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PRESS STATEMENT OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA

The Peace and Security Council, at its meeting held on 24 July 2006, received a briefing on the situation in Somalia from the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for Somalia, Ambassador Mohammed Ali Fom, as well as from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Somalia to the African Union (AU) and the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya to the AU, in his capacity as representative of the Chair of IGAD.

The Council expressed concern at the continued fragility of the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia.

The Council reiterated its earlier decisions expressing AU's full support to the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs), particularly the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). In this respect, the Council, once again, called on all concerned Somali parties to seek the path of dialogue and to extend the necessary cooperation to the TFG in order to achieve lasting peace and reconciliation in Somalia, building on the dialogue facilitated by the League of Arab States.

The Council took note of the steps taken by the Commission in cooperation with IGAD and AU partners as a follow-up to its earlier decisions on Somalia, including the consultative meeting between the AU, the IGAD and international partners on the Somalia reconciliation and peace process, held in Addis Ababa on 19 June 2006, the planning meeting that took place in Nairobi on 28 and 29 June 2006, and the assessment and reconnaissance mission to Somalia from 5 to 9 July 2006. The Council further took note of the meeting of the Somalia International Contact Group, held in Brussels on 17 June 2006.

The Council invited the Commission to continue to follow up and build on the steps already taken in support of the reconciliation in Somalia, and report within the coming weeks, including recommendations based on the relevant IGAD and AU decisions regarding the deployment of the IGAD Peace Support Mission to Somalia (IGASOM). In this regard, the Council stressed the need to expedite the ongoing IGAD/AU preparations to create conditions propitious for the deployment of IGASOM as soon as possible.

The Council reaffirmed its belief that a peace support mission will greatly contribute to peace and stability in Somalia, and therefore called on the UN Security Council to expedite action on AU request for granting an exemption to the arms embargo, in order to facilitate the early deployment of IGASOM.

The Council looked forward to the proposed IGAD ministerial meeting to be held soon to review the situation in Somalia, as recommended by the IGAD/AU/Partners assessment/reconnaissance mission.

The Council reiterated its concern at the prevailing humanitarian situation in Somalia and appealed to the international community to provide assistance and support to the needy communities in Somalia, which are suffering as a result of the protracted conflict in the country.

The Council agreed to reconvene to review the situation and take the appropriate decisions.

Addis Ababa, 24 July 2006