PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
246th MEETING
28 OCTOBER 2010
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

REPORT ON THE MISSION OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN UNION TO CÔTE D’IVOIRE

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. A delegation of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), led by Ambassador Dr. Ruben Maye Nsue Mangue, Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea, Chairperson of the PSC for the month of September 2010, undertook a mission to Côte d’Ivoire from 27 September to 3 October 2010. It is worth recalling that the field visit was undertaken pursuant to the Press Statement of the 234th meeting of the PSC held on 28 June 2010, in which Council decided to dispatch a mission to Côte d’Ivoire to evaluate the situation with a view to further contributing to the crisis exit process in the country. Subsequently, Council reiterated its decision at its 238th meeting held on 11 August 2010, to visit Côte d’Ivoire and Burkina Faso at the end of September/early October 2010, in order to evaluate the crisis exit process and contribute to the efforts towards the process which should lead to the presidential election scheduled for 31 October 2010. The visit to Burkina Faso did not take place, because President Blaise Compaoré, Facilitator of the Direct Inter-Ivorian Dialogue, and due to earlier commitments, was absent from Ouagadougou from 2 to 3 October, period during which the mission was supposed to visit.

2. After the visit made at the end of April/ early May 2009, it was the second time that the PSC undertook a mission to the country as part of the efforts deployed in support of the implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement (OPA) and its Supplementary Agreements.

II. CONTEXT OF THE MISSION

3. Since March 2007, the crisis exit process in Côte d’Ivoire has been conducted within the framework of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and its Supplementary Agreements which, it is to be recalled, focused mainly on the following issues: general identification of the population, the electoral process, disarmament, demobilization and reform of the defense and security sector in Côte d’Ivoire, the restoration of State authority and the re-deployment of the administration throughout the national territory.

4. At the time of arrival of the delegation in Abidjan, considerable progress had been made in the crisis exit process, particularly in the electoral process. The consensus which culminated in the setting of 31 October 2010, as the date of the presidential election, after several postponements, the adoption of the final Electoral List, as certified by the United Nations, and the distribution, from 5 October, of national identity cards and voters’ cards, constitute major achievements in the crisis exit process.
III. **OBJECTIVES OF THE MISSION**

5. In accordance with the Terms of Reference adopted by Council at its 238th meeting, the general objective of the mission was to evaluate the progress achieved and familiarize itself with the challenges facing the process in order to identify what further measures and actions the AU could take in contribution to the crisis exit process in Côte d’Ivoire, particularly the presidential election of 31 October 2010.

6. To that end, the PSC delegation held consultations/meetings with authorities, political parties, civil society organizations, the United Nations and the international community in Abidjan and Yamoussoukro, to obtain firsthand information on the progress made and the challenges to be addressed to ensure the success of the process. During those consultations, the following specific issues were raised:

   - Disarmament of former combatants;
   - Dismantling of the militias;
   - Re-unification of the country;
   - Consolidation of public funds (single state treasury);
   - Electoral process;
   - Support of the international community; and
   - Additional efforts expected from the AU.

IV. **CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE PSC DELEGATION AND THE STAKEHOLDERS IN THE IVORIAN CRISIS**

7. In his introductory remarks to the various interlocutors of the delegation, the Head of Delegation conveyed AU solidarity and encouragement to the Ivorian people in their efforts to end the crisis, in this year 2010, declared the “Year of Peace and Security in Africa”. He recalled the mandate of the PSC as set out in its Protocol, in which there are provisions for such a mission. He further stated that the visit, which was a follow-up to the visit paid by the Council in April/May 2009, was aimed at evaluating the progress made in the implementation of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and its Supplementary Agreements. To that end, the Delegation had come to obtain the views of the Ivorian authorities, political parties, civil society and representatives of the international community on the evolution of the electoral process, and on the issues of identification, disarmament, re-unification and re-deployment of the Administration in the entire country. The Head also asked the hosts of the delegation what they expected from the African Union in the crisis exit process, adding that it was necessary to not only express satisfaction at the remarkable strides made in the process leading to the presidential election of 31 October 2010, but also to make an accurate assessment of the remaining challenges to be addressed with a view to achieving a definitive end to the crisis.

a. **Meeting with Mr. Dagobert Banzio, Minister of Infrastructure and Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and African Integration**

8. Following the introductory remarks of the Head of Delegation, the Minister stated that he was honoured to receive the African Union delegation, which has always stood behind the Ivorian people in their ordeal.
9. Regarding the status of the crisis exit process, the Minister stated that the electoral process gathered momentum with the signing of the decree announcing 31 October 2010, as the date of the presidential election. He further stated that the meeting of the Permanent Consultation Framework (PCF) held on 21 September 2010, culminated in the removal of any doubts regarding the holding of the presidential election on 31 October 2010, with the election campaign set to begin on 14 October 2010, and for which 10,179 constituencies and 20,073 polling stations have been provided. In this respect, he indicated that the only major task remaining was the distribution of the different electoral documents (national identity cards, voters’ cards, ballot papers and other polling documents) within the allotted deadline. On the other aspects of the process, particularly the disarmament and the encampment of the former combatants of the New Forces, the Minister indicated that progress had been made, despite the persistence of financial difficulties. Concerning the re-deployment of the Administration and the single treasury issue, the Minister expressed satisfaction at the deployment of customs officers to border areas in the centre-north-west (CNO) zone under the control of the New Forces. In response to a question from the Head of the Delegation regarding equitable access to the State media, the Minister responded that the Government was prepared to implement the equitable distribution criteria provided for that purpose, but it was, first and foremost, necessary to resolve the issue of the “illegal existence of Ma Patrie Television which broadcasts in CNO zone for the benefit of a single candidate”.

b. Meeting with the Director of Cabinet of the Minister of Defence

10. The meeting offered the PSC Delegation the opportunity to have a better idea on the aspects of disarmament, demobilization, encampment of former fighters and reform of the defence and security sector, this being the subject of the 4th Supplementary Agreement to the Ouagadougou Political Agreement.

11. In his introductory statement, the Director emphasized that peace is always relative, but the situation had considerably changed since the signing of the OPA. Regarding security, he indicated that there were three aspects to be considered:

- Registration and disarmament of former FN combatants; he denied the existence of self-defense militias, as according to him, the latter had never posed a threat to the State;
- Selection and encampment of soldiers for integration into the Defense and Security Forces of Côte d’Ivoire (FDSCI) and into the Integrated Command Centres (ICC);
- Demobilization of the soldiers not selected.

12. In this regard, he provided an overview on the implementation of the Agreements. According to him, five thousand (5,000) men of the Armed Forces of the New Forces were in the process of being integrated into the FDSCI, in accordance with the criteria of age and level of education, subject to proof of Ivorian nationality. The encampment of the soldiers had been completed since 27 August. A tour of Generals (FDSCI, FAFN, Neutral Forces) is expected to take place on 5 October to evaluate the situation.
13. In addition to these numbers, 4,000 men of the FAFN are expected to be recruited to join 4,000 FDSCI soldiers under the Integrated Command Center charged with ensuring security during the elections with the support of the Neutral Forces (UNOCI and Force Licorne). The Director indicated that six hundred (600) men of FAFN had already been trained in Pretoria and integrated into the ICC, which receives financial support from the European Union.

14. Regarding the rest of the former combatants and self-defense militias, the Ouagadougou Political Agreement provided for 500,000 CFA Francs as a once-and-for-all payment. The programme, implemented by the Office of the Prime Minister, had encountered implementation difficulties due to the lack of resources. However, thanks to Government effort, funds had now been made available to pay the demobilized persons.

15. In response to a question by the delegation on the level of preparedness and capacity of the ICC to provide security for the electoral process, the Director of Cabinet emphasized that the arms embargo imposed on Côte d’Ivoire under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1572 (2000) was an obstacle to the proper equipping of personnel recruited for the ICC. He informed the delegation of the arrest in the USA of an officer of the Ivorian army on official mission to purchase non-lethal materials for the maintenance of law and order (teargas canisters, shields, etc.). The Director then requested the PSC to intercede with the United Nations Security Council to lift the arms embargo against his country.

c. Meeting with Mr. Alassane Dramane Ouattara, former Prime Minister, Chairman of the Rally of Republicans (RDR)

16. Welcoming the delegation, Mr. Ouattara thanked the AU for its solidarity and interest in the crisis exit process in Côte d’Ivoire. He assured members of the PSC that all Ivorian players, with the support of the international community, were working to ensure that the presidential election takes place on 31 October 2010, as Ivorians were impatient, wanting to go to the polls.

17. Concerning the implementation of the OPA and its Supplementary Agreements, he indicated that the process was still slow, but it was the price to pay for the peace so much desired by Ivorians. On security-related matters, the former Prime Minister said that much remained to be done to establish the ICC and dismantle the militias, particularly in the west of the country. He stressed that provision of security during the electoral process was a vital factor, but should not prevent the holding of the election on the set date. He expressed the wish that the Impartial Forces be involved to replace the ICC where necessary, particularly in the west. The Chairman of the RDR informed the delegation of his commitment to peace and reconciliation in Côte d’Ivoire, reason for which he signed the Code of Good Conduct. He declared his intention, in case of victory, to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as well as a Government of National Unity, involving all the political actors.

18. During the discussions, he drew the attention of the Delegation to the speech, which he considered disturbing, made by the presidential camp through the State Media, to which equitable access for all the political actors had been raised at all the meetings of the Permanent Consultation Framework (PCF). Mr. Ouattara also indicated his readiness to congratulate the winner of the election, which should be held in peace, transparency, equity and justice so that every citizen could express his/her choice. To that end, he requested the AU and the
international community at large, to send a large and objective observer mission to cover the election, so critical to ending the crisis in Côte d’Ivoire. He underscored his firm opposition to the lifting of the embargo on arms, importation of which could rekindle and strengthen the action of the militias, and requested the AU to strive towards retention of the embargo. Finally, speaking about the expiry of the mandate of the President of the Republic since October 2007, he stressed the determination of his party, a movement committed to peace, to oppose any fresh violation of the Ivorian constitution.

d. **Meeting with the Minister of the Interior**

19. Following the introductory remarks by the Head of Delegation, the Minister of the Interior thanked the AU for its solidarity with the Ivorian people and for the role it played in the process of ending the crisis. However, he indicated that the African Union has not fully played its role during the critical moments in the situation in Côte d’Ivoire. He emphasized that Ivorians were tired of the crisis and its consequences, and they were determined to go to the polls in spite of the difficulties. In that regard, he stressed that measures had been taken to provide security during the electoral process with the ICC and the Impartial Forces. He stressed that the arms embargo was a major obstacle to equipping the forces under the ICC. In his view, the security problem, however under control, should not prevent the holding of the election, and his Ministry was a foremost partner of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) responsible for organizing the elections.

20. On control of the CNO zone by the FN, he emphasized that it was difficult to challenge the privileges acquired during the rebellion.

21. In response to a question by the Delegation on the role of the public media in the context of ending the crisis, he responded that freedom of expression was well respected in Côte d’Ivoire and the abundance of the private press was a testimony thereof.

e. **Meeting with the Minister of Justice and Human Rights**

22. Welcoming the PSC Delegation, Mr. Koné Mamadou of the New Forces, Minister of Justice and Human Rights, expressed satisfaction at the role played by the AU in the crisis exit process in Côte d’Ivoire which, in his opinion, was consistent with the “African solutions to African problems” approach, which resulted in the Direct Inter-Ivorian Dialogue.

23. Regarding the role of his Ministry in the implementation of the OPA and in the electoral process, particularly in the delicate aspect of national identification, he traced the history of the public hearings which took place across the national territory and led to the issuance of birth certificates and national identity cards, as well as the reconstitution of 3000 civil registers. It was the painstaking work of his Ministry that, after consideration of contentious cases, culminated in the establishment of the final Electoral List comprising 5,725,720 voters. He concluded by emphasizing that, on his part, his mission in the crisis exit process had been accomplished.
f. **Meeting with the Group of African Ambassadors**

24. The South African Ambassador in Côte d’Ivoire gave a cocktail in honour of the PSC delegation. In his welcome statement on the occasion, the Ambassador of Burkina Faso, Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps, expressed satisfaction at the presence of the African Union at all the stages of the implementation of the OPA, particularly at this crucial stage of the crisis exit process, with the presidential election due to take place on 31 October 2010.

25. In his remarks, the Head of Delegation, after thanking the African Group, presented the Terms of Reference of the Mission. He pointed out that the PSC mission had come to obtain first-hand information on the implementation of different aspects of the OPA, especially on the progress achieved with respect to the presidential election that is to take place on 31 October 2010, in order to determine what the African Union could do at this delicate stage.

26. In their contributions, the African Ambassadors made the following remarks:

- The OPA and its Supplementary Agreements paved the way for the significant progress made in the crisis exit process;
- After so many postponements, there is room to believe, given the present state of affairs, that the presidential election would take place on the set date;
- The adoption of the final Electoral List constitutes a historic step in the resolution of the question of identity, which is at the centre of the Ivorian crisis.

27. With regard to the other aspects of the crisis exit process, the Ambassadors underscored as follows:

- Encampment of the former fighters is in progress;
- The allowances due to the demobilized combatants are to be paid, thanks to EU financial support;
- The single treasury is in progress with the deployment of national customs services in the central, northern and western (CNO) areas of the country;
- There has been considerable delay in the establishment of the Integrated Command Centre (ICC) responsible for providing security for the elections. To date, less than 2,000 personnel are available out of 4,000 men that the FAFN is supposed to provide;
- The self-defence groups and militias are yet to be dismantled;
- The question as to how to equip the ICC in the context of the existing arms embargo should be addressed.

28. As regards the holding of the presidential election, the discussions between the African Group and the PSC delegation helped to identify the following challenges:

- The political players should be placed before their historic responsibility to the people of Côte d’Ivoire and to Africa at large;
- The political players and candidates should all sign the Code of Good Conduct;
- The security of the electoral process will depend primarily on the good faith of the political players;
- Electoral materials should be made available expeditiously. This has continued to pose a logistical challenge;
- The Impartial Forces should be used to make up for the shortcomings of the ICC;
- Equitable/equal access to State media should be guaranteed for all the players in the process;
- AU and the international community should field large observer missions so as to cover the entire territory.

g. Meeting with the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI)

29. During the meeting with the PSC delegation, the Secretary-General of the Ivorian Popular Front, the political party of the President of the Republic, made the following points:

- Ivorians are tired of the crisis;
- The Direct Inter-Ivorian Dialogue, which culminated in the OPA, forms part of the concept of “African solutions to African problems”;
- The FPI is behind the President of the Republic and his Prime Minister in their efforts towards holding the election on 31 October 2010. Ivorians have been quite patient, but they are now pressed to go to the polls;
- The process leading to the presidential election on 31 October is irreversible;
- The President of the Republic is firmly committed to the holding of the election;
- The FPI, as the ruling party, bears a bigger burden of the responsibility than any other player, and should therefore take up the challenge of organizing the election in good faith and in conditions of transparency;
- The FPI has taken the option to comply with the verdict of the ballot box and has signed the Code of Good Conduct;
- The National Audio-Visual Communication Council (CNCA) is responsible for ensuring equitable access to State media for election candidates.

30. On the implementation of the security provisions of the OPA, the FPI delegation welcomed the adoption of the final Electoral List, as well as the announced issuance of national identity cards and voters’ cards. It also raised a number of concerns:

- Ensuring the security of the electoral process is a major challenge;
- The disarmament which, according to the terms of the 4th OPA supplementary Agreement, should be effective two months before the date of the election, is yet to be completed;
- A peaceful climate is necessary because the time has come for the Ivorian players to face universal suffrage;

- Single treasury: a solution has to be found because the State should not be deprived, indefinitely, of the resources from the north of the country. The deployment of the customs services is an encouraging step;

- The oppositions’ call for insurrection in the event of the victory of candidate Laurent Gbagbo.

31. The FPI leaders also expressed a number of concerns for the attention of the African Union, namely:

- Contribute to the conclusion of the disarmament process;
- Call on all the parties to respect and accept the verdict of the ballot box.

h. Meeting with Mr. Henri Konan Bédié, Chairman of the Democratic Party of Côte d’Ivoire-African Democratic Rally (PDCI/RDA)

32. Former President Bédié and party members assured the PSC delegation that the Ivorian political players were working to ensure that the presidential election takes place on 31 October and even if there were still challenges to be addressed within the framework of OPA, the elections can take place in the current climate. The Chairman of the PDCI/RDA pointed out that his party built Côte d’Ivoire on the values of peace, dialogue and national unity, reason for which he wished that all the parties sign the Code of Good Conduct. The PDCI/RDA, together with the RDR, MFA and UDPCI under the umbrella of Rally of Houphouetists for Democracy and Peace (RHDP), has had its actions informed by these values.

33. As regards the ongoing electoral process, the PDCI/RDA expressed delight at the progress achieved with respect to identification, the production of national identity cards and voters’ cards, distribution of which should commence on 5 October.

34. Concerning security matters, the Chairman underscored the following difficulties:

- FPI militias and self-defence groups pose a threat to a peaceful election climate, particularly in the western area;
- Security of the electoral materials and documents (ballot papers and polling results forms);
- The purchase of arms in violation of the United Nations arms embargo.

35. In view of the above challenges, the PDCI/RDA stressed as follows:

- Participation of ONUCI and the Representative of the Facilitator at all stages of the process;
- Payment of IEC workers should be ensured to avoid any weakening of responsibility during electoral activities;
- ONUCI should provide support to the ICC to guarantee the vote of all citizens;
- Strict application of the provisions of the Code of Good Conduct to guarantee peace and security;
- It would be premature to lift the arms embargo in the current situation;
- The political players should be given equitable/equal access to State media in accordance with existing laws and regulations.

i. **Meeting with the Movement of Future Forces (MFA)**

36. The *MFA*, which is a member of the *RHDP*, was also of the view that Ivorians are impatient to go to the polls and that everything is in place for the election to take place on 31 October. According to this political grouping, if there should be a postponement, Ivorians could understand, provided it is a mere time shift caused purely by technical and logistical factors, but not due to political reasons. For this grouping, the L’ONUCI should get involved in providing security for the electoral process because it would be difficult for the ICC, with its strength of 8,000 men, to adequately deploy around 20,073 polling stations.

37. In addition to the issues raised earlier with the Chairman of the *RDR* and *PDCI/RDA*, particularly security for the electoral process and access to State media, the leaders of MFA underscored the issue of acceptance of the result by the candidates. In the view of the party, the period of proclamation of the result will be a critical moment in the crisis exit process, and this is where the AU, ECOWAS and the Facilitator should play a cardinal role. The *MFA* called upon the AU to deploy a substantial number of observers to help guarantee the transparency of the 31 October polls.

j. **Meeting with the Union for Democracy and Peace in Côte d’Ivoire (UDPCI)**

38. The *UDPCI* delegation, a party founded by the late General Robert Guei and member of *RHDP*, recalled the circumstances surrounding the death of their founder on 19 September 2002, in the early days of the crisis. The leaders of the party raised a number of concerns:

- Statements that constitute an incitement to repression made by the President of the Republic to the *FDSCI* (army) which, according to them, has lost the confidence of Ivorians;
- Monopoly of the State media by the presidential camp;
- State authority in the CNO zone remains ineffective;
- Violence and intimidation to prevent voting in some areas of the country, especially in the west;
- Security of candidates, because in the event of the death of anyone of them, the election will be postponed.
39. For all the above reasons, the UDPCI recommended greater involvement of the Impartial Forces with a more robust mandate to ensure the security of the election.

k. **Meeting with the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC)**

40. The Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission welcomed the Delegation and said that the country was in full swing preparing for the presidential election scheduled for 31 October 2010. He noted several positive developments that have made it possible to fix the historic date of 31 October:

- The successful completion of the identification of the population for the issuance of national identity cards and voters’ cards;

- The establishment of the provisional Electoral List based on the results of the identification of the population;

- The discussions in good spirit in August/September 2010, among the major political actors, which ushered in consensus on the way forward to accomplish the crisis exit process;

- The meeting of the Permanent Consultation Framework on 21 September, which helped to consolidate the consensus among the major political players;

- The support and goodwill of the international community;

- The adoption, on a consensual basis, of the final Electoral List with 5 725 720 million persons;

- The fixation, on a consensual basis, of 31 October 2010, for the holding of the severally postponed presidential election; and

- The self-evident determination of the Ivorians to overcome the crisis facing the country through the ballot box.

41. Commending on the status of preparation for the election, the Chairman went on to indicate that:

- National identity cards and voters’ cards have been produced and their distribution to recipients was to start on 5 October 2010;

- The budget for the election has been fully secured;

- Election documents and equipment have been adequately prepared for distribution to election sites;

- 10 179 electoral constituencies and 20 073 polling stations have been set up throughout the country.
42. The Chairman noted that the IEC received support from the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and all other Ivorian stakeholders, as well as from the international community. He indicated that the IEC was working hand in hand with L’ONUCI to ensure sound logistical and technical support for the election. Regarding the continued support of the AU to the crisis exit process, the Chairman stressed the need for the AU to deploy on time a large enough team of election observers and to appeal to the election candidates, together with their supporters, to maintain peace and accept the outcome of the election. He concluded his remarks by stressing the need for adequate security arrangements to give a chance to the Ivorians to express their choice in a peaceful atmosphere.

I. Meetings with Civil Society Organizations

43. The Civil Society Organizations that received the PSC delegation included the Convention of the Civil Society of Côte d’Ivoire, the Coalition of Civil Society for Peace and Development in Côte d’Ivoire, the Coordination of Women for Elections and Post-Crisis Reconstruction in Côte d’Ivoire and the Network for Peace and Security for ECOWAS Women in Côte d’Ivoire.

44. The Civil Society Organizations informed the PSC delegation of their contributions to the crisis exit process, which include the following main activities:

- Voter education;
- Advocacy for peace and reconciliation;
- Mobilization and training of civic election observers;
- Mobilization of voters

45. The civil society organizations raised the following concerns:

- Lack of access to state media for most election candidates;
- Slow pace in the operationalisation of the Integrated Command Centre, with implications for security for the elections;
- Lack of funds to support activities of the civil society;
- Limited space and resources for women to engage in politics.

46. They called on the AU to deploy more election observers for the presidential election. They also appealed to the AU to assist them in mobilizing funds to sustain civil society activities within the context of the crisis exit process and for undertaking post-crisis activities.

m. Visit to the Constitutional Council

47. The PSC delegation paid a visit to the President of the Constitutional Council whose important role in the crisis exit process was underscored by the Head of the delegation.
48. In his statement, the President of the Constitutional Council commended the AU for its crisis prevention measures and support to Côte d’Ivoire which was entering a crucial stage in his history. Speaking about the role of his institution in the electoral process, he indicated that the Constitutional Council, which has the responsibility to validate the candidates and make the final proclamation of the results of the elections, is in full control of the process. He further stated that, in addition to its traditional judicial responsibilities, the Council, given the current situation in the country, would, alongside the international community, participate in the dialogue with the various players of the Ivorian political life. To this end, the President of the Constitutional Council underscored the need for serenity and discerning wisdom to enable it discharge its role in the historic context of Côte d’Ivoire.

n. **Meeting with the Interim Secretary-General of the Forces Nouvelles (FN)**

49. On behalf of the Prime Minister, Mr. Guillaume Soro, the interim Secretary-General of the Forces Nouvelles, Mr. Koné Mamadou, Minister of Justice and Human Rights, said he was honoured to receive the PSC delegation and appreciated the vital role of the PSC in the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in Africa.

50. From the origin of the conflict, he indicated that the Forces Nouvelles, while regretting the war which was the only option in the face of a State that refuses to recognise the nationality of its citizens, fully assumes its historic role in the crisis. He further emphasized that the hierarchy of the FN is doing all in its power to reach a peace settlement and reconciliation through the OPA, at the price of their lives. With regard to different aspects of the implementation of the agreements, the interim Secretary- General of the FN listed the actions that have been taken:

- Regarding the re-grouping of combatants, their confinement to camps, disarmament and demobilisation, he indicated that the confidence zone had been abolished to allow free movement of persons and goods and the 5000 elements for the new army had been put in the barracks since 27 August. Those who were retained for the Integrated Command Centre, 2000 elements in all, were selected. Those who were demobilized were listed and are waiting far payment. The barricades which are sometimes on the roads are the work of some of these ex-combatants. Payments resumed on 16 September 2010;

- The dismantling of militia and other pro-government self-defense groups is far from being achieved. The authorities are not doing enough in this area ;

- Regarding the single national treasury: treasury, tax and customs services are present in the central, northern and western zone. They have not started their operations because they need to re-establish the list of tax payers ;

- With regard to the electoral process, placed under the competence of the Independent Electoral Commission, the Prime Minister and the FN are giving all their support so that elections may hold on 31 October;
- Concerning the issue of securing the elections, the FAFN are contributing to it through the Integrated Command Centre and participated in the plan to secure the process;

- For the media, the FN are ready to suspend the broadcasting of private radios and TVs, such as TVNP, in the central, northern and western zone, once the principle of equity is respected by the State media.

51. According to the interim Secretary-General of the FN, the following are necessary for the elections to be peaceful:

- Avoid hate messages;
- Strengthen the role of neutral forces in the electoral process;
- Provide equitable access to State media for all political actors/candidates;
- The AU, ECOWAS and the rest of the international community should send unequivocal messages to different candidates so as to reduce the tense atmosphere;
- The Ivorian Radio and TV should be secured by neutral forces on the day of the proclamation of results.

o. Meeting with the National Assembly

52. The meeting with the National Assembly, involving representatives of the ruling party/presidential camp and the opposition, indicated some misperceptions between the two sides. The representatives of the ruling party gave a bright picture of the political atmosphere in Côte d’Ivoire as it moves towards the presidential election. They pointed out that there was no problem of security for the election as the Government was taking all necessary steps. They also stated that the self-defence groups served Côte d’Ivoire and were not a threat to the State. As for the opposition, it raised pre-occupations with regard to the existence of self-defence groups and militias; monopoly of the State media by the ruling party; lack of financial support for candidates of smaller political parties and inadequate security arrangements for the election.

p. Meetings with other political parties

53. The other political parties, namely, the Front for Rapid Elections in Côte d’Ivoire and the Democratic Union and Citizenship, raised some concerns to the PSC delegation:

- Lack of State financial support for their candidates;
- Lack of security for their candidates;
- lack of access to the State Media;
- the existence of self-defence groups;
- inadequate security arrangements for the election.

54. They appealed to the AU and the international community to intercede with the Government to address these concerns before the election takes place.
q. **Tête-à-tête between the Head of the PSC Delegation and the Ambassador of the United States of America**

55. At the request of the Ambassador of United States of America in Côte d’Ivoire, the Head of the PSC Delegation held a tête-à-tête with him on 30 September 2010. The two exchanged views on the situation in Côte d’Ivoire, in particular, the preparation for the presidential election.

r. **Meetings with Independent Candidates**

56. The delegation held separate meetings with six independent candidates preparing to contest the presidential election on 31 October 2010. The candidates commended the AU for the visit and urged it to do more for Côte d’Ivoire to emerge from the current crisis. These candidates raised similar pre-occupations, regarding issues dating back to 2008 and the preparations for the election, as follows:

- They do not have financial support from the State for the upcoming election, as provided for in the Constitution of Côte d’Ivoire with regard to election candidates;

- They were declared candidates in 2008, paying each a deposit of 20 million francs; but because of the repeated postponement of the presidential election, they have been incurring costs, which they want the State to refund to them;

- They are not provided with security personnel by the State to protect them, both at their places of residence and during their pre-election campaigns in the country;

- The political authorities in Côte d’Ivoire do not communicate with them on the arrangements for the presidential election. That was the same situation regarding previous postponements of the election;

- They are concerned that the Independent Electoral Commission may not distribute National Identity Cards and Voters’ Cards on time for the election and this may lead to the disenfranchisement of some voters.

- They are worried about security arrangements for the voters;

- The Independent Electoral Commission is focusing more on major parties and candidates at the expense of smaller parties and independent candidates;

- They are denied access to the State Television and Radio to pass their messages to the population, whilst the President of the Republic passes his election messages through them.
s. **Meeting with the International Consultative Organ (ICO)**

57. During the brief meeting with the International Consultative Organ, at which only the representatives of the United Nations, ECOWAS, United States of America and France participated, the delegation was informed of the progress made in the crisis exit process, in particular:

   - adoption of the final Electoral List;
   - production of national identity cards and voters’ cards;
   - the spirit of consensus prevailing among the political actors;
   - adequate funding for the election;

58. Regarding the challenges, the ICO underlined the need for the Government, with the support of the impartial forces, to provide security for the election process. It called for an accelerated operationalisation of the Integrated Command Centre to this effect.

t. **Meeting with the Principal Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (L’ONUCI)**

59. The meeting between the delegation and the representative of L’ONUCI took place at the Headquarters of L’ONUCI in Abidjan. Responding to the issues raised by the delegation, the representative informed that L’ONUCI is there to support the Government and people of Côte d’Ivoire to fully implement the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and its Supplementary Agreements to attain peace in their country. The date for the election has been set and preparations are on course. L’ONUCI works in close consultation with the Prime Minister’s Office on all aspects relating to the preparations for the election. He indicated that the political climate in the country is characterized by consensus, which allows for more progress to be achieved.

60. He quickly made the following main points, as the Prime Minister had called him for a meeting to receive national identity cards and voters’ cards:

   - The final Electoral List has been established with 5 725 720 million persons. For quite some time, the elaboration of the List was a highly controversial political issue, which negatively affected progress in the implementation of the crisis exit process;

   - Using the Electoral List, the Government has processed National Identity Cards and Voters’ Cards that are to be distributed to the recipients starting 5 October 2010. L’ONUCI, in conjunction with the United Nations Office for Project Services and the United Nations Development Programme, was to provide logistical support (road, water and air transport) to the Government in the distribution process;

   - L’ONUCI was to receive 500 additional personnel, as authorized by the UN Security Council, to boost its capacity during the pre-election and the election period;
- Funding for the election has been fully secured and the Government should be commended for having played its role in this respect;

- L’ONUCI is to provide logistical support for the movement of international observers during the election;

- Given that the Integrated Command Centre that is tasked with providing security for the election is not yet fully functional, l’ONUCI has put in place a standby Security Plan to provide security support for the election and also to protect civilians in the event of the outbreak of violence during the election;

- L’ONUCI holds regular consultations with the four Ivorian Generals responsible for the operation of the Integrated Command Centre to get a sense of its preparedness to provide security for the election.

u. Meeting with the Representative of the Facilitator of the Inter-Ivorian Dialogue

61. During the meeting held at his Office, the Special Representative of the Facilitator of the Inter-Ivorian Dialogue expressed appreciation for the support of the AU for the peace efforts in Côte d’Ivoire and the close collaboration between him and the AU Special Representative for Côte d’Ivoire. He commended the progress made by the Ivorian political actors, with the support of the Facilitator, as evidenced by the consensual adoption of the Electoral List, the fixation of the date for the presidential election and the measures subsequently taken to produce National Identity Cards and Voters’ Cards for the 5 725 720 persons appearing on the Electoral List. He indicated that there were no political differences among the political actors and the preparation for the election was going on smoothly. The Independent Electoral Commission should do its best to ensure the prompt distribution of National Identity Cards and Voters’ Cards early enough ahead of the election. L’ONUCI has made arrangements to provide logistical support to this exercise, with the participation of UNOPS and UNDP. He went on to inform that:

- The country has been re-unified, thereby bringing real improvement in the security situation;
- Progress was being made regarding disarmament and demobilization, despite the slow pace at the initial phase and some financial constraints to pay 500 000 francs to each of the demobilized ex-combatants. The Government has even negotiated with the ex-combatants for a gradual payment process;
- Funding for the election has been secured;
- The international community was supportive and has high expectations for the election.

62. Furthermore, the representative underscored the need for an open mind and readiness of the candidates to accept the outcome of the election. As such, candidates should prepare their supporters to have a positive attitude towards the results of the election. Peace must prevail during and after the election.
63. Concerning the scheduled courtesy visit of the delegation to President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso, the Facilitator of the Inter-Ivorian Dialogue, the representative informed that the President was at the time on tour of the region and was to continue on other trips, including outside Africa. Thus, it was not possible for the delegation to be received by the President.

64. Given the circumstances, the delegation then requested the Special Representative to convey to the Facilitator the deep appreciation and gratitude of the AU for the tremendous efforts that he has devoted, first, to the negotiations that culminated in the signing of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and its Supplementary Agreements and subsequently, to the implementation of the Agreement and its Supplementary Agreements.

v. Dinner at the Residence of the European Union

65. During the dinner offered to the PSC delegation by the EU Ambassador, the discussions manifested the following points:

- need for putting in place adequate security arrangements for the election;
- need for rapid distribution of national identity cards and voters’ cards;
- need to accelerate the operationalisation of the Integrated Command Centre to secure the election and also for the second round, should it take place;
- need for all election candidates to have access to the State Media;
- need for election candidates to accept the outcome of the election.

w. Meeting with His Excellency, Laurent Gbagbo, President of the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire

66. The meeting between the delegation and President Laurent Gbagbo took place at the Presidential Palace in Yamoussoukro on 2 October 2010. At the period of the delegation’s visit, the President was on a tour of the country. The meeting started with Head of delegation expressing gratitude for the welcome and hospitality extended to the delegation. He expressed AU’s continued solidarity and support to the people and Government of Côte d’Ivoire in their efforts to end the crisis facing their country. He further explained the objective of the visit raising the cardinal issues.

67. In his remarks, the President thanked the delegation for its visit and commended the engagement of the AU towards the peace efforts in Côte d’Ivoire and other parts of Africa. “Africans understand better Africans. Africans understand what happens in Africa. We manage our problems better as Africans. The West is always putting pressure on us to rush for elections. But it is not the right approach to rush to elections without creating the necessary conditions. African leaders should not follow what the West says. If they follow that, they will make errors” said the President. He recalled the efforts made by the Africans to resolve the crisis in Côte d’Ivoire, including the role played by Mr. Thabo Mbeki, former President of the Republic of South Africa. He also recalled the impasse that the Ivorian parties faced in trying to implement the French-brokered Linas-Marcoussis Agreement. “Yet when, we, the Ivorians, with the support of Africa, decided to engage in direct dialogue, we were able to make progress. We signed the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and its Supplementary Agreements
and we are implementing everything well” stated the President. “We have a clear Electoral List and we have made many achievements”, he also said.

68. Briefly responding to the issues raised by the delegation regarding the status of the preparation for the presidential election, the President impressed that all the necessary arrangements were being put in place ahead of the election. He indicated that National Identity Cards and Voters’ Cards were ready and the Government had put in place a viable strategy for distributing the cards to those recipients on the Electoral List throughout the country. “The Prime Minister is going to bring my National Identity Card and Voters’ Card next Monday and we will both go for a meeting in Buake”, said the President. He added that the UN was to provide logistical support for the distribution of the cards.

69. Regarding access to the media, as raised by independent candidates to the delegation in earlier meetings, the President informed that there was a Television and Radio Station in the north of the country that is being used by a single candidate to transmit his election messages to the population. He said that a request had been made to the Prime Minister to see with those concerned to take measures to close that Station. After that, the State Television and Radio will be opened to all candidates.

70. Regarding security concerns as also raised by independent candidates and some sections of the civil society, the President stated that all these candidates raising issues of security were freely moving all over the country making their pre-election campaigns. “There is no more fighting in the country, people and goods are moving freely all over. But there may be isolated incidents involving bandits and criminal gangs”, he said.

71. “The Ivorians are tired. They want peace” said the President concluding his remarks. He hailed his country, which, despite the crisis facing it, has managed to fulfil all its international obligations and to pay salaries to civil servants. He said that he had great hope for his country. He stressed the need for peace after the election. The delegation thanked the President for receiving it and went for a group photograph with him before its departure.

V. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

i. General Observations

72. The Ivorians are very tired and they just want this crisis to come to an end”, said most of the Ivorians that the PSC delegation met with in Cote d’Ivoire from 27 September to 3 October 2010. In this context, the Delegation is of the view that the presidential election will take place on the fixed date of 31 October 2010.

73. All Ivorian stakeholders are conscious of the fact that the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and its Supplementary Agreements have significantly accelerated the crisis exit process.
74. All Ivorian stakeholders, with the support of the international community, are determined to go for elections, despite the remaining challenges to be faced: «this time, it’s going to work», they say. Even the most pessimistic think that if there is going to be a postponement, it would be very short and strictly for technical reasons.

75. Due to the profound nature of the crisis, which should be recalled is linked to issues of identity, the adoption and certification of the final Electoral List, as well as the distribution of national identity cards and voters’ cards, are important steps in the crisis exit process.

ii. **Observations on the electoral process**

76. A strong momentum has built up towards the presidential election scheduled for 31 October 2010. There are several factors that help to support and sustain the momentum:

   a) There is a sound working relationship between President Laurent Gbagbo and Prime Minister Guillaume Soro. The later, as Head of Government and not being a candidate to the upcoming election, is actually in charge of the organization of the election;

   b) The three main political actors/candidates, namely, Laurent Gbagbo, Henri Konan Bédié and Alassane Quattara share a common determination to hold the presidential election. The spirit of consensus among them is a critical factor in the crisis exit process, which the upcoming election is expected to crown;

   c) There is a consensual Voters’ List, which has enabled the Ivorian authorities to process National Identity Cards (NICs) and Voters Cards (VCs) to the 5 725 720 persons appearing on the List;

   d) National identity cards and voters’ cards have already been prepared for early distribution ahead of the election. “Allez vite prendre vos papiers/Go quickly to collect your papers” said Prime Minister Soro in the newspaper ‘Nord-Sud’, on 3 October 2010, calling on those appearing on the List to collect their cards;

   e) The Government has/continues to put in place enabling technical and logistical arrangements with the support of l’ONUCI;

   f) The budget for the election has been secured from both domestic and international sources;

   g) The Government is urgently taking measures to do everything possible to improve the security environment for the election, including filling gaps regarding disarmament and demobilization. The concern about security for election candidates and voters was frequently raised to the PSC delegation, particularly by independent candidates and sections of the civil society that the delegation met with.
77. Thus, the convergence of these factors has created an irreversible momentum towards the holding of the presidential election as scheduled. But, for a different scenario, if there would be a postponement of the election, that would be due to logistical and technical factors relating to the distribution of NICs, VCs and related aspects.

iii. **Recommendations on the electoral process**

78. The AU has to play its part, with high visibility, in support of the final phase of the crisis exit process:

a) Resources allowing, a significantly large AU Election Observer Team should be deployed on the ground in good time before the election. It would be preferable that the Team witnesses the last week of the pre-election campaign;

b) The Election Observer Team should be led by a former Head of State to give it weight, high profile and possibility of audience with election candidates, when necessary;

c) Resources so allowing, the Head of the Team should be in Cote d’Ivoire ahead of the rest of the Team members;

d) There is need for the AU and the international community at large to help build confidence between the three main candidates and their supporters. In this respect, the AU should dispatch, before the elections, a High level personality to give a strong message to the Ivorian stakeholders that Africa will do its utmost to help them to overcome the challenges facing the peace and reconciliation process in Cote d’Ivoire. Meanwhile, the message should also be clear to potential spoilers that they would be held accountable for their actions in case of undermining the process;

e) AU, ECOWAS and the larger international community should do their utmost to get the assurance from the candidates that they will accept the results of the polls. The proclamation of the results will be the most sensitive moment in the process;

f) There is need for Ivorian authorities and stakeholders, with the support of the Facilitator, to find a sound solution to the protracted issue of the use/access to State Media and the contents of messages delivered through them by political actors in this context.

g) The Head of the AU Observer Mission should remain in place after elections to contribute to the settlement of differences that could arise following the proclamation of results.
iv. **Observations and recommendations on the implementation of the OPA and its Supplementary Agreements**

79. It should be noted that, despite the delays and postponements in the timetable for elections, the OPA, with the support of the Facilitator, has paved the road for the crisis exit process in Côte d'Ivoire, after the deadlocks encountered in the implementation of previous agreements.

   - The disarmament of ex-combatants and the dismantling of militia.

80. The disarmament of ex-combatants of FAFN, and the dismantling of militia and the setting up of the New National Army (NAN), which fall under Title II of the OPA and its 4th Supplementary Agreement, have been significantly delayed, although the Agreements provide that disarmament should be effective two months before elections.

81. The grouping and confinement to barracks of 5000 FAFN ex-combatants to be integrated in the NNA in the four sites (Man, Korhogo, Séguela and Bouaké) as provided for in the Agreement, was completed only on 27 August. The financing of the confinement to barracks of FN ex-combatants remains an issue of discord between the parties.

82. The demobilisation process is scheduled to take place at the same sites. Demobilised elements who have not been retained for inclusion in NNA will surrender their arms and receive 500,000 francs CFA as total compensation. Those amongst them who so desire can receive training for reconversion. This process has also faced difficulties of implementation, particularly due to financial difficulties. It is only on the eve of the arrival of the mission that the Government decided to release the resources necessary to finalise the operation. Demobilised elements will receive their indemnity in several monthly instalments.

83. With regard to the Integrated Central Command, of the 8000 ex-FAFN and FDSCI elements earmarked to be integrated into the structures devoted to securing the electoral process, only 2500 have been deployed. This in turn leads to delays in efforts by ONUCI and the Force Licorne to implement the security plan for the elections adopted by the Generals of FANCI, FAFN and Neutral Forces.

   - The re-unification of the country and the consolidation of the Public Treasury (the single coffer principle)

84. Within the framework of the re-unification of the country, territorial administration (Prefects) have been redeployed in the Central, Northern and Western regions under the FN, following the abolishment of the confidence zone. Concerning the financial system, public treasury services, tax and, recently, those of the customs, have been reinstated. But by many accounts, their effectiveness is still very limited due to the persistence of barricades and the parallel tax collection systems put in place by the FN since 2002.
85. Despite occasional incomprehension, the international community continues to bring political and financial support to the crisis exit process in Côte d’Ivoire, especially with regard to the electoral process, including the identification of the population, which is at the heart of the crisis.

86. The AU, ECOWAS and the international community should do all possible to ensure that elections in Côte d’Ivoire take place in the best conditions of security and transparency possible. The legitimacy of the candidate who will be elected should suffer from no contestation, because in the final analysis, it is the new President who will, with the support of Africa and the international community, implement the final aspects of the OPA and its Supplementary Agreements, including the disarmament and the reform of the defence and security sector in general.

87. Lastly but not least, the delegation would like to express its deep gratitude to Mr. Ambroise Niyonsaba, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union for his facilitation and contribution to the success of the mission. Similarly, the delegation is thankful to the Ivorian authorities, political parties, civil society, members of the international community in Abidjan and all others who found time in their busy schedules to receive and discuss with the mission.

VI. COMPOSITION OF THE PSC FIELD MISSION

88. The delegation, led by Dr. Ruben Maye Nsue Mangue, Ambassador of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, Chairperson of the PSC for the month of September 2010, included, in conformity with the principle of geographical representation:

1. Amb. Ferdinand Montcho of Benin, West Africa;
2. Amb. Epiphanie Kabushemeye Ntamwana of Burundi, Central Africa;
3. Amb. Mohame Ould Saleh R’zeizim of Mauritania, Northern Africa;
4. Amb. Joseph Nsengimana of Rwanda, East Africa; and
5. Amb. Andrew Hama Mtetwa of Zimbabwe, Southern Africa

89. The AU Commission was represented by:

1. Mr. Ambroise Niyonsaba, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission in Côte d’Ivoire, who joined the mission on the ground;
2. Dr. Admore Kambudzi, Secretary of the PSC;
3. Mr. Amadou Diongue, Expert, Secretary of the PSC;
4. Mr. Calixte Mbari, Senior Officer in the Political Affairs Department;
5. Ms. Denise A. Ahidjo, interpreter; and
6. Mr. Akinola Medeiros, interpreter.