

AFRICAN UNION

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**EIGHTY-SEVENTH ORDINARY SESSION OF
THE CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE MECHANISM
FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT
AND RESOLUTION AT AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL**

**4 DECEMBER 2002
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

Central Organ/MEC/AMB/Comm. (LXXXVII)

COMMUNIQUÉ

**COMMUNIQUE OF THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH ORDINARY SESSION
OF THE CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE MECHANISM FOR CONFLICT
PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION AT
AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL**

ADDIS ABABA, 4 DECEMBER 2002

The Central Organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution held its 87th Ordinary Session at Ambassadorial level in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on Wednesday 4 December 2002. The session was chaired by Ambassador Baso Sangqu, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the African Union. Also present was the Interim Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Mr. Amara Essy.

The Central Organ considered reports of the Interim Chairperson of the Commission on the Mission to The Sudan and Eritrea by an AU delegation from 20 to 25 October 2002, regarding the tension prevailing between the two countries, and on the evolution of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

At the end of its deliberations, the Central Organ decided as follows:

**A. ON THE MISSION TO THE SUDAN AND ERITREA BY AN AU DELEGATION AND ON
THE TENSION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES**

The Central Organ:

1. **COMMENDED** the Interim Chairperson for the prompt dispatch of the AU delegation to Khartoum and Asmara;
2. **TOOK NOTE** of the report of the Interim Chairperson;
3. **REITERATED** its appeal to the leaders of Eritrea and The Sudan to exercise restraint, and to refrain from any act likely to heighten tension and to undermine the efforts aimed at promoting peace and stability in the region, particularly the ongoing Machakos peace process;
4. **REITERATED** its appeal to the leaders of the two countries to strive, through dialogue, to resolve their dispute, in conformity with the principles enshrined in the Constitutive Act of the African Union;

5. **REQUESTED** both countries to take immediate steps toward implementing confidence-building measures, including at their common border, and **CALLED UPON** the Commission to assist the parties in working out acceptable modalities and mechanisms for attaining this objective;

6. **INVITED** the Chairperson of the African Union, with the support of the Commission, to take the steps he deems appropriate to assist in the efforts to defuse tension between the two countries;

7. **REQUESTED** the Interim Chairperson of the Commission, as a follow-up to his earlier initiative, to monitor closely developments in the relations between The Sudan and the State of Eritrea and to maintain close contacts with both parties, with a view to facilitating dialogue between them;

8. **DECIDED** to remain seized with the situation.

B. ON THE SITUATION IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

The Central Organ:

1. **EXPRESSED** its grave concern about the persistence of the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire and the armed incidents which have recently taken place in the West of the country;

2. **COMMENDED** the efforts made by the ECOWAS and its Chairman, President Abdoulaye Wade, as well as by President Gnassingbé Eyadéma, Coordinator of the ECOWAS Contact Group, with the support of the Special Envoy of the Interim Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Mr. Miguel Trovoada, and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, as well as the progress made in the negotiations in Lomé between the Ivorian Government and the Patriotic Movement of Côte d'Ivoire (MPCI);

3. **REQUESTED** the Ivorian Government and the MPC I to extend full cooperation to the mediation efforts in order to speed-up the negotiation process, having due regard for the respect of constitutional legality, the unity and territorial integrity of the country. In this regard, the Central Organ **REITERATED** its commitment to dialogue, as the only way to peace and lasting reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire;

4. **URGED** the leaders of the region to intensify their efforts aimed at promoting confidence and understanding, in order to facilitate peace in Côte d'Ivoire. In this regard, the Central Organ **WELCOMED** the meeting in Bamako, Mali, at the initiative of President Amadou Toumani Touré, between

Presidents Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso and Laurent Gbagbo of Côte d'Ivoire;

5. **STRESSED** the need for the region to strengthen its cohesion and its unity of action in the management of the Ivorian crisis and **REQUESTED** the Interim Chairperson of the Commission to take the most appropriate measures to support the efforts made in this regard;

6. **COMMENDED** the efforts taken by the Interim Chairperson of the Commission and his Special Envoy, Mr. Miguel Trovoada, to promote a peaceful and negotiated resolution of the crisis and **ENCOURAGED** the Commission to continue to give its full support to the efforts of ECOWAS, including the envisaged deployment of a regional peace-keeping force in Côte d'Ivoire;

7. **SUPPORTED** the establishment of a Liaison Office of the African Union in Abidjan to ensure a closer monitoring of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire and to give a more effective support to ECOWAS, and **REQUESTED** the Interim Chairperson to take the necessary steps in this regard;

8. **FURTHER APPEALED** to Member States and to the entire international community to provide ECOWAS with the financial, logistic and technical support necessary to facilitate the rapid deployment of its peace-keeping force in Côte d'Ivoire. In this respect, the Central Organ **EXPRESSED** its gratitude to those donor countries that have already contributed to the regional's peace efforts;

9. **WELCOMED** the despatch, to Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Guinea , Burkina Faso and Ghana of a delegation from the AU Commission on Refugees and Displaced Persons, to assess the humanitarian impact of the crisis and to examine the modalities of AU assistance to the affected populations. The Central Organ **REMINDED** all the concerned parties of the need to ensure the security of the civilian populations, Ivorian and Foreigners alike, as well as the respect for their rights and property. It urgently **APPEALED** to the international community, including the UN agencies and the NGOs, to extend substantial support to the affected populations.