BRAINSTORMING RETREAT BETWEEN
THE AFRICAN UNION AND THE REGIONAL
MECHANISMS FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION,
MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION

5 – 6 JANUARY 2008
ALGIERS, ALGERIA

AU-RECs/RMs.Decl

DECLARATION
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We,

- the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the Commission of the African Union (AU),

- the President of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS),

- the Secretaries General/Executive Secretaries of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD),

- other representatives of the East African Community (EAC), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA),

- the Director of the Coordinating Mechanism of the Regional Standby Brigade of East Africa (EASBRICOM) and the representative of the North Africa Regional Capability (NARC),

met in Algiers on 5 and 6 January 2008, within the framework of a Brainstorming Retreat, to consider the state of our cooperation and agree on ways and means of strengthening and deepening our partnership in order to promote peace, security and stability in our continent, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) Protocol.

This Retreat was also attended by the representatives of Cameroon, Chair of the PSC for the month of January 2008, and of Ghana, Current Chair of the AU. The opening session was graced by the presence of the Algerian Minister for Maghreb and African Affairs.

On the establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture

Our Retreat afforded us an opportunity to take stock of the progress made in the establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture, as spelt out in the AU PSC Protocol.

In this regard, we noted with satisfaction the remarkable progress made in the establishment of the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), both at the level of the AU and the Regional Mechanisms, in conformity with the relevant provisions of the PSC Protocol and the roadmap adopted by the Meeting of Government Experts on Early Warning and Conflict Prevention, held in Kempton Park, South Africa, in December 2006. The operationalization of the CEWS is all the more important in view of the fact that conflict prevention is at the core of the mandates of our respective organizations.
We also welcome the progress made towards the establishment of the African Standby Force (ASF), in application of the relevant provisions of the PSC Protocol and the Framework Document on the Establishment of the ASF. Although they are at different stages in their efforts, all the regions of the continent have taken the necessary measures for the establishment of the regional standby brigades provided for within the framework of the ASF. In addition, the basic documents relating to the different aspects of the ASF have been elaborated during workshops jointly organized by the AU and the regions. We underscore the urgent need for the holding of the proposed meeting of African Ministers of Defence and Security, which should validate these documents and adopt the roadmap for the second phase of the establishment of the ASF with a view to its operationalization by 2010, including the development of a rapid deployment capability, which should be taken into consideration in the different ASF scenarios.

At the same time, we recognize that there is still a lot to be done to render the African Peace and Security Architecture fully operational, particularly the CEWS and the ASF, including:

- the strengthening of coordination and harmonization between the continental and the regional levels, in order for all ongoing and future efforts to be fully in line with the arrangements agreed on in this respect;

- the rationalization, as much as possible, of the ongoing efforts, in particular by finding appropriate solutions to the problems linked to the fact that some Member States belong to more than one Regional Mechanism, the objective being to avoid duplication and make optimal use of available resources;

- the intensification, with the support of the AU and other regions, of efforts aimed at accelerating progress in all the Mechanisms concerned;

- the strengthening of the role of the AU, which should fully assume its responsibilities in steering, coordinating and harmonizing efforts aimed at establishing the African Peace and Security Architecture; and

- the provision by African States of the human, financial and institutional means required for the establishment and operationalization of the different components of the African Peace and Security Architecture.

**Status of Peace and Security in Africa**

Our Retreat reviewed the state of peace and security in the different regions of the continent. We welcome the significant progress made in many countries and regions as a result of the collective, resolute, action of the AU and the Regional Mechanisms, with the support of our partners in the international community. This progress should be consolidated through the implementation of post-conflict reconstruction and development programmes on the basis of the Policy Framework adopted in this respect by the AU Executive Council in Banjul, in June 2006. We undertake to double and
better coordinate our efforts to ensure more effective monitoring of this Policy Framework and the implementation of the directives contained therein, including dispatching joint assessment missions to evaluate the needs of countries emerging from conflicts and the implementation of coordinated activities to support post-conflict reconstruction, including rapid recovery of the countries concerned, advocacy for debt cancellation, reform of the security sector and the consolidation of state institutions.

Despite this progress, our continent unfortunately continues to face the scourge of conflicts and instability. In many regions, violence is still prevalent, affecting primarily civilian populations and undermining efforts towards socio-economic development and the promotion of the rule of law and good governance.

We are determined to intensify and better coordinate our efforts towards contributing to the rapid resolution of existing conflicts and strengthening our action in the area of prevention. In this respect, we stress the need to fully apply the principle of non-indifference enshrined in the AU Constitutive Act and the relevant instruments of Regional Mechanisms. It is incumbent upon Member States, in conformity with the PSC Protocol and relevant regional instruments, to lend their full and unconditional support to conflict prevention and resolution efforts undertaken at continental and regional levels. More specifically, member States should, in conformity with the commitments they have made, provide the AU and the Regional Mechanisms with the necessary political and other support, including facilitating the effective exercise by these organizations of their responsibilities regarding the promotion of peace and security.

Similarly, we reaffirm the determination of our respective organizations to spare no effort to tackle terrorism, in conformity with the relevant AU instruments. We commend the action of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism and intend to take full advantage of the opportunities it provides.

We are deeply concerned by the magnitude of drug trafficking and organized transnational crime, as well as by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which contribute to the weakening of the State structures and perpetuation of insecurity.

**Electoral Tensions and Disputes**

Our Retreat noted, with concern, the emergence of new challenges linked to the tension which frequently characterizes electoral processes in Africa. This situation has not only the potential of endangering stability, but also that of undermining the democratic processes initiated in the continent in accordance with relevant OAU/AU instruments.

Accordingly, we acknowledge that there is an urgent need to initiate a collective reflection on these developments in order to agree on a common strategy aimed at avoiding election-related disputes and violence, and preventing the election period in Africa from becoming synonymous with tension. There is a need, inter alia, to:

- improve monitoring of political developments in the countries concerned during the pre-election phase, including through early warning systems;
strengthen election observation by deploying missions with adequate strength ahead of the election, with a view to having a more comprehensive view of the situation and making, if need be, recommendations to the stakeholders to guarantee the transparency of the electoral process;

effectively combine the resources of the AU and the competent regional organizations, including the deployment of joint evaluation and electoral observation missions;

undertake, whenever required, preventive deployments of peace support operations; and

ensure that Africa, through the missions deployed on the ground, is in a position to speak with one voice, with the necessary authority and objectivity, on the transparency of electoral processes and ensure that these processes are fully owned by Africa.

In order to delve further into this issue and submit recommendations to the competent AU organs, we agreed to organize, as soon as possible, a seminar on electoral related conflicts and the challenges they pose for peace and security in Africa. We have requested the AU Commission, in collaboration with COMESA and SADC Secretariats, to prepare a concept note to this effect.

**Financing Peace and Security Efforts in Africa**

In considering the constraints to our efforts, we noted that financing constitutes one of the greatest difficulties facing the AU and the Regional Mechanisms. Our organizations are almost exclusively dependent on the resources provided by our partners. Clearly, this is a deplorable situation: as much as it is important to mobilize the support of the international community towards the peace efforts made in the continent, it is equally crucial for Africa to endow itself with the means to successfully implement the ambitious agenda it has set for itself.

We reiterate our gratitude to our partners and urge them to continue to provide their assistance, and express our full support for the efforts invested by the AU towards the financing, through United Nations assessed contributions, of peace support operations undertaken by the AU or under its authority, with the consent of the Security Council, as well as the establishment of a facility that would complement the Africa Peace Facility established by the European Union (EU) at the request of the AU.

At the same time, we underscore the imperative need for African States to contribute more significantly to the financing of the activities undertaken by the AU and the Regional Mechanisms in the area of peace and security, through a system of assessed contributions or alternative sources of financing. In doing so, the objective is for Africa to further demonstrate its political will to rid the continent of the scourge of conflicts,
effectively take ownership of efforts deployed in this respect, and ensure their sustainability.

**Coordination of interaction with international partners**

We recognize the need for better coordination between the AU and the Regional Mechanisms with regard to relations with the international partners, to ensure greater consistency, facilitate the achievement of our set objectives within the framework of the continental peace and security agenda, and maximize the impact of international assistance. In this regard, we commit to:

- agree on common modalities for interaction with partners;

- coordinate our actions in the relevant international organs, in order to effectively defend African interests and positions, as defined at continental level; and

- keep each other mutually informed of developments relating to our respective relations with our partners.

**Adoption of the Draft Memorandum of Understanding**

Having considered the draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the area of Peace and Security between the AU, the Regional Economic Communities and the Coordinating Mechanisms submitted by the meeting of experts held in Kampala, Uganda, from 31 August to 2 September 2007, we have agreed to sign this text, as reviewed and amended during our Retreat, on the margins of the forthcoming AU meetings in Addis Ababa at the end of January 2008. The signing of this MoU, elaborated in conformity with Article 16 of the PSC Protocol, will mark an important step in the implementation process of the African Peace and Security Architecture.

**Final Remarks**

We have agreed to submit this Declaration, for consideration, to the next AU Assembly.

We express our sincere thanks to the Government of Algeria for the facilities provided in order to ensure the success of this Retreat.