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الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

P. O. Box 3243

Telephone: 5517 700

Fax: 5517844

Website: [www. Africa-union.org](http://www.Africa-union.org)

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**REPORT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL ON ITS
ACTIVITIES AND THE STATE OF PEACE
AND SECURITY IN AFRICA**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Report of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa is submitted pursuant to Article 7(q) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the PSC of the African Union (AU). The present Report, prepared in conformity with the said Article, covers the activities undertaken by the PSC in the pursuit of its mandate, and provides an overview of the state of peace and security on the continent during the period from July 2012 to January 2013.

II. SIGNING AND RATIFICATION OF THE PSC PROTOCOL

2. Since its entry into force, in December 2003, fifty-one (51) Member States have signed the PSC Protocol, while forty-seven (47) have both signed and ratified it. The following Member States have signed the Protocol, but have not yet ratified it: Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Liberia, Seychelles and Somalia. Two Member States are yet to sign and ratify the Protocol, namely Cape Verde and South Sudan.

III. MEMBERSHIP OF THE PSC AND ROTATION OF THE CHAIR

3. As stipulated in Article 5 (1) of the Protocol, the PSC is composed of fifteen (15) members with equal rights, who are elected as follows: 10 members elected for a two (2) year term and five (5) for a three (3) year term. The current list of PSC members in the English alphabetical order is as follows: Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Gambia, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Notably, given the expiry of the mandate of five members of the PSC for a three (3) year term in January 2013, the Executive Council, during its 22nd ordinary session to be held in Addis Ababa, from 24 to 25 January 2013, will conduct elections for five seats of the PSC.

4. In conformity with Rule 23 of the Rules of Procedure of the PSC, the chair of the PSC rotates among its members on a monthly basis following the English alphabetical order of the list of the PSC members. During the period under review, the chair of the PSC rotated as follows:

- Côte d'Ivoire July 2012;
- Djibouti August 2012;
- Egypt September 2012;
- Equatorial Guinea October 2012;
- Gambia November 2012;
- Guinea (Republic) December 2012; and
- Kenya January 2013.

IV. ACTIVITIES OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

5. During the reporting period, in discharging its mandate, the PSC engaged in sustained efforts to address conflict and crisis situations within the continent, in close cooperation with all other stakeholders, including other AU Organs and the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), as well as the United Nations, the European Union (EU), the League of Arab States (LAS) and other AU partners. In this regard, the PSC held twenty six (26) meetings, including one at ministerial level, in Addis Ababa, on 24 October 2012, to consider the situation in Mali, as well as the situation between Sudan and South Sudan.

6. During the reporting period, the PSC held briefing sessions on various peace and security situations and other related issues. The countries and other stakeholders concerned with the situations and issues discussed were invited, in conformity with the provisions of the PSC Protocol and in line with the established practice of the PSC.

(a) Activities relating to crisis and conflict situations and other related issues

7. During the reporting period, the PSC considered the following crisis and conflict situations: CAR, Darfur (Sudan), DRC, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Somalia, and the situation between Sudan and South Sudan. The PSC also considered the following issues: capacity building for effective response to humanitarian assistance and disasters in Africa; activities and challenges of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) related to peace and security in Africa from the perspective of delivering humanitarian assistance in situations of crisis and conflict; terrorism and violent extremism in Africa; peace, security and development; international justice; and post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) efforts in Africa. The PSC also held a consultation on peace, security and governance with the Department of Political Affairs of the AU Commission and other stakeholders in Banjul, The Gambia, from 8 to 10 September 2012. Furthermore, the PSC convened a Retreat to review its working methods in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 15 to 16 November 2012.

(i) Central African Republic

8. During the reporting period, the PSC held two meetings on the situation in the CAR: 345th meeting, held on 6 December 2012; and 350th meeting, held on 14 January 2013.

9. At its 345th meeting, the PSC:

- welcomed the initiatives taken to promote dialogue among all the political and social stakeholders, the efforts made to further security and implement the different Agreements concluded with the political and military groups active on the ground, including as regards Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion (DDR), and the measures taken to facilitate the reactivation of the national economy and the fight against poverty;

- urged the Members States to contribute actively to the post-conflict reconstruction and development process in the CAR; and
- requested the Commission to initiate the necessary consultations with the CAR, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the EU, the United Nations and the bilateral partners concerned, with a view to submitting to it, within a period of three months, recommendations on the modalities for an appropriate support to the CAR authorities in the field of security.

10. At its 350th meeting, the PSC:

- welcomed the political agreement to end the crisis in the CAR, the cease-fire and the Declaration of Principles signed in Libreville, on 11 January 2013, by the CAR Government, the democratic opposition, the politico-military movements and the Seleka group, in order to put an end to the serious political and security crisis affecting the CAR since December 2012;
- commended all the CAR parties for their sense of compromise, and stressed the need for them to scrupulously and in good faith implement the commitments they have entered into;
- urged all Member States and international partners to extend full support to the implementation of the political agreement and the cease-fire; and
- requested the Chairperson of the Commission to submit to it, as soon as possible, a comprehensive report on the situation in CAR and the role of the AU in the implementation and follow-up of the agreements reached by the CAR parties.

(ii) Darfur

11. During the reporting period, the PSC dedicated two (2) meetings to the situation in Darfur: 328th meeting, held on 24 July 2012, and 319th meeting, held on 24 April 2012.

12. At its 328th meeting, the PSC:

- commended the signatory parties to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) of July 2011, namely the Government of Sudan and the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), for the steps taken towards the implementation of the DDPD, while, however, noting that many provisions of the DDPD remain unimplemented;
- encouraged the Parties to the DDPD to spare no efforts in expediting the implementation of the Agreement;

- expressed serious concern at the continued refusal of the hold out groups to engage in the peace process;
- noted with satisfaction the significant increase in the number of voluntary and spontaneous returns throughout Darfur in the past few months;
- noted with concern the restrictions on the movements of UNAMID;
- reaffirmed the continued relevance of the recommendations of the report of the AU High-Level Panel on Darfur (AUPD); and
- decided to extend, for a further period of 12 months, the mandate of UNAMID.

13. At its 348th meeting, the PSC:

- expressed its grave concern at the deteriorating security situation in some parts of Darfur;
- strongly condemned continued attacks by unidentified armed assailants on UNAMID, as well as hostage taking targeting the Mission, and urged the GoS to end impunity for such crimes and spare no efforts in helping to identify and bring to justice their perpetrators;
- commended UNAMID for the efforts to protect civilians and facilitate humanitarian operations;
- expressed serious concern at the continued restrictions of movement imposed on UNAMID, which affect its ability to effectively implement its mandate;
- commended the signatory parties to the DDPD for their continued engagement in implementing the DDPD; and
- expressed serious concern at the huge backlog in the issuance of visas for UNAMID personnel, and called on the Government to clear all pending cases as a matter of urgency.

(iii) Democratic Republic of the Congo

14. During the reporting period, the PSC held four meetings to consider the situation in the DRC: 335th meeting, held on 19 September 2012; 340th meeting, held on 2 November 2012; 343th meeting, held on 26 November 2012; and 346th meeting, held on 10 December 2012.

15. At its 335th meeting, the PSC:

- welcomed the efforts of the Member States and the Executive Secretariat of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region

(ICGLR), in order to find a lasting solution to the situation in eastern DRC;

- fully supported all the measures set out in the Declaration adopted by the 3rd Extraordinary Summit of the ICGLR, held in Kampala, on 8 September 2012;
- stressed the importance of the effective operationalization of the Joint Verification Mechanism (JVM), as well as the establishment and deployment of the envisaged Neutral International Force (NIF); and
- requested the United Nations to provide the necessary support to the efforts of countries of the region, particularly with regard to the operationalization of the NIF and the Expanded JVM (EJVM).

16. At its 340th meeting, the PSC:

- welcomed the appointment, by the Chairperson of the Commission, on 1 November 2012, of Ambassador Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra as the AU Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region; and
- underlined the necessity of adequate mobilization of the entire continent and the international community, in particular the United Nations, to assist in addressing the situation in the Great Lakes, which threatens international peace and security. The PSC reiterated its call to the UN and other international partners to provide the necessary support to the efforts of the ICGLR.

17. At its 343rd meeting, the PSC:

- reiterated its support to the efforts made by President Yoweri K. Museveni of Uganda, current Chairman of the ICGLR, and the countries of the region to find a lasting and sustainable solution to the crisis in eastern DRC. In this regard, the PSC endorsed the Declaration adopted by the ICGLR Summit of 24 November 2012;
- requested the immediate and scrupulous implementation of the Declaration. In this regard, the PSC demanded that the M23 take all the measures expected of it, expressed satisfaction at the commitment made by the Government of the DRC to listen, evaluate and address any legitimate concerns of the M23, and requested that this process be initiated without further delay and in good faith;
- expressed its intention to consider the draft Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for the deployment of the NIF, as soon as it is submitted by the ICGLR; and
- welcomed the adoption by the UN Security Council, on 20 November 2012, of resolution 2076 (2012), and fully supported its implementation.

18. At its 346th meeting, the PSC:

- noted with satisfaction the progress made in the implementation of the ICGLR Declaration of 24 November 2012;
- welcomed the decision of the DRC Government to contribute an amount of USD 20 million to facilitate the early operationalization of the NIF;
- noted the decisions of the SADC Extraordinary Summit of the Heads of State and Government, held in Dar-es-Salaam, on 8 December 2012, in particular the deployment of SADC's Standby Brigade in the eastern part of the DRC within the framework of the NIF;
- requested the Commission to take the necessary steps to facilitate the holding, under AU's auspices, of consultations involving relevant stakeholders, to facilitate the mobilization of the required support towards the establishment and deployment of the NIF and the full operationalization of the EJVM; and
- expressed its readiness to consider, as early as possible, the CONOPS prepared within the framework of the ICGLR and, to this end, requested the Commission to submit to it a report containing its recommendations on the way forward.

(iv) Guinea Bissau

19. During the reporting period, the PSC dedicated two meetings to the situation in Guinea Bissau: 340th meeting, held on 2 November 2012; and 351st meeting, held on 16 January 2013.

20. At its 340th meeting, the PSC:

- expressed its profound appreciation of, and strong support for, the efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the leaders of the region towards an early resolution of the crisis and the stabilization of Guinea Bissau;
- expressed its concern at the rise of tension caused by the attack in Bissau, on 21 October 2012, against Bissalanca airbase;
- welcomed the meeting between the Bissau-Guinean stakeholders, in New York, on 29 September 2012, facilitated by the AU; and
- encouraged the Commission to pursue its action in support of the region, and endorsed the dispatch of a joint mission of the AU, ECOWAS, the UN, the EU and the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) to Bissau.

21. At its 351st meeting, the PSC:

- expressed its appreciation for the sustained efforts of ECOWAS and the leaders of the region, with a view to expediting the resolution of the crisis in Guinea-Bissau;
- welcomed the progress made by the parties and commended the pro-activeness of a number of local stakeholders, to promote consensus on key issues;
- emphasized the imperative of the international community to display the unity of purpose that the situation so require;
- welcomed the successful undertaking, from 16 to 21 December 2012, under AU Commission's leadership, of a joint ECOWAS/AU/CPLP/EU/UN assessment mission to Guinea-Bissau and decided to meet again in February 2013, to consider the report of the mission; and
- took note of the request of ECOWAS for the lifting of the suspension of Guinea-Bissau from participation in the AU's activities, and agreed to consider the request in light of progress to be achieved in the country.

(v) **Mali**

22. During the reporting period, the PSC dedicated five meetings to the situation in Mali: 332nd meeting, held on 4 September 2012; 339th meeting, held on 24 October 2012, at ministerial level; 341st meeting, held on 13 November 2012; 348th meeting, held on 13 December 2012; and 350th meeting, held on 14 January 2013.

23. At its 332nd meeting, the PSC:

- welcomed the return to Bamako of the Interim President, Dioncounda Traoré, and his address to the nation, delivered on 29 July 2012;
- further welcomed the formation, on 20 August 2012, of the Government of National Unity, and stressed the need for this Government to spare no efforts to overcome the challenges of restoring the authority of the State in the northern part of the country and the organization of free, transparent and credible elections;
- urged the Malian stakeholders to extend full cooperation and support to President Traoré, and reaffirmed its determination to impose sanctions against any individual or entity obstructing the action of the Interim President and the conduct of the Transition;
- condemned the abuses and violations of human rights committed in Mali and warned the perpetrators that they will be held accountable for their actions;

- strongly condemned the announcement by the terrorist group Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) of the murder of an Algerian diplomat who had been held hostage, demanded the immediate and unconditional release of the remaining Algerian hostages; and
- requested the Commission, in close cooperation with ECOWAS, to expedite the finalization of the Strategic Concept that would guide AU's efforts in Mali.

24. At its 339th meeting, the PSC:

- welcomed the adoption by the UN Security Council, on 12 October 2012, of resolution 2071 (2012), as well as support being extended to the efforts by the region and Africa as a whole, in order to seek an early solution to the crises in Mali;
- commended the authorities and other political actors in Mali for the significant progress made in resolving the institutional crisis provoked by the coup d'état of 22 March 2012, including the formation of the Government of National Unity on 20 August 2012. In this context, the PSC decided to lift the suspension of Mali's participation in the activities of the AU;
- welcomed the Conclusions of the meeting of the Support and Follow-up Group held in Bamako, on 19 October 2012, which welcomed the Strategic Concept for the Resolution of the Crises in Mali elaborated by the Commission in collaboration with Malian authorities and relevant international stakeholders and partners;
- decided to adopt the Strategic Concept, which constitutes an important step towards greater coordination between the Malian stakeholders and the international actors and a holistic approach to the crises in Mali;
- requested the Malian authorities to, among others, enhance coherence among the transitional institutions, and elaborate a detailed roadmap on the implementation of the two main transitional tasks;
- welcomed the planning conference then scheduled to take place in Bamako from 30 October to 4 November 2012, to harmonize approaches and finalize the CONOPS for the planned deployment in Mali;
- stressed that the CONOPS should take into account the contributions that could be made by other African countries, including Mali's neighbors, in terms of intelligence, logistics and troops, and aim at strengthening the operational capacity of the Malian defense and security forces;

- urged the Security Council to adopt, in due course, a resolution authorizing the deployment of the envisaged African-led international force, in accordance with the request of the Malian authorities;
- urged AU Member States and the international community as a whole, including regional and international organizations, to make available to the Malian defense and security forces the required financial, logistical and capacity building support;
- welcomed the timely decision of the Chairperson of the Commission to appoint a High Representative for Mali and the Sahel; and
- underlined the urgent need for all international actors to closely coordinate their efforts to address the multifaceted challenges facing the Sahelo-Saharan region.

25. At its 341st meeting, the PSC:

- welcomed the final communiqué adopted by the ECOWAS Summit held in Abuja, on 11 November 2012, which adopted the harmonized CONOPS for the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA);
- took note of the transmission by the Chairperson of the Commission to the UN Secretary-General, by letter dated 25 October 2012, of the Strategic Concept for the Resolution of the Crises in Mali;
- decided to endorse the harmonized CONOPS for the planned deployment of AFISMA, in response to the request of the Malian authorities to regain the occupied regions in the north of the country, dismantle the terrorist and criminal networks and restore effectively the authority of the State over the entire national territory;
- requested the Chairperson of the Commission to transmit immediately the harmonized CONOPS to the UN Secretary-General;
- urged the UN Security Council to give its full support to the Strategic Concept and the harmonized CONOPS and to authorize, for an initial period of one year, the planned deployment of AFISMA, under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter;
- urged the Security Council to authorize the establishment of a support package funded by the United Nations assessed contributions, in order to facilitate the speedy deployment and operations of MISMA;
- requested the Chairperson of Commission to immediately initiate consultations with ECOWAS on the command and control of AFISMA;
- requested the Chairperson of the Commission, in consultation with ECOWAS, to take the necessary measures for the generation of forces

for AFISMA, as well as to contribute actively to the mobilization of adequate support for the Malian Defense and Security Forces, especially through the speedy organization of a donors' conference;

- reiterated its appeal to the international community, including regional and international organizations, to give the necessary support to the Malian Defense and Security Forces, and urged the UN Security Council to establish a Trust Fund to this effect; and
- urged all African States, including the countries of the region, the core countries and the other immediate neighbors of Mali, to contribute to the success of the planned operation, particularly through financial, logistical, technical, intelligence and troop contributions, as appropriate.

26. At its 348th meeting, the PSC:

- strongly condemned the conditions under which the resignation of outgoing Prime Minister Cheick Modibo Diarra occurred, and, once again, reiterated the imperative for the military and security forces to operate under the civilian authority;
- reiterated the centrality of an inclusive and coherent transition, under the authority of the Interim President, Mr. Traoré Dioncounda, for the successful conclusion of the ongoing efforts, and noted with satisfaction the appointment by the Interim President of a new Prime Minister in the person of Mr. Diango Cissoko;
- urged the Malian actors to organize, as soon as possible, and in the required conditions of inclusiveness, the envisaged national consultations that should lead to the adoption of a Roadmap for the management of the Transition;
- took note of the submission by the UN Secretary-General of the report requested under paragraph 7 of resolution 2071 (2012), as well as of the public debate that the Security Council members had on this matter on 5 December 2012; and
- urged, once again, the Security Council, in accordance with the requests made by the AU pursuant to PSC's decisions of 24 October and 13 November 2012, to give its full support to the Strategic Concept for the Resolution of Crises in Mali, to authorize the early deployment of AFISMA and the establishment of a support package funded through UN assessed contributions, as well as the establishment of a Trust Fund to support the Malian armed and security forces.

27. At its 350th meeting, the PSC:

- strongly condemned the attacks carried out by armed terrorist and criminal groups against the town of Konna, in the Mopti area, on 10 January 2013, and expressed AU's full solidarity with Mali;
- called on all AU Member States and international partners to provide the support required for the effective deployment of AFISMA and the running of its operations, and reiterated the call to the UN Security Council, for the establishment of a support package for AFISMA funded through UN assessed contributions; and
- encouraged the Commission to finalize the preparations for the holding, on the margins of the forthcoming AU Summit, of the donors' conference, as requested by the PSC in its communiqué of 13 November 2012, and subsequently supported by the UN Security Council in resolution 2085(2012).

(vi) Somalia

28. During the reporting period, the PSC met four times to consider the situation in Somalia: 331st meeting, held on 29 August 2012; 334th meeting, held on 17 September 2012; 337th meeting, held on 11 October 2012; and 350th meeting, held on 14 January 2013.

29. At its 331st meeting, the PSC :

- welcomed the encouraging political developments in Somalia;
- further welcomed the election, on 28 August 2012, of the Speaker of the Federal Parliament, Professor Mohammed Sheikh Osman (Jawari) and of his two Deputies, and called on all Somali stakeholders to ensure the speedy resolution of the outstanding names of parliamentary candidates;
- expressed satisfaction with the establishment of the National Constituent Assembly, the adoption of a new Constitution on 1 August 2012 and the inauguration of a new Federal Parliament on 20 August 2012;
- appealed to the Federal Parliament to elect, as expected, within ten days, the President;
- commended the successful implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 2036 (2012) increasing the AMISOM troop level from 12,000 to 17,731, as well as the continued improvement in the overall security situation across south and central Somalia;
- observed that Al-Shabaab, the extremist group still remains a security threat and destabilizing presence to the new and evolving political dispensation in Somalia;

- paid tribute to all troop contributing countries for their selfless sacrifices and sustained contributions to AMISOM; and
- expressed concern at the humanitarian situation in Somalia and urged Member States and the larger international community to continue providing support to the needy populations, as well as for the stabilization of the country.

30. At its 334th meeting, the PSC:

- welcomed the successful conclusion of the transition in Somalia, which culminated with the election, on 10 September 2012, of Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud as the new President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, and noted with satisfaction his inauguration in Mogadishu on 16 September 2012;
- paid tribute to the Somali stakeholders for the commitment they have demonstrated to ensure the successful completion of the transition, and urged them to stay the course, in order to consolidate the tremendous progress they have achieved;
- reiterated its deep appreciation to AMISOM and the Troop and Police Contributing Countries (TCCs/PCCs), as well as to the Somali national security forces for their courage and sacrifices, which created the enabling environment for the advancement of the political process; and
- appealed to all AU Member States and partners to enhance their assistance to Somalia to enable it meet the even more demanding and complex tasks ahead, in line with the priorities set by the new Somali Government.

31. At its 337th meeting, the PSC:

- welcomed the appointment by the President of a new Prime Minister, and looked forward to the early formation of an inclusive and competent cabinet;
- reiterated its appreciation to the T/PCCs for their commitment to the promotion of lasting peace, security and reconciliation in Somalia;
- paid tribute to the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi for his tireless efforts as Chair of IGAD, as well as to the AU partners for their support to AMISOM and the political process in Somalia;
- stressed that, while tremendous progress has been recorded, the tasks ahead, as will be defined by the Somali Government, will be even more demanding and complex;

- underlined the need for the international community to remain actively engaged and to extend greater support to Somalia, on the basis of the priorities defined by the Somali Government;
- called for urgent steps to be taken to restructure and empower the Somali Defense and Security Sector, including through the supply of stipends, equipment and weapons within a transparent and orderly framework, including the lifting of the arms embargo as it relates to the NSF, while maintaining it against non-state actors;
- expressed full support to the decision of the Commission to undertake, from October 2012 to January 2013, a strategic review of AMISOM and the implementation of its mandate; and
- requested, in the meantime, the Security Council to authorize a four-month technical roll over of the UN support package, as provided for by resolution 2036 (2012) of 22 February 2012, with the inclusion of additional support regarding the civilian and maritime components of the Mission.

32. At its 350th meeting, the PSC:

- commended the Commission for the steps taken towards the review of AMISOM and its mandate and welcomed the wide ranging consultations undertaken by the Review Team, under the leadership of Professor Ibrahim Gambari;
- noted the preliminary findings of the Review Team, and stressed the need for this exercise to lead to the enhancement of the effectiveness of AMISOM and strengthened coordination; and
- decided to renew the mandate of AMISOM as of 15 January 2013 for an additional period of six months pending the outcomes of the consultations between the AU Commission and the United Nations Secretariat on the future of AMISOM.

(vii) Sudan/South Sudan

33. The PSC dedicated three meetings to the situation between Sudan and South Sudan: 329th meeting, held on 3 August 2012; 339th meeting, held on 24 October 2012, at ministerial level; and 349th meeting, held on 14 December 2012.

34. At its 329th meeting, the PSC:

- noted the progress achieved in the implementation of the AU Roadmap, as endorsed by UN Security Council resolution 2046 (2012);
- highly appreciated the important agreement reached between the Parties regarding all financial matters relating to the export of South Sudan's oil

through Port Sudan, and urged the Parties to reach agreement on all remaining aspects of oil-related issues;

- strongly supported the decision of the Parties to constitute a Joint Delegation, supported by the AUHIP, which will approach various countries and institutions to request financial assistance to address the urgent needs of both countries, urged the lifting of all sanctions against Sudan and encouraged the creditor nations expeditiously to forgive Sudan's external debt;
- noted with regret that the Parties had not been able to finalise agreements on a number of critical issues in their post-secession relations by the deadline of 2 August 2012 stipulated in UN Security Council resolution 2046 (2012). In this respect, the PSC requested the AUHIP to continue and intensify its facilitation role to bridge the differences between the Parties;
- called on the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) speedily to finalize the establishment of the Abyei Police Service, to enable it to take over policing functions throughout the Abyei Area;
- requested the Commission, working together with the UN and the LAS, immediately to operationalize to ensure an early assessment of the situation and the speedy delivery of humanitarian assistance to war affected civilian populations in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan states, within the framework of the *Joint Proposal for Access to Provide and Deliver Humanitarian Assistance to War-affected Civilians in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States*; and
- requested the AUHIP to submit to it, by 22 September 2012, a comprehensive report on the status of the negotiations, including detailed proposals on all outstanding issues, to be endorsed as a final and binding solution to the post-secession relations, at a meeting of the PSC to be held at ministerial level, within two weeks following the submission of the report, it being understood that the said report and related Council's communiqué shall be transmitted, for consideration and endorsement, by the UN Security Council acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

35. At its 339th meeting, the PSC:

- commended the Governments of the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan for the agreements reached on 27 September 2012;
- noted with regret, nonetheless, that despite these major achievements, certain key issues included in the Roadmap remain unresolved between the two States, namely the Final Status of the Abyei Area and the resolution of Disputed and Claimed Border Areas;

- commended the AUHIP for the efforts exerted towards the resolution of the Final Status of the Abyei Area. In this respect, the PSC accepted the proposal submitted by the AUHIP on 21 September 2012, as representing a fair, equitable and workable solution to the dispute between the two countries;
- decided that, in the event that the Parties fail to reach agreement on the Final Status of the Abyei Area within a six-week period, it will endorse the 21 September 2012 Proposal as final and binding, and would seek the endorsement by the UN Security Council of the same. In the meantime, the PSC called on the Parties immediately to implement, in its entirety, the Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area;
- called on the Parties, under the facilitation of the AUHIP, to reach agreement, within two weeks, on the process for the negotiations for the resolution of the Five Disputed Areas they have already identified, as well as any other Claimed Border Areas. In this context, the PSC endorsed the Draft Terms of Reference of the Team of Experts, and urged both Parties to accord the Team of Experts all the necessary cooperation in the conduct of its work;
- decided that, in the event that the Parties fail to reach agreement on the process for the resolution of the Five Disputed Areas as well as the Claimed Border Areas, the AUHIP would present a proposal to the PSC, which will then make a final and binding determination and seek the endorsement of the UN Security Council of the same;
- expressed profound regret that the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-North) had failed to convene direct negotiations, and called on them immediately to do so no later than 10 November 2012, facilitated by the AUHIP with the support of the IGAD Chair;

36. At its 349th meeting, the PSC:

- noted with concern the non-implementation by the Governments of the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan of the Agreements reached on 27 September 2012;
- reiterated its support to the efforts of the AUHIP, and called upon the Parties to meet under the auspices of the Panel to resolve this and all other outstanding issues;
- welcomed the willingness of the President of the Republic of South Sudan and the President of the Republic of Sudan to meet, and encouraged the convening of a Summit in the shortest possible time, in order to remove bottlenecks on all pending issues;

- welcomed the engagement of the Parties with the Team of Experts on the resolution of the Five Disputed Border Areas in accordance with its previous decision, and urged the Parties to continue their cooperation with the Experts in order to expedite the resolution of this issue; and
- requested the AUHIP to submit a final report to Council on all outstanding issues arising from the 24 April 2012 Communiqué and Roadmap, for its meeting planned to take place on the margins of the forthcoming Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, in January 2013.

(b) Meetings held under Articles 17 and 18 of the PSC Protocol

- (i) Joint consultative ministerial meeting between the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and the Peace and Security Council of the League of Arab States, New York, 27 September 2012

37. The meeting was held as a follow-up to the first meeting between the two PSCs, held in Cairo, Egypt, from 18 to 19 December 2010, within the framework of Article 17 of the PSC Protocol. The consultative meeting provided an opportunity for the two PSCs to exchange views on the challenges to peace and security in the two regions, as well as on their efforts to address ongoing crises. Within this framework, discussions focused on the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia, the ongoing negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan on their post-secession relations, under the auspices of the AUHIP, as well as on the situations in Mali and in Palestine.

- (ii) Consultative meeting between the Peace and Security Council and the Pan-African Parliament (Committee on Cooperation, International Relations and Conflict Resolution), 27 November 2012, Addis Ababa

38. At its 344th meeting, held on 27 November 2012, within the framework of Article 18 of the PSC Protocol, the PSC had an interactive session with a delegation of the Committee on Cooperation, International Relations and Conflict Resolution (CCIRCR) of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), on cooperation between the PSC and PAP-CCIRCR on furtherance of peace, security and stability in Africa, and outlined practical modalities to this effect. The PSC commended the CCIRCR for the proposals on cooperation that it had submitted and for its contribution to the quest of peace and security on the continent. The PSC agreed to look in-depth into the proposals and other modalities for strengthening its relations with the PAP.

(c) Other activities of the PSC

- (i) Preparation for PSC Retreats/consultative session

39. At its 330th meeting, held on 22 August 2012, the PSC undertook preparations for its retreats and the following consultative sessions: the PSC/PAP validation workshop on a collaboration and cooperation mechanism; the PSC/Department of

Political Affairs (AU Commission) brainstorming session on peace, security and governance, Banjul; the PSC Retreat on Working Methods, Yaoundé; the PSC Retreat on Working Methods, Djibouti, February 2013; and the convening of the annual joint consultative meeting between the AU PSC and the LAS-PSC.

(ii) *Consultation on Ensuring Greater Synergy between the African Governance Architecture and the African Peace and Security Architecture of the AU*

40. In the framework of the Year of Shared Values, and in accordance with the provisions of Article 7(m) of the PSC Protocol, the PSC, the Department of Political Affairs of the AU Commission and other concerned stakeholders held a consultation on ensuring greater synergy between the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in Banjul, The Gambia, from 8 to 10 September 2012. The consultation provided an opportunity for an exchange of views on issues relating to governance and human rights, which form the basis of the AU work in the area of conflict prevention and peace building in Africa.

(iii) *Retreat of the Peace and Security Council on its Working Methods, Yaoundé, 15-16 November 2012*

41. The PSC held a retreat to review its working methods in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 15 to 16 November 2012. The Retreat was held against the background of the conclusions of the Dakar PSC Retreat of July 2007, which established, for the first time, the working methods of the PSC. Essentially, the Yaoundé Retreat sought to review the status of implementation of the conclusions of the Dakar Retreat and to consider other emerging issues, with a view to improving the working methods of the PSC and enhancing its effectiveness.

(d) Consideration of Thematic Issues

42. During the reporting period, the PSC considered the following five thematic issues relating to the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa.

(i) *Open Session on Capacity Building for Effective Response to Humanitarian Assistance and Disasters in Africa*

43. During the reporting period, the PSC devoted its 333th meeting, held on 14 September 2012, to the issue of capacity building for effective response to humanitarian assistance and disasters in Africa.

(ii) *Briefing by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)*

44. At its 338th meeting, held on 18 October 2012, the PSC received a briefing from ICRC on its activities and challenges related to peace and security in Africa from the perspective of delivering humanitarian assistance in situations of crisis and conflict. The PSC:

- noted with concern the worsening humanitarian situation in countries in conflict, particularly in northern Mali and eastern DRC; and
- urged Member States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Protocol, and to comply scrupulously with all relevant AU instruments governing the promotion of International Humanitarian Law.

(iii) Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa

45. At its 341st meeting, held on 13 November 2012, the PSC considered the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Terrorism and violent Extremism in Africa. In the communiqué adopted on that occasion, the PSC:

- commended the efforts of the Commission in promoting the AU counter-terrorism framework and in assisting Member States towards its effective implementation, including through needs assessment missions and capacity building support. Council further commended the Commission for its continued engagement with the international partners to mobilize support for member States, as well as to contribute to an enhanced coordination of international efforts to prevent and combat terrorism;
- requested the Commission to intensify the efforts being made towards the elaboration of an African Warrant of Arrest, and to continue to support Member States in adopting comprehensive counter-terrorism strategies and strengthening their capacities to respond to terrorism and address conditions conducive to its occurrence and spread, including through education, counter radicalization and de-radicalization programs;
- decided to operationalize its Sub-Committee on Terrorism on the basis of the document on the mandate, composition and functions of this organ, as submitted by the Commission and considered at its 311th meeting held on 20 February 2012.

(iv) Open Session on Peace, Security and Development

46. At its 342nd meeting, held on 21 November 2012, the PSC was briefed by UN Women on peace, security and development in Africa. The PSC:

- stressed the need to mainstream gender in all development, peace and security efforts on the continent. It welcomed the role of UN Women in addressing the plight of women, children, youth and other vulnerable social groups, and stressed the need for full implementation of AU's instruments and policies relating to women and children; and
- looked forward to the successful conduct of the 50th OAU/AU anniversary as an opportunity that will further boost the essence of the African Renaissance in terms of good governance, peace, security and development.

(v) Open Session on International Justice

47. At its 347th meeting, held on 12 December 2012, the PSC was briefed by the President of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and the Vice-President of the FIDH and President of Group Lotus, human rights organization, on international justice. The PSC:

- reiterated the commitment of the AU to the fight against impunity, and stressed the importance of international and transitional justice in the promotion of peace and security in Africa, and the need, in the context of the search for solutions to crises and conflicts and in view of the fragility of the peace and reconciliation processes on the continent, to ensure that they are mutually reinforcing; and
- underscored the fact that the primary responsibility for the protection of human rights rests with Member States;
- emphasized the need for a close working relationship with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, as well as with the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

(vi) Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Efforts in Africa

48. At its 352nd meeting held on 16 January 2013, the PSC considered the first progress report of the Chairperson of the Commission on AU's efforts on post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD) in Africa. The PSC:

- welcomed the launching of the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI), and called on Member States to fully appropriate and support the Initiative;
- stressed the importance of promoting champions on the continent with the capacity necessary for taking initiatives towards implementation of post-conflict reconstruction and development programmes;
- urged all Member States to extend full support towards the organization of an African Solidarity Conference (ASC) planned for the second half of 2013; and
- called for a regular review of PCRD implementation with a view to monitoring progress.

(e) Activities of the Subsidiary Organs of the PSC

(vii) Panel of the Wise

49. According to Article 11 of the PSC Protocol, the Panel of the Wise is mandated to support the efforts of Council and those of the Chairperson of the Commission, particularly in the area of conflict prevention, at their request or on its own initiative. In this respect, and in pursuance of relevant Assembly's decisions, the Panel of the Wise undertook a joint pre-election mission with ECOWAS to the

Republic of Ghana from 25 to 29 September 2012, ahead of the 7 December 2012 general elections; and from 30 September to 5 October 2012 in Sierra Leone. The main objective of both missions was to assist in the facilitation of the organization of peaceful, free and fair elections by making consultations with all stakeholders to alleviate the risk of an election crisis. Furthermore, the Panel of the Wise, the Committee of Elders of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), working with IGAD, and the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, undertook a pre-assessment mission to Kenya, from 16 to 23 January 2013, ahead of the 4 March 2013 general elections.

50. Furthermore, and in pursuance of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the area of peace and security signed in 2008 between the AU and the RECs/RMs calling for greater collaboration and coordination of efforts among them in areas of conflict prevention, management, reconstruction and mediation, the Panel of the Wise participated in the annual retreat of the COMESA Committee of Elders (CCOE), in Uganda, from 19 to 20 November 2012. The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange views on conflict prevention and related issues.

(f) Participation of the PSC in other peace and security activities

(i) Third AU High-Level Retreat of Special Envoys and Representatives on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa

51. The Chairperson of the PSC for the month of November 2012, the Ambassador of The Gambia, participated in the 3rd AU High-Level Retreat of Special Envoys and Representatives on the Promotion of Peace, Security and Stability in Africa that took place in Cairo, Egypt, from 5 to 6 November 2012, on the theme “Transforming the African Peace and Security Landscape in the Next Decade: Appraisal and Opportunities”. The Retreat had the following objectives: (a) to reflect on the experiences of the AU in realizing its vision and goals since its establishment; (b) to examine current and emerging conflict trends and dynamics on the continent; (c) to review the approaches towards the operationalization of the APSA and related opportunities and challenges; (d) to review peacemaking, including mediation and conflict management efforts of the AU; and (e) to draw lessons from past AU peace support operations. The Retreat, which coincided with the 10th anniversary of the AU, provided an opportunity for the participants to concertedly and holistically review the achievements made in the area of peace, security and development in Africa and the challenges ahead.

(ii) Consultative meeting on the NIF and the EJVM

52. The Chairperson of the PSC for the month of December 2012, the Ambassador of the Republic of Guinea, participated in the consultative meeting held at the AU Headquarters, in Addis Ababa, from 27 to 28 December 2012, on the security arrangements to be established in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, namely, the NIF and the EJVM. The meeting was held in pursuance of the communiqué on the situation in the eastern part of the DRC adopted by the 346th meeting of the PSC, held in Addis Ababa, on 10 December 2012, which requested the Commission to take the necessary steps to facilitate the

holding, under AU's auspices, of consultations to facilitate the mobilisation of the required support towards the establishment and deployment of the NIF and the full operationalization of the EJVM.

(iii) Ministerial meeting on the NIF and the EJVM for Eastern DRC

53. The Republic of Kenya, the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of January 2013, participated at the ministerial meeting on the NIF and the EJVM for Eastern DRC, held in Addis Ababa, on 8 January 2013. The meeting was in follow-up to the recommendations of the consultative meeting on the operationalisation of the security arrangements for Eastern DRC, held in Addis Ababa, on 27 and 28 December 2012.

V. STATE OF PEACE AND SECURITY

54. The following paragraphs provide an update on the various situations on the ground. It also cover a number of thematic issues that are relevant to the efforts aimed at promoting peace, security and stability on the continent.

1. Situations on the ground

a) Madagascar

55. The period under consideration was marked by the pursuit of efforts to implement the SADC Roadmap for a way out of the crisis in Madagascar. The PSC would recall that significant progress had been made since the signing of that Roadmap, on 17 September 2010, as illustrated by the establishment of the main transitional institutions, particularly the President of the Transition, the consensus Prime Minister, the Transitional Congress, the Transitional Supreme Council, the Transitional Independent National Electoral Commission (CENIT), the adoption of the major laws relating to the electoral framework and amnesty, including the establishment of the Special Committee on Amnesty, the election of the members of the Electoral Court, the organization of the campaign for the electoral census, and the signing of the Project to Support the 2012-2013 Electoral Cycle in Madagascar (PACEM), as well as that of related financing conventions. The only institution provided for in the Roadmap which is yet to be established is the Malagasy National Reconciliation Council (CNR), because the stakeholders have not yet overcome their differences with regard to the appointment of the members of this institution.

56. However, important aspects of the Roadmap are still outstanding. It should be pointed out that the provisions of the Roadmap relating to the neutral, inclusive and consensual nature of the transitional process, confidence-building and national reconciliation, the granting of amnesty and the unconditional return to the country of all political exiles, including former President Marc Ravalomanana, are still to be implemented.

57. Similarly, the electoral process faces logistical and financial problems, which could have a negative impact on the electoral calendar. The budget required for the organisation of elections amounts to 71 million dollars. A few months ahead of the scheduled date of the elections, only 35 million dollars have been pledged by

Madagascar partners. The Financial Law 2013 allots an amount of 27 million dollars for the electoral process. Even if all current pledges were confirmed, which is not yet the case, 3 million dollars remain to be mobilized for 2013 and 5.3 million for 2014. It should also be stressed that, due to lack of logistical and financial resources, the electoral census, which started at the beginning of October 2012 and was scheduled to end within a period of one month, is still not completed.

58. It is within this context that the Extraordinary Summit of SADC, held in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, from 7 to 8 December 2012, considered the situation in Madagascar. Among other things, the Summit urged the Malagasy political stakeholders to fully implement the Roadmap in letter and spirit. It urged the stakeholders to respect the electoral schedule, and reiterated its decision on the unconditional return to the country of former President Marc Ravalomanana. The Summit also stressed the need to persuade Mr. Ravalomanana and Mr. Rajoelina not to stand as candidates for the next presidential election.

59. In implementation of the decisions of the SADC Summit, Mr. Ravalomanana announced, on 10 December 2012, that he would not be a candidate in the next presidential elections. Mr. Rajoelina also announced that he would not be a candidate.

60. Furthermore, the difficult socio-economic conditions affecting Madagascar are compounded by the growing insecurity in the south of the country. With regard to the latter point, the clashes between the *dahalos – cattle wrestlers*– and the special forces, which are operating within the framework of the “*tandroka operation*” aimed at restoring law and order, are reportedly characterized by serious violations of human rights and International Humanitarian Law. The local chapter of the International Contact Group on Madagascar (ICG-M) agreed, last month, with the relevant Malagasy authorities on the need to send a neutral Commission to carry out an inquiry into the alleged violations of human rights and International Humanitarian Law in the south of the country.

61. In light of the above, it is important for the AU, in line with its responsibilities under the APSA, to intensify its efforts in support of the SADC Mediation. Within this framework, both the ICG-M and the PSC should meet and consider the adoption of appropriate measures to speed up the resolution of the crisis in Madagascar.

b) The Comoros

62. In the Comoros, the achievements made over the past years in the process towards reconciliation and peace building, after the dual separatist and institutional crisis faced by the archipelago, continue to be consolidated. In this regard, mention should be made of the improved relations between the central Government and the executives of the autonomous islands, as well as of the appointment, on 11 October 2012, of senior officials of the opposition to important positions in the Government. Similarly, encouraging results were also recorded with regard to macro-economic reforms, enabling the Comoros to reach the decision point of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) and obtain a reduction of its external debt to the tune of 176 million dollars.

63. As pointed out in previous reports to the PSC, the assassination of a senior officer from the Anjouan Island in May 2010 and the accusations made in this regard against the former Chief of Defence Staff of the Comorian National Army, Amir Salimou, who is from Grande Comoros, heightened tensions, including at the inter-communal level. On 2 November, the criminal Court acquitted General Salimou and his co-defenders. In a communiqué issued on 3 November 2012, the Comorian Government took note of the decision and called upon the Comorian judiciary to pursue the investigations in order to identify the authors of the assassination. In this connection, the President of the Union of the Comoros approached the Chairperson of the Commission to request for the AU's assistance. In response, the Commission proposed to the Comorian authorities the dispatch of a joint evaluation mission to the Comoros, which, aside from the AU, would involve the United Nations, the EU, the World Bank, the International Organization of *La Francophonie* (OIF) and the League of Arab States (LAS). The purpose of the mission would be to assess the reconciliation and stabilization process in the Comoros and make recommendations on additional measures which the partners of the Comoros could take in support of the efforts of the Comorian authorities. In agreement with the Government of the Comoros, the Commission is taking the necessary steps to further mobilize the international community to assist the Comoros to address the challenges at hand.

64. Indeed, many challenges are still to be addressed. They relate particularly to the process of collecting arms still in circulation in the Island of Anjouan, following the military intervention which took place on 25 March 2008, and the defence and security sector reform, for which the AU is providing support.

65. The Assembly may wish to encourage the Comorian authorities to pursue the efforts currently underway. It may also wish, given the need for sustained international support to consolidate the achievements made, to reiterate its appeal for the international partners to honor the pledges they made at the Donors Conference, held in Doha in March 2010.

c) Somalia

66. The period under review was marked by tremendous progress in Somalia. The country entered into a new political dispensation when, in September 2012, through a credible, but arduous democratic process, the new Federal Parliament elected a new President, thereby constitutionally ending the eight years of transitional arrangements that were established with the adoption of the Transitional Federal Charter (TFC), in 2004, and the complimentary August 2008 Djibouti process. President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud was formally inaugurated in Mogadishu, on 16 September 2012. Thereafter, he outlined the six (6) immediate priorities of his Government, namely security, national reconciliation, social service delivery, public financial management, economic development, as well as justice. He also stressed that he would reach out to armed opposition groups, and continue dialogue with Somaliland. On 6 October 2012, he nominated Abdi Farah Shirdon "Saacid" as Prime Minister. The Prime Minister and his Cabinet were endorsed by the Parliament, on 13 November 2012. Since then, the Somali authorities have taken a number of steps in implementation of the priorities they have outlined.

67. In November 2012, the Federal Parliament completed and adopted a 4-year strategic plan, including its internal working regulations. It also established 15 parliamentary committees, with elected chairpersons, vice-chairpersons and secretaries. Furthermore, the Parliament has identified eleven projects aimed at enhancing its capacity, including the establishment of a functional Secretariat. It has outlined its legislative agenda, which has been shared with the Government. On 13 December 2012, the Prime Minister, in consultation with the President, Members of the Parliament and representatives of the civil society, appointed five Ministers of State and twenty Deputy Ministers.

68. The new Government is taking concrete steps to revitalize or establish governance institutions, and appoint the required leadership to administer them. Consequently, the leadership and management of financial institutions are being restructured in line with the six-pillar policy of the Government. A similar process is underway for other institutions. The Government has started to work with the existing interim regional administrations in South Central Somalia.

69. On 6 December 2012, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Joint Committee on Grand Stabilization of South Central Somalia met in Addis Ababa. The meeting adopted a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), expanding the membership of the Committee (that initially comprised Jubbaland, Kenya and Ethiopia) to include the Federal Government of Somalia, which is now to serve as the Chair of the Committee.

70. The security situation has continued to improve, thanks to the sustained efforts of the Somalia National Security Forces (SNSF) and AMISOM. During the reporting period, the SNSF and AMISOM further expanded their areas of control. The AMISOM Formed Police Units (FPUs), together with the Somalia Police Force (SPF), play an important role, ranging from policing activities to the restoration of public confidence and security in Mogadishu. On their part, the Individual Police Officers (IPOs) are continuing to mentor and advise their SPF counterparts. Although the combined SNSF and AMISOM operations have created tangible security gains and have significantly weakened Al Shabaab, the extremist group continues to pose a serious threat and still retains the ability to strike.

71. With the full deployment of the Djiboutian contingent in Sector 4 (Beltweyne), which was completed at the end of November 2012, the strength of AMISOM uniformed personnel stands now at 17,709. This comprises 5,432 troops from Burundi, 960 troops from Djibouti, 4,652 troops from Kenya, and 6,223 troops from Uganda. The Sierra Leone battalion of 850 is now due to deploy in February-March 2013, after which Kenya will reduce its contribution by one battalion. There are 81 Staff Officers and 81 IPOs from a number of Member State, as well as 2 FPUs of 140 police elements each from Nigeria and Uganda. On 1 November 2012, a new Special Representative for Somalia and Head of AMISOM was appointed, in the person of Ambassador Mahamat Salah Annadif, from Chad.

72. During the reporting period, AMISOM components (substantive civilian, police and military) undertook a number of activities in support of the Federal Government of Somalia. These cover stabilization and governance in the liberated areas, gender

issues, the management of disengaged fighters, support to the SNSF and capacity building for Somalia civil service.

73. At its 337th meeting, the PSC expressed full support to the decision of the Commission to undertake a strategic review of AMISOM and the implementation of its mandate, with a view to determining how best the Mission can further contribute to the stabilization of Somalia. The decision to undertake the review was made against the background of the significant political and security progress achieved in Somalia over the past months and the need accordingly to adjust the operations of AMISOM. The review process, which was launched in December 2012, was concluded in mid-January 2013. Its outcome will be submitted to the PSC and, subsequently, to the Security Council.

74. The Assembly may wish to welcome the tremendous progress made in Somalia, commend the Somalis for the achievements recorded, and encourage them to remain steadfast, as well as to continue to put the interest of their country above any other consideration, as the tasks ahead will be even more complex and demanding. The Assembly may also wish to urge the international community to remain actively engaged in Somalia and to extend the required support on the basis of the priorities outlined by the Somalia authorities. Such support should also cover the restructuring and empowerment of the SNSF, including through the supply of stipends, equipment, weapons and ammunitions. The Assembly may also wish to pay a well-deserved tribute to the AMISOM troop and police contributing countries, as well as to Ethiopia, for their outstanding contribution to the improvement of the security situation and the huge sacrifices made in this respect.

d) Sudan

75. The Parties to the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), namely the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM), have pursued their efforts to implement the provisions of the Agreement. While some progress has been made, notably in establishing the institutions provided for in the DDPD, the implementation process has nonetheless witnessed delays, particularly with respect to the ceasefire and security arrangements, due to difficulties in finalizing the verification of the LJM troops. The agreement on the way forward reached between GoS and LJM representatives at the last meeting of the Joint Commission raises the hope that the verification exercise could be concluded soon.

76. On the security front, the situation seriously deteriorated. Incidents range from increased fighting between Government forces and armed movements to a recrudescence of attacks on UNAMID troops. Criminality and banditry, as well as inter-tribal conflicts, have also continued unabated. The rise in hostilities between the armed movements and Government forces have recently become entwined with inter-tribal rivalries, farmer-herder disputes, and competition over control of gold producing areas. This situation has led to a considerable civilian casualties and displacements across Darfur. It has also had an impact in humanitarian access and the security of humanitarian personnel.

77. In spite of the operational challenges it is facing, including attacks by unidentified elements, continued access denials, restrictions of movements and delays in the issuance of visas for the Mission's personnel, UNAMID has not relented in its efforts to protect civilians and assist those who are affected by the ongoing violence, without prejudice to the responsibility of the GoS to protect its citizens. UNAMID has revised its protection of civilian strategy to take into account the protection of persons in imminent danger, as well as the strengthening of the Mission's early warning capabilities.

78. Efforts to facilitate a more inclusive political process continue. A significant military wing of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), one of the major armed groups, has signed a ceasefire agreement with the GoS and agreed to resume negotiations on the basis of the DDPD. UNAMID is actively supporting the implementation of the DDPD and efforts for a more inclusive political process in Darfur. Contacts have also been established with the other hold-out movements with a view to persuading them to opt out of their military agenda and join the political process.

79. The Reconstruction Fund for Darfur has been set up, and calls for regional and international contributions to the Fund have been issued. However, the Government has yet to make its contribution to the Fund, as provided for in the DDPD, due to the general economic downturn facing the country. On the other hand, preparations for the holding of the donors' conference on Darfur are underway.

80. The long delayed appointment of a substantive Joint Special Representative (JSR) to replace Professor Ibrahim Gambari has now been resolved. Following consultations over the past months between the AU and the UN, on the one hand, and the GoS, on the other, Sudan has conveyed its acceptance of the appointment of Dr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, from Ghana, as the new JSR and Head of UNAMID. Mr. Chambas' responsibilities include those previously assigned to the former AU-UN Joint Chief Mediator (JCM). Professor Ibrahim Gambari deserves AU's tribute for his outstanding contribution to the quest for peace in Darfur.

81. Against this background, the Assembly may wish to call on the Parties to the DDPD to expedite their efforts towards the implementation of their commitments. It is equally important to urge them and all hold-out movements to demonstrate a renewed engagement to political dialogue and negotiations, in order to promote as inclusive a peace process as possible, as well as a peaceful settlement of all outstanding grievances.

e) Implementation of AU Roadmap on Sudan-South Sudan

82. Sustained efforts have continued to be made regarding the situation between Sudan and South Sudan on the basis of the Roadmap adopted by the PSC at its meeting held on 24 April 2012. It should be recalled that the Roadmap required the Sudanese Parties to implement a series of measures, within a clearly defined timetable, to halt hostilities and reduce tension, build confidence between the two States, and complete negotiations on the outstanding issues, under the facilitation of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), within three months. The UN Security Council endorsed the Roadmap on 2 May 2012, through the adoption of

resolution 2046 (2012). Consequently, 2 August 2012 was set as the deadline for the completion of these obligations. During its July 2012 Ordinary Session, the Assembly stressed the need for, and obligation of, the Parties fully and expeditiously to fulfill their commitments under the Roadmap.

83. From May to August 2012, the AUHIP convened the Parties in negotiations that focused on the implementation of all aspects of the Roadmap. On 3 August 2012, the Parties reached an Agreement on the terms of payment under which South Sudan would resume the export of oil through Port Sudan. The Parties also agreed to appoint a Team of Experts to give an authoritative but non-binding opinion on the status of the five disputed border areas. At its meeting held on 3 August 2012, the PSC welcomed the Agreements reached and extended the deadline for the submission of the report on the implementation of the Roadmap by the AUHIP to 22 September 2012.

84. Negotiations continued throughout September 2012, under the auspices of the AUHIP. Supported by Ethiopia, as Chair of IGAD, the AUHIP convened a summit meeting between President Omar Hassan al-Bashir and President Salva Kiir Mayardit, in Addis Ababa, from 23 to 27 September 2012. On 27 September, the two Presidents signed a series of Agreements covering security arrangements, oil and transitional financial arrangements, the status of nationals of one country resident in the other, post-service benefits, trade, banking, border issues and other certain economic matters, as well as an overall Cooperation Agreement. However, two outstanding matters between Sudan and South Sudan remained, namely the determination of the final status of Abyei and the resolution of the status of the disputed and claimed border areas. The Panel provided recommendations on the resolution of these outstanding matters.

85. On this basis, the PSC, at its meeting of 24 October 2012, accepted the Proposal on the Final Status of the Abyei Area submitted by the AUHIP on 21 September 2012; requested the Parties to engage each other on the basis of the AUHIP's Proposal, with a view to reaching consensus on the Final Status of the Abyei Area, within a period of six weeks; and decided that, in the event the Parties fail to reach an agreement, the PSC would endorse the 21 September 2012 Proposal as final and binding, and would seek the endorsement by the UN Security Council of the same. In the meantime, the PSC called on the Parties immediately to implement, in its entirety, the Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area. The PSC also called on the Parties to reach agreement, within two weeks, on the negotiations process for the resolution of the Five Disputed Areas, as well as any other Claimed Border Areas, and decided that, in the event that the Parties fail to reach agreement, the AUHIP will present a proposal to the PSC, which will then make a final and binding determination and seek the endorsement of the UN Security Council of the same.

86. Additionally, the Roadmap of 24 April called on the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-North) to initiate negotiations to find a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Two Areas of Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan on the basis of the 28 June 2011 Framework Agreement, facilitated by the AUHIP, with the support of the Chair of IGAD, and to facilitate humanitarian access to the war-affected populations based upon the Proposal made

by the “Tripartite” of the AU, the United Nations and the League of Arab States, in February 2012. No deadlines were set for these actions but the PSC emphasized their urgency. The Parties met bilaterally with the AUHIP and the Chair IGAD, but did not meet face-to-face. On 3 and 5 August respectively, the SPLM-N and GoS signed Memoranda on the implementation of the Tripartite Proposal, but there was no progress in implementing this over the following weeks. Faced with this lack of progress, the PSC resolved, in its meeting of 24 October 2012, that the Parties should begin direct negotiations no later than 10 November 2012, facilitated by the AUHIP with the support of the IGAD Chair. It also called on them to facilitate humanitarian access to the affected populations.

87. As a follow-up to the PSC communiqué of 24 October 2012, on 6 November 2012, the Chairperson of the AUHIP wrote to President Bashir and President Kiir, urging them to implement the Abyei Temporary Agreement and meet to discuss the Final Status of the Abyei Area on the basis of the AUHIP Proposal. Unfortunately, the Parties were not able to discuss either the implementation of the Abyei Temporary Agreement or the Final Status of the Abyei Area during the six-week period. Several attempts to convene the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC) were unsuccessful. The AUHIP also encouraged the Parties, through their Lead Negotiators, to resolve the matter of the process for the negotiation of the Disputed and Claimed Border Areas, as well as the outstanding question of the extent of the disputed area of Kaka. However, the Parties did not meet to continue their negotiations on these issues. Furthermore, no progress was made on the armed conflict in the Two Areas, which continues to escalate, leading to an increase in accusations and counter-accusations by each side. No face-to-face negotiations took place. More generally, it appeared that the negotiations on the outstanding matters, as well as the implementation of the September Agreements, had been hampered by the key issue of the conflict in the Two Areas, which has affected the political engagement between the two States.

88. It is against this background that the PSC, at its 349th meeting held on 14 December 2012, reviewed the implementation of the AU Roadmap of 24 April 2012. Regarding Abyei, the PSC reiterated its acceptance of the 21st September Proposal by the AUHIP; urgently called for the anticipated Summit meeting between the two Presidents to take place; and decided to refer the determination on the issue of the Final Status of Abyei to its meeting at the level of the Heads of State and Government, to be held on the margins of the Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, in Addis Ababa, in January 2013. On the border issues, the PSC, called upon the Parties to resolve these outstanding issues, and deferred its decision on these matters pending the outcomes of the Summit meeting between the President of the Republic of Sudan and the President of the Republic of South Sudan. Finally, regarding the Two Areas, the PSC repeated its urging that direct political talks should begin immediately, facilitated by the AUHIP with the support of the IGAD Chair.

89. Following the PSC meeting, the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) met in extraordinary session in Addis Ababa, on 19 December 2012, under the auspices of the AUHIP, and discussed the implementation of the security agreements signed on 27 September 2012. After due consideration was given to the obstacles that were hampering progress, including the lack of unconditional

withdrawal of forces to their side of the border, the JPSM renewed the commitment of the two States to the September 2012 Agreements and agreed on a timetable for operationalizing the various security arrangements. In particular, the JPSM agreed on the timetable for the activation of the *ad hoc* Committee and the Joint Border Verification Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM). Accordingly, the JPSM pledged to work closely with the UNISFA to determine priorities relating to the operationalization of the Safe Border Demilitarized Zone (SDBZ) and to assist in the deployment of the JBVMM. The JPSM also agreed that either State was at liberty to lodge with the Co-Chairs of the JPSM any concerns or complaints it might have regarding the implementation of the joint security commitments. The next meeting of the JPSM is scheduled to take place on 13 January 2013 to review progress made.

90. It is against this background that the Chair of IGAD, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia, visited Khartoum and Juba, on 26 and 27 December 2012, respectively. He took the opportunity to engage the Presidents of Sudan and South Sudan directly on the outstanding issues, and invited them to attend a Summit meeting in Addis Ababa.

91. The Summit between President Omar Hassan Al Bashir and President Salva Kiir Mayardit was convened by the AUHIP in Addis Ababa, on 4 and 5 January 2013, with the support of the Chair of IGAD. The meeting marked progress on all issues under discussion. The two Presidents agreed to the full and unconditional implementation of the Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for Administration and Security in Abyei Area, after which they will again meet to consider the final status of Abyei. They agreed on following the implementation matrix on security issues. In this context, the President of South Sudan reaffirmed that South Sudan had disengaged from the SPLM-North. The Presidents agreed to proceed with the resolution of the disputed areas by expediting the work of the AU Team of Experts, after which each side may raise any additional claimed areas.

92. In conclusion, and while welcoming the progress made, the Assembly may wish to urge the Parties to live up to the expectations generated both within their respective countries and in the rest of the continent by the Agreements of 27 September 2012. In so doing, they would not only further peace, security and prosperity in their respective countries, but also greatly contribute to stability in the region and beyond. It is evident that a resolution of the conflict in the Two Areas will go a long way in enhancing peace, security and stability between the two countries. The Assembly may, therefore, wish to urge that direct negotiations between the GoS and the SPLM-N should convene immediately.

f) Democratic Republic of the Congo and Great Lakes Region

93. The situation in the eastern part of the DRC continues to be a source of serious concern, particularly following the armed rebellion launched by the M23. The developments of the past months have been a serious setback for the stabilisation and peace building process in the DRC, in addition to negatively affecting regional security and stability. It is equally important to point out the humanitarian consequences caused by the crisis, which led to the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of people, as well as to a range of abuses perpetrated against the civilian population, particularly forced recruitment of child soldiers and

sexual violence against women, whose recurrence challenges the AU and calls for swift and strong action on its part.

94. During the period under consideration, sustained efforts were made to address the deteriorating situation on the ground and facilitate the launching of a political process, so as to find a lasting solution to the crisis. Thus, the Heads of State and Government of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) met in Addis Ababa, on 15 July 2012, on the margins of the Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union. On that occasion, they reiterated their commitment, made under the Dar-es-Salaam Declaration of 20 November 2004, to make the region a space of lasting peace and security, political and social stability, growth and shared development within the framework of a common destiny. In this regard, they requested the relevant structures of the ICGLR to work with the AU and the United Nations, with a view to immediately establishing a Neutral International Force (NIF) to eradicate the M23, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and all the other negative forces operating in the eastern part of the DRC, and to secure the border zones.

95. Subsequently, the ICGLR held four other extraordinary summits, in Kampala, on 7 and 8 August 2012, on 8 September 2012, on 7 October 2012 and on 24 November 2012. The decisions adopted at these Summits relate to the operationalization and deployment of the NIF to eradicate the negative forces operating in the eastern part of the DRC, particularly the M23 and the FDLR, the establishment of the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM), the mobilization of support from the international community, particularly the United Nations, and the encouragement of a dialogue between the Government and the M23, in order to evaluate and take into account all legitimate claims of that Movement.

96. Following the breach by the M23, on 15 November 2012, of the ceasefire it had observed since August 2012, the ICGLR, at its extraordinary Summit held on 24 November 2012, adopted a number of measures, endorsed by the PSC on 26 November 2012, aimed at speeding up the resolution of the crisis. The ICGLR Summit took place following the meeting between Presidents Yoweri Museveni, Joseph Kabila and Paul Kagame, held in Kampala on 21 November 2012. The three Heads of State sent a strong message to M23, calling on it to stop its offensive and withdraw from Goma.

97. Progress has been made in the implementation of the ICGLR Summit decisions. Thus, M23 has withdrawn its combatants from the town of Goma, which it controlled until then, without, however, respecting the 20 km distance required for the establishment of the buffer zone provided for in the security arrangements adopted by the ICGLR. Similarly, direct dialogue was held in Kampala from 9 to 23 December 2012 between the DRC Government and the M23, with the facilitation of Uganda. This first round of discussions focused more on the procedural than on substantive matters. The talks are planned to resume in Kampala.

98. The Commission participated actively in the different ICGLR meetings and provided the necessary support for the implementation of the decisions adopted. The Chairperson of the Commission appointed a Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region in the person of Ambassador Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra of Mali, who

has since held consultations with different regional stakeholders, including through visits to Kinshasa and Kigali, from 3 to 8 December 2012. The Commissioner for Peace and Security also travelled to the DRC, where he visited Kinshasa and Goma, and to Rwanda, in early January 2013, to discuss the situation in the region and the efforts to promote peace, security and stability. Furthermore, the AU participated in the talks between the DRC Government and the M23, in Kampala.

99. With regard to the operationalization of the NIF and the strengthening of the EJVM, the Commission, pursuant to the relevant decisions of the PSC, particularly those adopted at its 346th meeting held on 10 December 2012, took initiatives to harmonize the approaches for the deployment of the NIF and the strengthening of the EJVM, as well as to mobilize the necessary international support. Specifically, the Commission organized, in Addis Ababa, on 27 and 28 December 2012, a consultative meeting bringing together all the actors concerned. The meeting considered options for the operationalization of the NIF, precisely whether it could be deployed as a force distinct from the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) or integrated within MONUSCO, while maintaining its identity and its capacity to fulfill its mandate, as provided for in the relevant ICGLR decisions. The discussions also focused on the options available regarding the strengthening of the EJVM, whether to maintain in its present form or to transform into a full-fledged AU structure that is directly mandated by the PSC. The Commission also organized in Addis Ababa, on 8 January 2013, a ministerial meeting to consider further the options that could be envisaged and to be briefed on the proposals made by the UN military advisor, General Babacar Gaye. The meeting, in which the Ministers and the Chiefs of Defense Staff of several member countries of the ICGLR and of SADC participated, made it possible to identify elements of an option whereby the NIF would be a component of MONUSCO, whose mandate would be reviewed to include peace enforcement. Consultations will be pursued between the United Nations, the countries of the region and the AU.

100. It is important to point out the decision adopted by SADC at its extraordinary summit held in Dar-es-Salaam, on 8 December 2012, to deploy its Standby Brigade in the eastern part of the DRC, within the framework of the NIF. The DRC Government also made a financial contribution of 20 million dollars to facilitate the speedy operationalization of the NIF. Finally, Tanzania and South Africa offered, respectively, to contribute troops and logistics for the operationalization of the NIF.

101. The situation in the eastern part of the DRC, the suffering inflicted on the civilian populations, particularly the sexual crimes perpetrated against women and the attendant implications for regional security and stability, call the mobilization of the continent as a whole. No stone should be left unturned to put an end to this situation. In this regard, the present session of the Assembly may wish to reaffirm its support for the initiatives taken within the framework of the ICGLR and SADC, as well as for the measures taken by the Commission, including the request made to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to investigate the massive violations of human rights in the eastern part of the DRC, in order to enable the PSC and other relevant AU organs to take the necessary measures to address the situation. Beyond the immediate action to address the present challenges, it is important to also initiate long-term stabilization efforts for the Great Lakes Region as a whole. The Assembly may wish to lend its support to the initiatives that the

Chairperson of the Commission intends to take in this regard. It is equally important for the Assembly to reaffirm the AU's commitment to the respect of the unity and territorial integrity of the DRC and its total rejection of the recourse to armed rebellion to further political claims.

g) Central African Republic

102. The session of the Assembly in July 2012 considered the situation in the CAR against the backdrop of the efforts aimed at defusing the political tension generated by the legislative and presidential elections of January and March 2011, whose free and fair nature was challenged by the opposition. The efforts made in this regard led to the consensual adoption by the CAR actors, in September 2012, of a Draft Electoral Code and the launch of a political dialogue. The context was equally marked by an alarming security situation and the difficult and laborious implementation of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and the Security Sector Reform (SSR) programmes.

103. The period under consideration was marked by a serious deterioration of the situation. Indeed, from mid-December 2012, a coalition of political and military movements called SELEKA launched an offensive against the Central African Republic Armed Forces (FACA). SELEKA quickly occupied the north-eastern part of the country and moved towards Bangui, the capital city, advancing dangerously close to it.

104. The Commission reacted very quickly to that situation. It issued several communiqués in which it expressed serious concern; reaffirmed fundamental AU's principles on the rejection of recourse to armed rebellion in pursuit of political claims and of any seizure of power by force; expressed support for the efforts made by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and appealed to the international community to lend all the necessary support to the action undertaken by the region and its leaders. Furthermore, the Commission expressed its readiness to mobilize the international community, in coordination with ECCAS and in support of its efforts, to help address the situation.

105. In this regard, the Commission organized consultations with the representatives of the countries of the region in Addis Ababa, other African States, in particular Uganda, in its capacity as the Chair of the ICGLR, and the permanent members of the Security Council. With regard to the latter, the objective was to mobilize support for ECCAS efforts. The AU Liaison Office in Bangui worked closely with the UN Special Representative in CAR and ECCAS, in order to facilitate the commencement of the negotiations proposed by ECCAS. To this end, consultations were held with President François Bozizé and other CAR actors, as well as with President Denis Sassou Nguesso, who chairs the ECCAS Follow-up Committee on the CAR.

106. Furthermore, the AU current Chairman, President Thomas Yayi Boni, went to Bangui, on 30 December 2012, to facilitate the search for a solution. On that occasion, President François Bozizé expressed his readiness to negotiate and his commitment not to stand for reelection at the end of his present term of office, which expires in 2016.

107. It is important to highlight the commitment and pro-activeness demonstrated by the region in order to stabilize the situation on the ground. It is in this context that an extraordinary Summit of ECCAS took place in N'Djamena on 21 December 2012, under the chairmanship of President Idriss Déby Itno, Chairman of ECCAS. The Summit adopted the necessary decisions to speed up the resolution of the crisis, stressing the need for a political solution, and requested SELEKA to stop its advance. As a follow-up to the N'Djamena Summit decisions, the countries of the region deployed additional troops as part of FOMAC. That rapid response made it possible to stop the rebel advance and to stabilize the front line. On 28 December 2012, the ECCAS Ministers of Foreign Affairs met in an extraordinary session, in Libreville, to consider the situation in light of the developments that had taken place since the N'Djamena Summit and to ensure a follow-up of the decisions adopted at that time. On that occasion, the Chairperson of the Commission dispatched an emissary to Libreville in the person of the Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region.

108. In addition, ECCAS decided to hold peace talks in Libreville. Those talks took place from 9 to 11 January 2013. In their last phase, the talks were marked by the direct involvement of the Heads of State of the region, who met in Libreville and held consultations with the CAR parties. The negotiations led to the signing of a Political Agreement, a Ceasefire Agreement and a Declaration of Principles. The CAR parties agreed, in particular, on the appointment of a new Prime Minister from the Opposition, the establishment of an inclusive Government of National Unity for a period of 12 months, and the retention of the National Assembly with its prerogatives, until the organization of early legislative elections.

109. Priority should now focus on the implementation of the commitments made. The CAR parties should endeavor to implement promptly and in good faith the agreements concluded. It is obvious, however, that without sustained international support, those efforts cannot succeed. In light of the foregoing, the Assembly may wish to welcome the agreements concluded in Libreville and to express its appreciation to ECCAS and the leaders of the region, as well as to the AU Chairman, for their decisive role. The Assembly may also appeal to the Member States and the rest of the international community to give full support for the implementation of the agreements concluded.

110. At the same time, it is important to bear in mind that the developments that took place in the CAR highlight the danger posed by the increasingly frequent recourse to armed rebellion to further political claims. Clearly, this is a problem which the Assembly and other relevant AU organs should confront head-on, considering the threat that it poses to the stability and security of the continent and to the ongoing democratization processes.

h) Fight against the Lord's Resistance Army

111. During the reporting period, the Commission continued to work towards the implementation of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA). After the transfer of the Central African Republic, Ugandan and South Sudanese contingents (totaling 2,850 troops) to the Regional

Task Force (RTF), in September 2012, the Chiefs of Defense Staff of the four countries affected by the atrocities of the LRA met in Bangui, on 20 December 2012, to consider the mission documents of the Initiative. Thereafter, the Ministers of Defense of the countries concerned met in Addis Ababa, on 15 January 2013, within the framework of the Joint Coordination Mechanism (JCM) that is chaired by the Commissioner for Peace and Security. On that occasion, they approved the mission documents of the RCI-LRA, namely the Strategic Directives, the CONOPS, the Rules of Engagement and the standing operational procedures. At that meeting, South Sudan pledged to provide 500 additional troops to the RTF, while the DRC promised to make available its contingent of 500 troops before the end of January 2013. Furthermore, the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the Commission for the LRA continued his interaction with the different actors concerned in order to enhance the effectiveness of the efforts being made.

112. If the combined efforts of all the stakeholders have made it possible, to a certain extent, to contain the criminal activities of the LRA, this terrorist group is far from being neutralized. Hence the need for renewed efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of the RCI-LRA. The Assembly may wish to welcome the achievements made so far; thank the EU, the United Nations and the United States for their assistance; and express support to the establishment of a Support Forum for the RCI-LRA to expedite the mobilization of the necessary financial and logistical assistance to attain the objectives set.

i) Liberia

113. Liberia has continued to make remarkable progress in different areas, particularly economic recovery. The country has maintained positive economic growth rates, and pursued an encouraging policy to attract foreign investment. Cooperation has also continued with the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), as well as coordination with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to monitor the border between the two countries, which has been volatile over the past few months.

114. However, a number of challenges remain, the most urgent of which these being youth unemployment. Reinforcement of the security sector reform and rule of law initiatives are equally important. Furthermore, the ongoing transition process by UNMIL, which includes the handing over of security responsibilities to the Government of Liberia, and the resultant need to fill the security gaps that would be created, would require very careful planning, and the support of all stakeholders and partners, to ensure a successful gradual withdrawal process. Finally, it is expected that the newly-launched National Vision 2030, with the aligned Roadmap for National Reconciliation and the Agenda for Transformation (AfT), would further promote peace, security, reconciliation and economic development in the years ahead.

j) Côte d'Ivoire

115. The Ivorian authorities have pursued their efforts to build peace and reconstruct their country. Côte d'Ivoire continues to record good economic performance. Structural and management reforms have been carried out, and several public infrastructure works have been launched. At the same time, the

Government carried out a diplomatic offensive which has attracted interest from traditional partners and new potential investors.

116. At the security level, the efforts aimed at reforming the defense and security sector continued with the establishment of a National Security Council, the adoption of a national strategy for security sector reform and the establishment of an Authority for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (ADDR). However, during the second half of 2012, Côte d'Ivoire witnessed a number of attacks carried out by unidentified armed groups against Government forces. In spite of these destabilization attempts, the insecurity index has significantly gone down, while the number of refugees and internally displaced persons has decreased.

117. The commitment to national reconciliation was particularly highlighted in the consultations of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the dialogue between the Government and the opposition parties, as well as in the President's own appeal for peace and reconciliation to the Ivorian people during his visits inside the country. The Ivorian judiciary also helped in improving the political atmosphere by releasing on bail personalities close to former President Laurent Gbagbo, who are accused of crimes related to the post-electoral crisis that followed the presidential election.

118. The Assembly may wish to welcome the achievements made this far with regards to post-conflict reconstruction and economic recovery. At the same time, it may wish to encourage the continuation of political dialogue among all the Ivorian stakeholders, with a view to consolidating the national reconciliation efforts and the progress made in the area of security and justice.

k) Mali and the Sahel

119. During the period under consideration, the multi-dimensional crisis faced by Mali and the situation in the Sahel, in general, continued to mobilize the efforts of Africa, as well as the rest of the international community. The Commission actively endeavored to implement the relevant decisions of the Assembly of the Union and the PSC on Mali, particularly the Solemn Declaration adopted by the Summit on 16 July 2012.

120. Particular attention was given to the preparation of the documents required by the Security Council under resolutions 2056 (2012) and 2071 (2012) of 5 July and 12 October 2012, respectively, to consider the request made by ECOWAS and the AU regarding the situation in Mali. Within this framework, the Commission led the process of preparing a Strategic Concept on the Resolution of the Crises in Mali. The document, which was the subject of thorough consultations, articulated the different measures to be taken to hasten the resolution of the crises faced by Mali, and aim to structure the action of the continent and that of the rest of the international community with regards the situation in Mali. It focuses on the following elements: political process and governance, restoration of state authority and preservation of the national unity and territorial integrity of Mali, organization of free and fair elections, defense and security sector reform, stabilization, justice and support for post-conflict efforts and peace building, structural challenges faced by the Sahel-

Saharan region, including terrorism and organized transnational crime, humanitarian aid, return of displaced persons and refugees and restoration of basic social services, regional and international coordination, and follow-up. The Strategic Concept was adopted by the meeting of the Support and Follow-up Group, held in Bamako on 19 October 2012 and co-chaired by the AU, ECOWAS and the United Nations. The Chairperson of the Commission participated in that meeting, which was her first international travel after she assumed office on 15 October 2012. The Strategic Concept was endorsed by the PSC on 24 October 2012 and immediately transmitted to the Security Council through the UN Secretary-General.

121. Similarly, the Commission, in close coordination with ECOWAS, the core countries, the United Nations and other partners, was actively involved in the preparation of a harmonized Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for the deployment of an operation in Mali, following the request made by the Malian authorities. The draft harmonized CONOPS was endorsed by ECOWAS and the PSC on 11 and 13 November 2012, respectively. It provides for the deployment of an African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) of 3300 troops, to help train and restructure the Malian Defense and Security Forces, and assist in the restoration of state authority over the entire national territory. The PSC requested the Security Council to support the Strategic Concept and authorize the deployment of AFISMA, the establishment of a support package funded by UN assessed contributions, as well as of a Trust Fund to support the Malian defense and security forces.

122. On 20 December 2012, the Security Council adopted resolution 2085 (2012), in which, among others things, it authorized the deployment of AFISMA in Mali for an initial period of one year. The Security Council also appealed to the Member States and international organizations to provide the financial resources and contributions in kind required by AFISMA, requested the UN Secretary-General to establish a Trust Fund for AFISMA and the Malian defense and security forces, and called upon the Secretary-General to support the convening of a pledging conference to mobilize contributions for the Trust Fund. Simultaneously, the mediation efforts were pursued with the Malian rebel groups which committed themselves to negotiate on the basis of AU's principles, particularly the scrupulous respect for the unity and territorial integrity of Mali, the rejection of terrorism and organized crime, as well as the renunciation to armed struggle as a means to pursue political claims.

123. Obviously, the establishment of an inclusive Transition, under the authority of the Interim President, Mr. Dioncounda Traoré, is crucial to ensure Mali's ownership in the search for a lasting solution to the present crisis. In this perspective, both the PSC and the Commission, in conjunction with ECOWAS and the United Nations, continued to lend their support to the authorities of the Transition and to urge them, as well as the other Malian stakeholders, to promote the broadest possible consensus on the challenges at hand. It was within that framework that a joint AU/ECOWAS/UN/OIF delegation, coordinated by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, went to Bamako at the end of July 2012, at the time of President Dioncounda Traoré's return to the capital, after his medical treatment in France, following the physical assault against him in May 2012. Similarly, the PSC, at its meeting on 24 October 2012, decided to lift the suspension of Mali in the AU's

activities, taking into account, in this regard, the formation of a Government of National Unity, on 20 August 2012.

124. As these efforts were underway, the terrorist and criminal armed groups launched a massive attack on the positions of the Malian army, with the view to occupying the area of Sevare, which controls access to the strategic town of Mopti, leading directly to Bamako. At the request of the Malian Government and within the framework of resolution 2085 (2012), France launched the Serval Operation to block the attempted progress of the terrorist and criminal armed groups. At the same time, several ECOWAS Member States and other countries of the continent took measures to deploy troops within the framework of AFISMA, or, as far as the immediate neighbors of Mali are concerned, to further enhance the monitoring of their borders to prevent any movement of arms or combatants in favor of the terrorist and criminal armed groups.

125. The UN Security Council met on several occasions to consider the evolution of the situation. On 11 January 2013, the Chairperson of the Commission issued a communiqué in which she strongly condemned the attacks launched by the terrorist and armed criminal groups in northern Mali; expressed AU's solidarity with Mali; and made an appeal to all the AU Member States to extend, in conformity to the relevant PSC decisions and UN Security Council resolutions, the necessary logistical, financial and capacity building support to the defense and security forces. Furthermore, the Chairperson of the Commission reiterated the support of the AU to the Malian transitional authorities, particularly President Dioncounda Traoré and Prime Minister Diango Cissoko. At its meeting of 14 January 2013, the PSC pronounced itself on the issue. Recalling that it had repeatedly drawn attention to the seriousness of the situation in the north of Mali and the need for sustained international support to the efforts deployed by Africa, it acknowledged the assistance given by France at the request of the Malian authorities and within the framework of UN Security Council resolution 2085 (2012) and also expressed its gratitude to all the other AU partners that provide support to Mali. The PSC encouraged the partners to pursue and intensify their efforts and support.

126. As pointed out in the Strategic Concept, the resolution of the crises faced by Mali requires a holistic approach. It is important to simultaneously make determined efforts to promote the broadest possible national consensus among the Malians on the challenges faced by their country, and to speed up the deployment of AFISMA, to address the security challenges in the northern part of the country and restore state authority over the entire national territory. The AU is determined to leave no stone unturned to hasten the resolution of the serious crises faced by Mali and contribute to the stabilization of the Sahel region. It is in this context that the Chairperson of the Commission appointed former President Pierre Buyoya as her High Representative for Mali and the Sahel. As part of his mandate, the High Representative has undertaken missions to Mali and to the region and established contacts with the international partners, particularly the United Nations.

127. The Assembly may wish to reaffirm AU's full solidarity with Mali in these difficult moments. The Assembly may also wish to appeal to all Member States to provide the necessary support to Mali, particularly in terms of logistics, financial and

capacity building support for its defense and security forces and contribute, as appropriate, to the speedy deployment and effective operationalization of AFISMA. The Assembly may also wish to thank the AU partners for their contributions and urge them to strengthen their support, including through the establishment of a support package funded by UN assessed contributions, as the situation in Mali threatens not only that country and the region, but also the rest of Africa and beyond. At the time of finalizing this report, the Commission was preparing for the pledging conference for the Malian defense and security forces and for AFISMA, to be held in Addis Ababa on 29 January 2013. Furthermore, it is important that the Assembly reaffirm its full support to President Dioncounda Traoré and Prime Minister Diango Cissoko, who have the responsibility for successfully carrying out the Transition, warn the members of the former Junta who interfere with the political process and undermine the chain of military command, and urge all the Malian stakeholders to reach consensus on key issues, so as to be able to deal with the root causes of the serious crises faced by Mali.

I) Guinea Bissau

128. The July 2012 Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union considered the situation in Guinea Bissau against the background of the coup d'état that took place in that country in April 2012 and the international initiatives aimed at restoring constitutional order. The efforts deployed by ECOWAS in the wake of the recommendations of the extraordinary Summit held in Dakar on 3 May 2012 led to the establishment of a 12-month transitional period, as well as to the appointment of Sherifo Nhamadjo, then Acting Speaker of the People's National Assembly (ANP), as the President of the Republic of the Transition, following the renewal of the Bureau of the ANP and on the basis of Article 71 of the Constitution. Ibrahima Sori Djalo, then the 2nd Vice-Chairman of the ANP, replaced him as the Speaker of Parliament, while Ruis Duarte Barros, a technocrat and man of consensus, was appointed as Prime Minister, following wide consultations.

129. The impasse created by the majority party's refusal to be integrated into the structures of the Transition – a position which has changed since then - and the ensuing disruption of the activities of the ANP led the President of the Transition to initiate a series of consultations with all the Bissau Guinean stakeholders. Beginning August 2012, he met successively with the military, political parties, civil society organizations and religious leaders, with the support of the AU Liaison Office and in close cooperation with other international partners. Those consultations led to the convening, on 15 November 2012, of the 1st session of the 8th term of the ANP. On 20 November 2012, the members of Parliament decided, unanimously, to extend the mandate of the Parliament until the end of the Transition, in anticipation of the end of their term scheduled for 28 November 2012. In the same vein, on 23 November 2012, the two largest political parties, namely the African Party for the Independence of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC) and the Party for Social Renovation (PRS), agreed on the distribution of posts in the ANP Bureau. The Executive Chairman of the PRS retained his position of Speaker of Parliament, the Secretary-General of the PAIGC became the 1st Vice-President, while the position of the 2nd Vice-President was given to a former Minister of the PAIGC. At the same time, a Parliamentary Committee comprising 11 members and led by the PAIGC was established. It is tasked to propose a new version of the Transitional Charter likely to

enjoy a broader consensus and to propose amendments to the electoral law, indispensable for the integration of the reforms envisaged within the framework of the general elections which should conclude the process for the restoration of constitutional order, such as the biometric census and the appointing process of the Chairman of the National Electoral Commission.

130. Meanwhile, on 21 October 2012, an attack was launched against the Bissalanca air base in Bissau, by armed men led by Captain Pansau N'Tchama, a former officer of the Guinea Bissau army, who was until then in exile in Portugal. Seven persons died and Captain Pansau, who managed to escape, was, shortly thereafter, arrested on the Bolama Island. The PSC, at its 340th meeting held on 2 November 2012, strongly condemned the attack and its sponsors, and stressed the need to pursue regional and international efforts aimed at consolidating the progress made in the search for a lasting solution to the situation in Guinea Bissau.

131. Pursuant to the decision of the 319th meeting of the PSC held on 24 April 2012, requesting the Commission to facilitate the search for a consensus for a rapid exit from the crisis, the AU Special Representative in Guinea Bissau maintained close contact with all the national stakeholders. Similarly, and jointly with the UN Special Representative in Guinea Bissau, he held consultations with the office of the current Chairman of the AU and other international actors involved in the management of the crisis, as well as with the leaders of the overthrown regime. Between August and October 2012, the two Special Representatives went successively to Cotonou, Abuja, Addis Ababa, Maputo, Lisbon, Dakar and Luanda. At the end of September 2012, in New York, the AU co-chaired with the United Nations a coordination meeting among the CPLP, ECOWAS and the EU. In addition, the Commission facilitated a meeting between the representatives of the current Bissau Guinean authorities and those of the overthrown regime, on 29 September 2012, in New York. On that occasion, the two parties agreed to the dispatch a joint mission to Bissau comprising ECOWAS, AU, CPLP, EU and the UN, to assess the political and security situation and submit a report, which should serve as a basis for future initiatives.

132. Another meeting of the Bissau-Guinean parties was supposed to take place in Addis Ababa. However, only the representatives of the overthrown regime, based in Lisbon, responded to the invitation sent to them by the Commission. In addition to the interaction with the delegation, on 1 December 2012, the five organizations involved in the management of the crisis in Guinea Bissau held consultations to facilitate the harmonization of approaches and actions of the international community on the situation in Guinea Bissau. The participants agreed on the Terms of Reference of the planned joint mission. Subsequently, the five international organizations, under the coordination of the AU Commission, undertook a joint mission to Bissau, from 16 to 21 December 2012, with the aim of assessing the political and security situation on the ground and looking into the underlying causes of the recurring crises in Guinea Bissau, in order to facilitate a more effective international response. At the time of finalizing this report, the five international organizations were finalizing the report of the joint mission, while the PSC was planning to convene in mid-February to review the situation.

133. Obviously, Guinea Bissau needs the support of the continent and the rest of the international community to ensure the restoration of constitutional order and address the multiple scourges which have marked its post-independence history, whether it is impunity , drug trafficking, illegal fishing or the chronic interference of the army in the political life of the country. In this context, it is necessary to ensure that the present Transition is as inclusive as possible and to facilitate the holding of credible, free and fair elections. Particular attention should be given to security sector reform, for it is a prerequisite for the long term stability of the country and the viability of the democratization efforts.

m) Western Sahara

134. In the six months that elapsed since the last Summit, no progress has been made in the resolution of the dispute over Western Sahara between the Kingdom of Morocco and the POLISARIO Front. As the Assembly is aware, the United Nations Security Council has been seized with the conflict in Western Sahara for many years.

135. The period under review was marked by the resumption of the mediation on the dispute by Ambassador Christopher Ross, the Personal Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for Western Sahara. From 27 October to 11 November 2012, he visited the Territory – for the first time since his appointment, on 7 January 2009, Rabat (Morocco); Tindouf and Algiers (Algeria), and Nouakchott (Mauritania). In his close door briefing to the Security Council, Ambassador Ross indicated that he would be resorting to shuttle diplomacy as a means of engaging the Parties towards a serious and substantive consideration of the issue. In this regard, he stressed his intention to seek the active support of Council and other stakeholders of the region. The Personal Envoy also stated his intention to examine the impact of latest developments in the Sahel region on the Western Sahara issue. Ambassador Ross determination that acceptance of the status quo would be a miscalculation could serve as a stark reminder for all concerned Parties to cooperate towards the resolution of the dispute.

136. Against this background, the Assembly may wish to urge the Security Council to fully assume its responsibilities by taking the necessary steps for the people of Western Sahara to exercise their right to self-determination, in line with international legality. Such a decisive action by the Security Council will go a long way in furthering peace and stability not only in the Territory, but also in the region as a whole.

n) Egypt

137. The transitional process in Egypt witnessed a number of developments in the reporting period. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the decision taken by President Mohamed Morsi, on 12 August 2012, to annul the 17 June 2012 Supplementary Constitutional Declaration (SCD), through which the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), which had governed the country until the June 2012 presidential election, had insulated itself against any oversight by the elected President. Moreover, in a Constitutional Declaration (CD) he made on 22 November 2012, President Morsi ordered the removal of Public Prosecutor Abdel-Meguid Mahmoud

from office, accused of links with the former regime; called for the re-investigation of alleged perpetrators of the violence committed against demonstrators during the 18-day protests that forced Hosni Mubarak from power, and who had been acquitted; extended the tenure of the Constituent Assembly drafting the Constitution by eight extra weeks to enable it finalise its work; and immunised the Assembly against any threat of dissolution in view of the many court cases hanging over it.

138. The President justified his action by saying that it was aimed at protecting the Revolution and ensuring justice for its victims. However, his opponents protested against the decision, seeing in it an attempt to shield the President against democratic oversight. This led to a growing discord among the different political groups and violence, which resulted in fatalities and injuries. In a press release issued on 8 December 2012, the Chairperson of the Commission called on all the Egyptian stakeholders to exercise utmost restraint and to work towards consensus-building for the greater interest of the nation. She underscored the imperative of dialogue and AU's readiness to assist in such a process in whatever way that would be deemed appropriate.

139. Following the completion of the draft Constitution, a referendum was held in two stages on 15 and 22 December 2012. On 24 December 2012, the Supreme Elections Committee announced official final results indicating the approval of the Constitution with 63.68% of the votes. Shortly thereafter, the President signed the Constitution into law and transferred legislative power – which he had acquired through the 22 November 2012 CD – to the Upper House of Parliament until the members of the Lower House, which was dissolved in June 2012, are elected in the first quarter of 2013. While various opposition figures continued to challenge the Constitution, notwithstanding its approval, many indicated their readiness to participate in the legislative elections.

140. In view of the polarisation generated by the process towards the elaboration of the constitution, President Morsi, in a public address on 26 December 2012, called for more dialogue, saying that talks with the opposition were now a necessity. The National Salvation Front (NSF), which brought together opposition parties to protest against the CD, positively replied to this offer. It should be recalled that in a press release issued on 26 December 2012, the Chairperson of the Commission called on all the Egyptian stakeholders to engage in a constructive dialogue, with the required spirit of mutual respect and tolerance, to overcome the divisions that arose in the course of the elaboration of the Constitution and strengthen the democratic process in their country. On 27 December 2012, Egypt's newly-appointed Public Prosecutor ordered an inquiry into three prominent opposition leaders – Mohamed El-Baradei, and former presidential aspirants Amr Mousa and Hamdeen Sabahi – on charges of allegedly inciting the overthrow of President Mohammed Morsi during the protests against the draft Constitution. The three men are all members of the NSF.

141. The Assembly may wish to stress the importance of a constructive dialogue among the Egyptian stakeholders to successfully organize the planned legislative elections, in order to complete the transition ushered in following the 2011 Revolution, and address the socio-economic challenges facing the country. It is important that the Egyptian stakeholders make the necessary compromises to overcome their differences and put the national interest before all personal, partisan

and ideological considerations. It is also important that the international community accompany Egypt in its efforts to effectively address its socio-economic challenges, so as to help consolidate the progress made so far.

o) Tunisia

142. Efforts to complete the transition have continued in Tunisia. The National Constituent Assembly (NCA) has pursued its work on drafting the new Constitution with six constitutional committees tasked to draft its various chapters. Given the delays in its work, the NCA has been given more time to complete its work beyond the initial deadline of 23 October 2012. It is expected to complete the drafting process of the new Constitution by April 2013. Because of this delay, the general elections (presidential and legislative), which will mark the end of the transition, are now expected to be held in the second or third quarter of 2013. On a few occasions, violent confrontations broke out across the country, especially in Tunis.

143. On its part, the Government has embarked on an important reform programme for the economy, IT technology, social services, security, justice, and the communication sectors. However, the reform projects face serious challenges because of the recurrent protests and the uncertainty they create for the country's immediate future, thereby discouraging many potential foreign investors and tourists from coming into the country.

144. The Assembly may wish to reaffirm its support to the on-going transitional process and urge all the Tunisian stakeholders to persevere in their endeavours and redouble their efforts towards the successful and timely completion of the transition. In view of the recurrent protest marches, the Assembly may wish to call on all the Tunisian stakeholders, both in Government and in the opposition, as well as all citizens, to only use peaceful means to express their opinions and grievances and to make the necessary compromises to allow their country to meet the expectations raised by the popular protests of December 2010 and January 2011.

p) Libya

145. The last Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union took place against the backdrop of the successful conduct, on 7 July 2012, of nationwide polls to elect a General National Congress (GNC). Subsequent to its inauguration, the GNC, on 14 October 2012, elected Mr. Ali Zidan as Prime Minister. In accepting his appointment, the Prime Minister emphasized the establishment of a unified military and national security forces and the promotion of national reconciliation as priorities for the Government. On 31 October 2012, the GNC approved the newly-elected Government and, on 14 November 2012, the hand-over to the new Government was completed. On its part, the Commission, through its AU Liaison Office in Tripoli, and working closely with the UN, as well as other AU partners in the country, is continuing to support the transitional process.

146. Furthermore, in the first half of December 2012, Prime Minister Ali Zeidan undertook a visit to the neighboring countries of Algeria, Niger, Chad and Sudan to discuss issues relating to regional security and cooperation. On 16 December 2012, the GNC ordered the temporary closure of Libya's borders with four of its neighbors

(Algeria, Chad, Niger and Sudan), while at the same time declaring much of the southern part of the country a closed military zone, in order to address the security challenges in that part of the country, which is facing increasing violence and other forms of criminality.

147. The Assembly may wish to reiterate its support to the ongoing transition in Libya and the efforts to address the relating challenges, including in the area of security sector reform. The Assembly may also wish to stress the need for continued engagement between Libya and its neighbors to address common security and related challenges. The recommendations of the joint AU-UN meeting of experts on the situation in the Sahel, held in Addis Ababa on 14 and 15 March 2012, which was endorsed by the PSC in Bamako on 20 March 2012, provide a framework for a collaborative effort among all countries concerned to address the challenges at hand.

2. Thematic Issues

a) Security Sector Reform

148. The process for the development of the AU Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform (SSR) was completed during the reporting period. The purpose of the document is to guide Member States to transform their security sector in order to make them more effective, efficient, and responsive to democratic control and to the security and justice needs of the people. The document is a product of wide consultations with Member States and, in particular, with the relevant security sector experts over a period of 3 years starting in January 2009. The highlight of the consultation process was the Meeting of Government Experts of Member States that took place in Addis Ababa in May 2011 and considered and endorsed the draft AU Policy Framework on SSR. The development process of the document also involved wide consultations with other stakeholders, including RECs/RMs, the Committee of Intelligence and Security Services of Africa (CISSA), African civil society, and the United Nations. The final AU Policy Framework on SSR was circulated to all Member States and RECs/RMs in April 2012.

149. The completion of the AU Policy Framework on SSR is timely in view of the many conflicts that the AU is currently grappling with, a number of which involve security sector reform aspects, such as those in the Central African Republic, Mali, Guinea-Bissau, the Democratic Republic of Congo and many others. While recognizing the important role of the AU, the UN and other international players in SSR, the AU Policy Framework on SSR stresses national ownership of SSR processes. Additional instruments, at both national and continental levels, could be developed to further and consolidate SSR processes.

150. The AU has already started to respond to Member States calls for assistance in SSR. Starting in June 2012, the AU is assisting the Republic of South Sudan in the development of the country's National Security Policy. The AU will respond to many more calls for SSR assistance by Member States in 2013 and beyond, on the basis of the principles expounded in the Policy Framework on SSR for guidance.

b) Implementation of the UN Security Council resolution 1540

151. With the increased threat of terrorism and transnational organized crime, the proliferation of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons and materials to non-state actors, including criminal and terrorist groups, has emerged as a matter of deep concern within the international community. These concerns were accentuated by various incidents of theft and loss, as well as by the emergence of trafficking networks.

152. It was against this background that, on 28 April 2004, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1540 (2004). The resolution imposes binding obligations on all states to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and their means of delivery, to non-states actors, including by establishing appropriate legislation and domestic controls over related materials. Subsequently, the Security Council adopted resolution 1977 (2011), which stressed the need for an enhanced role of regional organizations.

153. Despite Africa's commitment to resolution 1540, challenges remain to its full and effective implementation, due largely to limited resources and competing developmental priorities. In response to this, the Republic of South Africa, Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540, in collaboration with the AU and with the support of the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), hosted, from 21 to 22 November 2012, in Pretoria, a workshop on the implementation of resolution 1540 for African states. The workshop contributed to an understanding of the synergies available to African States to advance their socio-economic development objectives, while developing national capacities for the implementation of resolution 1540. The workshop requested the AU to undertake the necessary efforts, in collaboration with the RECs, the 1540 Committee and the relevant international organizations, to further promote and enhance the implementation of 1540 (2004) in Africa.

154. The Assembly may wish to stress Africa's commitment to the implementation of resolution 1540, and to call on the international community to provide the required assistance both financially and in terms of capacity building. The Assembly may also wish to welcome the convening of the Pretoria workshop and to encourage the Commission, working with the 1540 Committee and other stakeholders, to actively follow-up on the recommendations that were made.

c) Terrorism and violent extremism

155. During the period under review, the continent has witnessed a rise in acts of terrorism and violent extremism perpetrated not only by organized terrorist groups, but also by individuals operating independently, who regrettably subscribe to the narrative of intolerance, hatred and violence. These occurred mostly in the eastern, western and northern parts of the continent, including in the Sahel region. The terrorist aggression against the Algerian gas processing facilities in In Amenas testifies to the ever-growing seriousness of this trans-border criminal phenomenon and its changing manifestations, as it involved a large group of heavily armed terrorists from several different nationalities, including non-Africans, conducting a mass-hostage taking of Algerian and foreign workers in the hundreds. The rescue

operation conducted by Algerian armed forces helped in saving hundreds of human lives and limiting the scope of the damages to the facilities.

156. The situation requires renewed and enhanced efforts from the Member States, working closely with the United Nations and other international partners, within the framework of existing regional and international counter terrorism regimes. While having disparate histories, ideologies and agendas, organized extremist and terrorist groups continue to operate similarly in exploiting existing security vulnerabilities and poor governance, as well as marginalization and socio-economic deprivation. Furthermore, these groups also exploit long standing socio-economic grievances and delicate inter-communal balances, inflaming societal and religious tensions, with serious consequences for state stability.

157. Terrorist acts cannot be justified under any circumstances. While efforts are intensified to address the security challenges arising from terrorism and violent extremism, through enhanced information exchange, effective policing of borders, effective state presence across national territories and capacity building for relevant agencies, it is equally important to address the conditions and factors that are conducive to the development and spread of terrorism. In addition, particular efforts are required to develop counter and de-radicalization programmes, given the fact that, over the past few years, terrorist groups have taken advantage of vulnerabilities of individuals and groups to mobilize them in support of their agenda.

158. Terrorist acts have claimed numerous lives on the continent and devastated many others. The victims remain often anonymous and dealt with only in terms of numbers. In this respect, it is critical that the Union make more sustained efforts to support the victims of terrorism. The Commission has initiated steps in this respect. These efforts need to be pursued and intensified.

159. The Assembly may wish to reiterate AU's long standing position on the total rejection of terrorism and violent extremism, as well as on the need for Member States to fully comply with their obligations under AU and international counter-terrorism framework and commit the financial and human resources required to this effect. Equally important is the need for Member States to make renewed efforts to address conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. The Assembly may also wish to express support for the efforts being made by the Commission, through the Algiers-based Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), as well as through other initiatives, such as the Sahel Programme (SAPROG), launched as a follow-up to the Declaration adopted by the PSC at its Bamako meeting of 20 March 2012.

d) Maritime Piracy

160. Maritime piracy off the coast of Somalia and the Gulf of Guinea continues to pose a serious threat to regional security and to undermine socio-economic development efforts. Accordingly, Member States should intensify their efforts to address this scourge, including by enhancing coordination among various initiatives in this area. On its part, the Commission will expedite the operationalization of the information and coordination cell on maritime security and safety, whose tasks will include enhancing the fight against maritime piracy.

e) **Challenges of conflict prevention in Africa**

161. The costs of managing and resolving conflicts are high, whether through the financial and human costs of peacekeeping operations or providing humanitarian assistance for affected populations. The high costs of post-conflict reconstruction efforts add to this list, thereby lending further credence to the long-standing adage that 'prevention is better than cure'. Recognising that the human, financial and material costs of prevention are far less compared to the devastating consequences of armed violence, the AU and the RECs/RMs have, over the last two decades, adopted norms and developed policies and instruments aimed at preventing violent conflict on the continent.

162. Notwithstanding these developments, however, several violent conflicts and serious political crises still afflict the continent, indicating the existence of serious challenges to conflict prevention in Africa. These challenges relate to the persistence of some of the causes of conflicts on the continent, as well as issues of capacity to deal, simultaneously, with the numerous on-going crises and engage in long-term structural preventive action. The challenges could therefore be classified as (i) structural; and (ii) institutional.

163. The structural challenges relate to some of the root causes of conflicts and other political crises on the continent. These include deviation from principles of democratic governance and violations of human rights, unequal distribution of resources, bad management of electoral processes, social and political discrimination, lack of dialogue among main socio-political actors in a given country, as well as impunity. Another structural challenge related to the lack of adequate financial resources that could allow African Government to satisfy some of the crucial socio-economic needs of their citizens. Yet, the result of such situations frustrate many citizens and make them vulnerable to the manipulation of warlords and other actors posing to be their saviours, making outside preventive measures difficult to succeed in the face of such mass anger.

164. Institutional challenges include the lack of effective preventive structures in many African countries, inconsistency in the implementation of some of the continental policy instruments, lack of capacity and resources that could allow the AU to intervene timely in some crisis situations before they escalate, and lack of the necessary clout to dissuade actors from engaging in activities that could lead to conflict. Some African countries have national structures and institutions that carry out conflict prevention actions to offset political crises. Those include national peace councils, national ombudsmen (*médiateurs de la République*), faith (and inter-faith) groups, councils of the elders, and national early warning systems. However, many other countries lack such structures and, in all cases, these institutions may not enjoy all the required moral authority, legal power or financial resources to effectively carry out their mandate.

165. AU's lack of capacity constitutes a challenge for conflict prevention in that the continental body often has to rely on external support to enable it implement many of its own policy recommendations, a situation that has at least two major consequences. One is that it is beholden to the decisions of external actors and their

appreciation of the pertinence and urgency of its pronouncement. This means that many opportunities may be lost for timely action for preventive purposes. A second consequence is the message this situation sends to actors targeted by preventive action, as these actors often perceive AU's injunctions as toothless, and are therefore not deterred.

166. In order to address these challenges, the AU is currently finalising a Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework. This Framework is intended to serve as a flexible template to assist the AU Commission in systematically mainstreaming conflict prevention in policy formulation, relevant areas of engagement and across its various departments, organs and programmes. It also aims at establishing an in-house 'culture of prevention' by outlining the appropriate means and procedures that will enable the incorporation of a conflict sensitive approach to AU policies. This is to be in close coordination with similar structures at the level of RECs/RMs, within the framework of the APSA.

167. The Assembly may wish to strongly reaffirm the commitment of Member States to effective conflict prevention on the continent. In this respect, Member States should uphold the already agreed norms and policies. The Assembly may also wish to encourage Member States with effective national conflict prevention institutions to share their experiences. It is worth noting in this regard that the Commission could assist Member States desirous to establish national early warning systems. Furthermore, the operationalization, in 2013, of the Pan-African Network of the Wise (PANWISE) has the potential of enhancing timely and effective action, through a bottom-up process, to detect seeds of conflict situation and put in motion the required modus operandi for peaceful settlement.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

168. Although during the period under review, some progress has been made in the quest for peace, thanks to Africa's efforts and the support received from partners within the international community, the continent continues, nonetheless, to face daunting challenges in the area of peace and security. The situations in northern Mali and eastern DRC, with their attendant regional consequences, the challenges in CAR, Guinea Bissau, the relations between Sudan and South Sudan, Somalia, the long-standing deadlocks in the peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea and in the situation in Western Sahara, and the complex task of consolidating peace where it has been achieved, are all indicative of the long journey that Africa has yet to complete to achieve the objective of a conflict-free continent.

169. Against this background, and in addition to the steps taken to resolve existing conflicts and consolidate the achievements made, there is need to strengthen the ongoing efforts to address the root causes of conflicts in a holistic and systematic manner, including through implementing existing instruments in the areas of human rights, the rule of law, democracy, elections and good governance. Equally crucial is the need for Member States to extend full support to the PSC and the Commission in the discharge of their respective mandates.

170. Finally, as the continent prepares to celebrate the OAU-AU's Golden Jubilee, the relationship between the AU and the RECs/RMs needs to be given further

attention, in both conceptual and operational terms, to ensure that the continental peace and security architecture, as envisioned in the PSC Protocol, functions effectively and in an integrated and harmonized fashion. To this end, the PSC Protocol provisions on the primary responsibility of the AU for the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa should be strictly adhered to. While the RECs/RMs have a critical role to play in the prevention and management of conflicts in their respective regions, the importance of continental leadership and coherence cannot be overemphasized, for Africa's strength, relevance and leadership in the area of peace and security lies in its unity.