND THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES

599. The 37th OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, in section 8 (b, iii) of its Decision AHG/Dec.160 (XXXVII) of July 2001 in Lusaka, requested “the Secretary General to undertake the necessary consultations with all the RECs in order to examine the implications of the Constitutive Act of the African Union on:

1. the existing institutional, functional and programmatic relationship between the OAU and the RECs;
2. the current and future programmes of the RECs in relation to the objectives of the African Union; and
3. the Protocol between the AEC and RECs with a view to its amendment or to preparing a new protocol to govern the relationship between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities”.

600. To implement this decision, brainstorming sessions and consultations were held with the RECs on the new relations to be maintained between the latter and the African Union. These consultations culminated in the negotiation of a new protocol that was adopted by the 2nd AU/RECs/ECA/ADB Coordination Meeting in June 2004, and submitted in March 2005 for the consideration of the PRC and Legal Experts from Member States, in conformity with Decision Ex.CL/Dec.174 (VI) of the Executive Council.

601. Furthermore, pursuant to Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.112 (VII) of the Banjul Assembly suspending, until further notice, the recognition of new RECs, with the exception of the eight already recognized, namely, ECOWAS, COMESA, ECCAS, SADC, IGAD, AMU, CEN-SAD and EAC; and to Decision Ex.CL/Dec.331(X), of the last session of the Executive Council requesting “the Commission to take all the necessary measures for the signature of the Protocol...”, the Protocol is presented to Council for submission to the Assembly which is requested to authorize the Chairperson of the Commission to sign it on behalf of the Union.

O.X. RATIONALIZATION OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES (RECS)

602. The inception of the African Economic Community called for rationalization of the programmes and activities of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), which are its building blocks. Efforts were made and decisions taken in this regard by the OAU in its time; and then the AU, with a view to building synergy between the activities of the RECs while avoiding any type of duplication,. These efforts led to the 1st Conference of African Ministers of Economic Integration (CAMEI) held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 30 to 31 March 2006, which, *inter alia*, recommended to the Assembly of the Union, which endorsed it by its Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.113(VII), that a study should be conducted by the Commission on the process for the rationalization of RECs, and more specifically, the disadvantages and benefits of the four rationalization scenarios proposed, namely, the Status Quo, the Abuja Treaty, the Focal Point Community and the Political Approach, which constitute another component of the study expected from the Commission.

603. The study which was conducted on the basis of a roadmap and questionnaire addressed to Member States, the RECs, with the exception of the AMU which does not have relations with the Commission, as well as the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), focused on the concept of rationalization, the causes of the latter, and the proposed procedure for rationalization. It recommended, *inter alia*, the review of the integration stages provided for under Article 6 (2) of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community as well the adoption by the RECs of a minimum integration programme.

604. After its validation by a meeting of experts and all stakeholders in the integration process, the study will be submitted for consideration and adoption by the 2nd Conference of African Ministers of Integration scheduled to hold in Kigali, in the second half of July 2007.

O.XI CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN AFRICA

605. In collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC) and financed by the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, the Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) implemented the second edition of the five-week training course on “*Regional Integration for Africa*” for officials from both Anglophone and Francophone Africa, during the last quarter of 2006. This course was targeted at Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as well as the African Union Commission (AUC). Thirty-nine (39) participants successfully, completed this course.

606. The main objective of the course was fourfold: (1) to strengthen the technical capacity of the RECs and the AUC; (2) to foster the understanding of economic integration as a key element of African development; (3) to build synergies and promote experiences among African development professionals and practitioners; and (4) to create a shared vision of opportunities and strategies for reversing the trend of economic marginalization and build capacity for effective management of the process of integration in Africa.

607. It should be noted that the enthusiasm and appreciation with which the training course was welcomed by the RECs and other participants as well as its conclusive results led the Commission to initiate talks with our partners in the domaine, namely the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) and the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) in order to organize a third edition, which BADEA has already agreed to finance.

O.XII. ASSESSING AFRICA'S PROGRESS TOWARDS THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS, 2007

608. It would be recalled that the Fifth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union in Sirte, Libya, July 2005, adopted a Common Position on the Review of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Millennium Declaration. The Common Position formed the basis for interventions of AU Member States at the United Nations High Level Conference on the MDGs in September 2005. In addition to adopting the Common African Position, the Assembly "mandated the Commission of the African Union, in collaboration with the ECA, AfDB, NEPAD and RECs to monitor the implementation of the MDGs and continue with the pertinent reflections in order to present to the Assembly at its annual Sessions" (Assembly/AU/Dec.78 (V).

609. In this regard, a Report on Assessing Africa's Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, 2007, was prepared in collaboration with the ECA and AfDB. The Report highlights the many challenges faced in achieving the goals, outlines scaling up actions, which are needed now, and beyond 2015 and proposes some policy recommendations. The Report notes specifically the following:

- Africa has experienced improvements in the political and economic environments, a crucial pre-condition for achieving the MDGs;
- Africa's recent growth performance has improved from 3.0% in 1999 to 5.2% in 2006, which has also translated to a favourable per capita annual income growth of 3% on average. However, employment creation for the larger part of the population is a very important element in the context of growth;
- Economic diversification would also need to be matched by equitable access to education and health care to promote the acquisition of the skills;
- Finally, Africa's progress towards the MDGs is facing a number of challenges most of which are inter-related. Hence, success in tackling them is critically dependent on simultaneous action on many fronts, including; growth, employment and

inequality, scaling up financing for public sector investments, policy environments, regional integration partnerships and globalization, peace and security, relevant and sufficient statistical data.

P. TRADE AND INDUSTRY

P.I. INTRODUCTION

610. During the period under review, the Commission has undertaken to implement its work programme as well as Declaration Assembly/AU/Decl.2(VIII) on Economic Partnership Agreements and Declaration Assembly/AU/Decl.3(VIII) on WTO negotiations endorsed by the January 2007 Summit held in Addis Ababa.

P.II. INTRA-AFRICAN TRADE/CUSTOMS COOPERATION

P.II.1. Harmonization of Customs Procedures

611. Council will recall Assembly decision in Banjul that “*urged the RECs to coordinate and harmonize their policies among themselves and with the Commission with a view to accelerating Africa’s integration process*”. In implementing such decision, the Commission initiated the process of harmonization of Customs procedures by organizing in April 2007 two Customs Experts workshops on Rules of Origin and Capacity Building initiatives respectively.

612. The workshop on Rules of Origin which is the first of a series of workshops to be organized in this area has concluded that the coordination process between the AU and the RECs needs to be firmed up so as to ensure greater synergy and effectiveness and should be addressed in a holistic manner, that all stakeholders should be involved and studies conducted to assess the impact of harmonization. In the very short term, a comparison matrix on the various rules applicable should be elaborated.

613. The workshop on Capacity Building which is also the first of a series has agreed on elements of a continental strategy which highlights the promotion of the vital role of Customs in the 21st century. It includes maximization of the use of the WCO Columbus Diagnostic Programme and encouragement to Member States’ administrations to develop holistic long term development plans in the area of Institutional Capacity, Infrastructure and Human Resources. The workshop also urged Member States to make optimum use of the services of Capacity Building experts available throughout the continent. It further draws the attention of the relevant Ministers on the necessity for governance in the promotion of officers to enable national administrations to carry out their missions in the most effective and efficient manner.

P.II.2. Rules of Origin and Economic Partnership Agreements

614. In accordance with Decision EX.CL/Dec.298 (IX) on Economic Partnership Agreements Negotiations, the Commission has been mandated by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union. to coordinate the negotiations underway between the four African negotiating groups (ECOWAS, CEMAC, SADC and ESA) and the European Union. On the basis of this decision, the Commission has initiated a close examination process of the Rules of Origin being proposed by the European Union for negotiation. The workshop on Rules of Origin aforementioned which had also been tasked to look into this issue recommended that the Commission convenes a meeting of Chief Negotiators/Technical Advisers of the four African groups negotiating EPAs with EU to discuss and exchange ideas on the issue of Rules of Origin with a view to achieving a common harmonized African position on Rules of Origin in the context of EPAs.

P.II.3. 3rd Ordinary meeting of the African Union Sub-Committee of Directors General of Customs

615. The Commission organized the 3rd Ordinary meeting of the African Union Sub-Committee of Directors General of Customs in Abuja, Nigeria from 7 to 11 May 2007. The main theme of the meeting was “The Implications of EPAs on Customs”. The meeting elaborated a Resolution for consideration by the policy organs of the Union. This document contains recommendations in four major areas, namely Capacity Building, Rules of Origin within the EPAs, Integrity in Customs and Harmonization of Customs instruments. They also contain general guidelines for implementation.

P.III. MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

P.III.1. Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)

616. Negotiations for economic partnership agreements have continued over the period covered by this report, between the European Commission and four groups of African countries – CEMAC, Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA), SADC, and West Africa. To enable it to coordinate the actions for formulation of an African Common Position, the Commission participates actively in the negotiation activities, especially in the meetings and workshops organized on EPAs by the RECs and the negotiating groups.

617. From recent joint ministerial declarations with the European Commission, the negotiating groups seem disposed to conclude EPAs by December 2007, covering aspects of development and market access, with the understanding that negotiations will continue in other outstanding areas – concluding what are called phased EPAs. By all accounts, a lot of work remains to be done even in these two areas; and divergences still remain on key issues, such as the rules of origin criteria for giving originating status to products, transition periods, and scope of coverage of liberalisation. In the area of development, there is yet no agreement on whether there will be a full-scale chapter or whether the details will be moved to other sectoral chapters and to the matrix. It is important to address the exact scope of phased EPAs and the modalities for conclusion of EPA negotiations, in order to ensure that the groups conclude harmonious and pro-development EPAs that support and are in line with the integration process in Africa, particularly the formation of the African Common Market.

618. The Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) group has done quite a lot of work towards preparing the text for their EPA. Other groups are not as advanced in text preparation. Perhaps they could learn from the ESA experience, and ESA is also likely to have much to learn from them. There is merit in proposing that the groups should invite each other to their meetings and negotiations, so that they can share text and experience.

619. Regarding modalities for conclusion of EPAs, some consideration could be given to the harmonisation, or possibly the merger, of all the negotiating groups in Africa at the time of conclusion of the EPAs. Another possibility could be to continue to strongly urge the European side and the African Union member states as well as the negotiating groups to take all measures to preserve the unity of Africa as One Africa and in this regard to avoid the balkanisation or division of Africa along lines that could make the formation of the African Common Market difficult. It is to be noted that Europe has undertaken in the Africa Strategy to deal with Africa as One Africa, and to support the unity of Africa and the integration process.

620. The approach of concluding phased EPAs requires additional clear provisions on how and when the outstanding issues will be addressed, particularly in the areas where ACP countries have offensive interests.

621. Countries that conclude EPAs by December 2007 will still have to go through domestic procedures for approval and domestication of the agreements, a process that could be lengthy. It is critical that transitional measures are put in place to ensure that trade is not disrupted after December 2007. The measures should be publicised and known in advance by the business community in Africa and Europe, as orders are placed up to a year or so in advance and trade relations require continuity and stability. Therefore, it is of paramount importance that the European Commission and the European Union should immediately send out a strong message to re-assure the business community that transitional measures will be put in place to ensure that trade is not disrupted. The European Union and the European Commission should immediately elaborate these transitional measures so that they can be put in place by 1 January 2008.

P.III.2 Preparation of Joint Africa/European Union Strategy

622. I wish to inform Council that, in the context of Africa-European Union Dialogue, a joint strategy is under preparation. The outlines of this strategy have already been identified and consigned to a document which was considered by the Africa-EU Ministerial Troika on 15 May 2007. It will be submitted to the next Assembly of the Union meeting in Accra, Ghana, in July for approval to enable it to be used in a preparation of a draft joint strategy which will be presented to the Africa-EU Summit due to take place in Lisbon, Portugal, at the end of 2007.

623. The measures undertaken in relation to trade and regional integration consist in improving economic governance and the investment climate, building Africa's technical infrastructure, building production capacities and pursuing the EPA process with a view to boosting regional integration on the basis of the Abuja Treaty, especially trade integration aimed at eventual establishment of a fully integrated continental market.

624. The other objectives sought are: development of market access capacity particularly in the area of quality control to ensure more effective consumer protection, promotion of market access for goods and services and enhancing consultation so as to develop at multilateral level, particularly in the context of WTO, common positions on the development dimension of the Doha Round.

a. Doha Round Negotiations at the WTO

625. The Commission actively participates in meetings on the WTO multilateral trade negotiations organized by the Geneva negotiating groups, with a view to coordinating and harmonizing the African Common Position as mandated by African Trade Ministers. For instance, pursuant to the provisions of the Hong Kong Declaration requesting the WTO Director General to organize a consultative meeting on cotton, the Commission participated fully in that meeting held in Geneva on the trade and development aspects of cotton. That meeting arrived at conclusions at both political and technical levels. At political level, it was its view that the Doha Round Negotiations could not be successfully concluded without effective resolution of the issue of cotton. At technical level, the meeting underscored the need to ensure coordination (Ministers and authorities) at national and international levels between donors, financial institutions and other bodies. The Commission also participated in the Expert s' meeting on sensitive and special goods and their implications for Africa in the Doha Round, organized in Benin.

P.IV. INDUSTRY

626. In preparation for the next Conference of Ministers of Industry scheduled for September 2007, the Commission organized jointly with UNIDO three expert group meetings (EGM). The first was a High level Consultative meeting at ministerial level convened in Accra, Ghana in February 2007 on Productive and Decent Work for Youth in the Mano River Union and Côte d'Ivoire. It should be borne in mind that youth employment in that sub-region constitutes a major challenge and has implications on political stability. The meeting called for a multi-stakeholder approach for the establishment of active partnerships between the public and private sector and youth groups to, among others, develop value-chains in an integrated manner, especially in manufacturing, agri-business and services in order to create over the next five years about 4.5 million decent and productive jobs for youth in the sub-region. Some UN agencies and donors made commitments to immediately provide appropriate support for the strengthening of the Mano River Union Secretariat to promote and implement programmes relevant to youth employment.

627. Pursuant to the decision of the 17th Conference of African Ministers of Industry, the second EGM held in Tunis in February 2007 focused on standards compliance and conformity assessment for the development of sustainable trade in Africa. The rationale behind holding this meeting is that African countries are unable to exploit opportunities that exist in preferential trade agreements and in global markets in general due, over and above limited production and trade capacities, lack of value addition, to difficulty in complying with international standards and conformity assessment procedures. During the meeting, the Commission made a call for action to build a reliable quality infrastructure across the

continent to support industry. This includes standardization, accreditation, metrology, testing, inspection and certification. In this regard, a continental strategy, policy and action plan aimed at building and strengthening quality infrastructure will be put in place under the umbrella of the AU Commission.

628. The third EGM held in Addis Ababa in March 2007 discussed investment for African productive capacity. The meeting examined a proposal by the African Investment Promotion Agency Network (AfriPANet) for an investment monitoring platform that would assist industrial enterprises in making more informed management decisions that can lead to expanded business operations, new partnerships, facilitated access to finance and employment creation. It would also assist government institutions to conduct evidence-based policy advocacy and to measure the response of investors to policy interventions. A recommendation to expand the AfriPANet initiative into an African programme was made.

P.IV.1 NEPAD-Related Activities

Industry, Trade and Market Access cluster

629. Following the 7th Regional Consultation Meeting (RCM) of UN agencies and organizations working in Africa in support of the AU and NEPAD, a cluster on Industry, Trade and Market Access (ITMA) was created with UNIDO as convener and UNCTAD as vice-convener. In this regard, the Commission worked jointly with NEPAD Secretariat to present their current and planned activities in those areas at the launch and inaugural meeting of the cluster at the UNIDO Headquarters in Vienna in May 2007. The cluster is meant to build greater synergy in the industrial, trade and market access programmes and activities of the UN system and key stakeholders in Africa in support of the African Union and its NEPAD initiative. It will also undertake joint programmes and activities; joint studies and publications; joint seminars and workshops among other activities.

Pan-African Parliament Seminar on NEPAD

630. During the period under review, the Commission made presentations of its activities under the various Departments to the corresponding Committees of the PAP during the PAP Seminar on NEPAD. The objective of the seminar was to increase awareness of AU/NEPAD activities within the PAP and regional and national parliaments as well as enhance the effective oversight of NEPAD activities within the PAP.

P.IV.2 Relation with the Partners

631. The Commission signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the International Trade Centre in Geneva on 27 February 2007. This led to formulation of an Action Plan for implementation of the measures contained in this Memorandum.

Q. IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISION ASSEMBLY/AU/DEC.156 (VIII)

632. Council will recall that at its Eighth Ordinary Session, the Assembly took Decision Assembly/AU/156 (VIII) which stipulates, among others, that:

- **DECIDES** to devote the 9th Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Accra, Ghana, in July 2007 to the theme: “Grand Debate on the Union Government”;
- **ENDORSES** the proposal of the Executive Council, as part of this process, to hold a retreat of Ministers of Foreign Affairs to reflect on the State of the Union to be followed by an extraordinary session of the Executive Council and **WELCOMES WITH SATISFACTION** the offer by the Government of South Africa to host such meetings.

633. Pursuant to these two provisions, Ministers of Foreign Affairs/External Relations of Member States held a brainstorming session on 8 and 9 May 1997 in Zimbali, South Africa, on the state of the Union. The session was followed by an extraordinary session (the tenth) of the Executive Council, on 10 May 2007, devoted to the consideration of the “Report of the Chairperson on the Strengthening of the African Union Commission”.

634. The conclusions of the two meetings have been summarized in this report as follows:

Q.I. CONCLUSIONS OF THE BRAINSTORMING SESSION

635. After discussion, the summary by the Chairperson of the session, Chairperson of the Executive Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ghana, H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo, was adopted as the conclusion of the Brainstorming Session. This summary is reproduced hereunder.

We have had a very informative debate in which some major issues were defined. We have heard the reiteration, with the exception of one delegation, of our collective commitment to the political and economic integration of the continent, leading to the establishment of a United States of Africa.

Beyond this, there is still considerable divergence as to the “how” to achieve this objective.

I dare say that part of the problem lies in the fact that, as we have seen from other parts of the world, the question of integration does not admit of a single, unique answer. The Gabonese Vice-Premier yesterday reminded us that all the other regions or continents are coming together and that the regional groupings taking place in the world take many forms – NAFTA, ASEAN, EU; then the Federations which the Senegalese Foreign Minister finds attractive (USA, India, Brazil, China).

The Federations are all characterized by certain common features – common language, common legal system, common culture, common history.

The African reality is somewhat different, for our continent is characterized by a certain diversity of peoples with different languages, different legal systems and different cultures. If, therefore, we want a United States of Africa, we would have to devise our own model, but one that would have to meet certain minimum standards.

Clearly, the process of integration in Africa would have to take its own course, even if we can glean a lot from the experience of others, especially that of the EU, because it is clear from our own Constitutive Act that we were very much influenced by the European model.

The EU model clearly emphasizes a gradualist, step-by-step approach to the question of integration – an approach that is based on the systematic spread of common policies. The Ethiopian Minister was right in saying that the EU has been a spectacular example of success in the integration of sovereign states for common purposes.

Why integration? The answer is compelling: we believe we stand a much better chance of dealing with the critical, strategic issues confronting us - under-development, the eradication of mass poverty, the promotion of democracy and the rule of law, and the defense of our political independence and our position in the world - by the process of integration.

This is the fundamental motivation for the integration process, that, even though some states may be able to go it alone, we can all make better progress towards our objectives if we work and act together, especially in the face of globalization which offers both opportunity and threat to our ambitions.

The acceleration of the process of integration is, therefore, the order of the day, and those who seek to realize the age-old dream of the Pan-Africanists for the immediate establishment of a continental government believe that that is the most effective way to accelerate and, indeed, complete the process of integration.

There appears to be certain issues which the demand for immediate government has yet to clarify – matters like the surrender, partial or total, of sovereignty; the representative nature of the continental government; its popular base etc.

In the same vein, what are the concrete steps that need to be taken if we cannot today go to the immediate establishment of a continental government, but we want to accelerate the process of integration? There is the clear need to define a road-map with the relevant bench-marks and develop minimum standards that must be met by all of us as we move along, and which also make possible better coordination of the work of the RECs, and harmonize their development towards the integration of the continent. An important consideration in this regard will be for us to look closely at what things we can deal with at the level of the RECs and those things that can be better addressed at the continental level.

A customs union, a common market; when are we going to arrive at these, because one of the greatest deficiencies of our current situation is our inability, unlike all the other continents, to trade amongst ourselves – that is a major weakness which we

have to overcome, and we can only do so if we take seriously common efforts to develop our infrastructures and their linkages, and if we develop our common commitment to the growing of the skills of our people, which is indispensable to our future progress and prosperity.

There is also the effectiveness of the continental institutions that we have set up – the AU Commission and other organs. How can we improve their performance and effectiveness?

These are, I believe, some of the specific issues that have been raised by our discussion which we need to resolve, and which makes both parts of our meeting linked. In my view, this requires us to look at our work here holistically, and that whatever we want to do here to assist our leaders in Accra can best be done if we look at and act upon both parts of our proceedings, especially if we have regard to the passionate appeal made to us by the Chairperson of the Commission to strengthen the hands of the Commission, which he describes as the Executive of the Union, as important steps towards the acceleration of the integration process which is in the strategic, geo-political interest of all of us and our continent.

If you agree with me, I would propose that we go straight to the agenda of the second part of our meeting, and come to a conclusion at the end of that agenda so that we can better assist the Accra Summit, which is the main purpose reason of this gathering.

636. The main objective of this extraordinary session was to consider the “Report of the Chairperson on the Strengthening of the African Union Commission”. It should be recalled that this document had been presented at the Tenth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council in January 2007 in Addis Ababa but could not be considered at that session.

637. At the end of the session, the Executive Council agreed on the following:

- i) While the Report of the Chairperson on the Strengthening of the Commission and the Specialized Technical Committees was commendable in terms of substance of the proposals contained therein, its consideration was deferred pending the provision of a detailed budget and the completion of the Audit exercise;
- ii) The terms of reference of the institutional audit, as amended by Council, were adopted;
- iii) The Audit of the Commission, other AU Organs and Regional Economic Communities, as well as their relations with relevant organizations such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank, should commence immediately, and be completed within a six (6) months’ time frame;
- iv) The results of the Audit should be presented to the Executive Council at its meeting scheduled for January 2008;

- v) The Chairperson of the Commission and that of the Executive Council should consult, as a matter of urgency, with a view to identifying the source of funding for the Audit and the expertise (personalities or firm) to undertake the exercise;
- vi) A recommendation should be made to the Assembly to postpone the election of the new Commission and extend the mandate of the current Commission so as to allow sufficient time for the completion of the Audit exercise as well as to take on board the decisions of the Accra Assembly on the Union Government, which will no doubt have implications on the nature and scope of the reform package. This would allow the new Commission to take shape on the basis of the new reforms.

638. The Executive council took note of the readiness of the Chairperson and the other Members of the Commission to remain in office, if need be for an additional month or two to ensure the smooth completion of the reform exercise.

639. The draft reports of the two sessions have been submitted separately to Council for adoption. This item figures on the agenda of the Executive Council.

2007

Report of the chairperson of the commission for the period january- June 2007

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