SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE OAU MECHANISM FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION, MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION AT AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL

ADDIS ABABA, THURSDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2000

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PEACE-PROCESS BETWEEN ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA
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1. At its 68th Ordinary Session held on 28 July, 2000 at Ambassadorial level, the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution examined the report of the Secretary General on the role of the OAU in the implementation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea signed in Algiers on 18 June, 2000. After deliberation, the Central Organ authorised the Secretary General to deploy the necessary military and civilian personnel to enable the OAU to effectively discharge its role in the implementation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities.

2. Following that decision, the General Secretariat took steps to put in place an OAU Liaison Office in Ethiopia and Eritrea known as OLMEE, whose mandate consists in assisting the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and co-operating closely with it in the implementation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities.

3. Since the 68th Ordinary Session of the Central Organ, the General Secretariat has been monitoring very closely the peace talks between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

1. **Follow-Up on the Implementation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities**

A. **Deployment of OLMEE**

4. As part of deployment of the OAU Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, it was planned to speedily deploy three (3) liaison officers in each capital (Addis Ababa and Asmara). In September 2000, four (4) liaison officers (provided by Algeria and Nigeria) were deployed, two in each capital. Two other South African officers are expected to join their colleagues in Addis Ababa and Asmara shortly. Two telecommunications technicians (2 non-commissioned officers from Tunisia and Kenya) were deployed to the OAU Mission in Addis Ababa and Asmara.

5. Since their assumption of duty in Addis Ababa (September 2000) and Asmara (October 2000), the OAU Liaison Officers have established contacts with competent Ethiopian and Eritrean authorities and have been participating in the regular tripartite meetings of representatives of the host countries (Ethiopia and/or Eritrea), the United Nations and the OAU. These meetings afford the opportunity to discuss the various problems
related to the implementation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities and the deployment of the United Nations peace keeping mission.

6. Steps were taken to provide the OAU Mission in Addis Ababa and Asmara with the facilities necessary for its operation (premises, transportation, communication, etc).

7. Once the liaison officers have been deployed in the respective capitals, it was planned to deploy nine (9) other liaison officers in the three (3) operational sectors initially adopted in the UN deployment plan; namely, Barentu, Adigrat and Assab. The three countries (Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia) contacted to provide liaison officers have already reacted positively to the General Secretariat's request. These officers will be deployed in the weeks ahead.

8. The OAU Mission also comprises a civilian component which will be led by a Representative charged to follow-up on the political aspects of the Mission and ensure co-ordination not only between it and the General Secretariat but also between it and the representatives of the United Nations Mission. The UN Representative will soon be designated.

9. Pursuant to the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, a Military Co-ordination Commission (MCC) is expected to be set up by the OAU and the UN, with the consent of the two parties, to facilitate implementation of the mandate of the Peace Keeping Mission. The Commission will be composed of representatives of the two parties and one representative of the OAU, and will be chaired by the Head of the Peace Keeping Mission. The task of the Military Co-ordination Commission is to co-ordinate and resolve issues pertaining to the implementation of the mandate of the Peace Keeping Mission as stipulated in the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities. It is also expected to address military issues that might arise during the implementation period.

10. The OAU was expected to appoint its representative as part of the establishment of the Military Co-ordination Commission. The Secretary-General approached Ghana to provide him with a Brigadier General to serve as OAU representative on the Commission. Ghana accordingly placed Brigadier General Peter Valentin Blay at the disposal of the General Secretariat.

11. Consultations are underway among the various concerned parties for the convening of the first meeting of the Military Co-ordination Commission.
12. The approved budget for the financing of OLMEE stands at US$ 1,822,077. Of the thirty two (32) partners which OAU had approached for voluntary contribution, eight (8) have officially pledged contributions amounting to US$1,519,756. US$ 569,756 has so far been paid into the OAU Peace Fund for the funding of OLMEE.

B. Deployment of UNMEE

13. Under its Resolution 1312 (2000) of 31 July 2000, the UN Security Council authorized the UN Secretary General to deploy, under the auspices of the OAU, a United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea known as UNMEE. It has six months renewable mandate effective from 15 September 2000. This mission is charged with implementation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities and is, in particular, to:

- monitor the cessation of hostilities;

- assist, as appropriate, in ensuring the observance of the security commitments agreed by the parties;

- monitor and verify the redeployment of Ethiopian troops from positions taken after 6 February 1999 which were not under Ethiopian administration before 6 May 1998;

- monitor the positions of Ethiopian forces once redeployed;

- simultaneously monitor the positions of Eritrean forces that are to redeploy in order to remain at a distance of 25 kilometres from positions to which Ethiopian forces shall redeploy;

- monitor the temporary security zone (TSZ) to assist in ensuring compliance with the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities;

- chair the Military Co-ordination Commission (MCC) to be established by the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity in accordance with the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities;

- coordinate and provide technical assistance towards humanitarian mine action activities in the temporary security zone (TSZ) and areas adjacent to it;
14. The UNMEE will operate under the responsibility of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General. It will be made up of a political component; a military component led by the Commander of the Peacekeeping Force, embodying the Military Coordination Commission (MCC) – one of the key instruments placed at its disposal for responding to the military concerns of the parties and for engaging them in consultations on the activities of the Mission; a Coordination Center for Demining established at the UNMEE Headquarters and assisted by the United Nations Mine Action Department; an information component comprising a Communications and Information Bureau established within the UNMEE; and a humanitarian component in charge of human rights matters whose primary mission will be to examine and address issues pertaining to human rights violations.

15. According to Security Council Resolution 1320 (2000) of 15 September 2000, the total strength of UNMEE is fixed at 4,200 troops including 220 military observers. Deployment of these observers will be in three phases:

In the first phase, ten Liaison Officers were deployed, five in each capital. In the second phase, 100 military observers, fifty in either country had been deployed as of the end of October. The remaining Liaison Officers are expected to be deployed during the third phase. Three battalions (3,630 soldiers in total) supported by different logistics units, will be deployed along the border of the two countries within the temporary security zone. Deployment will commence at the end of November this year, and is expected to be completed very early in 2001.

16. Consultations are in progress between the United Nations representatives and the two countries' authorities on the opening of land and air corridors, and on necessary demining measures so as to facilitate deployment of the peacekeeping force.

17. The UNMEE is led by a Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General in the person of Ambassador M. Legwaila Joseph Legwaila of Botswana who was appointed on 10 October 2000, and effectively assumed duty on 9 November 2000. Mr. Yogesh Saksena (India) was appointed Officer-in-charge of UNMEE pending the arrival of the Special Representative. The Commander of the UNMEE Force is Major General Patrick Cammaert of The Netherlands who effectively assumed duty on 4 November 2000.
18. Cooperation and coordination between the OAU and United Nations Missions at all levels is progressing very satisfactorily.

II. **Resumption of the Peace Negotiations**

19. Discussions between Ethiopia and Eritrea resumed in Algiers from 23 to 27 October 2000, with a view to reaching a comprehensive and lasting peace Agreement between the two parties, particularly on outstanding issues; namely, border demarcation-delimitation, and compensations. The delegations of the two countries were led by their respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Seyoum Mesfin for Ethiopia and Mr Said Abdalla for Eritrea.

20. Negotiations were chaired by Mr Abdelkader Messahel, Minister Delegate to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in charge of African Affairs who represented President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. Also present were Mr Said Djinnit Assistant Secretary General of the OAU in charge of Political Affairs, Mr. Anthony Lake Special Representative of President Clinton, Mr Rino Serri, Special Representative of the European Union and Mr Yogesh Saksena Officer in charge of the United Nations Peace-Keeping Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea representing the Secretary General of the United Nations.

21. Regarding substantive discussions, following consultations among the facilitators, a document was submitted to the two parties. This document contains proposals especially on the mechanisms to facilitate resolution of the issues related particularly to border delimitation-demarcation and compensations.

22. Significant progress was made during the above Algiers talks on the principles to guide the peace process and on the mechanisms to be set up in pursuance of the settlement process. It was agreed to maintain contacts with the two parties in order to finalise the framework for settlement of the conflict.

23. As part of the Algiers discussions, a delegation of Facilitators led by the Algerian Minister in charge of African Affairs Mr Abdelkader Messahel, which included Mr Anthony Lake, visited Addis Ababa and Asmara from 4 to 7 November 2000, where they held talks with the leaders of the two countries. These talks were aimed at narrowing the gap between the two parties and considering the ways and means of speedily reaching a comprehensive and lasting peace agreement.
24. This mission was followed by yet another mission to the region by the same delegation from 17 to 18 November 2000. During this latter mission, the delegation held talks in Addis Ababa and Asmara with the leaders of the two countries.

III. OBSERVATIONS

25. The developments that have so far taken place in the process of resolving the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict call for the following observations:

(i) The fact that the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities signed between Ethiopia and Eritrea in Algiers on 18 June 2000 is being observed by the two parties, is a source of satisfaction;

(ii) Despite accusations particularly of humanitarian law and human rights violations leveled by one party against the other, and the difficulties encountered in the negotiation process, the two parties remain committed to peace and to reaching a comprehensive and lasting agreement to end the conflict;

(iii) It should also be noted, with satisfaction, that the deployment of the Peace-Keeping Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea is proceeding satisfactorily and is receiving tremendous support from the international community;

(iv) Despite the progress made towards a comprehensive and lasting agreement, the fact remains that the relations between the two countries are still characterised by mistrust and suspicion. They have to overcome their differences particularly with regard to the mandate and terms of reference of the mechanisms for border delimitation-demarcation and compensations.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

26. In the light of the recent developments and the results of the peace process to resolve the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea, it is recommended that the Central Organ:

(i) pay tribute to the two parties, Ethiopia and Eritrea for their compliance with the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities;
encourage both parties to continue to demonstrate political will and the spirit of co-operation in order to hasten conclusion of a comprehensive and lasting agreement on the conflict;

pay tribute to President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the Secretary General of the OAU, the partners of the OAU particularly the USA and the European Union as well as their respective representatives, for the sustained efforts they have continued to deploy to promote a lasting settlement of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea;

commends the United Nations Secretary General and other members of the International Community for their continued support towards implementation of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities particularly the deployment of the Peace-Keeping Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

commends both parties for their co-operation with the United Nations and the OAU in the implementation of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities, particularly the deployment of the Peace-Keeping Mission, and encourages them to persevere in this direction to facilitate speedy deployment of the Mission;

appeals to the entire International Community to accelerate mobilisation of the human, logistics and material resources necessary for the early deployment of the Peace-Keeping Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea;

appeals to Member States and to OAU partners to provide necessary financial assistance towards the speedy and effective deployment of the OAU Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea.