REPORT OF THE INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ON THE DRAFT PROTOCOL TO THE AU CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION AND COMBATING OF TERRORISM

The Inter-Governmental High Level meeting on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa, held in Algiers, from 11 to 14 September 2002, adopted a Plan of Action and recommendations for the prevention and combating of terrorism in Africa. The meeting took note with appreciation of the draft Protocol prepared by the Commission and urged the latter to examine in greater details the various aspects of the additional Protocol by incorporating therein, in addition to the follow-up mechanism, other provisions aimed at complementing and updating the Algiers Convention. The meeting requested the Commission to incorporate the views and proposals of AU Member States and submit a comprehensive draft Protocol to the State Parties to the Convention, and to the deliberating Organs of the AU within the shortest time possible, for consideration by the next African Union Summit in Maputo.

The Executive Council meeting in N'djamena, held from 3 to 6 March 2003, adopted decision [EX.CL/Dec. 13 (II)] on the High-Level Inter-Governmental Meeting on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism in Africa. In that decision, the Council endorsed the Plan of Action and recommendations of the Intergovernmental High Level meeting, and further requested the Commission to finalize the Additional Protocol to the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, in time for consideration by the next ordinary session of the Assembly in Maputo, Mozambique. The Council also urged Member States, which have not yet done so, to forward their observation on the draft Protocol to the Commission.

In follow-up to the above decisions, the Commission sent monthly reminders to all Member States, requesting their views and comments on the draft Protocol. It also prepared a questionnaire, which was sent to all Member States in April, to further solicit their comments on the said draft Protocol. At the time of preparing this report, 12 countries (Burundi, Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia) responded to both the monthly reminder and the Questionnaire. The draft Protocol was revised by the Commission to include the views and comments received from Member States. It was considered by the 92nd Session of the Central Organ at Ambassadorial level in Addis Ababa, held from 12 to 13 June 2003. That Meeting requested the Commission to review and finalize the
draft Protocol in light of the input of the 92\textsuperscript{nd} Session of the Central Organ held in Addis Ababa from 12 to 13 June 2003, and to submit the final draft of the Protocol to the sixth Ordinary Session of the PRC to be held in Maputo, Mozambique in July 2003.

The current draft Protocol reflects the input and recommendations of the Central Organ. It provides for follow-up mechanisms to the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism. The draft Protocol also addresses some of the prevailing issues in international terrorism and the on-going global counter-terrorism campaign, to complement the Algiers Convention. In this regard, it makes reference to sophisticated technology and communication systems increasingly used by terrorists to organize and carry out terrorist activities. The objective is to raise awareness and to protect the new generation of technology such as E-mail, Internet and other electronic fast-communication systems, and their users in Africa, from being abused or used for purposes of committing terrorist activities.

The draft Protocol also addresses the risks of terrorists acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction in Africa. The increasing risk of linkages between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and in particular, the potentials of terrorists to acquire access to WMDs such as chemical, bacteriological and nuclear explosives, currently constitutes a major threat to humanity as far as terrorism is concerned.