

# AUC NEWS



The newsletter of the African Union Commission

Issue 13. October 2006



## EUROPEAN COMMISSION AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION MEET



“ There is a passion for partnership between Europe and Africa. Our relationship has evolved from one of colonialism to one of cooperation and mutual respect. It is important to engage all our states in the search for solutions to challenges.

We admire the way the AU has managed to carry out its work under difficult circumstances.

The AU has played a key role in Darfur. In recognition of the work of the AU we have considered strengthening our representation in Addis Ababa. The EU Strategy for Africa is something we want to implement on a daily basis”

**President Jose Manuel Barroso**

“ There are so many historical links between Africa and Europe.

EU has shown a real desire to establish a partnership with Africa. Africa has many achievements to be proud of. At the AU, we have witnessed the formation of the African Court of Human and People’s Rights; ECOSSOC, and the Pan African Parliament. The Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are our major building blocks.

We are looking forward to the creation of the African Central Bank and the African Monetary Fund.

There is a major strategy leading to the United States of Africa.

We need consultation- a true debate on the major issues.

**Chairperson Alpha Oumar Konare**

Cooperation between the African Union Commission and the European Commission has been ongoing for a while, and intensified after the Africa- Europe Summit 5 years ago. A European Union Strategy for Africa has since been developed and some tangible initiatives have taken place. These include the establishment of the Africa -EU Partnership and Trust Fund, The African Peace Facility and the AU’s Institutional Transformation Programme. The AUC and EC are also working on an Africa – Europe Joint Strategy.

On 2 October, the relationship moved a step forward when the two organisations met in high level dialogue consisting of Commissioners from the two continental organizations. *Continued on page 2*

The major outcomes of the 2 October Commission to Commission meeting between the EC and the AUC were three very important documents in the efforts to strengthen the cooperation between them, in the light of the EU Strategy for Africa. The documents are

#### THE JOINT DECLARATION:

In the joint declaration, the EC and the AUC agreed

- to continue to take on the challenges of conflict, war and insecurity.
- to work together to improve governance within the framework of a broad holistic approach and to support governance programmes at all levels.
- to establish an EU-Africa Partnership on Infrastructure to support programs that facilitate interconnectivity at inter-regional continental level.
- to encourage the creation of full-fledged regional markets, with improved economic governance.
- to try and manage the migration flows to the benefit and development of both continents.
- to foster regional centres of excellence for research and higher education. These centres will be inter-linked within Africa and twinned with European centres. to establish joint strategies to tackle the challenges of agriculture and environment.
- to exchange experience and best practices in employment and health policies.
- to strengthen their institutional ties.



AUC and EC Commissioners during a break in the discussions

#### THE MOU ON THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES AND THE COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION TO FOSTER TWINNING AND EXCHANGE

Through this MoU, the EC and the AUC established a partnership to foster twinning and exchange with the aim of strengthening the institutional ties between the two institutions.

The overall objective of the Partnership is to strengthen the institutional ties between the European Commission and the Commission of the African Union.

The specific objectives are to:

- increase understanding of the functioning and policies

- of the respective institutions;
- foster better collaboration between the institutions;
- enhance the effectiveness of both the EC and the AUC.

The objectives of the Partnership will be achieved through:

- exchange of officials;
- secondment of trainees.

#### The Memorandum of Understanding on a Support programme of 55 million Euro for the AU

The Support programme has two objectives

- To enable the AU Commission to effectively play its role as “motor” of the integration process
- To facilitate the deepening of the partnership between the AU and the EU

## COTE D'IVOIRE ELECTIONS IN 12 MONTHS– PSC

On 8 September 2006 the International Working Group (IWG) issued a communiqué in which it expressed its serious concern about the deep and persistent obstacles to the implementation of the decisions adopted by the meeting of the main Ivorian political leaders on 5 July and of the road map elaborated by the IWG and adopted by the Ivorian Government.

The ECOWAS Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of 6 October 2006 observed that it would be impossible to hold elections in Cote D'Ivoire on the scheduled date.

With this and other considerations, the PSC met in Addis Ababa on 17 October to define a new transitional framework that can provide a remedy to the causes of the deadlock that have been identified

At its 64th meeting, the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) decided that elections in Cote D'Ivoire are to be organized on 31 October 2007 at the latest, by which time a transition period commencing on 1 November will have expired. During the transition period, the following tasks should be completed:

- identification and registration of voters,
- DDR and restructuring of the defense and security forces,
- dismantling of the militias,
- restoration of state authority throughout the territory of Côte d'Ivoire, and
- the technical preparations for elections

The PSC decision came at the expiry of the initial arrangement, wherein elections were due to have been held by 31 October this year.

At the meeting, which was held at heads of state level, the PSC made a number of other decisions including:

President Gbagbo shall remain Head of State until the end of the transition period,  
The Prime Minister of the transition Charles Konan Banny shall

have all the necessary powers and means to implement the following activities:

- the disarmament programme,
- the identification process,
- dismantling of the militias,
- restoration of State authority throughout the country,
- electoral issues, and
- the redeployment of the administration and public services throughout the territory of Côte d'Ivoire.

The PSC also decided that the Prime Minister shall have the necessary authority over all the integrated Ivorian defense and security forces; the Ministers shall be accountable to the Prime Minister, who shall have full authority over his Cabinet and that the Prime Minister shall not, in accordance with the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, be eligible to stand for the elections.

Council accepted the request of South African President Thabo Mbeki for his country to hand over the role of mediation, following its election to the United Nations Security Council. The pursuit of the mediation was entrusted to President Denis

- Elections will be held on 31 October 2007 at the latest
- A new 12 month transition period shall commence on 1 November 2006
- President Gbagbo shall remain head of state
- The Prime Minister shall have all the necessary powers
- AU Chairperson is entrusted with pursuit of mediation

Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo, in his capacity as Chairperson of the AU, in liaison with the AU Commission Chairperson and ECOWAS, in liaison with any other African leader willing to make a contribution to the search for peace in Côte d'Ivoire.

The decisions of the PSC will be handed over to the United Nations Security Council to enlist its support. The Chairperson of the Commission was requested to take all the necessary measures.



## CHINA COMPLETES FEASIBILITY STUDY ON THE AU CONFERENCE CENTER PROJECT

With the active cooperation of the AU, a Chinese delegation from the Ministry of Commerce has successfully completed an on site feasibility study of the AU Conference Center Project.

The Chinese delegation, led by Mrs. Sai Danxia, Deputy Director General of the Department of Aid to Foreign Countries held friendly discussions with the AU delegation led by H.E Mr. Patrick Mazimhaka- Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission.

The AU requires conference facilities capable of holding large international conferences. The Chinese side felt that the AU, as the most important Organization for Africa's integration, has been playing an effective and

efficient role in establishing continental and regional peace and stability, and promoting the socio-economic development of its member states.

In order to support the AU in playing this role, the Chinese government was willing to give positive consideration to the AUC's request.

After discussions, the two sides reached an agreement on the contents and construction mode of the proposed AU Conference Centre Project. These include project site; project scope and construction contents; construction codes and standards; and division of responsibilities.

On October 25, they signed min-

utes of the discussions on the feasibility study of the AU Conference Center project.

In the meantime, on Sunday 8 October, the AU received an amount of USD 1000 000 (one million) in support of the AMIS, which is engaged in peace activities in the Darfur region.

The money, in cheque form, was handed to Commission Chairperson Mr. Alpha Oumar Konare, on behalf of the AU, by H.E Mr. Zhai Jun, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, on behalf of the Chinese government.

In the picture: Mrs. Sai Danxia of China and AU Commission Deputy Chairperson, Mr. Patrick Mazimhaka (seated) signing minutes of the discussions on 25 October as officials from both sides look on



## MALI SIGNS AFRICAN YOUTH CHARTER

The ambassador of Mali and his country's representative to the AU, H.E M Al-Maamoun Baba Lamine KEITA, on 25 October signed the African Youth Charter, before the Legal Counsel, Mr. Ben Kioko.

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNED BETWEEN THE AUC AND ITALY

The Italian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Patrizia Sentinelli who is also in charge of development cooperation paid a working visit to the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa on 11 October 2006, where she was received by the Commission Chairperson Mr. Alpha Oumar Konare.

### Possible areas of cooperation include:

the training of officials through fellowships, the training of other personnel and exchange of experts

After their discussions, the two parties signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at strengthening cooperation between Italy and the AU. The MOU comes in the wake of the granting of observer status in 2006 to the Republic of Italy with the AU.

In the MOU, the AU and Italy acknowledge that the establishment of a mechanism for regular consultations on matters of common interest and concern will ensure coordination of efforts within the framework of the implementation of their cooperation.

The two parties agreed to convene meetings, at an appropriate level, on a regular basis. The objectives of these meetings would be to deal with specific questions, considered to be of mutual interest, and to explore possible areas



H.E. Patrizia Sentinelli: Italian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

of cooperation in different sectors, including the training of officials through fellowships, the training of other personnel and exchange of experts.

During her visit, the Deputy Minister also met representatives from science and technology and gender divisions of the AUC.

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## 8 AMBASSADORS ACCREDITED TO THE AU

### AFRICAN AMBASSADORS

3 African Ambassadors came to the African Union on 19 October to individually present their credentials as their countries' permanent representatives to the AU.

The ambassadors were

H.E Mr. Wilfried Inotira Emvula from Namibia

H.E Mr. Augustin Nsanze from Burundi:

HE Mr. Emmanuel Issoze- Ngodet from Gabon

### NON AFRICAN AMBASSADORS

Later in the day, 5 representatives of non African countries were accredited as observers within the AU. They met the Chairperson as a group. They were:

H.E Mr. Ahmed Salah El din Noah from the League of Arab States

H.E Mr. Luis Marino Joubert Mata from Venezuela.

H.E Mr. Gerard Corr from the Republic of Ireland.

H.E Mr. Rene Schaetti from Switzerland.

H.E Mr. Milan Cigan from the Slovak Republic



Chairperson Konare with: from left to right  
Mr. Ahmed Salah El din Noah: League of Arab States  
Mr. Luis Marino Joubert Mata: Venezuela  
Mr. Milan Cigan: Slovak Republic  
Mr. Rene Schaetti: Switzerland  
Mr. Gerard Corr: Ireland

After presenting their credentials, the ambassadors had a brief meeting with the Chairperson, during which they had wide ranging discussions.

Among others, they discussed topics such as the proposed United States of Africa, conflicts on the continent, efforts to consolidate peace, poverty eradication, democracy, partnerships and African integration.

In each case, the Chairperson reminded the ambassadors that the AU is at their disposal and that his door is always open for them to talk to him.

Nigerian President H.E Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo paid a visit to the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa on 10 October, where he had talks with the leadership of the AU Commission before addressing many delegates from the international community and the diplomatic corps. Mr. Obasanjo, who was termed a “Great African” by AU Commission Chairperson Alpha Oumar Konare, arrived to cheers and waving from the gathered AU members of staff.



## AFRICAN UNION PLAYS HOST TO “A GREAT AFRICAN”, PRESIDENT OLUSEGUN OBASANJO

In his first address to the members of the international community resident in Addis Ababa, Mr. Obasanjo spoke of his admiration for the accomplishments of the African Union since its formation. He hailed the formation of NEPAD and the African Peer Review Mechanism and the moves towards the formation of a United States of Africa. He commended the AU’s interventions in peace keeping and conflict prevention, and thanked the international community for its support in this regard.

President Obasanjo outlined 5 key areas, which he said are crucial if Africa is to be an integral part of global development and progress. These factors are: ridding the continent of famine; promoting education, science and technology; creating a sustainable environment; maintaining peace and security; and fighting diseases, especially HIV AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. All these factors are interconnected, he observed, and they are underlined by

poverty.

The President observed that a number of conferences have been held to try and find solutions to some of the challenges. These conferences served the purposes of raising awareness and focusing the attention of decision makers on the critical areas identified at continental level.

Calling on African leaders to recommit to sustainable development, President Obasanjo said African leaders should create climates conducive to investment in their countries. He also called on the international community to consider total cancellation of Africa’s debt, make markets accessible to African goods, remove agricultural subsidies, stop the sale of small weapons to non state parties in Africa and encourage the return of looted state funds stashed in foreign banks so as to release money for development. The President praised the cooperation between the African Union, the United Nations Economic Community for Africa and the African Development Bank.

AU Commission Chairperson Alpha Oumar Konare paid tribute to the work done by President Obasanjo, in the promotion of good governance, accountability and democracy; advocacy for African positions at major fora; hosting important summits; fighting against famine and major diseases and spearheading technological advancement on the continent.

Mr. Obasanjo did this work in his various capacities over the years which included; being Chairperson of the African Union; Chairperson of the Commonwealth; and Chairperson of the Group of 77 among others.

President Konare pointed out the Bakassi frontier agreement as an example of how states can use dialogue to resolve conflict without resorting to war. He also applauded Nigeria for its commitment to the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS).

Mr. Obasanjo’s visit to the AU took place in the context of a state visit to Ethiopia.

## AU/ AAVP REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON HIV VACCINE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA HELD AT AU



Commissioner Zoba, Deputy Chairperson Mazimhaka, Dr Kalimugogo, Commissioner Gawanas, Dr Owili of AAVP and Dr Uchenna of WHO

A two day regional Consultation on HIV Vaccine Research and Development in Africa began at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa on 25 October. It was organized by the AU Commission and the Africa AIDS Vaccine Programme (AAVP) with support from WHO, UNAIDS, International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) and EDCTP among others. Participants included African experts on vaccine research, representatives of AU member states, Regional Economic

Communities, civil society organizations and development partners.

The objectives of the Consultation were: to present the efforts of the AAVP in advancing the goals and strategic directions of the AU/NEPAD Health Strategy ; discuss the Yaoundé Statement and recommendations of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Forum, and explore the potential contribution of the AU and the RECs to their effective implementation. It also aims to

promote the development of regional networks to facilitate common regional approaches to HIV development, enhanced cross-country and cross-institutional collaboration, and accelerated development of national HIV Vaccine Plans and their integration into overall national HIV/AIDS plans and strategies, among others.

AU Social Affairs Commissioner, Advocate Bience Gawanas officially opened the consultation workshop, in front of the AU Commission Deputy Chairperson Mr. Patrick Mazimhaka and Infrastructure and Energy Commissioner, Dr Bernard Zoba.

Mrs Coumba Toure, the AAVP Programme Coordinator said the AAVP is a network of researchers, experts, communities and institutions which started in Kenya in 2000. It works to advance the regional and global HIV vaccine research efforts, and provides a platform for collaboration for such research in Africa, bringing together all key agencies.

## WORKSHOP ON BIOTECHNOLOGY HELD

It is important for Africa to establish a mechanism through which countries can engage in dialogue and develop a consensus on the controversies, risks, challenges and myths surrounding the growth and development of biotechnology in Africa. In recognition of this, the African Union convened a workshop at its headquarters in Addis Ababa from 17- 19 October, aimed at contributing to guidelines for Member States as they address issues surrounding the use of biotechnology and genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

Speaking at the opening of the bio technology workshop, the Director for Rural Economy and Agriculture at the AU, Dr Babagana Ahmadu said Africa needs reliable information and guidance, in its responses to a wide range of social, ethical, environmental, trade and economic issues associated with the development and application of modern biotechnology. He also said agricultural biotechnology can be used to help farmers in African countries to produce more by developing new crop varieties that are drought-tolerant, resistant to insects and weeds and able to capture nitrogen from the air.

## STATISTICS WORKSHOP HELD IN MALI

The Seminar on the Harmonization of Statistics in Africa was held in Bamako, Republic of Mali, from 28-29 September, 2006. It brought together representatives of national statistics offices of Member States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), international institutions and development partners to discuss issues related to the development and harmonization of statistics and the establishment of a mechanism for statistical data collection in order to ensure comparability among member states.

The deliberations of the seminar started with presentations on experiences from institutions with regard to harmonization of statistics data on the continent, common framework for statistics data collection proposed by the African Union Commission and financing of development programmes and building of statistics capacities.

Discussions and opinions dwelt mainly on the following major themes:

Role and importance of statistics in economic and social development

Harmonization of production methods of national accounts

Methodological approach for harmonization of monetary and financial statistics

Minimum framework of indicators for comparable statistics in the African Union

Coordination of the harmonization and validation process of statistics in Africa

Strategies and activities to finance the development of statistics

The delegates also discussed strategies and methods used by AF-RISAT for the collection of statistical data from member states

At the workshop, which was organized by the department of Economic Affairs, Commissioner Mkwezalamba highlighted the integration programme that calls for a huge quantity of statistical data in order to evaluate performance and ensure harmonization of sectoral policies. He also stressed that the AU will play its advocacy role at all levels and invited the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank to provide technical support.



Workshop participants and AU staff members who attended the workshop

**Meanwhile**, the Economic Affairs Department is taking part in an effort to publicize the African Statistics Day which is commemorated in November, by supporting communication and advocacy activities targeting mass media, politicians and technical partners.

As part of its efforts, the department is collaborating with the Organisation for International Cooperation and Development (OECD) to produce a DVD compiling interviews of officials from African regional institutions on the theme of the importance of sound and transparent statistics for effective policy making.

## AU PARTNERS BRIEFED ON WORK OF ACSRT

**The Director of the African Center for the Study and Research on Terrorism, Ambassador Bou-bakar Diarra held a briefing session with the AU partners on 5 October at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa.**

**The aim was to explain to the partners, how the centre was operating.**



Ambassador Diarra, Mr. Geoffrey Muganyizi and Dr. Kambudzi

### INAUGURATION and MISSION

Ambassador Boubakar said the center, which was inaugurated in October 2004 and is based in Algiers, is working to combat terrorism. It receives funding support from the AU and partners. Its mission is to: develop and maintain a database on issues relating to the prevention and combating of terrorism; initiate and disseminate information, assessments and analysis about terrorism in Africa and develop training programmes for the benefit of AU member states.

### STRUCTURE OF CENTRE

The center has three units i.e. training and equipment unit; alert and prevention unit and the databank and documentation unit. To date it has 25 pro-

fessional and 25 local staff members.

### WORK DONE SO FAR

Currently the center is in the process of gathering information through the focal points: 39 have come from member states and 5 from the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

It has also started receiving assessment reports from member states. It has held a number of seminars and meetings on various issues such as capacity building, combating terrorism, neutralisation of explosives, dealing with chemical and biological weapons among others.

### COOPERATION

The center cooperates with many regional and international security and intelligence agencies and in this respect it has hosted many specialists and high profile visitors in combating terrorism.

### CHALLENGES

The main challenges facing the center are:

Porous borders in Africa which allow terrorist suspects to move from country to country

Terrorist attacks which have occurred in some parts of the continent

Few countries have the means to implement the international instruments on combating terrorism

Lack of clear cut agreements on extradition

The link between terrorism and trafficking of drugs, weapons and human beings.

### PRIORITY AREAS

These include

Training of human resources and promoting understanding of international legislation on terrorism

Equipping African countries with surveillance equipment

Creation of a database to allow proper monitoring of criminals.

## THE AFRICAN PEER REVIEW MECHANISM

The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is an instrument voluntarily acceded to by Member States of the African Union as an African self-monitoring mechanism.

The mandate of the African Peer Review Mechanism is to ensure that the policies and practices of participating states conform to the agreed political, economic and corporate governance values, codes and standards contained in the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance.

The APRM is the mutually agreed instrument for self-monitoring by the participating member governments.

AUC NEWS spoke to the Executive Director of the APRM Secretariat, Dr Bernard Kouassi.



ance and democracy and freedom of press. Kenya has almost all the right policies to address African challenges. There are many other successes

### How can other countries benefit from best practices?

During the review process, we find that some countries actually learn from the reports being presented. E.g. countries are now much more sensitized about the gender issue and are trying to learn how Rwanda did it. So, countries that are still to begin the APRM may not need to start from scratch. They may just get information from others and adapt it to their own circumstances.

### What benefits are there for assessed countries?

The benefits are many. Internally, the review is inclusive, so we get the participation of the whole nation. The process creates a climate of dialogue in the nation.

“The review does not just look at what is wrong. But also we look at what is right- to share with others.

The process promotes more regular consultation between the government and other stakeholders. Externally, the process acts as an audit and once the outside world knows that the management is good, the country has access to markets.

### How far has the APRM process come?

We now have 25 countries in the APRM, representing 74% of the African population.

### What does the review consist of?

The review consists of several stages. Once we have the support mission, the country starts self assessment. After this, the country drafts a programme of action to address the challenges. They submit the self assessment report to us together with the PoA. On that basis we call African experts in the four thematic areas i.e. democracy and political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance and socio economic development. We spend some time in the country talking to the government officials, the judiciary,

the ombudsman, the parliament, civil society organizations, the media, the corporate community, youth, women’s associations etc. After the consultations, we develop our report which goes back to the countries. The heads of state will review the final document with their colleagues; hence “Peer Review”. After this we publish the document.

### Which countries have gone through the APRM process?

The countries which have finished completely are Ghana, Rwanda and Kenya. At the July Summit of the AU, we hope to present 3 more reports.

### What best practices have been learnt so far?

Rwanda has a very high representation of women in government and parliament. In Ghana we identified political govern-

## INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR OLDER PERSONS

1<sup>st</sup> October is the International Day for Older Persons. The theme for this year's commemoration was: "Improving the Quality of Life for Older Persons: Advancing UN Global Strategies".

In a statement to mark the day, Social Affairs Commissioner Advocate Bienncé Gawanas called on all stakeholders, including the older persons themselves, to utilize the AU Policy Framework and Plan of Action on Ageing and adapt it to their needs.

The action plan is contained in the Yaounde Call for Action which was recently issued by the AU, the Government of Cameroon, and Help Age International – together with a number of Partners. It recognizes the vulnerability of older persons on the Continent, and the need to promote efforts to provide a better life for them. The Yaounde declaration calls for the incorporation of the needs and concerns of older persons in national development policies and poverty alleviation strategies, and provision of the necessary support to older persons in terms of access to health care and services, pensions, and raising awareness.

The AU statement acknowledges the role that today's older persons played in building society. It also recognizes the devastating impact of HIV on older persons, many of whom are caring for and supporting sick adults and orphaned children .

## AU IN COMMEMORATION OF TWO IMPORTANT DAYS

## AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

The African Union has called on everyone to work together and redouble efforts to make human rights a reality for present and future generations. This call was made by Political Affairs Commissioner Mrs. Julia Joiner in a statement to mark African Human Rights Day on 21 October.

In her statement, Commissioner Joiner called upon those member states that have not yet ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and People's Rights, to urgently do so in order to make the court a truly African Pan African mechanism. She also called upon all member states that have not yet done so, to urgently sign, ratify, domesticate and respect international and regional human rights instruments, including the Protocol of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

The commemoration of Africa Human Rights Day, is an occasion for recommitment to the cause of human rights and fundamental freedoms on the Continent and to tackle the human rights problems that are affecting and continue to affect the lives of millions of men, women and children including the challenges of poverty, conflicts, HIV/AIDS, gender based discrimination, violence against women.

## CUSTOMARY LAW STUDY LAUNCHED AT AU

A study on customary international humanitarian law was launched at the African Union Commission on 31 October, by Political Affairs Commissioner Mrs. Julia Joiner and the Vice President of the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) Mr. Jacques Forster. The study, which is published by the Cambridge University Press, was presented to representatives of AU Member States, African academics, the diplomatic community and international organizations. The study represents the first comprehensive statement of contemporary customary law of armed conflict based on State practice.

The study is important in that it can be used in the training of military personnel and the drafting of domestic legislation; and also as a basis for discussions on current challenges to international humanitarian law.

ICRC legal staff, experts from different legal systems, academics and specialists from governments and international organizations spent over eight years reviewing the practices of states around the world. They also looked at sources at the United Nations, African Union, regional organizations and international courts and tribunals.