



## AUC SALUTES STRIDES MADE TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY



African women can use the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) on the Rights of Women in Africa to realize their human rights and contribute fully to the development process

On International Women's Day, March 8, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, H.E. Prof Alpha Oumar Konaré congratulated the women and men of Africa, and African Heads of State and Government for the progress on the continent in the struggle for gender equality, peace and development.

Mr. Konaré said the coming into force early this year of the "Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) on the Rights of Women in Africa" was a landmark achievement and presents a new opportunity for the realization of women's rights. Benin, Cape Verde, Comoros, Djibouti, Gam-

bia, Libya, Lesotho, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, Mauritania, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Senegal, and Tanzania have led the way by ratifying this important Protocol. 40 countries have so far signed the Protocol.

The Chairperson took the opportunity of International Women's Day to encourage all other African countries to sign and ratify this instrument which African women can use to realize their human rights and to contribute fully to the eradication of poverty and to the development process.

Prof. Konaré saluted the thousands of African women and men who, through their civil society organizations have worked hand in hand with the AU Commission to champion

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early ratification of the Protocol and urged them to continue building partnerships and generating momentum towards the attainment of gender justice and peace for all African people.

### Women, gender and development activities at the AU

In the Chairperson's report to the Khartoum Heads of State and Government Summit, covering the period July to December 2005, he outlined the following developments with regard to women, gender and development:

- The first AU conference of Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs and Gender took place from 12 to 15 October in Dakar, Senegal.
- Departmental plans for mainstreaming gender into respective programmes of each department and for building their capacity for gender analysis were drawn.
- The AU is following up on the exercise to revamp the Pan African Women's Organisation (PAWO), to allow African women to shape its future. The role of the Commission is to assist PAWO to engage with the AU in the most effective way. In this regard, the AU engaged PAWO on two separate occasions in 2005: Firstly at a meeting in Johannesburg, South Africa in September and again at PAWO's General Secretariat Meeting in Windhoek, Namibia in November.

### What does the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) on the Rights of Women in Africa say?

The Protocol, adopted by the Second Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union held in Maputo, Mozambique, in July 2003, specifically identifies and addresses the various forms of discrimination against women and stipulates measures to ensure the promotion, protection and realization of the rights of African women.



The right to economic and social welfare is one of the articles enshrined in the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) on the Rights of Women in Africa

The Protocol binds the State Parties to ensure the following rights for women

- Elimination of Discrimination against Women
- Right to Dignity
- The Rights to Life, Integrity and Security of the Person
- Elimination of Harmful Practices
- Equal partnership and rights in marriage
- Same rights in cases of separation, divorce and annulment of marriage
- Access to justice and equal protection before the law
- Right to participation in the political

- and decision-making process
- Right to participate in the promotion and maintenance of peace
- Protection of women in armed conflicts
- Right to education and training
- Economic and social welfare rights
- Right to health and reproductive rights
- Right to food security
- Right to adequate housing
- Right to a healthy and sustainable environment

- Right to sustainable development
- Rights of widows to all human rights
- Right to inheritance
- Special protection of elderly women
- Special protection of women with disabilities
- Special protection of women in distress
- Remedies, where States Parties shall undertake to provide for appropriate remedies to any woman whose rights or freedoms have been violated.



## PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL SUPPORTS, IN PRINCIPLE, A TRANSITION FROM AMIS TO UN OPERATION

Extends AMIS mandate to September 2006

The 15 member Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union held its 46<sup>th</sup> meeting at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 10 March 2006 to, according to the Chairperson's report to the Council "take a final decision on the matter of a transition towards a UN operation in Darfur and the modalities thereof."

In a communique, the Council announced its decision to support, in principle the transition from the African Union Mission in Darfur (AMIS) to a UN operation and to extend the mandate of AMIS to 30 September 2006.

During the period of transition, Council decided that every effort should be made to ensure the early conclusion of the Abuja round of peace talks, improve the security, humanitarian and human rights situation on the ground and address the crisis in

relations between Chad and Sudan.

Council also noted the announcement by the Sudanese government that Sudan was prepared to accept the deployment of a UN operation in Darfur after, and as part of the conclusion of a peace agreement at the Abuja talks and asked the Chairperson of the Commission to continue his consultations with the United Nations, the Government of Sudan and other stakeholders on the modalities of the transition.

On how best to expedite the peace process in Darfur, the Council recommended the establishment of a Committee of Heads of State and Government, which would also include the AU chairman, the immediate past chairman, the Chairperson of the PSC, and the Chairperson of the Commission, to engage the Sudanese authorities and other stakeholders.

The Council called on the AU part-

ners to provide all the necessary financial and logistical support to sustain AMIS until 30 September as well as support the ongoing Abuja talks. In this respect, and in the context of the transition, preparations are being made for a pledging conference in Brussels at a date still to be announced.

Council also called for an immediate end to all acts aimed at inciting demonstrations against the international community and defamatory characterization of AMIS. In line with the AU's indifference to wars and conflicts, the Council emphasized the critical role of the UN Security Council in holding accountable those impeding the peace process and committing human rights violations.

The transfer to a UN operation does not however mean an end to the AU's role in Darfur. Among some of the points stressed by the PSC are that, the transition from AMIS to a UN operation should be informed by the following:

- The preparedness of the Government of Sudan to accept the deployment of a UN operation in Darfur
- That the African character of the Mission be maintained in order to secure the cooperation of all the parties
- That the lead role of the AU in the overall Darfur peace process is maintained and
- That during and after transition, consultations are maintained between the AU and UN, including between the PSC and the UN Security Council as well as between the Chairperson of the Commission and the Secretary general of the UN.

The meeting of the PSC took place pursuant to its 45<sup>th</sup> meet-

ing held on 12 January 2006 at which the PSC expressed its support, in principle, to a transition from the AMIS to a UN operation within the framework of the partnership between the AU and the United Nations in the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa. Paragraph 5 of the meeting's communique tasked the Chairperson to initiate appropriate consultations with the UN and other stakeholders, with a view to providing the 46th PSC meeting with all the relevant additional information, including the modalities for a transfer to a UN operation and the financial aspects of the ongoing operation in Darfur.

#### Since the PSC decision of January 12, there have been a number of achievements:

- **Consultations held with all stakeholders**
- **Smooth rotation of AMIS troops**
- **462 new vehicles purchased to bring the total under AMIS to 1125**
- **Delivery of communications equipment is ongoing**
- **Efforts are underway to provide level I and 2 medical care**
- **Substantive progress has been registered in the Wealth Sharing Commission**

The Chairperson duly prepared his report and it was this which formed the basis for deliberation by the PSC at its 46<sup>th</sup> meeting. In the report Professor Konare noted the apparent vulnerability of the AU through "the exclusive dependency (of AMIS) on funding based on voluntary contributions and ad hoc arrangements" as exemplified by the notice served by the AU partners that they would not sustain AMIS financially beyond 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006, as well as the "growing complexity of the AMIS operation, which increasingly required the type of experience, expertise and resources the UN possesses."

Professor Konare also gave a

break down of the costs involved to sustain AMIS. They came to a total of US\$22 857 719 per month, an amount which the AU cannot sustain on its own. The partners had however indicated that, with a transfer to the UN, further funding of the Mission would be assured through assessed contributions.

In his report, the Chairperson also catalogued the consultations which the Commission has held with all the stakeholders since the PSC decision of January 12. His special representative to Sudan, Baba Gana Kingibe and Commissioner Said Djinnit of the Peace and Security Department were heavily involved in the consultations with the Government of National Unity in Sudan (GoNU), the rebel movements, the United Nations, the partners and Troops Contributing Countries (TCCs).

Since January 12, the Chairperson reported, there has been a smooth rotation of AMIS troops,

which will be completed by 27 April 2006. The total strength of AMIS currently stands at 7031 personnel. In an effort to address the logistics situation, the Commission has purchased 462 new vehicles to bring the total number of vehicles under AMIS to 1125. Delivery of communications equipment is ongoing and will be completed at the end of March. Efforts are also being made to provide level 1 and 11 medical care by the TCCs and the Mission.

The Chairperson's report also informed the PSC meeting of the upsurge in violence particularly in West Darfur. A report by a panel of experts, which formed part of the Chairperson's report indicated that some



Deputy Chairperson Mr. Mazimhaka with Ambassador Djinnit of Peace and Security and the Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs who was chairing the PSC meeting

of the parties to the conflict have committed consistent, willful and systematic violations of the N'djamena Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement and that armed militia groups have not yet been neutralized. The panel found evidence of widespread violations of humanitarian law in Darfur during the period 29 March to 5 December.

In Inter Sudanese talks Mr. Konare reported that modest progress has been made in two of the 3 commissions, i.e. the Power Sharing and Security Arrangements Commissions. Progress is much more substantive in the Wealth Sharing Commission, he said.

AMIS is the first ever African initiative of this magnitude by Africans in solidarity with their brothers and sisters under the new AU principle of non indifference to conflicts and related situations within member states. This role was acknowledged by the UN Security Council in a statement issued at its meeting of 3 January 2006. It commended the efforts of the AU for the successful deployment of AMIS and for significant contribution to the provision of a secure environment for civilians and the humanitarian situation in Darfur.

## CHAIRPERSON BRIEFS PARTNERS ON PSC DARFUR DECISION

After the 46<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Peace and Security Council, the Chairperson, Professor Alpha Oumar Konare met with AU partners on Wednesday March 15, to brief them on the meeting's outcomes.

Mr. Konare informed the partners that the PSC had decided in principle to a transition from the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) to a UN operation within the framework of the partnership between the AU and the United Nations in the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa. The PSC also extended the mandate of AMIS in Sudan to end of September 2006. The Chairperson insisted however that during and after transition, AU leadership must be maintained and due respect must be given to the government of Sudan.

While pointing out the need for increased capacity, the AU Chairperson said the African Union wishes to create the necessary political conditions in Sudan before the UN takeover, saying that the UN should be in Sudan for peace keeping, humanitarian work, demobilization and disarmament. In this regard, the AU is aiming to achieve two fundamental goals before the handover;

The first is the early signing of a peace agreement between the warring parties in Darfur, preferably by end of April 2006.

The second goal is the normalization of relations between Sudan and its neighbours, particularly Chad. In this regard, he said various consultations are under way.



Chairperson Konare during the briefing flanked by his deputy and the Commissioner for PSC



Some of the partners who attended the briefing



Members of the African Union Mission in Sudan

Mr. Konare said that there will be no other outcome in Sudan but peace. Urging dialogue and democratic practices, he said the AU will defend fair claims to a democratic Sudan and that it will never support efforts to take over power through armed force. He encouraged the rebels to make their bases known so that both the AU and the partners can guarantee them their security and put an end to the conflict. However he also said pressure must be brought to bear on the Sudanese government. He called on the Sudanese government to stop all hostilities against humanitarian organizations, neutralize the militias and stop putting impediments to the operations of the African Union.

The government of Sudan, he said, should play a democratic role and take advantage of its pluralism and unity to achieve peace and stability.

Professor Konare warned of the immense destabilization potential of the crisis in Darfur, saying that apart from affecting Chad, it can also affect any of the country's 9 neighbours and extend beyond the borders to merge with problems in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, in pursuit of the AU goals in Sudan, Professor Konare undertook a 48 hour working visit to Khartoum on Monday 27 March 2006, where he was scheduled to attend the official opening ceremony of the Arab League Summit of Heads of State and Government,

scheduled to take place on 28 to 29 March 2006. The Summit would focus on, among other things, the conflict in Darfur.

At the time of the Chairperson's visit, his Deputy, Dr Patrick Mazimhaka was visiting the Darfur region. Dr. Mazimhaka arrived in the Sudan on Friday 23 March and had a working session with the AMIS International Staff in Khartoum before proceeding to El Fasher where he had similar meetings with the AMIS civilian and military personnel, as well as consultations with the Sudanese administrative and political authorities in Darfur.

## RATIONALISATION OF RECs PURSUED

One of the main challenges that confront Africa's integration agenda is the proliferation of regional groupings with overlapping membership and same objectives and mandates. They also compete for resources. Rationalization of the Regional Economic Communities would ensure that they become stronger and more effective as overlapping functions are eliminated. They would also be able to contribute more effectively to the process of regional and continental integration. In addition, multiple memberships of regional economic communities would be eliminated, implying a targeted use of resources.

It is in this regard that the AU Commission, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa held two consultative meetings at experts' level for the Central, Northern, and Western, and for the Eastern and Southern regions of Africa. Another meeting of experts and ministers on the Rationalisation of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso from 27- 31 March 2006. The rationalisation of the RECs will be the main theme at the Banjul Heads of State and Government Summit in July this year.

In both consultative meetings a number of issues, which were common in some cases, were raised. Both meetings emphasised the need for intensive consultative processes with all stakeholders such as private sector, civil society, parliamentarians and labour movements at national and regional levels to ensure ownership of the rationalization process.

The key common observations from the two consultative meetings are that the rationalization of the RECs be based on the Abuja Treaty; and that the AU Commission should have a timeframe for the achievement of continental integration. Based on the common observations and the need to rationalize the RECs in the integration process in Africa, the AU Commission, in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), proposed the following scenarios that the African leadership could use to attain their wish of continental African economic union. The scenarios are:

Maintaining the status quo

Maintaining the tenets of the Abuja Treaty but with a shorter timeframe

Rationalization by anchored community

Rationalization by a political decision of Heads of State

The Road map or the next steps that will need to be taken include:

- Examination of recommendations of Accra and Lusaka by the Ouagadougou meeting;
- Defining a way forward based on the recommendations, which may entail:-

Studies to quantify the scenarios, convening of seminars to validate the studies;

Consultative meetings involving civil society, tax and customs officials;

Ministerial conference in 2006 to examine the outcome of these consultations;

Proposals of optimal configuration of RECs for Heads of State and Government to decide upon.

### Current Membership of the Regional Economic Communities

#### Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) 15

Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

#### Southern African Development Community (SADC) (14)

Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kingdom of Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

#### Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) (18)

Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe

#### Inter Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) (7)

Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda

#### Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) (10)

Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome & Principe.

#### Arab Magreb Union (UMA) (5)

Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, (Morocco), Tunisia.

#### Community of Sahel Saharan States (CEN-SAD) 19

Benin, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Gabon, Gambia, Liberia, Libya, Mali, (Morocco), Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Togo and Tunisia

#### East African Community EAC (3)

Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania

## HUMAN RIGHTS WORKSHOP FOR COUNTRIES IN OR EMERGING FROM CONFLICT

In the implementation of the African Union's (AU's) agenda on human rights, democracy and good governance, the Political Affairs Department in collaboration with the Government of Sierra Leone organized a workshop on the promotion of human rights, the culture of peace and respect for constitutions in countries in or emerging from conflict, from 16 – 18 February 2006 in Freetown, Sierra Leone.



Commissioner Joiner at the Sierra Leone workshop

The objectives of the workshop included sharing of experiences on peace building and human rights, promoting respect for human rights instruments and mechanisms, capacity building in the promotion of human rights in

conflict situations, developing strategies for building the culture of human rights in countries in conflict or emerging from conflict and identifying challenges and opportunities for peace building in Africa. Political affairs Commissioner Mrs. Julia Joiner deplored the continued violation of human rights in some countries, especially in conflict situations and appealed for increased efforts in working for post conflict reconstruction to prevent a relapse into conflict and anchor the process of socio economic development.

Following three days of discussions, the workshop came up with various all-inclusive recommendations, calling upon:

### the African Union

to continue its peace keeping in Africa and end impunity;

to monitor the circulation of small arms in Africa;

to organize similar fora in different countries for experience sharing and sensitisation of member states and Civil Society Organisations on economic, social and cultural rights;

to promote and protect human rights defenders, discourage unconstitutional changes of government, and conduct a study on the two-term mandate of the presidency.

### Member States

to ratify, domesticate and comply with obligations under the human rights treaties;

to include human rights in the school curriculum;

to consult with NGOs and social movements on the terms of agreement of the IMF and World Bank;

monitor traditional justice systems, ensure respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and include women and religious bodies in peace, policy and decision-making processes.

### the United Nations

to adopt international law that assigns responsibilities to non-state actors such as multinational corporations, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organisation for violation of economic, social and cultural rights; and

to adopt arms trade treaty and monitor manufacturers of small arms.

### CHAIRPERSON CONGRATULATES THE PEOPLE OF BENIN

Following the first round of presidential elections which took place on 5 March 2005, the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission congratulated the people of Benin for their massive participation in the elections, as well as for the smooth conduct of the elections. He said, this first round demonstrated, once more, the maturity of the people of Benin and their attachment to democratic principles.

In a press release issued on 6 March, Professor Konare stressed the need for all candidates to the election to comply with the results which would be announced by the National Independent Electoral Commission and, in case of disagreements, to use the mechanisms and procedures laid down for this purpose. He expressed his conviction that the political actors in Benin would spare no effort to consolidate the democratic gains already made in their country and to preserve the example set by the ongoing democratic process.

### AU AND UNHCR IN JOINT APPEAL FOR SUDANESE VICTIMS OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT

The African Union and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees launched a joint supplementary appeal for the return and reintegration programme of Sudanese refugees and Internally Displaced People (IDPs) to South Sudan and for the protection of IDPs in Khartoum and Kassala states of the Sudan. The appeal was launched on 17 March 2006 at the AU Commission in Addis Ababa. The total amount needed for 2006 is US\$63.2 million

The African Union contributed \$100 000.

## AFRICAN MINISTERS OF ENERGY MEET IN EFFORT TO INCREASE ACCESS TO ELECTRIC ENERGY

Africa has substantial energy resources unequally distributed among its regions. These resources are abundant in some countries and scarce in others. For example, the share of biomass in some countries represents up to 90% of the total energy resources. On the other hand, the vast hydroelectric potential of Africa is currently exploited at only 5%.

Despite the availability of sufficient resources to meet its electrical energy requirements, Africa is the area of the world where most of the inhabitants do not have access to electricity. According to recent studies, hardly over 20% of the population of Africa and, in some countries, 5% at most have direct access to electricity. This rate goes down to 2% in rural areas. The weak global electrification rate observed in various countries results generally from an almost complete lack of rural electrification, as considerable efforts are devoted to meeting urban consumption. This is worrying for the Commission and everyone involved in Africa's development because the continent needs energy for its economic development and poverty reduction.

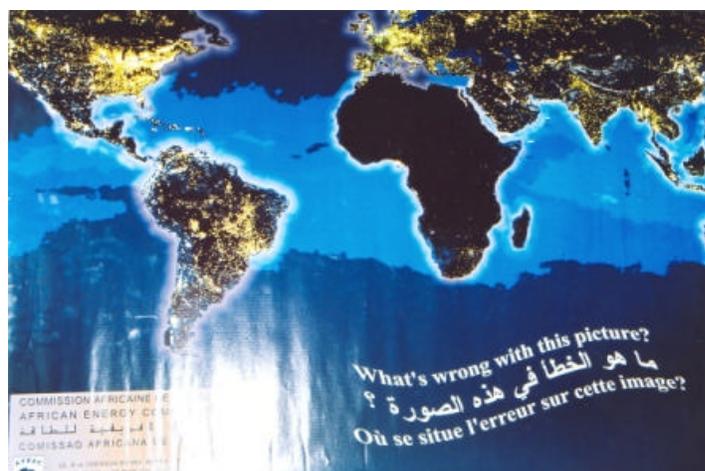
In its efforts to increase Africans' access to electricity, the African Union Commission hosted a conference for ministers responsible for electrical energy from 20 to 24 March at its Addis Ababa headquarters. The main expected outcomes of the conference were

- to discuss the challenges and prospects in the electrical energy field
- Articulation and adoption of a

common vision of continental development policies, orientations and strategies on electrical energy;

- Commitment to a common exploitation of the major hydroelectric resources on the continent and to an enhanced exchange of energy;
- Commitment to harmonization of policies, legal and regulatory frameworks for attracting investments and accelerating integration of the sector;
- Support to the establishment of a coordination council for the integration of the sector's projects under the leadership of the African Union;
- Commitment of development partners to increase their financing of the development of the electrical energy sub-sector;
- Commitment of the remaining African Union Member States to ratify the AFREC Convention;
- Support to the new initiative of establishing the African Standardization Electro-technical Commission (AFSEC) and the creation of the African Fund for the Development of Rural Electrification (FADER);
- Adoption of a Plan of Action for monitoring the implementation of the orientations and recommendations of the conference

In his address to the conference, Commissioner Zoba told the delegates that the AU pledges to develop a policy infrastructure for development of electrical energy, develop a continental master plan that will foster the integration of electrical energy infrastructure, provide support to major regional and international projects, and contribute towards development of renewable energy resources. He emphasised that these are important, particularly for the electrification of the rural areas.



This poster outside the conference venue told the story of the need for Africa to have more access to electrical energy

The conference was attended by African Ministers responsible for electrical energy; experts of African Union Member States, particularly those responsible for policies and strategies in electric energy; major African organisations in the sub-sector: AFREC, the Union of Transporters and Distributors in Africa (UPDEA), regional energy pools, experts of the Regional Economic Communities; Economic Commission for Africa; United Nations Environment Program; African Development Bank; World Bank; banks and sub-regional financial development institutions; international energy organizations; European Union Commission; and NEPAD Secretariat.

## **AFRICA ADOPTS BRAZZAVILLE COMMITMENT ON SCALING UP TOWARDS UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO HIV PREVENTION, TREATMENT, CARE AND SUPPORT**

The African Union, in consultation with UNAIDS, World Health Organisation and other development partners organized a consultative meeting on Universal Access to HIV Prevention, Treatment and Care in Brazzaville, Congo from 6 to 8 March 2006. The main objective of the meeting was to prepare Africa's contribution to the global Steering Committee on Universal Access, whose report will be presented to the June 2006 UN General Assembly on AIDS. The continental consultation ended with the adoption of the "Brazzaville Commitment".

The meeting, which brought together more than 250 participants from 53 African countries, was convened by the African Union, under the patronage of the AU Chairman President Denis Sassou Ngeuso of the Republic of Congo. Participants included ministers, deputy ministers, parliamentarians, civil society activists, people living with HIV and AIDS, faith based organizations, donors and international organizations. They agreed that the movement towards universal access offers a unique opportunity for Africa to mobilize for an exceptional response to AIDS throughout the continent. Advocate Bience Gawanas urged all participants to put vulnerable people at the center of all concerns and commit to actions that would best serve them.

The Brazzaville Commitment identifies main obstacles to the rapid and sustainable scale up of existing programmes and services, and proposes concrete measures to address them. It sets a concrete agenda for action to scale up a comprehen-

sive HIV response in Africa towards universal access to HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support by 2010.

Key obstacles include Africa's dependence on unpredictable external funds and insufficient allocation of national resources. The document also mentions the problem of donors allocating their funding between and within countries and across thematic areas in ways that do not match the specific needs identified by the countries. The Commitment also draws attention to the lack of appropriate human resources due to insufficient training and resources to retain staff and also to the weaknesses and unequal distribution between urban and rural areas, of health systems and infrastructure.

Stigmatization of people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA) and marginalized groups including orphans, migrants and sex workers, and recurring conflicts were identified as important obstacles in the document.

The conference participants agreed on the importance of generating new national and regional resources for HIV and AIDS and also on the need to increase the level of domestic budget allocation to HIV and AIDS. Aligning national budgets to the national AIDS plans is another commitment enshrined in the commitment.

Recognizing that accountability is critical in the process of scaling up towards universal access, the Commitment also recommends to develop and strengthen national monitoring and evaluation systems which would produce an annual report on progress and to set, by the end of 2006, national targets, inspired by regional targets on

prevention, treatment, care and support for 2008 and 2010. These targets should contribute to Africa's development and be milestones towards the Millennium Development Goal of halting and reversing the epidemic by 2015.

The Brazzaville Commitment build on the outcomes of 41 national consultations held between 2005 and February 2006 across Africa. These consultations were broadly inclusive and engaged an estimated 5000 stakeholders, including community based organizations, civil society groups and PLWHA. It will be presented at the Heads of State African Union Special Summit to take place in Abuja Nigeria, in May.

### **HIV Prevention Campaign to be launched**

An Acceleration of HIV Prevention Efforts in the African Region campaign, with the theme "Step up the Pace of HIV Prevention in Africa" is to be launched at the AU Conference Centre on 11 April 2006, from 11:00 to 13:00 hours. The program will include statements by dignitaries and eminent persons as well as presentation and distribution of an advocacy kit for the year of HIV Prevention Campaign. Many high level delegates and AU Commission Staff are expected to attend. Organisers expect satellite linkage to sites in Dakar in Senegal, Johannesburg in South Africa, and Khartoum in Sudan. A press conference will also take place.

# PARTNERSHIP

## WFP AU Partnership

The cooperation between the World Food Programme and the African Union was formalised in 2000 when a Cooperation Agreement was signed with the OAU providing a general framework for partnership and stipulating areas of collaboration between the two organisations.

With operations in some 40 countries in Africa, WFP provided food assistance to more than 40 million vulnerable people in 2004. WFP's interventions are based on four programme areas, namely emergencies, post-conflict/ disaster reconstruction, development and special operations. WFP's operations depend entirely on donor contributions, received either in cash or in-kind. WFP spends approximately over 50% of its total operational expenditures in Africa (USD 1.4 billion in 2004). Cash contributions are used to purchase food locally – between 2002 and 2004 alone WFP's local procurement in Africa amounted to over USD 474 million.

The aim of the **Cooperation Agreement with OAU/AUC** is to collaborate in areas of mutual interest particularly regarding support to member countries towards attainment of MDGs and reducing short-term food shortages arising from emergencies. Priority areas focus on humanitarian affairs; education; health; nutrition and HIV/AIDS; economic, social and cultural development initiatives; economic and social recovery; food security and agriculture; gender; and the fight against poverty

and hunger. Under the general framework of the agreement, areas of collaboration continue to be jointly identified and some joint initiatives have been implemented and/or are underway.

**Memorandum of Understanding with NePAD** was signed in 2003. Areas of cooperation focus on (i) food security and livelihood protection; (ii) basic education through school feeding; (iii) capacity building in areas of vulnerability analysis, emergency

2006 based on the availability of resources.

A food reserve systems study was carried out in 2004 by AU-NePAD with technical support from WFP. The main objective of the study was to define appropriate regional and national food reserve systems outlining how food reserves support responses to emergency food needs, improve regional and national food commodity trade, boost national agricultural production and facilitate access to food. There have been several follow-up regional workshops towards implementing the study recommendations.

### Food for Education –

WFP's School Feeding Programme is run in some 40 countries in Africa. In 2004 more than 7.8 million children on the continent benefited from the programme, re-

sulting in a 32% increase in absolute enrolment rate in Sub-Saharan Africa.

To enhance sustainability of the school feeding programme, WFP, together with NePAD, promotes the home-grown school feeding programme, which links school feeding programmes with agricultural development through the purchase of locally produced food, school gardens and the incorporation of agriculture into school curricula. In this way, demand for domestically produced food is stimulated triggering market mechanisms and creating jobs and profits. Ten pilot countries (Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal,



WFP's school feeding programme in Ethiopia

needs assessment and contingency planning; and (iv) joint advocacy to mobilise resources. Within the support to NePAD, WFP has committed to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, in particular the pillar on Increasing Food Supply and Reducing Hunger.

### Emergency Preparedness and Response

A workshop organised by the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture of the AUC together with WFP in June 2005 came up with a series of recommendations that led, *inter alia*, to the design of a joint project known as Alert Africa – an African Early Warning System, to be launched in

Uganda and Zambia) are targeted to implement the project, which calls for at least 50% cost coverage by the government, and effective participation of the private sector, civil society as well as local communities. The initiative delivers an essential package that comprises health, nutrition, education and skills training interventions.

#### Other areas of cooperation –

In partnership with other agencies

WFP contributes, where appropriate, to emerging strategic policy frameworks developed by AUC such as in areas of post-conflict recovery framework for countries in transition, education, HIV/AIDS and gender mainstreaming.

Information sharing is another important area of collaboration between AUC and WFP, in particular with regards to complex emergencies, such as Darfur and, most recently, the Niger crisis, as well as WFP's assistance to IDPs, refugees

and returnees.

AU-WFP partnership was further strengthened when, in June 2005, the AU then Chairperson, H.E. President Obasanjo of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, visited WFP Headquarters in Rome and addressed the Annual Session of WFP's Executive Board.

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## FACTS ABOUT BIRD FLU

*This is the second and last part of an article prepared by the AU Medical Center experts, featuring bird flu.*

#### How is infection with H5N1 virus in humans treated?

Two drugs (in the neuraminidase inhibitors class), **oseltamivir** (commercially known as **TAMIFLU\***) and **zanamivir** (commercially known as **RELENZA\***) can reduce the severity and duration of illness caused by seasonal influenza.

#### How to take TAMIFLU?

Tamiflu is for treating adults, adolescents, and paediatric patients 1 year of age and older with the flu whose flu symptoms started within the last day or two. Tamiflu is also used to reduce the chance of getting the flu in people aged 13 and older who have a higher chance of getting the flu because they spend time with someone who has the flu.

Tamiflu can also reduce the chance of getting the flu if there is an outbreak in the community.

It is important that the treatment with TAMIFLU begins as soon as possible from the first appearance of flu symptoms or soon after exposure to the flu.

In case of Flu: TAMIFLU is taken twice daily for 5 days, once in the

morning and once in the evening. The entire treatment of 10 doses should be completed (Capsules or Liquid) even if the patient feels better.

To prevent Flu: in case of flu in a home, TAMIFLU should be taken once a day for at least 7 days. TAMIFLU could be taken for up to 6 weeks if the patient is exposed to the flu because of an outbreak.

TAMIFLU can be taken with or without food. There is less chance of stomach upset if taken with a light snack, milk or a meal.

If the medicine has been forgotten, the missed dose should be taken as soon as it is remembered except if it is 2 hours or less before the next dose.

#### Is there a vaccine to protect humans from H5N1 virus?

There currently is no commercially available vaccine to protect humans against the H5N1 virus. However, vaccine development efforts are taking place. Research studies to test a vaccine to protect humans against H5N1 virus began in April 2005, and a series of clinical trials is underway.

However, **VAXIGRI\*P** could be used as prevention for elderly persons and for immuno-depressed patients.

#### What is African Union doing to prepare for a possible H5N1 flu pandemic?

African Union is taking part in a number of pandemic prevention and preparedness activities, including:

- Purchasing VAXIGRI\*P, TAMIFLU and other necessary drugs for prevention and treatment.
- Working if possible with the Public Health Laboratories on the use of special laboratory (molecular) techniques to identify H5 viruses.
- Working with the World Health Organization (WHO) to investigate influenza H5N1 and in getting reagents kits to detect the currently circulating influenza A H5N1 viruses.
- Contacting laboratories in Africa performing laboratory testing of H5N1 viruses.
- Starting an initiative to improve influenza surveillance in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia:
- Raising awareness among member states through the Conference of Ministers of Health for an adequate response in all African countries towards the pandemic threat.

*Pr Koki Ndombo MD, Dr MS Kaloko MD, Dr MS Diallo DPharm, Dr Nahase Buche MD and Dr Abdou Khelil, D. on behalf of the AU Medical Centre, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.*

## ADDIS SCHOOL CHILDREN VISIT THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

School children drawn from different grades at the Hohete Tibebe share company school in Addis Ababa paid a visit to the African Union Commission Headquarters on Thursday 30 March.



Communication Division staff with the students and their teachers

and the radio and television studios.

After their tour, the children asked a number of questions. They wanted to know for example how the AU helps to ensure peace, the AU's position on gender equality, how

### FAREWELL TO MR. TADESSE TULU

In the month of May, the Commission was saddened to lose its acting Chief of Security Services Mr. Tadesse Tulu, who passed away in South Africa. A commemoration service in his honour was held at the AUC headquarters on March 31, before he was laid to rest.

Mr. Tulu was born at Shoa, Ethiopia in July 1949. He graduated from the Naval Petty Officer School of the Ethiopian Navy and the School of Marine Commando.

Later he became a Security Station Manager with Ethiopian Airlines and served as Assistant Security Station Manager in Asmara, Rome, Dire Dawa and Kinshasa.

He was appointed as Assistant Security Officer at the then OAU on 15 August 1990. From 1998 to date, the late Mr. Tulu performed the duties of Acting Chief of Security Services Unit. He is survived by his wife and three children.



Head of Communication Mrs Habiba Mejri Cheikh explaining the functions of the AU

The students and their teachers visited the clinic, the gymnasium, conference hall, the photo laboratory



The students get to understand how the AU website works from Asmerom Girma

the AU helps to protect the environment e.t.c. These and other questions enhanced their knowledge about the AU, its origins, its mission and activities.

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