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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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AND THE STATE OF PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Since the 23rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union (AU), held from 26 to 27 June 2014, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) has remained steadfast in its efforts to address both long standing and new conflict and crisis situations in Africa. In the same vein, the PSC has recognized the emergence of the phenomena of terrorism and violent extremism, election-related violence, illicit financial flows and rising inequality among others, which undermine peace and security on the continent. In this context, the PSC held 39 meetings to address the conflict and crisis situations, as well as issues reflected below.

2. During the period under review, the PSC considered the following conflict situations in: Burkina Faso, Central African Republic (CAR), Darfur (The Sudan), Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Libya, Mali/Sahel, Mozambique (the then prevailing political developments in the country), Somalia, the situation between The Sudan and South Sudan and South Sudan. The PSC also considered the issues of Ebola outbreak in West Africa and Boko Haram terrorist group, as well as the following thematic and other issues: Drug trafficking and related organized crimes in West and Central Africa, humanitarian situations in the CAR, South Sudan and Sahel region, prevention and combating of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa, sexual violence in conflict situations in Africa, structural prevention of conflicts-reinvigorating states in fragile situations in Africa, sources of instability in Africa: Root causes and Responses, Focusing on the issues of Women, Peace and Security, Income inequalities and illicit financial flows and prevention of Election-related Conflicts in Africa. The PSC also held consultative meetings with the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Peace building Commission (PBC), as well as an informal consultative meeting with the non-permanent members of the UN Security Council (both incoming and outgoing) within the framework of Article 17 of its Protocol.

3. Furthermore, the African Union Members of the UN Security Council, the Permanent Members of the UN Security Council, countries, civil society organizations (CSOs), Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), AU partners and other stakeholders concerned with the conflict and crisis situations, as well as thematic issues mentioned above, were invited to the meetings of the PSC, in conformity with the provisions of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and in line with the established practice of the PSC.

4. In addition, some Chairpersons of the PSC, as mandated by the Council, held video teleconferences with the European Union Political and Security Committee (EUPSC), to exchange views on various matters of mutual concern and interest, with a view to enhancing the cooperation between the AU PSC and EU PSC, within the framework of Article 17 of the PSC Protocol.

5. The present Report of the PSC on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa is submitted to the Assembly of the AU pursuant to Article 7(q) of the PSC Protocol. The Report covers the period from July 2014 to January 2015. It comprises three parts, dealing respectively with (a) signature and ratification of the PSC Protocol, membership of the PSC and rotating Chair of the PSC; (b) activities carried out by the PSC in the pursuit of its mandate from July 2014 to January 2015; and (c) an overview of the state of peace and security on the continent from July 2014 to January 2015.

II. UPDATES ON SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION OF THE PSC PROTOCOL, MEMBERSHIP OF THE PSC AND ROTATION OF THE CHAIR OF THE PSC

6. Since the adoption of the PSC Protocol in July 2002, fifty-four (54) Member States have signed it, while forty-nine (49) have both signed and ratified the Protocol. The following Member States have signed the Protocol, but have not yet ratified it: Cape Verde, Central African Republic (CAR), Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Liberia, and South Sudan.

7. Regarding membership, the PSC is composed of fifteen (15) members with equal rights, in line with Article 5 (1) of the Protocol, which are elected as follows: 10 members elected for a two -year term and five (5) for a three - year term. The current list of PSC members in the English alphabetical order is as follows: Algeria*, Burundi, Chad, Equatorial Guinea*, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Guinea, Libya, Mozambique*, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria*, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda*¹.

8. Furthermore, and 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 their names. Thus, during the period under review, the Chair of the PSC rotated as follows:

- | | | |
|---|-------------------|----------------------------|
| - | Algeria | July 2014; |
| - | Burundi | August 2014; |
| - | Chad | September 2014; |
| - | Ethiopia | October 2014; ² |
| - | Equatorial Guinea | November 2014; |
| - | The Gambia | December 2014; |
| - | Guinea | January 2015. |

9. It should be noted that, in line with the established practice of the PSC, the incoming monthly chair submits a provisional programme of work for Council's consideration and adoption. The programme is reviewed, as necessary, to take into account emerging developments during the month at hand.

¹ * Denotes PSC Members with three-year term mandate

² Ethiopia and Equatorial Guinea, with the concurrency of the PSC, swapped their months of chairing the PSC

III. MONTHLY ACTIVITIES OF THE PSC

A) PSC activities during the month of July 2014, under the Chair of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

10. The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria assumed the Chair of the PSC on 1 July 2014. During that month, Algeria chaired three meetings of the PSC, namely from the 445th meeting to the 447th meeting.

a) 445th Meeting:

11. At its 445th meeting held on 3 July 2014, Council considered and adopted its provisional programme of work for the month of July 2014.

b) 446th Meeting:

12. At its 446th meeting held on 9 July 2014, the PSC considered the report on the different aspects of the situation in Darfur and the implementation of the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), covering the period from 1 April to 30 June 2014. In this regard, Council reiterated the importance of continued UNAMID presence in Darfur, in order to contribute to the protection of the civilian population and advance the search for peace, security, stability and reconciliation in that region. Accordingly, Council decided to extend, for a further period of 12 months, the mandate of UNAMID as stated in its communiqué PSC/PR/Comm.(LXXIX) of its 79th meeting held on 22 June 2007 and UN Security Council resolution 1769 (2007) of 31 July 2007 and requested the UN Security Council to do the same.

c) 447th Meeting:

13. At its 447th meeting held on 24 July 2014, the PSC was briefed by the Social Affairs Department of the AU Commission on the Report of the Comprehensive Assessment of the Socio-Economic and Security Challenges of Drug Trafficking and Related Organized Crimes in West and Central Africa.

B) PSC activities during the month of August 2014, under the Chair of the Republic of Burundi

14. The Republic of Burundi assumed the Chair of the PSC on 1 August 2014. During that month, Burundi chaired seven meetings of the PSC, namely from the 448th meeting to the 454th meeting.

a) 448th Meeting:

15. In line with its practice of adopting its provisional monthly programme of work at the beginning of each month, the PSC, at its 448th meeting held on 1 August 2014, considered and adopted its provisional programme of work for the month of August 2014.

b) 449th Meeting:

- Briefing on the situation in Mali/Sahel:

16. At its 449th meeting, held on 11 August 2014, Council considered the report on the major developments then prevailing in political, security and humanitarian situations in Mali and in the Sahel region and the efforts of the AU, including through its Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL). In this regard, Council endorsed the AU Strategy for the Sahel region, which provides a framework for a holistic and coordinated action by the AU in support of the efforts of the countries of the region and in close cooperation with the regional actors, including ECOWAS, and the international partners concerned. Council urged the AU Member States and the international partners to provide political, financial and technical support for the effective implementation of the AU Strategy.

- Briefing on the situation in Libya:

17. At the same 449th meeting, the PSC was also briefed by the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the Commission for Libya, Mr. Dileita Mohamed Dileita, on the situation in Libya and the consultations that he had held with the Libyan stakeholders and with the neighbouring countries. Council noted with satisfaction the establishment of two Committees dealing with political and security issues, coordinated by Egypt and Algeria, respectively, and urged the larger international community, including the United Nations, to fully support the regional efforts.

18. Council reiterated AU's deep concern about the then prevailing situation in Libya, as marked by continued confrontation between armed groups and militias, particularly in Benghazi and Tripoli, with the resulting loss of lives and senseless destruction of property and public infrastructure, and in this regard, Council called for an immediate ceasefire and urged the organization of a national dialogue involving all Libyan stakeholders.

c) 450th Meeting:

- Open Session on the Humanitarian Situation in Africa

19. At its 450th meeting held on 19 August 2014, the PSC convened an open session on the humanitarian situation in Africa. Council stressed the need for all concerned to facilitate humanitarian activities in the areas affected by conflicts and crises. Council emphasized the need for the countries concerned to continue to provide protection for humanitarian workers.

- Ebola outbreak in West Africa

20. At the same 450th meeting, the PSC was briefed by the AU Commission on the Ebola Outbreak in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In this regard, Council recognized the serious security implications of the current Ebola outbreak, and decided, given the emergency situation caused by the Ebola outbreak, to authorize the immediate deployment of an AU-led Military and Civilian Humanitarian Mission, comprising medical doctors, nurses and other medical and paramedical personnel,

as well as military personnel, as may be required, for the effectiveness and protection of the Mission.

d) 451st Meeting:

21. At its 451st meeting held on 21 August 2014, Council was briefed by the Chairperson of the Special Envoys of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) for South Sudan, Ambassador Mesfin Seyoum, on the situation in that country. Council urged the Parties to the conflict, in the interest of their country and its people, to immediately end the fighting and expedite the IGAD-facilitated Talks aimed at restoring peace in South Sudan. Council reiterated its readiness to impose targeted multilateral sanctions and any other forms of punitive measures against any party that was failing to honour its commitments and continued to undermine the search for a negotiated solution to the crisis.

e) 452nd Meeting:

22. At its 452nd meeting held on 22 August 2014, Council was briefed on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation (PSC) Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Region. Council stressed that, despite the progress already made, many challenges were still to be overcome, notably: (i) the continued presence of negative forces in eastern DRC, including the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR); (ii) the delay in the implementation of the Conclusions of the Kampala Direct Dialogue between the DRC Government and the M23, as contained in their statements adopted in Nairobi on 12 December 2013; (iii) the illegal exploitation of natural resources in eastern DRC; and (iv) the persistence of impunity despite the reforms that the Congolese Government was endeavouring to bring about. Therefore, Council encouraged the Congolese Government and the other signatories of the PSC Framework, to intensify their efforts to honour their commitments in good faith.

f) 453rd Meeting:

23. At its 453rd meeting held on 25 August 2014, the Council considered the Rules of Procedures of the PSC Counter-Terrorism Committee and those of the PSC Committee of Experts, and decided that its Committee of Experts and the PSC Secretariat continue to develop them based on the Council's guidelines.

g) 454th Meeting:

24. Subsequently, at its 454th meeting held on 27 August 2014, the Council held a preparatory meeting for its Summit, on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa, which was scheduled for 2 September 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya.

C) PSC activities during the month of September 2014, under the Chair of the Republic of Chad

25. The Republic of Chad assumed the Chair of the PSC on 1 September 2014. During that month, Chad chaired five meetings of the PSC, namely from the 455th to the 459th meeting.

a) 455th Meeting:

26. At its 455th meeting held on 2 September 2014, Council held a meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government in Nairobi, Kenya, on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa. In this meeting, Council reiterated the AU's deep concern over the worsening scourge of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa.

27. In this respect, Council:

- reiterated its call to the Member States that had not yet done so to urgently take the necessary steps to become party to the 1999 Convention and the 2004 Supplementary Protocol, as well as to the relevant international instruments adopted under the auspices of the United Nations;
- urged Member States to take the necessary steps to ensure that their territories were not used as recruitment grounds and to prevent their nationals from participating in terrorist activities elsewhere on the continent and beyond and, in this respect, to take measures to counter the recruitment methods and propaganda being used by the terrorist groups;
- requested Member States to submit, in line with the provision of the 2004 Protocol, annual reports to the Council on measures taken to combat and prevent terrorism, and to notify it of all terrorist activities in their territories as soon as they occur;
- further requested Member States that had not yet done so to appoint, by the end of 2014, national Focal Points for liaison and coordination with the ACSRT, bearing in mind the need to designate in such positions suitable individuals with the required clearance level to access information and decision-makers in the intelligence and security services; and
- called upon Member States to make financial contributions to facilitate the implementation of the AU counter-terrorism framework and to second, upon request by the Commission and at their own expenses, technical expertise to the ACSRT.

28. Furthermore, Council tasked the Commission to pursue and intensify its efforts in support of Member States, with particular attention to:

- the elaboration of an African arrest warrant for persons charged with or convicted of terrorist acts, including the convening of a meeting of governmental experts on the matter by the first quarter of 2015;
- supporting and facilitating regional cooperation initiatives and mechanisms, to address specific transnational threats, building on the experiences of the RCI-LRA and the Nouakchott Process; and
- supporting the full and early operationalization of African Mechanism for Police Cooperation (AFRIPOL), in line with decision EX.CL/Dec.820(XXV).

b) 456th Meeting:

29. At its 456th meeting held on 12 September 2014, Council was briefed by the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) for The Sudan and South Sudan on its activities in support of the efforts of the two countries. The Council noted the numerous challenges that continued to face The Sudan, including armed conflicts in the Two Areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile and in Darfur, which threatened the well-being of the Sudanese people and indeed the future of the country.

30. Council endorsed the following steps to ensure harmonized and focused action by the AUHIP in support of the efforts of the Sudanese stakeholders to address the issues confronting their country:

- i) the negotiations on cessation of hostilities, immediately leading to a Comprehensive Security Arrangements Agreement, should resume at the earliest opportunity, under the auspices of the AUHIP and in collaboration and coordination with the JSR/JCM;
- ii) the negotiations on the cessation of hostilities for the Two Areas and for Darfur should be conducted in a synchronized manner; and
- iii) a meeting of the Sudanese parties to discuss relevant process issues, in order to pave the way for the National Dialogue should be held at the AU Headquarters under the facilitation of the AUHIP, as requested by the Sudanese stakeholders, , to ensure that the necessary confidence-building measures are taken, the key steps of the National Dialogue process are fully agreed upon, and that the process be fair and will result in the mutually-agreed objectives.

c) 457th Meeting:

31. At its 457th meeting held on 16 September 2014, Council was briefed the developments in the situation in Mali and the Sahel. In this meeting, Council reiterated its appeal to the Malian armed movements to harmonize their positions and to demonstrate a spirit of mutual accommodation, in order to find a lasting solution to the crisis facing Mali, and stressed that the success of the negotiations initiated within the framework of the Algiers process would significantly enhance security and stability in the country and the region as a whole.

d) 458th Meeting:

- Situation in the Central African Republic

32. At its 458th meeting held on 17 September 2014, Council was briefed on the situation in the CAR. Council commended the outstanding work done by the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA), with the support of Operation Sangaris and the EU Operation (EUFOR), in the fulfillment of the different aspects of its mandate.

33. Council welcomed the successful transfer of authority from MISCA to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA), which took place in Bangui, on 15 September 2014. Council requested the Chairperson of the Commission to take the necessary measures urgently for the transformation of MISCA into an AU Mission for the CAR and Central Africa (MISAC), so as to enable the AU, in close coordination with ECCAS, MINUSCA and other relevant international actors, to continue to support the ongoing national efforts, with particular focus on: (i) support to the political transition, (ii) the organization of elections, (iii) national reconciliation, (iv) support to the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration process, as well as to the security and justice sectors reform, (v) post-conflict reconstruction, (vi) gender, and (vii) facilitation of coordination between the AU-led Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army (RCI-LRA) and MINUSCA, in the discharge of their respective mandates.

- Political Developments in Mozambique

34. At the same 458th meeting, Council exchanged views on the then political developments in Mozambique, on the basis of the briefing given by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Mozambique to the AU. The Council commended the Mozambican stakeholders for the spirit of responsibility and compromise that they were demonstrated, which led to the conclusion of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities which constituted an important step towards the organization of the general elections on 15 October 2014, in the required conditions of peace and security. Furthermore, Council encouraged the signatory parties to spare no efforts to honour their commitments faithfully.

- Situation in South Sudan

35. At the same 458th meeting, Council received a briefing on the situation in South Sudan. Council expressed its deep concern over the lack of progress in the political negotiations, including the non-compliance with the sixty days deadline for the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity, and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

36. Council reminded the South Sudanese stakeholders of their primary responsibility to end the untold suffering inflicted upon their people and establish lasting peace, security, stability and reconciliation in their country. Council further reiterated its appeal to the parties to honour their commitments under the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and other subsequent Agreements, including the Implementation Matrix that they signed and which set out a timetable for disengagement, separation and disposed of forces.

e) 459th Meeting:

37. At its 459th meeting, held at Ministerial level on 23 September 2014, in New York, Council was briefed on the situation in Libya. Council decided to step up its efforts in support of Libya and its people, as well as of the region, emphasizing the need for Africa to play a crucial role in the ongoing process. In this respect, Council agreed to establish, in close coordination with and with the support of the UN, an International Contact Group for Libya (ICG-L), comprising all of Libya's neighbors, as

well as the relevant multilateral and bilateral partners, in order to facilitate a coordinated and harmonized international engagement, in support of the efforts of the neighbours of Libya.

38. Council supported the establishment of a High-Level Committee of Heads of State and Government, to enable the AU to more effectively support peace and reconstruction efforts in Libya and consolidate the results achieved by Libya's neighbours towards the cessation of hostilities and national reconciliation. Council requested the Chairperson of the Commission to initiate the required consultations for the establishment and operationalization, in due course, of this High-Level Committee.

D) PSC activities during the month of October 2014, under the Chair of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

39. The Republic of Ethiopia assumed the Chairmanship of the PSC on 1 October 2014. During that month, Ethiopia chaired five meetings of the PSC, namely, from the 460th to the 464th meeting.

a) 460th Meeting:

40. At its 460th meeting held on 7 October 2014, Council considered and adopted provisional programme of work for the month of October 2014.

b) 461st Meeting:

41. At its 461st meeting held on 14 October 2014, Council convened an open session on Sexual Violence in Conflict Situations in Africa. At that meeting, Council reiterated AU's strong condemnation of all acts of sexual violence and their use as a weapon of war. Council called upon all the Member States to take the required steps, including the strengthening where required, their legislative measures, in order to combat sexual violence and facilitate the investigation of such acts and the prosecution of their authors, and to take all steps required to provide support and assistance to survivors of sexual violence, including through the provision of adequate health services and support in terms of livelihoods.

42. Council reiterated its zero-tolerance stance on Sexual Exploitation and Abuses (SEA) and, noting with concern the allegations made by Human Rights Watch regarding acts of SEA by AMISOM uniformed personnel and welcomed the decision taken by the Commission to thoroughly investigate these allegations and take appropriate action if they were to be authenticated by evidence gathered on the ground.

c) 462nd Meeting:

- Briefing on the situation in Somalia:

43. At its 462nd meeting held on 16 October 2014, Council was briefed on the situation in Somalia and the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). In this regard, Council welcomed the FGS-led efforts to establish interim district and regional administrations in the newly-recovered areas, and underlined the urgent need to

complete the establishment of interim regional administrations throughout Somalia by the end of 2014, based on the principles of political inclusivity and transparency and in accordance with the Provisional Federal Constitution.

44. Council further commended AMISOM for its outstanding contribution to the improvement of security in Somalia, the stabilization of the country and furtherance of the reconciliation process and renewed the mandate of AMISOM for a further period of 12 months and, requested the Security Council to renew for a further period of 12 months, starting from 31 October 2014, that mandate also to enable the Mission to continue to carry out its mandate and to take all necessary measures to this effect.

- Briefing on elections in Africa:

45. At the same meeting, Council received an update on the then upcoming elections in African Union Member States for the period from October to December 2014, namely: (i) Republic of the Comoros, (ii) Republic of Mozambique, (iii) Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, (iv) Republic of Tunisia, (v) Republic of Botswana and (vi) Republic of Namibia. The overall objective of this briefing was to update Council on the status of preparations for these elections, including the political and security environment then existing in these countries ahead of the elections.

d) 463rd Meeting:

46. At its 463rd meeting held on 27 October 2014, Council convened an open session, on the theme: "Structural Prevention of Conflict in Reinvigorating States in Fragile Situations in Africa". During the discussions, Council and participants expressed their determination to address the root causes of fragility in Africa through building strong, accountable and responsive institutions and pledged to implement legal instruments and other decisions taken by the various organs of the African Union.

e) 464th Meeting:

- Briefing on the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa:

47. At its 464th meeting held on 29 October 2014, the PSC received a briefing on the Ebola Outbreak in the affected countries in West Africa, as well as the efforts made and the support provided by the AU. In this regard, Council expressed its unreserved support to the affected countries and their peoples. Council also called for a coordinated action and emphasized the need for a follow-up mechanism. Furthermore, Council agreed to dedicate a monthly meeting on the Ebola epidemic to receive updates with a view to enabling it consider further measures that would enhance Africa's fight against Ebola.

- Briefing on the activities of the ICRC in Africa:

48. At the same meeting, Council was briefed by the President of the ICRC, on the activities of the ICRC in Africa and challenges related to the humanitarian aspects of crisis and conflict situations on the continent. Council commended the

ICRC's activities in Africa and reaffirmed AU's commitment to closely work with ICRC to facilitate its activities relating to the provision of support and assistance to populations living in conflict and post-conflict areas, as well as in other situations of violence and need in Africa. Council called upon all stakeholders to facilitate the work of the ICRC on the continent.

E. PSC activities during the month of November 2014, under the Chairmanship of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea

49. The Republic of Equatorial Guinea assumed the chairmanship of the PSC on 1 November 2014. During that month, Equatorial Guinea chaired seven meetings of the PSC, from the 465th to the 471st meeting.

a) 465th Meeting:

50. At its 465th meeting held on 3 November 2014, Council convened an emergency meeting to consider the situation in Burkina Faso. At that meeting, Council strongly condemned the acts of violence that took place in Burkina Faso, which led to the loss of human lives and destruction of property, and urged that the sponsors and authors of those acts of violence be brought to justice. Council demanded the Burkinabe military to step aside and hand over power to a civilian authority, in accordance with the Constitution, within a maximum period of two weeks from the date of the adoption of the communiqué of that meeting of the PSC, failing which, measures, including the suspension of Burkina Faso from participating in AU's activities and the imposition of targeted sanctions against all those who would be obstructing the efforts would to be imposed.

b) 466th Meeting:

51. At its 466th meeting held on 4 November 2014, Council considered and adopted its provisional programme of work for the month of November 2014.

c) 467th Meeting:

52. At its 467th meeting held on 13 November 2014, Council exchanged views on the upcoming AUPSC/EUPSC Joint Mission to Mali, scheduled from 11 to 13 February 2015, which was agreed between the AUPSC and EUPSC during their 7th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting held on 15 May 2014, in Brussels, Belgium. At the same meeting, Council was briefed by the Commission about the meeting of the Africa Forum on Security Sector Reform in Africa, which took place in Addis Ababa, from 24 to 26 November 2014 and on the workshop on AU-NATO Collaboration that was to be held in Addis Ababa on 20 November 2014, to which Council was invited to participate through its Chairperson of that month.

d) 468th Meeting:

53. At its 468th meeting held on 18 November 2014, Council received a briefing on the situation in Burkina Faso. At that meeting, Council welcomed the significant progress made in Burkina Faso towards the establishment of a civilian-led transition, in conformity with the aspirations of the people of Burkina Faso for the consolidation of democracy in their country. In this regard, Council agreed, in anticipation of the

transfer of power to the newly-designated President of the Transitional, then scheduled to take place on 21 November 2014, not to take the measures that were envisaged in paragraphs 9 (iii) and 14 of communiqué PSC/PR/ COMM.(CDLXV), including the suspension of the participation of Burkina Faso in the activities of the AU.

e) 469th Meeting:

- Humanitarian Challenges in conflict situations in Africa:

54. At its 469th meeting held on 25 November 2014, Council received a briefing on the humanitarian challenges emanating from the prevailing conflict and crisis situations in Africa from the United Nations (UN) Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Council expressed its deep concern about the humanitarian situations prevailing in the conflict and crisis situations in Africa. Council called upon the AU Member States and the community at large to generously contribute to humanitarian action in Africa, noting that overall response to Consolidated Humanitarian Appeals was significantly below what was needed. Council also stressed the need for creative approaches to mobilize additional resources to address the challenges at hand.

- Briefing on Boko Haram Terrorist Group:

55. At the 469th meeting, Council received a briefing on the threat posed by the Boko Haram terrorist group and on the efforts made by the countries of the region, within the framework of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC). Council welcomed the Final Communiqué of the LCBC Extraordinary Summit held in Niamey, Niger, on 7 October 2014, which decided to establish a Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF). In this regard, Council requested the Commission to hold urgent consultations with the LCBC Member States and Benin and to avail the necessary expertise, in order to identify and agree on the practical steps that could facilitate the early provision of the required international support, as had been requested by the ministerial meeting of 13 October 2014, namely: (i) the adoption by the UN Security Council of a resolution authorizing the Member States of the LCBC and Benin to deploy the MNJTF for an initial period of 12 months, (ii) the establishment by the UN Secretary-General of a Trust Fund for the sustenance of the MNJTF operations, and (iii) the mobilization of the necessary international financial and logistical support.

f) 470th Meeting:

56. At its 470th meeting, held on 26 November 2014, Council was briefed by the Chairperson of the UN Peace building Commission (UNPBC), on peace building activities in Burundi, the CAR and Guinea-Bissau, as well as on the impact of the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa on peace and economic activities. Council and the members of the UNPBC also exchanged views on enhancing their collaboration in support of peace building efforts in countries on the UNPBC agenda and other African countries emerging from conflict.

57. At that meeting, Council emphasized the need for more dialogue within the AU and RECs/RMs and between them and the UNPBC, with a view to identifying

more areas for collaboration and strengthen national ownership and local participation, in keeping with the core principles that underpin the AU Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), in order to ensure that PCRD activities address the root causes of conflict and relapse, contribute to the establishment of sustainable peace, social justice, renewal and participatory governance. Furthermore, Council urged the AU Member States to be proactive and contribute to the review of the UN peace building architecture.

g) 471st Meeting:

58. At its 471st meeting held on 28 November 2014, Council convened an open session on the Ebola epidemic on the basis of a comprehensive report submitted by the Commission, covering the evolution of the situation, the implementation of the mandate of the AU Support Mission to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA), the status of contributions by AU Member States and the level of engagement of the international community as a whole. In this regard, Council underscored the need to start rebuilding the national healthcare infrastructure of the most affected countries in West Africa, and underscored the urgent need to begin to explore practical ways and means of supporting the West African region to return to the path of accelerated recovery, peace-building and development.

F. PSC activities during the month of December 2014, under the Chairmanship of the Republic of The Gambia

59. The Republic of The Gambia, assumed the chairmanship of the PSC on 1 December 2014. During that month, The Gambia chaired seven meetings of the PSC, namely, from the 472nd to the 478th meeting.

a) 472nd Meeting:

60. At its 472nd meeting held on 3 December 2014, Council considered and adopted its provisional programme of work for the month of December 2014. In addition, Council considered the Rules of Procedure of its Committee of Experts and its Committee on Counter-Terrorism, and the membership of the PSC Committee on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development with a view to determining if the Committee, as currently constituted, suited the changing PCRD landscape in Africa.

b) 473rd Meeting:

61. At its 473rd meeting held on 4 December 2014, Council considered its working methods and its Indicative Annual Programme of Activities for 2015. Council also, continuing from its 472nd meeting of 3 December 2014, reviewed the status and mandate of the PSC Committee on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development and considered the terms of reference of its Committee of Experts and Committee on Counter-Terrorism. Notably, whilst the Indicative Annual Programme of Activities for 2015 was provisionally adopted, consideration of the terms of reference of the two said committees still remained work in progress.

c) 474th Meeting:

62. At its 474th meeting held on 5 December 2014, Council was updated on the situation in South Sudan. In this context, Council decided to enhance and scale up its support to IGAD and its mediation efforts in South Sudan, including consultations with the leaders of the region towards the urgent establishment of an AU High-Level Ad-hoc Committee of Heads of State and Government, comprising one representative from each of the five regions of the Continent, to strengthen Africa's support to IGAD and assist the South Sudanese parties and stakeholders to achieve lasting peace in their country.

d) 475th Meeting:

63. At its 475th meeting held on 8 December 2014, Council continued with the discussions of the 473rd meeting on the outstanding issues left pending on the review of its working methods, consideration of its Indicative Annual Programme of Activities for 2015, review of the status and mandate of the PSC Committee on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development and the consideration of the terms of reference of its Committee of Experts and its Committee on Counter-Terrorism.

e) 476th Meeting:

64. At its 476th meeting held on 16 December 2014, Council held an open session devoted to the theme "Sources of Instability In Africa: Root Causes and Responses" Focusing on the Issues of Women, Peace and Security and Income Inequalities and Illicit Financial Flows" during which the AU Commission Department of Economic Affairs provided an overview of illicit financial flows in Africa and the Special Envoy of the AU Chairperson on Women, Peace and Security provided an overview of women in peace processes on the continent. At that meeting, Council and participants recognized the critical roles of women in national reconciliation, peace and political processes and in national decision-making and the need to implement AU and national instruments and commitments on women, peace and security was equally emphasized.

65. The Council also underlined that, each year, the continent was losing over 50 billion USD through illicit financial outflows from Africa due to weak accountability systems, tax dodging and evasion, corruption and other malpractices. On the issue of income inequality and its impact on social cohesion, Council and participants emphasized that the continent needs to act on the matter with speed and a sense of urgency, given the high levels of youth unemployment and the demographic bulge that the continent was experiencing. Council stressed the importance for Africa to become a more integrated continent where goods, services and people move across countries and regions-creating larger markets, increasing companies' competitiveness and expanding intra-African trade opportunities. Council further stressed the need for strengthening AU's and Member States legal regimes to effectively combat the scourge of illicit financial flows on the continent.

f) 477th Meeting:

- Partnership between the PSC, other AU Organs, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RMs)

66. At its 477th meeting held on 18 December 2014, Council considered the issue of partnership between itself, other AU Organs and the RECs/RMs. Council underscored the importance of enhancing collaboration and synergy between the PSC and all stakeholders, particularly other AU Organs and the RECs/RMs in the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa. In this regard, the Council decided to convene a meeting with other AU Organs and the RECs/RMs in 2015, to exchange views, among others, on working methods and related issues for enhancing collaboration among all relevant stakeholders in the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa.

- Mandate of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel on The Sudan and South Sudan (AUHIP)

67. At the same 477th meeting, Council considered the mandate of the AUHIP, which was going to expire in the same month and decided to extend the mandate of until 31st December 2015. Council further encouraged the Governments of The Sudan and South Sudan to continue with their efforts to conclude, discussions on the outstanding issues with the facilitation of the AUHIP.

g) 478th Meeting:

- Ebola Outbreak in West Africa:

68. At its 478th meeting held on 19 December 2014, Council was briefed on the Ebola Outbreak in West Africa by the AU Commission Department of Social Affairs. At that meeting, Council underscored the need for sustaining the current momentum in the fight against Ebola. Council urged all stakeholders to continue mobilizing additional resources, including through the Commission's budget, in support of ASEOWA and the efforts of the region, as well as those of the countries most affected by the Ebola epidemic. Council also reiterated the need for the Commission to accelerate efforts aimed at establishing the African Centre for Disease Control and for all AU Member States to further strengthen their healthcare systems.

- Working methods and the preparation of the terms of reference for its subsidiary bodies:

69. At the same meeting, Council continued its consideration of its working methods and the preparation of the terms of reference for its subsidiary bodies. In this regard, Council decided that all PSC subsidiary bodies shall be guided, *mutatis mutandis*, by the Rules of Procedure of the PSC and should be guided in their work by generic terms of reference, still to be elaborated, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the PSC Protocol. Council stressed that these generic terms of reference should take into account the specific mandate of each subsidiary body. Council mandated the Committee of Experts, with the support of the Commission, to

draft the terms of reference for the various subsidiary bodies of the Council and submit them for consideration by Council in February 2015.

G. PSC activities during the month of January 2015, under the Chairmanship of the Republic of Guinea

70. The Republic of Guinea, assumed the chair of the PSC on 1 January 2015. During that month, Guinea chaired five meetings of the PSC, namely, from the 479th to the 483rd meeting.

a) 479th Meeting:

71. At its 479th meeting, held on 8 January 2015, Council considered and adopted its provisional programme of work for the month of January 2015 and held discussions on the Report of the 2nd High-Level Seminar on the Peace and Security in Africa: Assisting Incoming African Members on the UN Security Council in Preparing to Address Peace and Security Issues on the Continent, held in Oran, Algeria from 9 to 11 December 2014, which, due to time constraint, was then differed to another meeting.

b) 480th Meeting:

72. At its 480th meeting held on 16 January 2015, the Council held an open session devoted to the theme "Prevention of Election-Related Conflicts in Africa" during which the AU Commission Department of Political Affairs presented a Report. At that open session, Council and participants exchanged views on the upcoming elections in Africa and emphasized the need for AU Member States to prevent election-related violence through early warning and preventive diplomacy and to develop strategies aimed at dealing with structural root causes of election-related conflicts through governance, voter education, positive and objective media practices and coverage of elections. Council also stressed the need for closely monitoring the developments in all of the 18 African countries, which will be organizing elections during the 2015.

c) Consultative meeting with the non-permanent members of the UN Security Council

73. On 13 January 2015, Council held a consultative meeting with the non-permanent members of the UN Security Council, where they exchanged views on how the Council and the non-permanent members of the UN Security Council could enhance their cooperation in the spirit of ensuring that African common positions in the UN Security Council, on issues related to peace and security on the continent, were strongly defended and promoted.

d) 481st Meeting:

74. At its 481st meeting held on 15 January 2015, Council considered the progress Report on AU Support to Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA) and the status of contributions by AU Member States and the level of engagement of the international community in combating the epidemic, as presented by the AU Commission Department of Social Affairs. At that meeting, Council commended the

progress made in the implementation of the ASEOWA and decided to extend its mandate by another six months. Furthermore, Council deplored the continued stigmatization, discrimination and isolation of both people and the countries most affected and reiterated its call to AU Member States, which had not yet done so, to fully comply with the decision that was adopted by the 16th Extraordinary Session of the Executive Council, regarding the opening of borders and resumption of flights to the affected countries.

e) 482nd Meeting:

75. At its 482 meeting held on 21 January 2014, Council adopted a communiqué on the outcomes of the 2nd High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa, held at Ministerial level, from 9 to 11 December 2014, in Oran, Algeria, with a view to Assisting Incoming African Members on the UN Security Council in Preparing to Address Peace and Security Issues on the Continent.

f) 483rd Meeting:

76. At its 483rd meeting held on 26 January 2015, Council considered the Report of the PSC on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security In Africa, to be submitted to the 24th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, due to be held on 30 and 31 January 2015.

77. It is worth noting that, at the time of finalizing this report, the PSC had agreed to convene a meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government, on the margins of the 24th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, to consider the following issues: (i) Update on the Situation in South Sudan and the regional and international efforts, including the AU-led Commission of Inquiry; (ii) Consideration of the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Regional and International Efforts to Combat the Boko Haram Terrorist Group; and (iii) Consideration of the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Ebola Epidemic in West Africa.

IV. OTHER ACTIVITIES OF THE PSC

- Meetings of the PSC Committee of Experts

78. Throughout the reporting period, the PSC Committee of Experts held several meetings in support of preparations for PSC meetings and to finalize the Terms of reference of the various subsidiary bodies of the PSC.

- Participation of the Chairperson of the PSC in the Fifth Annual Retreat of Special Envoys and Mediators on the Promotion of Peace and Stability in Africa:

79. During the month of October 2014, Chairperson of the PSC participated, on behalf of the PSC, in the Fifth Annual Retreat of the Special Envoys and Mediators on the promotion of peace and stability in Africa which took place from 21 to 23 October 2014, in Arusha, Tanzania, where she emphasized the need to make more efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa through mediation.

- Participation of the Chairperson of the PSC in the Fifth Ordinary Session of the Pan African Parliament:

80. Furthermore, the Chairperson of the PSC for the month of October 2014, was also invited to represent the PSC to the 5th Ordinary Session of the Pan African Parliament (PAP), on 20 October 2014 in Midrand, South Africa. However, due to prior commitments, the Chairperson of PSC for that month, with the agreement of the Council, was represented by the Permanent Representative of Namibia at that session of the PAP, where she delivered the statement on behalf of the PSC and provided updates on peace and security in Africa, as well as the steps that were being taken by the PSC to address prevailing peace and security challenges in the continent.

- Participation of the PSC Chairperson in the High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security in Africa:

81. The PSC Chairperson for the month of December 2014, participated in the 2nd High-Level Seminar on the Peace and Security in Africa: Assisting Incoming African Members on the UN Security Council in Preparing to Address Peace and Security Issues on the Continent, held in Oran, Algeria from 9 to 11 December 2014. On that occasion, the PSC Chairperson delivered a statement on behalf of the PSC, where he emphasized the need to enhance cooperation and collaboration between the PSC and the African Members of the UN Security Council, as well as with the RECs/RMs, with a view to promoting African common positions on peace and security issues of interest to Africa in the UN Security Council.

V. ACTIVITIES OF THE PANEL OF THE WISE FROM JULY 2014 TO JANUARY 2015

82. The Assembly may recall that at its Malabo session in June 2014, it endorsed the recommendations made by the Chairperson of the Commission regarding the appointment of the new members of the Panel of the Wise. The following personalities were appointed as members of the Panel: Dr Lakhdar Brahimi from Algeria (representing North Africa), Mr Edem Kodjo from Togo (representing West Africa), Dr Albina Faria de Assis Pereira Africano from Angola (representing Central Africa), Dr Specioza Wandira Kazibwe from Uganda (representing East Africa) and Madame Luisa Diogo from Mozambique (representing Southern Africa).

83. On 9 July 2014, the new members of the Panel convened their inaugural meeting in Addis Ababa. On that occasion, they exchanged views with the outgoing members of the Panel namely: Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, Madame Marie Madeleine Kalala-Ngoy, Dr Mary Chinery Hesse and Madam Elisabeth Pognon, on the achievements made and challenges encountered since the operationalization of the Panel, in 2007. The Panel also discussed issues relating to the enhancement of the Pan-African Network of the Wise (PANWISE), as well as its interaction with the PSC. Finally, the Panel elected Mrs. Luisa Diogo as its new Chairperson.

84. On 9 January 2015, the Panel convened another meeting during which it reviewed the overall peace and security situation on the continent, on the basis of presentations made by the AU Commission and the United Nations Secretariat. The Panel agreed to focus its efforts on the prevention of election related violence and

conflict, and identified a number of practical steps to be taken, including the dispatch of missions to specific countries. The Panel also exchanged of views on the thematic areas it should focus on in 2015 as part of its conflict prevention efforts.

VI. SITUATIONS ON THE GROUND

85. If progress had been made in resolving some of the crises faced by the Continent, many challenges remained to be taken up. The Commission and the PSC had made sustained efforts to consolidate the progress made and promote lasting peace, security and stability on the Continent.

a) The Comoros

86. The Comoros continued to make progress towards national reconciliation and democracy. From January to February 2015, parliamentary (members of the Union Assembly and Councillors of the Autonomous Islands) and municipal elections would be organised in the Archipelago. In response to the requests from the Comorian authorities and its Constitutional Court, the Commission made available experts in electoral and legal matters to assist in the preparation of these elections. The Commission also plans to dispatch an Election Observation mission to the Comoros. Within this framework, the Assembly may appeal to the Member States and international partners to provide all the necessary support for the successful organisation of the planned elections. Similarly, the Assembly may wish to stress the need for increased economic and financial assistance to enable the archipelago promote its socio-economic development. This is on the understanding that this assistance will be complemented by continuous efforts by The Comorian authorities in the area of good governance.

b) Madagascar

87. In Madagascar, one of the developments of the period under consideration related to the unexpected return, on 13 October 2014, of former President Marc Ravalomanana and his statements contesting the legitimacy of the Malagasy institutions. In pursuance of the Press Statement issued by the Commission, on 15 October 2014, other members of the international community condemned this unconcerted return and the statements made by the former President. At the same time, the AU and other members of the international community appealed for the acceleration of the national reconciliation process. On 6 November 2014, the Special Representative of the AU visited the former President, in Antsiranana, where the latter was under house arrest.

88. It was against this background that the first meeting between the President of the Republic, Hery Rajaonarimampianina and the four former Presidents (Didier Ratsiraka, Albert Zafy, Marc Ravalomanana et Andry Rajoelina), was organised on 19 December 2014 in Antananarivo, under the mediation of the Malagasy Christian Council of Churches (FFKM) thus re-launching the national reconciliation process. At the end of that meeting, a Presidential pardon was granted to five political detainees while President Marc Ravalomanana, until then under house arrest at the military camp of Antsiranana, was authorised to return to his private residence of Antananarivo on 24 December 2014. A second meeting was held on 13 January 2015.

89. In parallel, the process of institutional normalisation and consolidation of democracy was continuing. In this respect, the organisation of parliamentary by-elections on 29 August 2014 to fill the seats that were not filled during the parliamentary elections organised last year, the appointment of new members of the High Constitutional Court (HCC) and the adoption of a series of legislation, relating particularly to the appointment of the new members of the High Judiciary Council, the establishment of the High Court of Justice as well as the abolition of the death penalty should be highlighted. Furthermore, the appointment of a new Prime Minister on 14 January 2015, in the person of Brigadier General Jean Ravelonarivo, in replacement of Roger Kolo should also be highlighted.

90. In October 2014, a joint assessment mission led by the AU and comprising the representatives of the SADC, UN, EU, OIF and the African Security Sector Network (ASSN) went to Antananarivo to consider the needs of Madagascar in the area of the security sector reform. Furthermore, the AU Special Representative continued to facilitate the meetings of the local branch of the International Support Group for Madagascar (ISG-M), set up in Madagascar, on 28 March 2014.

91. The Assembly may welcome the positive development of the situation and encourage the different actors to pursue their efforts for national reconciliation and to expedite the conclusion of the outstanding aspects of the Roadmap to end the crisis. The Assembly may also urge the international community to mobilise the economic and financial support needed by Madagascar as well as to support the process of security sector reform.

c) Somalia

92. The overall political developments in Somalia remained encouraging, with the evidence of progress in the state formation process, constitutional review and preparations for elections by 2016. Since the signing of the August 2013 Addis Ababa Agreement establishing the Interim Jubba Administration, there has been some progress in the implementation of this Agreement. Furthermore, agreement was reached, on 23 June 2014, on the establishment of two other states, namely: the South-West and Central states. The Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) also held consultations with representatives of the central regions, including the ãRegional State of Galmudug, the ãAdministration of Himan & Heebò and the leadership of Ahlu Sunna wal Jamaa, resulting in the signing, on 30 July 2014, of an Agreement in which the parties committed themselves to form an administration for Mudug and Galguduud. Progress was also been registered in the constitutional review process in Somalia and the preparations of elections. The UN, in close collaboration with the AU and other partners, was planning an electoral assessment mission in Somalia in early 2015.

93. However, key legislation establishing the National Independent Electoral Commission and the Boundaries and Federation Commission was yet to be adopted. Furthermore, following political differences within the Executive, the Parliament passed a no-confidence vote against Prime Minister Abdiweli Sheikh Ahmed, on 6 December 2014. On 17 December 2014, Omar Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke was appointed as the new Prime Minister. He unveiled his Cabinet on 12 January 2015.

94. On the security front, AMISOM and the Somali National Army (SNA) successfully carried out two joint operations code-named “Eagle” and “Indian Ocean” which resulted in the recovery of large areas from the Al-Shabaab terrorist group. More than 80% of South-Central Somalia is now under the control of the FGS. In line with the FGS stabilization plan, local administrators, who were selected by the Ministry of Interior and Federalism, had taken over the responsibility for the governance of some of the recovered areas from the SNA and AMISOM. However, more resources were required to ensure the success of the stabilization efforts, especially with regard to social service delivery.

95. On 10 January 2015, the IGAD Council of Ministers held its 53rd Ordinary Session on Somalia in Mogadishu. The meeting, which was the first to be convened in Somalia by the IGAD Foreign Ministers in 29 years, was a clear indication of progressive political and security environment in Somalia. The meeting was preceded, on 7 January 2015, by the visit of the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security and representatives of the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) to AMISOM, with a view to assessing the situation on the ground, expressing solidarity with AMISOM following the 25 December 2014 terrorist attack against the Halane base camp and consulting with the Somali authorities.

96. Although Al-Shabaab has been weakened, the group still has a presence in the Middle Juba region and some parts of Bay and Bakol regions, and retains the capability to carry out attacks in other areas, as demonstrated by the recent attack against the AMISOM base camp in Mogadishu. The group also continued to carry out attacks elsewhere in the region, notably in Kenya. . Against this background, the setting up of the Somalia security institutions remained a central part of AMISOM’s exit strategy. In this regard, the AU and the UN, at the joint retreat held in Kampala, from 9 to 10 January 2015, agreed to strengthen collaboration in support of the development of an FGS security framework. More needs to be done to integrate allied militias and support the Somali security institutions fighting alongside AMISOM. Furthermore, AMISOM remained short of adequate air assets, and lacked a number of other enablers. The humanitarian situation remains dire. The cycle of violence and insecurity along the main supply routes, which hamper the delivery of assistance to the affected populations, the drought and rising food prices in Somalia continue to have devastating consequences on the Somali people.

97. Against this background, the Assembly may wish to welcome the progress made. At the same time, the Somali stakeholders should be urged to stay on course and to demonstrate the required unity of purpose and action in order to fulfil the aspirations of their people to peace, security and stability. The Assembly may also wish to pay tribute to AMISOM and the Troop and Police Contributing Countries (T/PCCs) for their commitment and the sacrifices made, as well as to reiterate the AU’s appreciation to those partners extending support to the Mission. The Assembly may wish to appeal for the provision of adequate financial, economic and humanitarian assistance to Somalia.

d) Eritrea and Ethiopia

98. During the period under review, no progress has been made in overcoming the challenges facing the peace process between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Against this background, the Assembly may wish to underscore the need for renewed efforts to

overcome the challenges at hand and to encourage the Commission and the PSC to take appropriate initiatives in this respect, in line with the relevant provisions of the PSC Protocol.

e) Djibouti and Eritrea

99. The Assembly will recall that, as a follow-up to the relevant decisions of the Assembly, the Commissioner for Peace and Security visited Djibouti and Eritrea in April and May 2014, with a view to encouraging the two countries to take further steps to normalize their relations. The Assembly may wish to reiterate the need for the effective implementation of the 6 June 2012 Agreement facilitated by the State of Qatar, and welcome the commitment expressed by the two countries during the visit of the Commissioner to normalize their relations and promote good neighbourliness.

f) Horn of Africa

100. As Council is aware, the Assembly of the Union has, over the past few years, repeatedly called for a regional and holistic approach to the challenges to peace, security and stability in the Horn of Africa, in support of IGAD. This approach would, among other things, involve the convening of a regional conference on peace, security, stability, cooperation and development. The Commission and the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), whose mandate was broadened by the PSC meeting held in New York, on 22 September 2013, to promote such an approach, are actively engaged in efforts to follow-up on the Assembly's decisions on the matter. The AUHIP is planning to provide an update on steps taken in this respect to the PSC in due course. In the meantime, the Assembly may wish to reiterate its support for the envisaged regional and holistic approach and to call upon all the countries of the region to extend the necessary support.

g) The Sudan

101. One of the key developments in The Sudan during the period under review relates to the efforts to implement the national dialogue process announced by President Omar Hassan Al Bashir, on 27 January 2014, to address in a holistic manner the challenges facing that country. During the past six months, the AUHIP has had interactions with the Government of The Sudan (GoS), various opposition parties, as well as other Sudanese stakeholders. On 4 September 2014, these efforts culminated in the signing of an '*Agreement on the National Dialogue and Constitutional Processes*' by the 7+7 Coordinating Committee of the National Dialogue and the Paris Declaration group that comprises the rebel movements from Darfur, the Two Areas of Blue Nile and South Kordofan States and the National Umma party. This encouraging development was welcomed by both the PSC and the UN Security Council. However, greater commitment and flexibility is required from the Sudanese parties in order to create the required political space and move the process forward.

102. From November to December 2014, the Panel convened meetings in Addis Ababa, in one process and two parallel tracks, in accordance with the PSC communiqué at its 456th meeting, to conduct negotiations between the Government and the SPLM-N on the Two Areas and the Government and the Darfur armed movements on Darfur, respectively. These Talks aimed primarily at achieving

cessation of hostilities leading to a comprehensive ceasefire so that the rebel groups could participate in an inclusive national dialogue process. The negotiations on the Two Areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile States were conducted on the basis of a Draft Framework Document, to which the Parties had gained common ground on a number of issues from April 2014. The latest round concluded with some progress but without reaching a final agreement on the issues at hand. The Panel isolated six issues which were blocking progress on the other parts of the document. These matters would require further engagement before the Parties could be reconvened.

103. In a similar move, and pursuant to the PSC communiqué, the AUHIP, with the support of the Acting Joint Special Representative (JSR) for the AU-UN hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID), the UN Secretary-General Special Envoy for The Sudan and South Sudan and the IGAD representative in Sudan, facilitated, from 23 to 29 November 2014, negotiations between the Government and the following armed movements in Darfur: the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and The Sudan Liberation Movement ĩ Mini Minawi (SLM-MM). The Head of the Sudan Liberation Movement ĩ Al Nur (SLM-Al Nur) Mr. Abdulwahid Al Nur, declined to join the negotiations. The objective was to pave the way for an effective cessation of hostilities and an inclusive participation in the national dialogue. The Government and the Darfur armed groups could not reach consensus on the agenda. Accordingly, the Panel decided to adjourn the session in order to conduct wide consultations which would assist in narrowing the gap before the next meeting. To this end, the Panel is engaging the Sudanese authorities, and intends also to interact with the State of Qatar and Chad to seek support for advancing the negotiations.

104. On the ground, the situation in Darfur continues to be characterized by sporadic clashes between the armed belligerents, resulting in significant displacement of populations. According to the aid agencies in Darfur, as of early 2015, up to 200,000 people have been displaced as a result of military operations in some parts of this region. The implementation of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) continues to face serious challenges, notably the refusal of a number of armed groups to subscribe to it as well as the lack of adequate funding for the executions of projects agreed upon under the DDPD. On 11 November 2014, the GoS wrote to the UN seeking the development of an exit strategy for UNAMID. It is against this background that, in December 2014, a joint AU-UN strategic review assessment mission of UNAMID was conducted to determine the extent of the implementation of the three core priority areas which were identified by the December 2013 AU-UN assessment mission, namely: mediation between the Government of The Sudan and the non-signatory armed movements on the basis of the DDPD; protection of civilians, facilitation of the delivery of humanitarian assistance and safety and security of humanitarian personnel; and support to mediation of inter-communal conflict. The report of the strategic review is being finalized and will be submitted in due course to the PSC.

105. The Assembly may wish to reiterate AU's support to the national dialogue initiative and to call upon all Sudanese stakeholders to work in earnest for its successful implementation, notably by rising above narrow considerations for the higher interest of their country. The Assembly may wish to reiterate its full support to the AUHIP, commend its members for their untiring efforts and commitment and urge the Sudanese stakeholders to extend full cooperation to the Panel. Finally, the Assembly may wish to appeal to the international community to extend the

necessary support, including through the provision of economic and financial assistance to help stabilize the economy of the country.

h) South Sudan

106. The political and security situation in South Sudan continues to be of utmost concern. Several violations of the ceasefire have been noted by the IGAD Monitors. The humanitarian situation remains precarious, with 1.4 million persons displaced as a result of the violence and 3.8 million in need for assistance. Over 450,000 have fled to the neighbouring countries.

107. Since the Malabo Summit, IGAD, with the support of the relevant international stakeholders, including the AU, has continued its mediation efforts. The IGAD Heads of State and Government convened two Summits, on 25 August and 7 November 2014, during which they facilitated face-to-face negotiations between President Salva Kiir Mayardit and Dr. Riek Machar, Head of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition (SPLM-IO). From 22 September to 6 October 2014, the Mediation convened a round of negotiations in Bahr Dar, involving the Government of South Sudan and the SPLM-IO, as well as other stakeholders, including civil society and the former political detainees, and in Addis Ababa, from 17 to 24 December 2014, between the Government and the SPLM-IO.

108. It should be recalled that the Parties agreed, on 10 June 2014, to establish a Transitional Government of National Unity by 10 August 2014. However, that deadline was not respected, as the Parties could not reach agreement on transitional arrangements regarding power sharing. It is against this background that the IGAD Summit of 7 November 2014 granted an additional period of 15 days to the Government and the SPLM-IO to complete their consultations. The IGAD Summit also decided that any violation of the cessation of hostilities by the Parties would lead to the adoption of the following measures: asset freeze, travel ban, and arms embargo. Furthermore, the Summit agreed that IGAD should take the necessary measures to intervene directly in South Sudan to protect civilian life and restore peace and stability. The Summit also agreed that should this become necessary, IGAD may call upon the PSC, the Security Council and the larger international community to provide the necessary assistance for the implementation of these measures. No progress has been made in the period following the Summit.

109. The AU, through the Commission, has continued to lend support to the mediation process and has maintained close consultation with the IGAD Special Envoys and countries, as well as with partners, including the UN, on how best to expedite the search for a lasting solution. At its 474th meeting, held on 5 December 2014, the PSC decided to enhance and scale up its support to IGAD and its mediation efforts in South Sudan, including consultations with the leaders of the region for the urgent establishment of an AU High-Level Ad-hoc Committee of Head of State and Government comprising one representative from each of the five regions of the continent. At the time of finalizing this report, consultations were underway regarding the composition and Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Committee. Furthermore, the AU Commission of Inquiry, established to investigate the human rights violations and other abuses committed during the conflict in South Sudan and make recommendations on the best ways and means to ensure

accountability, reconciliation and healing among all South Sudanese communities, has completed its work. The report will be submitted to the PSC in due course.

110. In the light of the above, the Assembly may wish to express appreciation to IGAD for its relentless efforts and commitment to the search for a lasting solution to the conflict in South Sudan, as well as welcome the establishment of the AU High-Level Ad-hoc Committee and encourage it to take all necessary steps in order to enhance the IGAD-led mediation. The Assembly may wish to express support to the measures contemplated by the IGAD Summits of 7 November 2014 and **29 January 2015**, and request the PSC to take the necessary follow-up action. Council may also wish to register its deep concern at the grave humanitarian situation prevailing on the ground, reiterate the need for all parties to comply with International Humanitarian Law and human rights law, and appeal to the international community to enhance its humanitarian operations.

i) Relations between The Sudan and South Sudan

111. During the period under review, the AU continued to closely follow-up and support the implementation of the September 2012 Cooperation Agreement between The Sudan and South Sudan. In August 2014, and following reports of lack of progress, particularly in security-related matters, the AUHIP undertook a mission to The Sudan and South Sudan, to encourage the Parties to remain steadfast in their efforts to address all pending issues in their relations. From 17 to 20 November 2014, and as part of the efforts to implement the Agreement on Border Issues of 27 September 2012, the AUBP hosted a confidence-building workshop between Sudan and South Sudan's Boundary Commissions. This was followed by the first Joint Boundary Commission (JBC) meeting, on 21 November 2014, which agreed that the first Joint Demarcation Committee (JDC) will meet on 7 December 2014 in Khartoum. On 31 December the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the two countries met in Khartoum and reiterated their commitment to fully implement the existing Agreements. In this context, they further instructed the various Committees established within this framework to meet to address the challenges at hand.

112. No progress has been made on the implementation of the 20 June 2011 Temporary Arrangements on Security and Administration in the Abyei Area. The Abyei Joint Oversight Committee (AJOC), which is supposed to administer the Area, on behalf of the Presidents, has not met since May 2013, despite numerous attempts by the AU Facilitator to convene the Parties. However, the situation on the ground has been stable in the recent months, thanks to the presence of the UN Interim Force in Abyei (UNISFA). The mandate of UNISFA was renewed until 28 February 2015, through resolution 2179 (2014) adopted by the UN Security Council on 15 October 2014.

113. The AUHIP has continued to assist with the Joint Approach, through the Tripartite Committee established by the Cooperation Agreement to facilitate the mobilization of international assistance to the two countries. In this regard, the AUHIP held a number of consultations in September 2014, in Washington, with the World Bank, the IMF and the United States Government. The Petroleum Monitoring Committee (PMC) continued its work. At the time of writing of this report, the Committee was planning to organize its 5th meeting.

114. Council may wish to encourage the two countries to expedite their efforts towards the full implementation of the September 2012 Cooperation Agreement. The Assembly may also wish to appeal to them to take the necessary steps to address the issue of Abyei, both through the effective implementation of the Temporary Arrangements and renewed efforts to resolve the issue of the Final Status of the Area. Council may also wish to call on the international community to extend the necessary support to the Joint Approach. Finally, the Assembly may wish to commend the AUHIP for its tireless efforts, and encourage it to continue availing its support to The Sudan and South Sudan.

j) Burundi

115. This present session of the Assembly is convening at less than six (6) months from the third post-conflict general elections in Burundi. Scheduled to be spread from 26 May to 24 August 2015. These elections include a total of five (5) ballots, including the first and second rounds of the Presidential election scheduled respectively for 26 June and 27 July 2015. To facilitate the smooth organisation of these elections, a Roadmap and a consensual Electoral Code were adopted. The total cost of the different elections planned is estimated by the Government at 60 million United States dollars. The AU intends to provide technical support for the organisation of these elections, as well as the deployment of long and short term observers to monitor the process. In that respect, an AU pre-electoral assessment mission went to Burundi from 8 to 21 December 2014 to assess the political environment in the country as well as the modalities of necessary support.

116. The Assembly may wish to welcome the steps already taken to ensure the smooth conduct of the elections and urge all the Burundian stakeholders to spare no effort to this end. Within this framework, the Assembly may condemn the attack perpetrated on 30 December 2014 by armed elements and stress the obligation of all the Burundian stakeholders to continue to endeavour for the promotion of peace, security and stability so as to consolidate the remarkable progress their country has made since the signing of the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in 2000.

k) Democratic Republic of the Congo

117. The efforts to implement the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework Agreement for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Region were pursued during the period under consideration. It is within this framework that the Second Joint Ministerial Meeting of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), held in Luanda, Angola, on 2 July 2014, requested that the offer made by the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) to disarm voluntarily be implemented within a period of 6 months, as from 2 July 2014. That request was subsequently endorsed by the different organs of the ICGLR and SADC, as well as the meeting of the Regional Monitoring Mechanism of the Framework Agreement, held in New York, United States of America, in September 2014. On the basis of the assessment made so far, there has been no significant progress made in the FDLR disarmament process. Only 337 militias out of a total of 1300 elements accepted to disarm voluntarily.

118. It was within that context that the First meeting of the Guarantors of the Framework Agreement was held in Addis Ababa, under the aegis of the AU and the United Nations. In addition to the AU and the United Nations, Angola, the Current Chairman of the ICGLR, Zimbabwe and South Africa, in their respective capacity as the Current Chairman of the SADC and the SADC Organ for Political, Defence and Security Cooperation, as well as the Executive Secretaries of the ICGLR and SADC, participated in that meeting. The Guarantors noted the volatile nature of the security situation in eastern DRC. Recalling the imminent deadline of 2 January 2015 for the voluntary disarmament of the FDLR, the Guarantors expressed their deep concern about the delay in the process. They stressed the binding and non-negotiable nature of the deadline of 2 January 2015, recalling that pursuant to the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the Decisions of the countries of the Region, MONUSCO and the FADRC were asked to take the necessary actions to neutralise the FDLR in case they did not comply with the agreed deadline. In a Communiqué issued on 2 January 2015, the Team of Special Envoys of the AU, UN, USA, EU and Belgium expressed their concern about the refusal of the FDLR to disarm and called for military action to neutralise the group. The DRC Government and the troop contributing countries to the MONUSCO Intervention Brigade reiterated their commitment to effectively implement the agreed decisions aimed at neutralizing the FDLR. Consultations are underway to convene, at the appropriate time, an ICGLR-SADC Summit on this matter.

119. Meanwhile, we are witnessing the resurgence of activities of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), in several areas of North Kivu, including the massacre of many civilians. The joint MONUSCO-FARDC military operations continue against that group. They have just conquered the strategic area of Abya. Furthermore, the AU continues to monitor the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations of December 2013 on the Direct Dialogue of Kampala between the DRC and the M23. The above-mentioned meeting of the Guarantors took note of the efforts made by the DRC Government to honour its commitments under the said Declarations and encouraged it to speed up the process, including the issue of amnesty and the repatriation of ex-M23 living in Rwanda and Uganda. Finally, it should be pointed out that within the framework of the support of the AU to the implementation process of the Framework Agreement, the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security undertook a working visit in September 2014 to Kigali, Luanda and Kinshasa. The AU Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region also continued his efforts, in cooperation with other international actors concerned.

120. The Assembly may reiterate the support of the AU to the implementation process of the Framework Agreement and appeal to all the actors concerned to redouble their efforts in this regard. Within this framework, the Assembly may stress the crucial importance of the immediate beginning of the neutralisation of the FDLR and other armed groups operating in eastern DRC, in conformity with the relevant decisions of the UN Security Council and the decisions adopted by the ICGLR and SADC. Similarly, the Assembly may urge all the actors concerned to speed up the implementation of the Nairobi Declarations. Finally, the Assembly may recall the need for more sustained efforts to translate the socio-economic aspects of the Framework Agreement into deeds.

I) Central African Republic

121. One of the major developments in the Central African Republic (CAR) was the transfer of authority from the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), which took place in Bangui, on 15 September 2014, thereby marking the completion of the initial phase of the stabilisation of the situation on the ground. The Chairperson of the Commission and the Commissioner for Peace and Security participated in the ceremony,. She seized that opportunity to underscore the outstanding work done by the MISCA with limited means and in an extremely difficult context. At its meeting, held on 17 September 2014, the PSC, after welcoming the smooth transition, requested the Commission to make the necessary arrangements for the continued support of the AU to the Transitional and stabilisation process in the CAR, through the transformation of the MISCA into an AU Mission for the Central African Republic and Central Africa (MISAC). The necessary steps are being taken to make MISAC fully operational.

122. At another level, the AU continued to assume its responsibilities as the Co-Chair of the International Contact Group on the CAR (ICG-CAR), which held two meetings during the period under consideration namely: Addis Ababa, on 7 July 2014 and Bangui, on 11 November 2014. At its 5th meeting held in Addis Ababa, particularly in Bangui, the ICG-CAR agreed on the establishment of an International Mediation, under the aegis of President Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo and comprising representatives of the AU and the UN. It also agreed on other measures aimed at reactivating the political process.

123. It was in this context that, under the aegis of the International Mediation, the Forum for National Reconciliation was convened in Brazzaville, from 21 to 23 July 2014. The Forum led to the signing of a Cessation of Hostilities Agreement and a consensus on the way forward concerning the future steps in the reconciliation process. Subsequently, a sensitization campaign for the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities was carried out. At the time of finalizing this report, popular consultations were underway in the 16 prefectures of the country. This is expected to lead to the planned convening of a National Reconciliation Forum and Political Dialogue, in February 2015, in Bangui. In this respect, plans are underway to organise a Reconciliation Forum and a Political Dialogue in Bangui in February 2015. It should also be noted that pursuant to the Brazzaville Forum, a new Government was formed on 22 August 2014, which was technically reorganized on 16 January 2015. This new Government set as priority the restoration of security, to enable the smooth conduct of the political process and the elections that will mark the end of the Transition. On this point, the ICG-CAR, at its 4th meeting in Bangui, noted that the deadline of February 2015 set for the elections was no longer technically tenable. The Group, therefore, requested the International Mediator, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the Transition, to extend the Transition by 6 months, starting from 15 February 2015. Pursuant to this recommendation, the International Mediator, on 6 January 2015, extended the Transition until 15 August 2015. In this context, it is encouraging to note that the Central African stakeholders reached consensus on the outstanding aspects of the electoral process. It is now agreed to hold the presidential and legislative elections

simultaneously, but on the understanding that there will be a computerized registration system, which includes a voter's photo.

124. The security situation remains precarious despite the improvements witnessed on the ground. The armed groups, particularly the anti-Balaka and the ex-Seleka continue to be active in several parts of the country, including in some areas of Bangui. The rise of UN Mission for the United Nations Mission for the Stabilisation of the CAR (MINUSCA) whose strength number 7,609 military troops and 1,127 police personnel out of an authorised total of 11,800. The humanitarian situation also remains alarming. Furthermore, the overall economic and financial situation equally remains difficult as evidenced by the budget for the financial year 2015 adopted by the National Council of the Transition, the latter representing a deficit of a little more than 79 billion CFA francs.

125. The Assembly may express its deep appreciation to the MISCA and the troop and police contributing countries for the excellent work done on the ground and to the Member States and international partners which provided logistical, technical and financial support to the Mission. The Assembly may also urge the Central African actors to remain absolutely committed themselves resolutely to the completion of the Transition within the newly agreed deadline and strongly condemn the acts of violence committed by the armed groups. The Assembly may reiterate its appreciation to the International Mediation, ECCAS and international partners concerned for their continued commitment. Furthermore, the Assembly may appeal for the mobilisation of increased humanitarian and financial and economic support for the CAR. On this last point, the Assembly may urge the Central African authorities to further promote good governance and carry out successfully all the required reforms.

m) Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)

126. The efforts to neutralize the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) continued during the period under review. The operations conducted by the Regional Task Force (RTF) of the AU-led Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA (RCI-LRA), which brought together the CAR, the DRC, South Sudan and Uganda, significantly weakened the LRA, forcing the group to relocate some of its activities to the north-eastern part of the CAR. In a significant development, Dominic Ongwen, one of the senior commanders of the LRA who was indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC), in July 2005, for war crimes and crimes against humanity, at the request of the Ugandan Government, surrendered to the Seleka group in north-eastern CAR at the end of December 2014. On 5 January 2015, the Seleka group transferred him to the US Special Forces (USSF), who are supporting the RTF. The USSF, in turn, and at the request of the AU, transferred him to the custody of the RTF in Obo, on 14 January 2015. Following consultations with Uganda and at its request, Dominic Ongwen was handed over to the CAR authorities, who transferred him to the ICC. As a result of the increased pressure by the RTF, the LRA is increasingly redeploying from the CAR to the North-Eastern part of the DRC, where an upsurge in attacks, looting and abductions has been noted.

127. In order to consolidate and enhance the progress of the RCI-LRA, the Commission is planning a number of concrete actions in the months ahead. These include the review of the results achieved so far in the implementation of the

mandate of the RCI-LRA, the continued mobilization of political, financial and logistical support for the RTF contingents, and the intensification of the efforts initiated towards the rehabilitation of the LRA-affected areas and communities.

128. On 10 July 2014, the Chairperson of the Commission appointed Lieutenant-General (Rtd.) Jackson Kiprono Tuwei from Kenya as the new Special Envoy for the issue of the LRA. He replaced Ambassador Francisco Madeira, who had assumed that responsibility on a temporary basis concurrently with his position as the Special Representative for Counter-Terrorism Cooperation and Director of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT). The new Special Envoy has since undertaken a joint mission with the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) to consult with countries participating in the RCI-LRA, as well as key partners. He also briefed the UN Security Council on 10 December 2014, and participated in a meeting of the International Working Group on the LRA, in New York, on 11 December 2014.

129. The Assembly may wish to welcome the progress made, and call for renewed efforts to build the operational capacity of the RTF to enable it to eliminate the LRA. The Assembly may also wish to stress the need for the mobilization of adequate resources for the rehabilitation of the affected areas and communities.

n) Boko Haram

130. During the period under review, the Boko Haram terrorist group has carried out numerous attacks, targeting civilians, police, churches, mosques and public facilities, including schools. In early January 2015, Boko Haram overran a military base that was the headquarters of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) located in Baga, Borno State. The group then forced thousands of locals from the region, burnt and destroyed their homes and business and committed mass killings. Mention should also be made of the 10 and 11 January 2015 suicide bombings in Maiduguri, Borno State, and Potiskum, Yobe State, reportedly involving children coerced by Boko Haram to act as suicide bombers. Significantly, since 2013, the Boko Haram terrorist group has frequently attacked towns and villages, security outposts and schools, as well as kidnapped civilians, foreign tourists and missionaries in the border regions of Cameroon. Recently, there has been an increasing number of attacks in the Lake Chad Basin region along Nigeria's borders with Chad and Cameroon, as well as in the northern provinces of Cameroon.

131. The attacks and other abuses committed by Boko Haram have resulted in massive internal displacement. It has also led to significant flows of populations from the Borno, Yobe and Adamawa States of Nigeria into Niger, Chad and Cameroon. This situation has significantly strained resources in the host countries, raising concerns that this may give rise to tension between refugees and host communities. According to the Government of Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), about 868,235 people were affected by the on-going terrorist attacks in the North East. NEMA is currently managing 20 camps for internally displaced people (IDPs). The precarious security situation prevents the delivery of aid to many people in need. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that the number of refugees and displaced people has exceeded one million."

132. During the PSC meeting on Terrorism and Violent Extremism, held in Nairobi, Kenya, on 2 September 2014, the issue of Boko Haram was extensively discussed. More specifically, the PSC urged the countries of the region to take the necessary steps towards operationalizing the mechanism agreed upon to address more effectively the threat posed by Boko Haram. Subsequently, a number of initiatives were taken by the countries of the region, in follow-up to the conclusions of the Paris summit of 17 May 2014, which brought together the Heads of State and Government of Benin, Chad, Cameroon, France, Niger, Nigeria, the Prime Minister of United Kingdom and other stakeholders, as well as the ministerial-level meetings that took place in London and in Washington on 12 June and **5 August** 2014, respectively. On 3 September 2014, the countries of the region convened their 3rd ministerial meeting in Abuja. The meeting welcomed the progress made in the operationalization of the Regional Intelligence Fusion Unit (RIFU), the efforts of the Nigerian Government to set up a fund in order to alleviate the plight of the victims of the Boko Haram insurgency and the measures taken to strengthen the MNJTF. The meeting also underscored the need to effectively address the sources of funding for and the supply of weapons to Boko Haram.

133. On 7 October 2014, the Heads of State and Government of the LCBC member countries and Benin held an Extraordinary Summit in Niamey to assess the security situation and common strategy in the fight against the Boko Haram terrorist group. The Summit expressed its determination to build the operational and intelligence capabilities of the region, as well as the coordination of the MNJTF. It decided to finalize the deployment of the contingents pledged by the LCBC member countries and Benin, by 1st November 2014, and the establishment of the MNJTF Headquarters, by 20 November 2014. As directed by the Summit, the 4th ministerial meeting of the LCBC member countries and Benin took place in Abuja, on 13 October 2014. The meeting committed staff to the implementation of the decision of the Summit regarding the establishment of the MNJTF Headquarters, and the deployment by the countries of the region of the pledged contingent within their national borders. They agreed on a draft resolution to be forwarded to the AU and the UN Security Council, which would authorize the operationalization of the MNJTF, call for the provision of the required international support and request the UN Secretary-General to establish a Trust Fund for the force.

134. On 25 November 2014, the PSC reviewed the regional efforts to combat Boko Haram. In its communiqué adopted on that occasion, the PSC reiterated its strong condemnation of the abhorrent terrorist attacks perpetrated by Boko Haram, as well as its solidarity with Nigeria and the other countries of the region. It stressed that the terrorist activities of Boko Haram posed a serious threat not only to Nigeria but also to the region and the continent as a whole, and as such, called for collective African efforts. The PSC expressed full support for the establishment and deployment of the MNJTF, as an appropriate framework for effectively neutralizing the Boko Haram terrorist group. It requested the Commission to hold urgent consultations with the LCBC Member States and Benin and to avail the necessary expertise, in order to identify and agree on the practical steps that could facilitate the early provision of the required international support, as requested by the ministerial meeting of 13 October 2014, namely: (i) the adoption by the UN Security Council of a resolution authorizing the Member States of the LCBC and Benin to deploy the MNJTF for an initial period of 12 months, (ii) the establishment by the UN Secretary-General of a Trust Fund for

the sustenance of the MNJTF operations, and (iii) the mobilization of the necessary international financial and logistical support.

135. The countries of the region convened their 5th ministerial meeting in Niamey, Niger, on 20 January 2015. The AU, along with a number of international partners, attended the meeting. Participants noted the continued deterioration of the situation and the occupation of vast territories in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria, resulting in the significant increase of Boko Haram operational capacity, massive forced displacement of populations and a severe humanitarian crisis, strong pressure on natural resources in the countries hosting refugees and an increase in banditry. The meeting agreed on some practical security steps, notably the establishment of the Headquarters of the MNJTF in Ndjamena, the establishment of a secure communication network for the security forces operating in and around the Lake Chad Basin, and the finalization, as soon as possible, of the coordination and liaison cell to be established in Ndjamena. Furthermore, the meeting requested the Chairperson of the Commission to submit report on the regional and international efforts to combat Boko Haram in order to enable the PSC to authorize the deployment of the MNJTF; to organize, in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders, a meeting of experts in early February 2015 to finalize the concept of operation for the MNJTF. It is also planned to convene a donor's conference to mobilize resources for the MNJTF. At the time of finalizing this report, the Commission was taking the necessary steps to follow-up on the requests made by the Niamey ministerial meeting.

136. Meanwhile, on 14 January 2015, the Government of Chad pledged active support to fight against Boko Haram. Subsequently, the Chadian National Assembly authorized the Chadian Armed and Security Forces to assist Cameroonian and Nigerian soldiers in the fight against Boko Haram terrorists. Since then, Chadian soldiers have been deployed into Northern Cameroon. In a communiqué issued on 20 January 2015, the Chairperson of the Commission welcomed the decision taken by Chad. She noted with appreciation the Conclusions of the Niamey meeting and pledged AU's continued support to the efforts of the countries of the region.

137. The Security Council has also pronounced itself on the terrorist activities of Boko Haram. As the Assembly may recall, on 22 May 2014, the UN Security Council's Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee approved the addition of Boko Haram to its list of individuals and entities subject to the targeted financial sanctions. On 19 January 2014, UN Security Council adopted a presidential statement condemning in the strongest terms the most recent escalation in attacks perpetrated by Boko Haram; demanded that Boko Haram immediately and unequivocally cease all hostilities and all abuses of human rights and violation of international law, and disarm and demobilize; and expressed concern about the scale of the growing humanitarian crisis caused by the activities of Boko Haram. The Security Council took note of the decision of the LCBC member states and Benin to operationalize the MNJTF and urged the countries of the region to undertake further planning towards the sustainable, viable and effective operationalization of the MNJTF. It welcomed the assistance already being provided to the states in the region and encouraged bilateral and multilateral partners to increase their support.

138. In conclusion, the Assembly may wish to renew its strong condemnation of the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group, as well as to reiterate its solidarity

with the affected countries in the region. The Assembly may also wish to welcome the efforts being undertaken by the LCBC member countries and Benin, including the steps taken to operationalize the MNJTF, as well as the steps being envisaged by the Commission in support of the countries of the region. The Assembly may wish to call on the UN Security Council to adopt, in due course, a resolution authorizing the deployment of the MNJTF and requesting the Secretary-General to establish a trust fund. The Assembly may wish to appeal to the international community at large to extend all necessary support to the LCBC member countries and Benin in the implementation of the decisions they have taken. Finally, the Assembly may wish to reiterate that Boko Haram is a threat not only to Nigeria and the region, but also to the continent as a whole and, as such, the situation calls for renewed collective African efforts. The Assembly may wish to appeal to all AU Member States, which have not yet done so, to extend full support to the efforts of the LCBC member countries and Benin, in keeping with the principles of African solidarity and indivisibility of peace and security on the continent, as provided for in the relevant AU instruments, including the Common African Defense and Security Policy.

o) Côte d'Ivoire

139. Côte d'Ivoire continues its efforts to build peace and national reconciliation, as well as ensure socio-economic recovery. The Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CDVR), whose mandate has already ended, carried out a painstaking work of documentation and memory building. Similarly, an agreement was reached between the Government and the opposition concerning the composition of the Central Bureau of the Independent Electoral Commission in view of the elections scheduled for October 2015. The process to reorganise the Defence and Security Forces is continuing, despite the difficulties faced. The process of the voluntary return of exiles and refugees has also accelerated. In the health sector, the authorities took early measures to prevent the spread of the Ebola virus. During my tour of the sub-region at the end of October 2014, I welcomed the efforts made by the Ivorian authorities in this regard. Furthermore, the security index has improved considerably, enabling the definitive return of the African Development Bank (AfDB) to its statutory headquarters, 11 years after relocation to Tunis. This generally positive context allowed the Ivorian economy to record a high growth rate. The Assembly may welcome the continued positive development of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and encourage the authorities and other Ivorian actors to persevere in their efforts.

p) Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone

140. Liberia was making steady progress in its post-conflict peace building efforts before the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). The current Ebola outbreak has affected all sectors of the Liberian economy and governance processes in the country. Guinea and Sierra Leone, which had made significant progress towards recovery and growth, are also affected by the EVD. The AU has deployed a number of medical and other personnel as part of a mission aimed at containing the EVD. From 22 to 24 October 2014, the Chairperson of the Commission undertook a mission to Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, the purpose of which was to express AU's solidarity with the affected countries, assess the efforts being made on the ground, and contribute to an enhanced African and international mobilisation. She seized the opportunity of her presence in the region to consult with the Presidents of

Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire on the situation. A separate report thereon has been submitted to AU policy organs. The Assembly may wish to reiterate AU's solidarity with the affected countries, call for enhanced African and international mobilization to contain the Ebola crisis and stress the need for continued efforts at peace building and post-conflict reconstruction in the three countries.

q) Guinea-Bissau

141. In Guinea-Bissau, significant progress has been made during the period under consideration. Following the Presidential and Parliamentary elections in April and May 2014, won by the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), an inclusive government comprising the representatives of the parties with parliamentary seats and the civil society was formed on 4 July 2014. To face the socio-economic situation, the Government adopted measures focusing on the emergency situations including a Plan of Action for the prevention of the Ebola epidemic outbreak, the conduct of audit exercises of the contractual obligations of the State and the development of a long-term strategy to lay the foundation for sustainable development. To ensure its financing, all hopes are pinned on the Roundtable scheduled for March 2015.

142. The other priority of the Government is the Defence and Security Sector reform. It should be pointed out that some barracks have been rehabilitated with the support of ECOWAS. Negotiations are on-going to determine the conditions for the retirement and demobilisation of the military and paramilitary personnel. The cost of this operation will amount to 83 million Dollars over a period of 5 years. ECOWAS committed itself to finance the operation to the tune of 46.1 million Dollars. The remaining amount would be met partly by the Government of Guinea Bissau, which pledged to finance 10% of the global amount of the operation; other international partners could also join in the process. Furthermore, the 46th Ordinary session of the ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State and Government, held in Abuja, on 15 December 2014, decided to extend the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea Bissau (ECOMIB).

143. Within the framework of the support to the new authorities, the international financial institutions fielded several missions to Guinea Bissau to assess the situation and identify future areas of action. At the same time, a third joint ECOWAS/CPLP/OIF/EU/UN assessment mission, coordinated by the AU, went to Bissau from 15 to 19 September. Its report was considered by the Heads of the organisations concerned in New York on 26 September 2014, on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly.

144. The Assembly may welcome the encouraging development in the situation in Guinea Bissau and reiterate its support to the efforts of the Government. Similarly the Assembly may appeal to the member States and the international community to mobilise the necessary support. In this regard, it is important to stress particularly the financing of the Security Sector reform and the socio-economic recovery of the country.

r) Burkina Faso

145. The recent months were marked, by a series of sustained demonstrations led by the civil society and the political opposition to block the proposed amendment to Article 37 of the Constitution, which limit to two the number of terms that a President of the Republic can serve. These events deteriorated on 30 and 31 October 2014, when the National Assembly was preparing to consider the proposed revision of the Constitution, thereby forcing President Blaise Compaore to resign from his post. The army, through Colonel Isaac Zida, then decided to take State power, after having suspended the Constitution and dissolving the National Assembly.

146. In a Communiqué issued on 1 November 2014, the Chairperson of the Commission called for a civilian-led and consensual Transition in Burkina Faso. She also appointed a Special Envoy in the person of Mr Edem Kodjo, a member of the Panel of the Wise of the AU. On 3 November, the PSC reaffirmed the imperative need for a civilian-led Transition and demanded that the military hand over power to the civilians within two weeks or face sanctions. Other initiatives were also taken both by ECOWAS, in particular through a Contact Group, led by President Macky Sall of Senegal, by the Chairman of the Union, President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, who travelled to Ouagadougou. In addition, the AU, ECOWAS and the UN, sent two joint field missions there in early November.

147. It was within this framework that the Constitution was restored. This breakthrough was followed by the adoption by the Burkinabe actors of a Charter for the Transition and the appointment of a civilian, Michel Kafando, as President of the Transition, which is to last 12 months, after which elections will be organised. At its meeting, held on 18 November 2014, the PSC, noting the positive evolution of the situation, decided not to take the measures that had been envisaged in its Communiqué of 3 November 2014, including the suspension of the participation of Burkina Faso in the AU activities. Later, Lt. Col. Isaac Zida was appointed Prime Minister and a new government was formed. The Government announced its intention to simultaneously organise the Presidential and Legislative elections on 20 September 2015 and the local elections on 8 November 2015. The Government also gave preliminary indications about the budget of the different ballots.

148. Pursuant to the PSC Communiqué of 18 November 2014, the AU, ECOWAS and the UN established an International Follow up and Support Group for the Transition in Burkina Faso (GISAT-BF). The Group, which brings together the neighbouring countries of Burkina Faso and other African countries, as well as bilateral and multilateral partners, held its Inaugural meeting in Ouagadougou on 13 January 2015. On that occasion, the participants reaffirmed the commitment of their respective organisations and countries to give all necessary support for the successful completion of the Transition within the set timeframe. They also agreed on the modalities of the functioning of the GISAT-BF, which would meet, at least, every two months.

149. In light of the foregoing, the Assembly may reiterate the solidarity of the AU with the people of Burkina Faso and its commitment to support the authorities of the Transition in their efforts to carry out successfully the Transition, with the organisation of free, fair and credible elections. The Assembly may also appeal to the AU Member States and the international community to provide all necessary

support to this end and contribute to the alleviation of the socio-economic difficulties faced by Burkina Faso. The Assembly may reaffirm the need to establish the necessary conditions for the full participation of all political actors and other stakeholders in the life of the nation and lay the foundations for genuine national reconciliation.

s) Mali

150. In Mali, the period under consideration witnessed the continuation, in Algiers, of the Inclusive Peace Talks between the Government of Mali and the armed movements. This process is taking place under the auspices of the Algerian Mediation, in coordination with the AU, the UN, the ECOWAS Mediation, the EU and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and with the support of the Region (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania and Niger). On 24 July 2014, the Parties signed a consensual Roadmap on the conduct of the negotiation process and a Declaration on Cessation of Hostilities. Algeria, the lead Mediator, has submitted a draft Agreement to Malian parties, which should be finalised at a final phase of negotiations, scheduled in February 2015. The Commission, including MISAHEL, actively participated in the proceedings of the Algiers negotiations.

151. The security situation in northern Mali is still fragile, marked as it is by the increased attacks against the Malian army and the international forces present there. It is in this context that the Troop Contributing Countries to the MINUSMA met in Niamey, on 5 November 2014, with the participation of the Commission, to make recommendations on the modalities to strengthen the Mission. The Commission is closely following-up these recommendations. Furthermore, the Commission is working on the implementation of the AU Strategy for the Sahel Region, adopted by the PSC on 11 August 2014. This Strategy focuses on governance, security and development.

152. One of the major developments in the action of the AU in the Sahel was the convening, in the Mauritanian capital, on 18 December 2014, of a Summit of the participating countries in the Nouakchott Process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and the Operationalization of the African Peace and Security architecture in the Sahelo-Saharan Region, under the auspices of president Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, who is also the current Chairman of the Union. Representatives of the UN and the EU participated in the Summit. In the Declaration adopted on that occasion, the Summit welcomed the outcome already obtained in the implementation of the Process, particularly the regular convening of meetings of the Heads of Intelligence and Security Services and of Ministers of the countries of the Region. Furthermore, the Summit stressed the need to speed up and finalise the brainstorming on the operationalization of the APSA. In this regard, the Summit requested the Commission, in close cooperation with ECOWAS and with the support of international partners, to take the necessary measures, including the organisation of a meeting of the Chiefs of Defence Staff and Heads of Intelligence Services and the Ministers of Defence and Security, to finalise the necessary studies for the establishment of enhanced cooperation mechanisms for monitoring the borders, particularly mixed units and joint patrols. Finally, the countries of the region expressed their readiness, in consultation with the UN, to contribute to the strengthening of MINUSMA, especially through the establishment, based on the

model of the MONUSCO Intervention Brigade, an Intervention force to be deployed in the North of Mali within MINUSMA.

153. The Assembly may express its appreciation to Algeria and the other members of the Mediation for their efforts and urge the Malian parties to quickly conclude an Agreement within the scrupulous respect for the unity and territorial integrity of Mali and the secular nature of the State of Mali. The Assembly may also lend its support to the Conclusions of the Niamey meeting on the strengthening of the mandate of MINUSMA, reiterate its support to the Nouakchott Process and encourage countries of the Region to continue to work together in addressing the multifarious challenges they faced.

t) Western Sahara

154. No progress has been made in the search for a solution to the question of the non-self-governing territory of Western Sahara. The Assembly will recall that in resolution 2152 (2014), adopted on 29 April 2014, the UN Security Council affirmed its strong support for the commitment of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to a solution to the question of Western Sahara and, in this context, called for renewed meetings and strengthening of contacts.

155. The period under review has elapsed without the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Ambassador Christopher Ross, being able to launch the consultations he was planning to undertake with the Parties, as part of his new approach to help overcome the impasse in the search for a solution. While the POLISARIO Front and the neighbouring countries of Algeria and Mauritania expressed readiness to receive Ambassador Ross, the Personal Envoy was unable to initiate the bilateral consultations because Morocco was not willing to receive him. Morocco has also not yet authorized the newly-appointed UN Special Representative and Head of MINURSO to travel to Laayoune and assume duty. The question of Western Sahara was considered by the Security Council during a meeting held on 27 October 2014, during which the Personal Envoy indicated that the negotiation process remained exactly where it was since the Security Council last reviewed in April 2014. Meanwhile, the POLISARIO Front has continued to draw international attention in human rights violations, as well as to the illegal exploitation of the Territory's natural resources.

156. On its part, and in pursuance of the relevant decisions adopted by the Executive Council, the Commission has pursued its efforts aimed at increasing international engagement to overcome the current impasse. Following his consultations with relevant officials in Spain, the United Kingdom, France, the United States and the United Nations in June 2014, former President Joaquim Chissano, as AU Special Envoy, visited Moscow in September 2014, for discussions with Russian officials. He also visited China in January 2015.

157. In light of the above, the Assembly may wish to reiterate AU's appeal for an early settlement of the conflict on the basis of international legality and relevant UN Security Council resolutions. In this respect, the Assembly may wish to reiterate AU's support, including through active engagement of the international community, to the efforts of the UN Personal Envoy and to echo the repeated calls made by the UN Security Council for the Parties to continue negotiations without preconditions and in

good faith, with a view to achieving a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the UN Charter. The Assembly may wish to renew its support to the efforts of the AU Special Envoy, including continued interaction with the UN Security Council and other international stakeholders.

u) Tunisia

158. Tunisia continued to make remarkable progress in its process of its Transition. The Assembly would recall that the previous period was particularly marked by the adoption, in January 2014, of a new Constitution and a new Electoral Code in May 2014,. On 26 October 2014, Tunisians went to the polls to elect the Assembly of the People's Representatives (ARP), under free, fair and credible conditions which were unanimously hailed by the election observers, including those of the AU. Of the 217 seats in the Parliament, the Nida Tounes Party obtained 85, followed by the Ennahda Party, which won 69, and the *l'Union patriotique libre* (Free Patriotic Union) 16 seats.

159. The first round of the Presidential election was held on 23 November 2014. As none of the candidates had obtained the absolute majority required, a second round between Mr. Béji Caïd Essebsi, the candidate of the Nida Tounés Party, and Mr Mohamed Moncef Marzouki, outgoing President, on 28 December 2014. The Independent Higher Organ for Elections in Tunisia (ISIE) proclaimed Mr. Essebsi as winner with 55.68% of votes as against 44.32% of votes for Mr. Marzouki, who immediately accepted his defeat and congratulated the President elect. The latter was sworn in on 31 December 2014 in front of the ARP, thus becoming the first democratically elected President by universal suffrage since the independence of Tunisia in 1956.

160. The Assembly may congratulate the Tunisian socio-political actors for the sustained efforts they continued to make to conduct a peaceful and consensual Transition and underscore the exemplary nature of the Tunisian experience. The Assembly may wish to renew its appeal to the international community to provide Tunisia with the necessary economic and financial support for the consolidation of its democracy.

v) Libya

161. During the period under review, Libya continues to face many challenges, including the sharp deterioration of the security situation, with increased and destructive fighting by rival armed militias in Tripoli and Benghazi and in several other parts of Libya. The fighting has resulted in numerous and serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, while also worsening the humanitarian situation, with close to 400,000 internally displaced persons and more than 100,000 refugees who crossed into the neighbouring countries.

162. The prevailing situation on the ground has also compounded the political crisis in the country following the legislative elections of 25 June 2014, with the establishment of two parallel legislative and executive bodies. The internationally-recognized Government led by Prime Minister Abdullah Al-Thinni and the newly-

elected legislative, the House of Representatives, had to relocate to Tobruk, following the takeover of Tripoli, in August 2014, by a coalition of militias under the Libya's Dawn Operation. A parallel administration, with Mr Omar al-Hasi as Prime Minister, and the previous legislative body, the General National Congress (GNC), now operate from Tripoli. The political climate was further polarized by the decision of Libya's Supreme Court, on 6 November 2014, invalidating the June 2014 election of the House of Representatives.

163. It is also important to note the growing threat posed by terrorist and criminal groups, some of whom, including foreign elements, have found safe haven in parts of Libya. On 22 September 2014, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2174 (2014), which condemned violent extremism and terrorism, and requested all States to prevent the movement of terrorists and terrorist groups and underline the importance of addressing the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters. On 20 November 2014, the UN Security Council declared the Ansar Al Sharia as a terrorist organization. The period under review has also witnessed the emergence in Libya of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIL), with some local group pledging allegiance to ISIL. Furthermore, the situation in Libya has also facilitated the continued proliferation and trafficking of arms, with far-reaching consequences for the entire Sahelo-Saharan region.

164. It is under these circumstances of escalating violence and political deadlock that the AU Special Envoy for Libya, Dileita Mohamed Dileita, undertook a series of consultations with the Libyan authorities and other stakeholders, as well as with the countries of the region. The Special Envoy also had extensive consultations with AU's bilateral and multilateral partners. It should also be noted that the neighboring countries are actively engaged in the search for a solution to the crisis. They have so far convened five ministerial meetings, in Algiers in May 2014, in Malabo in June 2014, in Tunis in July 2014, in Cairo, in August 2014, and in Khartoum, in December 2014. Within this framework, a security committee and a political committee have been established, headed by Algeria and Egypt, respectively. These committees have met on a number of times with the AU's participation.

165. The UN Special Representative and Head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Bernardino Leon, has taken a number of initiatives aimed at facilitating a cessation of hostilities and a political dialogue. In this respect, UNSMIL facilitated, from 14 to 15 January 2015, in Geneva, a Libyan political dialogue, aimed at finding ways to end the multidimensional crisis facing the country. The participants called on all parties to cease hostilities to create a conducive environment for dialogue. They also discussed confidence-building measures to safeguard the national unity of Libya and alleviate the suffering of the civilian population.

166. The PSC is also actively seized of the matter. At its 459th meeting held in New York on 23 September 2014, the PSC called for renewed efforts to achieve a lasting cessation of hostilities between the warring parties and facilitate an inclusive dialogue. In this respect, the PSC welcomed the initiative by Algeria to convene an inter-Libyan dialogue. The PSC also decided to establish, in close coordination with and with the support of the UN, an International Contact Group for Libya (ICG-L) to facilitate a coordinated and harmonized international engagement in Libya. Furthermore, the PSC supported the establishment of a high-level committee of Heads of State and Government to enable the AU to more effectively support the

peace and reconciliation efforts in Libya. The Group convened its inaugural meeting in Addis Ababa, on 3 December 2014. In the conclusions adopted on that occasion, participants, having emphasized that there can be no military solution to the current crisis in Libya, called for an immediate and unconditional end to the fighting. They strongly condemned all external interferences and interventions that are exacerbating the situation on the ground and further polarizing the political and social landscape. They noted with appreciation the role of the neighbouring countries and their extensive efforts to help Libya address the challenges facing it. They expressed full support to the efforts being conducted by Algeria to convene an inclusive inter-Libyan dialogue to restore peace and stability. They also welcomed and strongly supported the efforts of the UN Special Representative, as well as those of other international stakeholders. Finally, the participants agreed on the central role that the ICG-L should play in facilitating close coordination and harmonization of initiatives, and decided to meet at least once every two months.

167. The ICG-L convened its second meeting at ministerial level, in Addis Ababa, on 28 January 2015. On this occasion, participants reviewed the current situation in Libya and the efforts being made to end the violence in the country and re-launch the political process. They reiterated their conviction that there can be no military solution to the current crisis in Libya and that only dialogue will bring about lasting peace, stability and reconciliation. They welcomed the convening of the second round of the political dialogue, and called all concerned parties to continue to demonstrate the required political will and flexibility. Participants welcomed the announcements made by the Libyan National Army and the Libya Dawn Coalition to observe a cessation of hostilities and urged them to fully comply with their commitments. Participants expressed their appreciation to the countries of the region, the AU, including its Special Envoy, and the UNSMIL for their continued involvement, sustained efforts and commitment. They reiterated their support to UN Security Council resolution 2174 (2014) of 27 August 2014, which provide for the imposition of sanctions against all those involved in serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, and those undermining the political process.

168. Against this background, the Assembly may wish to stress, once again, AU's deep concern at the prevailing situation in Libya and its far-reaching consequences for the country, as well as for regional peace, security and stability. The Assembly may wish to strongly condemn all acts of violence in Libya and to reiterate AU's conviction that there is no military solution to the current crisis. The Assembly may also wish to call on the Libyan stakeholders to put the interest of their country above narrow partisan considerations and to work in earnest towards bringing the violence to an end and initiating a genuine national reconciliation process. The Assembly may wish to welcome the on-going efforts by the UN and the neighbouring countries, and to stress the need for continued close coordination among all concerned international stakeholders. In this respect, the Assembly may wish to underline the central role of the ICG-L.

VII. ELECTIONS IN AFRICA

169. In 2015 and 2016, the African continent will be holding a significant number of presidential and parliamentary elections. Thus far, nearly 50 elections are planned for the period 2015-2016 (24 presidential and 25 parliamentary elections). These

polls will be an important milestone in the consolidation of representational democracy that Member States have embarked upon following the July 1990 landmark Declaration on the fundamental changes taking place in the world and their consequences for Africa adopted by the 29th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The popular uprisings that took place in North Africa in 2011 reflected the continued aspirations of the African people to the deepening of democracy and the promotion of the rule of law.

170. Presidential elections are planned to be held in 2015 in Burkina Faso, Burundi, CAR, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Nigeria, Sudan, Togo and **Tanzania; and, in 2016, in Benin, Cape Verde, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial-Guinea, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Niger, São Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, and Uganda.** Parliamentary elections are expected to be held in 2015 in Benin, Burundi, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, **Gabon (Senate and National Assembly)**, Lesotho, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Zambia; and in 2016 in Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Niger, Rwanda (Senate), Somalia, Seychelles, and Uganda.

171. Indeed, the continent has achieved a remarkable level of democratic consolidation, as illustrated by the regular holding of transparent, free and fair elections in accordance with the AU's 2002 Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa; the peaceful transfer of power and the development of a culture of democracy and peace; an increasing compliance with the rule of law and guaranteeing human rights; and also cases of political alternation through elections. However, a number of challenges remain to fully attain the objectives set by the AU policy organs. In this respect, mention should be made of the continued occurrence of unconstitutional changes of Government, electoral violence and other related difficulties.

172. Since 2008, the Panel of the Wise has closely monitored and reflected on the issue of electoral violence and conflict on the continent. In its report titled "Election-Related Disputes and Political Violence: Strengthening the Role of the African Union in Preventing, Managing and Resolving Conflict", whose recommendations were endorsed by the Assembly of the Union, in Sirte, in July 2009, the Panel recalls that in "representative democracies, which have been aspired to and achieved to varying degrees across Africa, elections are the means or mechanisms by which people make choices about who should represent and lead them, as well as express preference for given policies. Elections are instruments of legitimation for a body politic. They facilitate changes in leadership from one party to another in a way that is structured, competitive, transparent, and within a legal framework". At the same time, the Panel also noted that in "such a process, tension is inevitable and perhaps desirable to the extent that it can bring out the best of the contending parties or individuals, but it can also bring out the worst. Elections can fuel violence in situations where contestants do not follow the rules or accept the election outcome as the legitimate expression of the will of the citizenry". At its 15th meeting, held on 9 January 2015, the Panel agreed to focus its future efforts on the prevention of election related violence and conflict. The Panel identified a number of practical steps to be taken, including the dispatch of fact finding, mediation and observer missions to specific countries.

173. The PSC is also actively seized with the issue of elections as part of its conflict prevention mandate and responsibility to monitor the democratisation processes on the continent. At its 335th meeting, held on 13 February 2013, the PSC noted that the peaceful conclusion of elections is a clear demonstration of Member States' commitment to upholding the principles of the AU as encapsulated in the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance, adopted in 2007 and which entered into force in 2012. The PSC further noted the contentious nature of some of these elections and called on all political stakeholders to use legal avenues to seek redress in cases of electoral disputes, to reduce the incidence of post-election violence. At its 385th meeting, held on 19 July 2013, the PSC welcomed the deployment of AU observers to elections to be held, and called on all political stakeholders in the countries concerned to take the necessary steps to conduct peaceful, credible and timely elections. At its 480th meeting, held on 14 January 2015 and devoted to the theme "Prevention of Election-Related Conflicts in Africa", the PSC emphasized that the Charter reinforces the commitment of AU Member States to hold credible, transparent and legitimate elections that enhance democratic governance and, thereby, contribute to the promotion of peace, security and political stability, all of which are critical pre-requisites for socio-economic development.

174. Specifically the African Charter aims at: (i) promoting adherence to the universal values and principles of democracy and respect for human rights; (ii) promoting and enhancing adherence to the principle of the rule of law; and (iii) promoting the holding of regular free and fair elections to institutionalize legitimate authority of representative government as well as democratic change of governments. To this end, the Charter urges Member States to: establish and strengthen independent and impartial national electoral bodies responsible for the management of elections; establish and strengthen national mechanisms that redress election-related disputes in a timely manner; ensure fair and equitable access by contesting parties and candidates to state controlled media during elections; and ensure that there is a binding code of conduct governing legally-recognized political stakeholders, government and other political actors prior, during and after elections. The code shall include a commitment by political stakeholders to accept the results of the election or challenge them through exclusively legal channels.

175. Against this background the coming two years offer a critical window of opportunity to consolidate and enhance democracy in Member States. The risk of tensions around elections, including debate on term limits, and the threat of democratic regression should be vigorously addressed by Member States, relevant RECs and all AU institutions in a concerted effort. All the AU relevant conflict preventive tools have to be judiciously deployed, and events closely monitored, to ensure success of democratic consolidation in the broadest terms possible. In this respect, unreserved cooperation with the Panel of the Wise, the PSC and the Commission in the discharge of their respective responsibilities is of critical importance. The promotion of democracy and the rule of law are preconditions for sustainable peace, stability and socio-economic development.

VIII. COUNTER-TERRORISM

176. Terrorism continues to be one of the most serious threats to African peace and security, and indeed to global security as well. The threat of terrorism has become even more complex with its association with transnational organized crime, such as drugs and arms trafficking, human trafficking, illicit proliferation of arms money laundering and illegal immigration, which has led to tragic incidents in the Mediterranean Sea. Terrorism on the African continent has exhibited itself in a number of ways, including; (i) terrorist attacks on African interests; (ii) terrorist attacks on Western and other foreign interests; (iii) use of African territories as safe havens; (iv) use of Africa as terrorist breeding ground and source of recruitment and financing; and (v) Africa as a transit point for terrorists and fund-raising tied to other illicit activities such as kidnappings for ransom. Terrorist activities in Africa have been led by such organizations as Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Movement for the Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MOJWA), Ansaru and Boko Haram in Nigeria and Cameroon, Al-Shabaab in East Africa, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Central Africa, and Ansar Al-Sharia groups in North Africa.

177. As a response to these challenges, the AU, both through the Commission and the PSC, continue to encourage Member States to sign and ratify the relevant AU and international instruments, including the Protocol to the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism that finally entered into force on 26 February 2014. Furthermore, and in line with the AU Assembly decision of July 2009, the Commission has taken a number of steps to mobilize international support for the prohibition of the payment of ransom to terrorist groups. Other steps include the elaboration of an AU Model Law on Counter-Terrorism to guide Member States efforts to adjust their national legislation to their continental and international obligations, which some Member States are already taking advantage of; the capacity building support extended to Member States through the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT); and the annual meetings of the ACSRT Focal Points, the latest of which took place in Algiers from 7 to 9 December 2014. The Commission has also initiated efforts towards the elaboration of an African arrest warrant for persons charged with or convicted of any terrorist acts.

178. In order to enhance its counter-terrorism efforts, the Commission organized a Symposium of Victims of Acts of Terrorism, in Algiers, from 27 to 28 October 2014, to give a face and a voice to victims of terrorism through sharing their stories and experiences, as well as provide a forum to discuss how to assist victims of terrorism and promote their role as active partners in peace-building and countering terrorism and violent extremism. The Symposium made a number of recommendations on the support to the victims of terrorism, the criminal justice response to terrorism, the role of the media, the role of the victims of terrorist acts in countering violent extremism, and on the establishment of a network of African Associations of victims of terrorist acts.

179. It is also important to note the establishment of a PSC sub-Committee on Counter-Terrorism. The five (5) members of the Committee (Algeria as Chair, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Nigeria and South Africa) were appointed by the PSC at its 447th meeting held on 24 July 2014. The establishment of the sub-Committee will go a long way in facilitating the discharge by the PSC of its responsibilities in the area of counter-terrorism.

180. A number of regional initiatives are also underway to address specific security threats. These include the Nouakchott Process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and Operationalization of APSA in the Sahelo-Saharan Region, the RCI-LRA, the efforts being undertaken within the framework of AMISOM to neutralize the Al-Shabaab terrorist group, as well as those undertaken by the LCBC member countries and Benin to combat the Boko Haram terrorist group.

181. In view of the seriousness of the threat posed by terrorism, the Assembly of the Union, at its Malabo ordinary session in June 2014, requested the PSC to devote a meeting, at Summit level, to the issue of terrorism. The meeting took place in Nairobi, on 2 September 2014, and resulted in the adoption of a comprehensive communiqué articulating practical steps to be taken at national, regional and continental levels to prevent and combat terrorism. As a follow-up to the PSC communiqué, the Commission is finalizing an implementation plan to guide its efforts and those of Member States in fulfilment of the relevant provisions of the communiqué.

182. The Assembly may wish to reiterate the need for renewed efforts to address the scourge of terrorism and violent extremism. In this respect, the Assembly may wish to underline the critical importance of the follow-up to, and implementation of, the communiqué adopted by the PSC summit in Nairobi, which outlines the practical steps to be taken at national, regional and continental levels to effectively prevent and combat terrorism. The Assembly may also wish to welcome the convening of the Algiers symposium of victims of acts of terrorism and request the Commission to fully implement the recommendations made on that occasion, bearing in mind the invaluable contribution that victims can make in countering terrorism and violent extremism.

IX. REVIEW OF UN OPERATIONS

183. In November 2014, the UN Secretary General established a High-level Independent Panel to review UN Peace Operations. This exercise is of particular relevance to Africa. Indeed, the continent continues to host the largest number of peacekeeping operations, and the nature of the security environment into which such operations are deployed has changed significantly in the fourteen years following the first UN report on peacekeeping, the Brahimi report of 2000. Thus, this new review offers a unique opportunity to assess the changes that have taken place in the world and the ways in which to adjust multilateral interventions.

184. On 2 December 2014, the Chairperson of the Commission addressed a letter to the UN Secretary General, in which she welcomed the establishment of the Panel, expressing her conviction that it would make an invaluable contribution to the enhancement of the effectiveness of peace operations. She pledged AU's commitment to work with the Secretary General and the Panel to ensure that the report emerging from the review does indeed reflect the evolving nature of the security challenges facing the AU and the UN on the ground. She underlined that, more generally, the review will provide an opportunity to further the common objective of building an innovative and forward looking partnership between the AU and the UN in the context of Chapter 8 of the UN Charter. In a response to this letter dated 24 December 2014, the Secretary General recalled that he had directed the

Panel to make a comprehensive assessment of the state of UN peace operations today and the emerging needs of the future. In this respect, he indicated that the Panel was considering a broad range of issues facing peace operations, including the changing nature of conflict, evolving mandates and activities, planning and partnerships. Having noted the strong commitment of the AU and its Regional Mechanisms to rid the continent of war, as demonstrated by the proactive deployment of peace support operations to seize opportunities to advance the agenda of peace, the Secretary General reiterated the commitment of the UN to continue strengthening its partnership with the AU. In this connection, he informed the Chairperson of the Commission of the intention of the Panel to visit the AU from 9 to 13 February 2015 to interact with all relevant stakeholders.

185. Against this background, it is important that the AU effectively contribute to this review to ensure that the continent's concerns are adequately taken into account, including the need to build an innovative and forward looking partnership between the AU and the UN in the promotion of peace, security and stability, building on relevant AU and UN pronouncements on the issue, including the Presidential Statement adopted by the Security Council on 16 December 2014 under the presidency of the Republic of Chad. Both the Commission and the PSC will take the necessary steps to facilitate a successful interaction with the UN Panel during its visit in Addis Ababa in mid-February, as well as **develop** a common African position on the issues at hand, **to be adopted by the PSC**, ahead of the discussions that will take place within the relevant UN policy organs.

X. CONCLUSION

186. In spite of the progress made, Africa continues to face serious challenges in the field of peace and security, which undermine the socio-economic development efforts, entail catastrophic humanitarian consequences and contribute to project a negative image of the Continent. These challenges highlight the need for increased efforts to attain the objective of a conflict-free Africa by 2020, as agreed by the Heads of State and Government. It is not only to build peace where it has been established particularly considering the high risk of relapse into violence, during the five years following the conflict resolution, but also to overcome the persistent impasse characterizing some conflict situations on the Continent.

187. It is necessary to intensify the action taken for conflict prevention. On the one hand, this is to ensure the effective implementation of the different AU instruments on democracy, elections and human rights, although it is true that most of the crises faced by the Continent are related to difficulties in the area of governance. On the other, it is important that Member States, in accordance with their obligations under the Protocol relating to the establishment of the PSC, facilitate the efforts of the Commission and the PSC in the field of prevention.

188. Finally, the attainment of the objectives set will require resource mobilisation commensurate with the challenges to be taken up. While continuing to benefit from the support of the international partners, Africa should also assume better its responsibilities concerning the promotion of peace, security and stability on the Continent. The ownership and leadership of peace efforts to which the Continent and its peoples aspire so legitimately cannot be fulfilled as long as the essential bulk of the related financial burden is borne by the international partners.