INFORMATION NOTE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE DECISION OF THE ASSEMBLY
OF THE UNION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AFRICAN CAPACITY FOR IMMEDIATE
RESPONSE TO CRISSES
INFORMATION NOTE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF THE DECISION OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AFRICAN CAPACITY FOR IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO CRISES

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present information note provides an update on the implementation status of decision Assembly/AU/Dec.489(XXI) adopted by the 21st ordinary session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Addis Ababa, from 26 to 27 May 2013 on the establishment of an African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC). It concludes with observations on the way forward.

II. BACKGROUND

2. The 21st ordinary session of the Assembly of the Union extensively discussed the issue of ACIRC. Following those discussions, the Assembly adopted the following decision:

“The Assembly,

1. RECALLS the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the establishment of a Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC) submitted to the 6th ordinary meeting of the Specialised Technical Committee on Defense, Security and Safety (STCDSS), held in Addis Ababa, on 30 April 2013, as well as the Declaration adopted by the STCDSS requesting a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of the challenges encountered in the operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF) and its Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC);

2. DECIDES in principle to immediately establish, as a transitional arrangement and pending the full operationalization of the ASF and its RDC, an African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises, to provide the AU with a flexible and robust force, made up of military/police capabilities, force enablers and multipliers, equipment and resources to be voluntarily provided by Member States on the basis of their willingness and capabilities, to be deployed very rapidly to effectively respond to emergency situations, within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA);

3. DECIDES FURTHER that the contributions, referred to in the paragraph 2 above, will be promptly provided by individual Member States and/or by the regional capabilities being developed within the framework of ASF;

4. DECIDES ALSO that Member States willing and ready to immediately contribute military and police capabilities, force enablers and multipliers, as well as equipment and financial resources and any other necessary assets, or make a contribution in any specific area
among the above, will make appropriate notification to the AU Commission at their earliest convenience;

5. **DETERMINES** that this strategic endeavor of historic value and scope, aimed at helping in bringing about African solutions to Africa’s problems, calls for continued commitment and involvement of Heads of State and Government themselves;

6. **REQUESTS** the Chair of the Union and the Chairperson of the Commission to undertake appropriate consultations to build the broadest possible support and adherence to the implementation of this decision;

7. **REQUESTS** the Commission to work out the detailed modalities for the operationalization of the ACIRC and to submit recommendations in this respect to a meeting of the Specialized Technical Committee on Defense, Security and Safety to be held no later than the last quarter of 2013;

8. **FURTHER REQUESTS** the Chairperson of the Commission to submit to it a report on the implementation of this decision at its next ordinary session, in January 2014.”

**III. OPERATIONALIZATION OF ACIRC**

3. As a follow-up to the Assembly’s decision on ACIRC, the Chairperson of the Commission addressed a letter to all Heads of State and Government of the AU Member States. In that letter, the Chairperson recalled that, as per the Assembly’s decision, the ACIRC is a transitional arrangement aimed at facilitating speedy response to urgent situations on the ground, pending the full operationalization of the ASF and its RDC. The objective is to endow the AU with a flexible and robust force, made up of military/police capabilities, force enablers and multipliers, equipment and resources to be voluntarily provided by Member States based on their capabilities. Given the urgency and importance of the matter, the Chairperson requested willing Member States to urgently confirm their commitment to pledge, in principle, military and/or police capabilities to the ACIRC and notify the Commission. This will enable the Commission to liaise with the concerned countries to provide them with further details on the requirements in terms of forces, force enablers and multipliers, equipment and other assets, as well as financial resources.

4. Furthermore, the Commission developed a work plan that would guide its efforts towards the operationalization of ACIRC. The plan revolves notably around the following elements: development of all conceptual and legal guidelines for ACIRC; consultations with countries willing to contribute and other African stakeholders; and finalization of the report to be submitted to the STCDSS. In parallel, Heads of State and Government are consulting on how best to mobilize the required support from within the continent, to expedite the operationalization of ACIRC.
IV. ASSESSMENT OF ASF

5. While taking steps towards the operationalization of ACIRC, the Commission is also undertaking a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of the challenges encountered in the operationalization of the ASF and its RDC. This assessment is in furtherance of the declaration adopted by the 6th ordinary meeting of the STCDSS. Senior statesmen, military officers and other experts will soon undertake the assessment tasks.

6. The assessment will be conducted in collaboration with the Planning Elements of the ASF Regional Standby Forces, as well as AU Member States. The aim of the assessment is to: ascertain the level of progress made in the operationalization of the ASF including the RDC (as per the Policy Framework and other approved ASF provisions); identify key challenges encountered in this regard; consider timeframes for the actual operationalization of all the ASF components; and make appropriate recommendations as to the way forward within the context of APSA.

V. OBSERVATIONS

7. The Commission intends to complete both the work on ACIRC and the ASF assessment by October 2013, in order to submit a comprehensive report to the STCDSS. As requested by the 21st ordinary session of the Assembly, the Commission will submit a report on the implementation of this decision at its next ordinary session, in January 2014.

8. The overall objective of the ongoing effort is to strengthen the capacity of the continent to address the peace and security challenges facing it and, in so doing, to enhance AU’s ownership and leadership of peace efforts on the continent. As stressed during the discussions that led to the adoption of the Assembly’s decision on the ACIRC, Africa cannot continue to rely on external interventions to provide for its own security. It is important in particular to stress that the decision to establish the ACIRC could not have come at a better time than during the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the OAU/AU under the theme of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. It has generated expectations that the AU, drawing lessons from its past experiences, will be more effective and action-oriented in dealing with some of the situations facing the continent. Needless to stress, as indicated by the Summit, that the success of the initiative requires continued commitment and involvement of the Heads of State and Government themselves.