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**REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION
ON THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 151st meeting held at the ministerial level, in New York, on 22 September 2008, Council reviewed the situation in Somalia. On that occasion, Council welcomed the significant progress made in the peace process, and reiterated its call on all Somali stakeholders to join this process and commit themselves to the peaceful and negotiated settlement of the conflict in Somalia. Council further reiterated its call on all member States and the larger international community to provide adequate support in order to enhance the capacity of the Somali institutions, including the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and its security and defence forces, to enable them fully play their role. It strongly condemned the threats and/or acts of violence and terrorism perpetrated by those elements seeking to undermine the political process, hinder the operations of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and undermine regional peace and stability, as well as all acts of violence perpetrated against humanitarian workers and civilians, in violation of international humanitarian law.

2. Council reiterated its appeal to member States to provide the required troops and personnel to reach the authorized strength of AMISOM, as well as financial and logistical support, to facilitate the deployment of the Mission and the sustenance of its operations; it also appealed to the AU partners to provide increased logistical and financial support for AMISOM. Finally, Council stressed the need for the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation in Somalia that will take over AMISOM and support the long-term stabilization and post-conflict reconstruction of Somalia.

3. The present report provides an update on the developments in Somalia since the New York meeting of Council. It contains recommendations on the way forward in view of the unfolding situation on the ground and the impending withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops.

II. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DJIBOUTI AGREEMENT

4. Council will recall that, after protracted negotiations, the TFG and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) signed, on 19 August 2008, the Djibouti Agreement. The Agreement provides, inter alia, for the cessation of armed confrontation for an initial period of 90 days renewable; the submission of a request to the United Nations for it to authorize and deploy, within 120 days, an international stabilization force from countries that are friends of Somalia, excluding neighboring states; the TFG to act in accordance with the decision already taken by the Ethiopian Government to withdraw its troops from Somalia after the deployment of a sufficient number of United Nations forces; the commitment of both parties to undertake all necessary measures to ensure unhindered access and assistance to affected populations; and the establishment of a Joint Security Committee (JSC) and a High Level Committee (HLC), to follow-up the implementation

of security arrangements and issues relating to political cooperation between the parties, justice and reconciliation. The terms of reference of both the HLC and the JSC were agreed upon during a meeting of the parties held in Djibouti from 14 to 19 August 2008, in the presence of the AU and the UN.

5. During the period under review, the parties to the Djibouti Agreement have taken a number of steps towards the implementation of the commitments they have entered into, building on earlier progress, including the conclusions of the meetings of the JSC and the HLC which took place in Djibouti from 17 to 19 September 2008. Hence, on 26 October 2008, the parties signed an Agreement on the Modalities for the Implementation of the Cessation of Armed Confrontation. Among others, the Agreement provides for the following:

- effective ceasefire between the parties, starting from 5 November 2008;
- deployment of troops to restore peace and security in Mogadishu and other areas, within a period of 45 days, starting from 10 November 2008;
- relocation of Ethiopian troops from Beledweyne and parts of Mogadishu, starting from 21st November 2008. To avoid a security vacuum in the areas vacated by the Ethiopian forces, security will initially be provided by AMISOM with the assistance of TFG and ARS security forces, until the deployment of UN forces;
- completion of the second phase of the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops within 120 days, in accordance with the Djibouti Agreement;
- preparation, by the TFG and the ARS, of a police force of 10,000 to maintain peace and security in Mogadishu and other regions, with UNOPS being requested to provide the required financial resources; and
- commencement, starting 25 November 2008, of the operations of the JSC and its sub-committees from Somalia, to implement the general ceasefire.

6. On 26 October 2008, the TFG and the ARS issued a joint declaration providing for the establishment of a unity government as well as an inclusive and expanded Parliament. A month later, the HLC, meeting in Djibouti, reached an agreement on a number of guiding principles as a framework to strengthen the commitments of the parties on political cooperation, particularly regarding the envisaged unity government and an inclusive Parliament. More specifically, it was proposed to enlarge the Parliament, with additional 200 seats to be allocated to the ARS and a further 75 seats to be reserved to members of the civil society. This new and inclusive Parliament will have the responsibility to elect the new leadership of the Transitional Institutions. It was further agreed to set up a working group to elaborate the details of the unity structures and submit proposals within 30 days. The parties also agreed on a proposal

to extend, by two years, the transition period provided for by the Transitional Federal Charter (TFC). Finally, the parties concurred on the need to amend the TFC to take into account all agreements resulting from the Djibouti process.

7. On its part, the JSC met in Naivasha, Kenya, from 20 to 24 November 2008, under the auspices of the AU and the UN. In the communiqué issued at the end of the meeting, the parties reaffirmed the Agreement they reached on 26 October 2008 and their determination to continue to work towards its speedy implementation; established a Cessation of Hostilities Supervisory Committee, tasked to undertake further planning and develop detailed proposals to strengthen the Agreement; and called on all Somalis to actively support the peace efforts. The parties also elaborated proposals on the strengthening of the JSC, the development of a full ceasefire and the establishment of a Verification and Monitoring Mission (VMM), the integration and realignment of the Somali Police Force, as well as the integration and strengthening of the transitional security forces of Somalia.

8. Meanwhile, and as part of the efforts to sustain the Djibouti process on the ground, the ARS leadership has taken steps to establish itself within Somalia. Thus, in the first week of November, the Chairman of the ARS, Sheikh Sheriff Sheik Ahmed, visited Jowhar and Beledweyne, where he was well received by the local population. On 8 December 2008, the first group of 19 ARS leaders arrived in Mogadishu. On 10 December, 36 other ARS officials, including the ARS Chairman, arrived in Mogadishu. At their request, AMISOM is providing protection to these ARS officials, who have now agreed to be part of the envisaged Government of National Unity and the inclusive Parliament.

9. During the period under review, Council and the Panel of the Wise reviewed the situation in Somalia. At its 156th meeting held on 11 November 2008, Council welcomed the signing of the Agreement of 26 October 2008, commended both the TFG and the ARS for this further step towards the implementation of the Djibouti Agreement, and urged them to scrupulously comply with their commitments. On its part, the Panel of the Wise, at its 4th meeting held in Nairobi on 28 and 29 November 2008, consulted with Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein 'Adde' and the Chairman of the ARS Central Committee, Sharif Hassan Sheik Aden. The Somali leaders updated the Panel on the prevailing situation in their country and on their efforts to bring about peace. They expressed appreciation for the support rendered by the AU, in particular through the deployment of AMISOM. While noting the steps taken by the Somali parties since the signing of the Djibouti Agreement, the Panel expressed deep concern at the prevailing violence and the suffering inflicted on the civilian population. The Panel stressed the need for the Somali leaders to transcend the internecine political struggles that are consuming their energy, and called on all Somali parties that have not yet done so to join the peace and reconciliation process and demonstrate the much-needed spirit of accommodation and tolerance.

10. On its part, the Security Council adopted, on 20 November 2008, a press statement encouraging all parties in Somalia to implement fully the Djibouti Agreement, and stressing the need for all those that are not yet parties to this Agreement to become part of it as a matter of urgency. The Security Council stressed that progress on an inclusive political process was key to improving the security and humanitarian situation.

III. DIVISIONS WITHIN THE TFG

11. In New York, I informed Council of the political crisis between the TFG President, Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, and Prime Minister Nur Hussein 'Adde', following the decision taken, on 29 July 2008, by a Cabinet meeting chaired by the Prime Minister to remove Mohamed Dheere from his position as Mayor of Mogadishu and Governor of the Benadir region, on charges of mismanagement of funds. As Council is aware, on 26 August 2008, the leadership of the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) reached an agreement under the auspices of the Ethiopian Government, to overcome this political impasse. The Somali parties committed themselves to create a better understanding, trust and confidence between and among the TFIs. They also agreed to take a number of steps relating, among others, to the size and composition of cabinet, as well as to the establishment of a new Benadir administration.

12. In view of the lack of progress in the implementation of the commitments made in Addis Ababa and the resulting concerns, the 13th Extraordinary Summit of IGAD convened in Nairobi on 29 October 2008 to review the situation. The Summit, which was chaired by Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, was attended by the Presidents of Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda and Somalia, as well as by the First Vice President of the Sudan. Members of the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP) and leaders of the ARS were also present and interacted with the IGAD representatives. Burundi, as a Troop Contributing Country (TCC) to AMISOM, participated in the meeting. The Deputy Chairperson of the Commission, Erastus Mwencha, and the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Amb. Ramtane Lamamra, represented the AU at the meeting, which was also attended by representatives of the UN and the IGAD Partners Forum (IPF). The Summit expressed profound concern regarding the political paralysis in Somalia, and regretted the lack of unity and unhelpful competition among the leadership of the TFIs. The Summit agreed on a number of steps to be implemented by the TFIs, including the appointment of a cabinet within 15 days, the establishment of the Benadir administration within 15 days, and the finalization of the drafting of the Somali Constitution and the enactment of the electoral and parties law within 6 months. The 156th meeting of Council referred to above welcomed the Nairobi Declaration and urged all Somali parties concerned to implement fully and in good faith the decisions of the Summit.

13. Subsequently, and as part of the efforts to constitute the cabinet, the Prime Minister submitted a list of names to the President of the TFG. However, his proposal was not accepted by the President. On 13 September 2008, both leaders visited Addis Ababa, for consultations with the Ethiopian Foreign Minister, in his capacity as chair of

the IGAD Council of Ministers. On that occasion, the Ethiopian Government impressed upon the Somali leaders the need to expeditiously implement the decisions reached by the IGAD Summit, and informed them that their failure to agree would be brought to the attention of the IGAD Council of Ministers and the IGAD partners.

14. On 18 November 2008, the 30th Extra-Ordinary Session of the IGAD Council of Ministers met in Addis Ababa to review the prevailing political and security situation in Somalia. The meeting, at which the AU, the UN and the IPF were represented and which was chaired by the Ethiopian Foreign Minister, Seyoum Mesfin, expressed utmost dismay at the failure of the top leadership of the TFG to agree on the establishment of a new cabinet and the formation of the Benadir administration. It regretted the fact that, once again, the Somali leadership had failed its people, the region and the international community at large. The meeting affirmed that the decisions reached in Nairobi at the end of October 2008 should be implemented without any further renegotiation or delay. The meeting decided, with immediate effect, to impose targeted sanctions, including travel ban and asset freeze, against all those in and outside Somalia who have become obstacles to the achievement of peace, and called on the AU and the UN Security Council to do the same. The meeting recommended to the IGAD Assembly of Heads of State and Government to consider withdrawing political recognition and support to anyone in the Somali leadership who is an obstacle to the search for peace.

15. In the last two weeks of November and in early December 2008, consultations took place between members of the Parliament and the TFG President, on the one hand, and the Prime Minister, on the other. While the Benadir administration was elected on 24 November 2008 and is now functioning, no progress was made in addressing the issue of the formation of the Cabinet.

16. It is against this background that, on 14 December 2008, President Abdullahi Yusuf announced, in a press conference held in Baidoa, his decision to dismiss Prime Minister, Nur 'Adde'. The Prime Minister rejected this announcement, stressing the overwhelming support he received from Parliament through a vote of confidence which took place in early October 2008. It is to be recalled that, based on the provisions of the TFC, the Prime Minister can only be removed with the concurrence of the Parliament. In view of the seriousness of the situation, I issued, on the same day, a Communiqué expressing my concern. I stressed that the announcement made by President Abdullahi Yusuf would further complicate the situation and deepen the rift within the TFG, and had the potential of undermining the sustained efforts being made by the AU, IGAD and the larger international community, including the United Nations, to further reconciliation, peace, and stability in Somalia. I reiterated AU's support to the decisions taken by IGAD, called on the Somali leaders to implement these decisions fully and without any further delay, and urged them to overcome the internecine divisions that are consuming their energy, in order to meet the daunting challenges confronting their country. I am pleased to report that, on 15 December 2008, the TFP approved by 143 against 27 votes the Cabinet proposed by the Prime Minister.

IV. WITHDRAWAL OF THE ETHIOPIAN FORCES

17. On 25 November 2008, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ethiopia wrote to me to inform me of the decision of his Government to withdraw its troops from Somalia at the end of this year. The Minister indicated that the fact that Ethiopia maintained its troops in Somalia for nearly two years was never intended, but rather dictated by a desire to avoid a security vacuum. In this respect, Ethiopia counted on the full deployment of AMISOM or, alternatively, on that of an international stabilization force. Unfortunately, the Minister stressed, AMISOM could not reach its authorized strength, while the deployment of an international stabilization force did not look hopeful. Ethiopia also felt that genuine reconciliation among the Somalis and the setting up of a broad-based Government would make Somalia less dependent on outside help to keep peace and maintain stability. However, the process has rather been slow and the manner in which it has been handled has not been commensurate with the dire situation Somalia continues to face.

18. On 26 November 2008, I wrote to Minister Seyoum Mesfin. In my letter, I recognized the immense sacrifices, both human and financial, made by Ethiopia. I also expressed disappointment at the fact that the international community had failed to seize the opportunity which came with the presence of the Ethiopian troops on the ground. I stressed that the withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops before AMISOM could be reinforced or the deployment of an international stabilization force would create a vacuum. I also wrote to the Chairperson of the Union and the Chairperson of Council, as well to the UN Secretary-General and, through him, to the Security Council, to bring to their attention the decision taken by Ethiopia. I expressed hope that action could be taken to ensure that the withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops would not result in a total breakdown of law and order in Somalia.

19. On 2 December 2008, the Commissioner for Peace and Security and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Somalia, Mr. Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, met with the Ethiopian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Tekeda Alemu. On that occasion, Dr. Alemu reiterated Ethiopia's position. At the same time, he indicated that Ethiopia had a moral obligation towards AMISOM and would do whatever it can to ensure that its withdrawal did not harm the Mission.

20. At its 4th meeting referred to above, the Panel of the Wise took note of the decision of the Ethiopian Government to withdraw its forces from Somalia, and commended it for its contribution to the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia. In order to avoid a security vacuum that would compound the situation on the ground and seriously undermine the efforts towards lasting peace and reconciliation, the Panel urged the UN Security Council to fully assume its responsibility, in particular by authorizing the establishment of an international stabilization force that would build on an enhanced AMISOM and further the cause of peace, security and reconciliation in Somalia, as well as facilitate the deployment of a UN peacekeeping operation. At the same time, the Panel appealed to the AU Member States to fully assume their responsibility in the spirit of African solidarity, in particular by urgently providing troops.

It also urged the AU partners to provide the much-needed financial and logistical support to AMISOM.

21. At its extraordinary session on the developments in Somalia, which took place at the level of the Permanent Representatives in Cairo, on 4 December 2008, and at which the AU was represented by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, the Council of the League of Arab States took note of Ethiopia's decision to withdraw its troops from Somalia, in line with the Djibouti Agreement. It urged the UN Security Council to act so as to avoid a security vacuum, in particular through the establishment and deployment of an international stabilization force, which should include AMISOM, as well as Arab and other contingents. The Council of the League of Arab States also decided to provide material and logistical support for the rehabilitation of the Somali army to enable it play its role in the promotion and maintenance of peace and stability in Somalia.

22. On 10 December 2008, I issued a Communiqué reiterating my concern at the situation in Somalia in light of the worsening insecurity and the impending withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops. In this respect, I indicated that the Commission was involved in consultations with a number of stakeholders to review the ongoing developments and identify ways to avert a further deterioration of the situation. I appealed, once again, to the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities and authorize, without any further delay, the deployment of a UN operation in Somalia. At the time of finalizing this report, the Commissioner for Peace and Security was in New York, where he had already initiated consultations with the African and the permanent members of the Security Council and the UN Secretariat on the situation in Somalia and the best ways to address it. He has met with the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, and is due to participate at a high level meeting of the Contact Group in Somalia that will take place in New York under the chairmanship of the UN Secretary-General, as well as address a meeting of the UN Security Council. In all his consultations, the Commissioner will reiterate the AU appeal to the Security Council to assume its responsibilities.

V. SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

23. During the reporting period, the overall security situation in South Central Somalia has seriously deteriorated. The period was characterized by a series of threats and calculated attacks directed towards members and supporters of the TFG; fighting between the TFG forces, backed by Ethiopian troops, and anti-government elements belonging mostly to the Al Shabab in different parts of the country; continued use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and roadside bombs, mortar attacks and inter-clan fighting. On several occasions, the Mogadishu airport and aircrafts delivering logistical support to AMISOM came under attack. A number of police stations have been raided and several attacks have been carried out against the State House in Mogadishu.

24. Most of the fighting between the TFG forces and the anti-government elements was concentrated in the northern part of Mogadishu, Baidoa and Beledweyne. In the

month of November 2008, the insurgents pushed further from Kismayo and captured Merka, using the latter as a spring board to attack Mogadishu. By the end of November, the Al Shabab and their allies were in control of most of the strategic towns in the Lower Shebelle and the immediate areas North-East of Mogadishu.

25. The situation is compounded by the weaknesses of the government forces and the fact that the TFG is unable to ensure the regular payment of their salaries. In actual fact, the TFG has stopped paying salaries since January 2008, following the decision of the international community to bring its financial support to a halt, in reaction to alleged violations of human rights by some TFG forces and lack of transparency and accountability in the management of the resources provided. As a result, the morale of these forces is very low and a number of desertions and illegal sales of arms, including to insurgents, have been reported. According to the United Nations, about 40 per cent of the police officers it has trained have left the police force, due to the lack of payment of salaries.

26. Since the meeting of Council in New York, there have been renewed attacks against AMISOM. Four attacks were recorded in October, three in November and, at the time of finalizing this report, one in December 2008. A soldier from the Burundian contingent was wounded on 7 November; 5 soldiers from the same contingent on 18 November; and one Ugandan soldier on 22 November, while one Burundian soldier was killed on 1 December.

27. On 29 October 2008, a wave of coordinated car-bombings was perpetrated in the two Somali regions of Somaliland (Hargeysa) and Puntland (Bosasso), which hitherto have been relatively stable, killing dozens of people and injuring many others. In Hargeysa, the attacks targeted the UNDP compound, as well as local government offices and the Ethiopian Consulate. In a communiqué issued the same day, I strongly condemned these terrorist attacks, noting that they came at a time of renewed efforts by IGAD, the AU and the UN to bring about lasting peace, security and reconciliation in Somalia. On 30 October 2008, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement condemning in the strongest terms these heinous acts, and underlined the need to bring their perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors to justice.

28. The period under review has also witnessed an increase in the acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia. Since January 2008, about 65 ships have been hijacked off the coast of Somalia, particularly in the area bordering Puntland. In a dramatic development, a Saudi oil tanker – the Sirius Star – with a cargo of two million barrels of crude oil worth more than 100 million US dollars was seized by pirates in the Indian Ocean as it was nearing the Kenyan coast.

29. This situation has prompted a number of initiatives. On 7 October 2008, and as a follow-up to earlier resolutions, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1838(2008), in which it condemned and deplored all acts of piracy and armed robbery off the coast

of Somalia, and called upon States interested in the security of maritime activities to deploy naval vessels and military aircrafts to actively fight piracy on the high seas off the coast of Somalia. On 2 December 2008, the Security Council adopted another resolution – 1846(2008) – strengthening international efforts to fight piracy off the coast of Somalia expanding the mandate of States and regional organizations working with Somali officials towards that aim. More specifically, the Security Council decided that, during the next 12 months, States and regional organizations working with the TFG may enter Somalia's territorial waters and use all necessary means to fight piracy and accrued robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia, in accordance with relevant international law. Several countries and regional organizations, including the US, Canada, France, the UK, the Netherlands, India, the Russian Federation, Spain, NATO and the EU, are involved in activities aimed at combating piracy off the coast of Somalia. For some of the naval forces concerned, this involves escorting WFP vessels carrying food aid to Somalia. I would like to report that AMISOM, with its limited capability, provides active support to the fight against piracy. Indeed, the Mission has escorted ships carrying much-needed relief supplies from a distance of five nautical miles of the Mogadishu seaport.

30. Furthermore, on 20 November 2008, at the initiative of the Government of Egypt, a high-level consultative meeting of Arab States bordering the Red Sea (Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Sudan, Egypt, Djibouti and Yemen) took place in Cairo. The objective was to reach a common understanding of the causes of the escalation of piracy off the coast of Somalia; define the geographic area affected and the legal, political, economic and security dimensions involved; and coordinate the positions of the Arab States bordering the Red Sea in addressing this problem, limiting its repercussions, and preventing its spread and the resulting negative impact on Red Sea navigation. On 11 and 12 December 2008, an international conference on piracy around Somalia took place in Nairobi at ministerial level. The conference adopted a number of recommendations, ranging from enhanced coordination and cooperation in the fight against piracy to the strengthening of the capacity of the Somali institutions and that of other countries in the region. At the same time, the Conference stressed that the problem of piracy around Somalia cannot be durably resolved without the return of peace, stability and a functioning government.

31. The humanitarian situation in Somalia remains precarious. The civilian population has paid a heavy toll to the escalation of fighting during the period under review, with many killed or wounded. The continued fighting in Mogadishu has also led to a sharp increase in the number of IDPs. According to the UNHCR, more than 100,000 people have been forced to flee the violence in Mogadishu since September 2008. The total displacement from Mogadishu this year is estimated at 250,000. Displacements have also occurred in other parts of the country, including the city of Baidoa and elsewhere in the Bay region. The fighting in Mogadishu has also resulted in the setting up of numerous roadblocks controlled by various groups, which hinders further movement of humanitarian supplies. UN agencies stress that rates of acute malnutrition are on the rise in several areas and that huge losses of assets, like livestock, have occurred.

32. Attacks against humanitarian workers have continued unabated. As indicated above, on 29 October 2008, the UN compound in Hargeysa was hit by a suicide car bomb, killing two UN Staff members and injuring six others. In the month of October and November 2008, a number of other incidents and attacks against humanitarian workers were recorded, including the killings of a senior programme assistant with WFP in Marka, in the Lower Shabelle region, a UNICEF employee on 19 October in Xudur, Bakool region and a woman who worked for a local NGO, on 25 October in a village called Guriel, in Galgaduud region, as well as the abduction of four aid workers from an airstrip near the town of Dhuusamarreeb, also in the Galgaduud region. In October, the NGOs CARE and IMC (International Medical Corps), one of whose employees was shot in early October, suspended all their programmes in South Central Somalia following a statement issued by the Al Shabbab calling on these agencies to cease operations in areas under their control. The suspension of CARE activities has affected close to 1 million Somalis in need of food aid. In spite of the challenging environment in which they are working, the humanitarian agencies continue to make sustained efforts to assist the affected population. I would like, once again, to commend them for their invaluable work.

33. As I have also reported earlier, AMISOM continues to provide health services to the civilian population, especially those residing around AMISOM headquarters, and treats about 400 out-patients at its Level 1 Hospital daily. The Mission also provides about 40,000 litres of treated water on a daily basis to the civilian population. In areas not close to its headquarters, AMISOM has assisted in the repair of water wells.

VI. PEACEKEEPING ASPECTS

34. The mandated strength of AMISOM is 8,000 troops. In mid-October 2008, the second Burundian battalion was deployed in Somalia, with the support of NATO, UK and the US, bringing the total strength of the Mission to 3,450 troops, consisting of two battalions each from Burundi and Uganda. Efforts also continue to be made towards the deployment of AMISOM police component. Seven senior police leadership of the Mission has been recruited and will be deployed to the Mission area shortly. This is to be followed by the deployment of additional elements, as part of the efforts to train, mentor and advise the Somali police, with the view of facilitating its re-organization.

35. During the period under review, the Commission has continued to make efforts to generate additional forces. In this respect, the Commissioner for Peace and Security has held consultations with some African Governments. Between 20 November and 3 December 2008, a team from the Commission traveled to Botswana, Namibia, Zambia and Malawi to discuss with officials of these countries a possible pledge of troops. On 10 December 2008, I addressed letters to the Heads of State and Government of the members of Council and other African countries, to seek urgent contributions for the maintenance of AMISOM, either through the pledge of troops or the provision of financial resources and/or equipment. I am pleased to report that on 14 December 2008, the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria wrote to me to pledge the support of

is country to the efforts being deployed by the AU to enhance AMISOM and sustain its presence on the ground. In this respect, he confirmed the readiness of Algeria, as it did in the past, to provide, within the AU framework, airlift for the deployment of additional contingents to Somalia.

36. Furthermore, my Special Representative for Somalia, Nicolas Bwakira, traveled to Uganda and Burundi, from 7 to 13 December 2008, to express my gratitude to Presidents Yoweri Museveni and Pierre Nkurunziza for contributing troops to AMISOM, and to obtain assurances on the readiness of these two countries to provide one additional battalion each. I am pleased to report that both Uganda and Burundi are ready to contribute additional troops, provided the necessary financial and logistical support is mobilized. The two countries also stressed the need for the UN Security Council to adopt a resolution authorizing the deployment of an international stabilization force, as well as the importance of further progress in the political process within Somalia and that of a coordinated and phased withdrawal of the Ethiopian forces. The necessary co-ordination is going on between the AU and partners, in particular the UK and the US, to mobilize the financial and logistical support required for the deployment of these battalions.

37. At its 156th meeting, Council noted the continued efforts being exerted by the Commission to strengthen AMISOM and, once again, called on AU Member States to contribute additional troops to enable it reach its authorized strength. At its 4th meeting held in Nairobi at the end of November 2008, the Panel of the Wise noted with concern that, nearly two years after the adoption by Council of the decision authorizing the deployment of AMISOM, the Mission was yet to reach its authorized strength. The Panel appealed to AU Member States to fully assume their responsibilities, in the spirit of African solidarity, in particular by urgently providing troops; it also urged the AU partners to provide the much needed financial and logistical support to AMISOM. I cannot but echo these appeals, especially in view of the role expected of AMISOM in support of the Djibouti and other subsequent agreements reached by the TFG and the ARS, as well as the planned withdrawal of the Ethiopian troops.

38. At its extraordinary session on the developments in Somalia referred to above, the Council of the League of Arab States expressed support to AMISOM, and condemned all attacks and acts of obstruction directed against the Mission. The League called upon Arab-African States to contribute troops for the full deployment of AMISOM and urged its member States to continue to make financial and logistical contributions towards the deployment of the Mission.

39. In spite of the many constraints facing it and the challenging security environment in which it is operating, AMISOM has continued to provide invaluable support to the ongoing peace efforts. These include the protection of major infrastructure, such as the airport, the port, Villa Somalia and Kilometer 4 junction, confidence building patrols, as well as support to the security arrangements provided for within the framework of the Djibouti Agreement and protection for the ARS leadership

relocating to Mogadishu. As indicated above, AMISOM also contributes to the fight against piracy.

40. In its presidential statement of 4 September 2008, the UN Security Council took note of the parties' request in the Djibouti Agreement for it to authorize and deploy, within a period of 120 days, an international stabilization force. The Security Council also noted the communiqués of Council of 29 June, 8 and 20 August 2008. Acknowledging recent positive political developments, the Security Council reaffirmed its willingness, as set out in resolution 1814(2008), to consider, at an appropriate time, a UN peacekeeping operation to take over AMISOM, subject to progress in the political process and improvement in the security situation on the ground. The Security Council requested the Secretary-General to elaborate on his contingency plans and provide a detailed and consolidated description of a feasible multi-national force. It also requested the Secretary-General to urgently identify and approach States that might contribute to this force.

41. In his report on the situation in Somalia dated 17 November 2008, the Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council proposals on a feasible international stabilization force to support the implementation of the Djibouti Agreement. The Secretary-General indicated that such a force would be composed of a headquarters and two multi-national force brigades, one of which could be a reinforced AMISOM, operating under a unified command. The core mandate of this force would be to provide a first phase of support to the implementation of the Djibouti Agreement, helping the parties to establish a secure environment, and create conditions for the deployment, at a later stage, of a multi-dimensional UN peacekeeping operation. The area of operation of the force would be limited to Mogadishu. The proposals submitted by the Secretary-General also address issues relating to the capabilities of the force, its deployment timeline, and command and control. The Secretary-General further indicated that, in pursuance of the presidential statement referred to above, he had approached some countries and one international organization that might contribute to the proposed multi-national force. At the same time, the UN continues to review its contingency planning for a feasible peacekeeping operation to take into account the evolving situation on the ground and the envisaged deployment of an international stabilization force.

VIII. OBSERVATIONS

42. Once again, Somalia is at crossroads. Some of the most recent developments in the situation could lead to a total collapse of all the efforts deployed over the past few months to promote peace and reconciliation in the country, including the disintegration of the TFG, the withdrawal of AMISOM and seizure of Mogadishu by the Al Shabbab, and an upsurge in violence, with far reaching consequences for the civilian population and the stability of the region as a whole. On the other hand, there have been encouraging steps which, if built upon and effectively supported, can create a new momentum to the search for peace, security and stability. Clearly, the current situation

requires a far greater mobilization and focus from the Somali stakeholders and the international actors alike.

43. The process initiated in Djibouti, with the support of the UN, the AU, IGAD and other members of the international community, including the European Union and the League of Arab States, has witnessed significant progress, as shown by the signing of the Agreement of 26 October 2008 on the Modalities for the Implementation of the Cessation of Armed Confrontation between the TFG and the ARS, the work being carried out by the HLC and the JSC, and the relocation of the ARS leadership to Mogadishu. I would like to seize this opportunity to commend both Prime Minister Nur 'Adde' and the ARS leadership for the commitment they have shown and their continued efforts.

44. At the same time, it is disappointing to note that the same progress has not been matched by the leadership of the TFIs, particularly the TFG. Despite efforts from various quarters, including IGAD and its Chair, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, the leadership of the TFG continues to display poor statesmanship and reluctance to act in a manner that can sustain and enhance the Djibouti process. In this respect, I am particularly concerned by the announcement by the President of the TFG of his decision to dismiss Prime Minister Nur 'Adde'. This is clearly an unhelpful move that can only further complicate an already difficult situation. As stressed by the Panel of the Wise, at its Nairobi meeting, at a time when the suffering of the Somali people has reached an unprecedented scale, it is imperative for the Somali leaders to transcend the internecine political struggles and divisions that are currently consuming their energy. I fully associate myself with this statement, and I urge all those who remain outside the Djibouti process to join the ongoing efforts and demonstrate the much-needed spirit of accommodation and tolerance to end the suffering of their people and open a new chapter in the history of their country.

45. Against this background, it is important for Council, in addition to calling once again on all concerned to show leadership and rise to the daunting challenges facing their country, to lend its full support to the decision of IGAD to impose targeted sanctions against all those inside and outside Somalia who have become obstacles to the achievement of peace. In this respect, I welcome the adoption by the Security Council, on 20 November 2008, of resolution 1844(2008), in which it decided, among others, that travel restrictions and asset freeze would be applied to individuals and entities that are engaged in activities that threaten the peace and the political processes and obstruct humanitarian assistance. As recommended by the IGAD Council of Ministers, at its meeting of 18 November 2008, serious consideration should be given to the possibility of withdrawing political recognition and support to anyone in the Somali leadership who is obstructing the efforts to resolve the crisis in Somalia. In order to facilitate the monitoring and implementation of the sanctions decided by IGAD, it would be necessary to establish a panel of experts.

46. Undoubtedly, the decision of the Ethiopian Government to withdraw its troops from Somalia by the end of this year, in accordance with the Djibouti Agreement, poses new challenges. If steps are not immediately taken to prevent a security vacuum, there is a serious risk of a further deterioration of the situation on the ground, which, in turn, could undermine the ongoing political process between the TFG and the ARS. In order to address this situation, I have initiated sustained efforts to mobilize additional troops for AMISOM. I would like to seize this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to the Governments of Burundi and Uganda for their invaluable contribution to AMISOM and for their expressed readiness to provide one additional battalion each. This is a further testimony to their unflinching commitment to the search for lasting peace and reconciliation in Somalia. I also would like to pay tribute to the Government of Ethiopia for its contribution to the peace efforts in Somalia and the sacrifices it made by maintaining its troops in Somalia for two years. I call on all AU Member States to fully assume their responsibility towards Somalia and its people, in particular by providing urgently the troops required for the strengthening of AMISOM. I also appeal to our partners and the larger international community to provide the support required for the full deployment and sustenance of AMISOM.

47. At the same time, I cannot but emphasize the primary responsibility of the UN Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. I call, once again, on the Security Council to take the steps expected of it, in particular by authorizing the deployment of an international stabilization force and, subsequently, that of a peacekeeping operation to take over from AMISOM and support the long-term stabilization and reconstruction of Somalia. As stressed by the Panel of the Wise, there are today few countries in the world where there is such an acute need to translate into action the much-heralded principle of the "Responsibility to Protect" than in Somalia. The international community has, for so long, failed the Somali people. It is high time for it to muster the necessary political will and determination to address the conflict and the violence that has been tearing Somalia apart for almost two decades.

48. In the meantime, and in spite of the great difficulties being encountered, Africa has no other option but to continue to provide whatever support it can to the search for peace, security and stability in Somalia. The AU is the only organization the Somalis can readily turn to at this particular moment of their history. At its 139th meeting held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, on 29 June 2008, Council decided to extend the mandate of AMISOM for an additional period of 6 months, with effect from 17 July 2008, and further decided that the Mission shall take the necessary steps to support the implementation of the Djibouti Agreement. Given the commitment by Burundi and Uganda to provide additional troops and the encouraging reactions of the countries and partner organizations contacted by the Commission, I recommend that Council extends the mandate of AMISOM for a further period of **2** months. I commend AMISOM personnel for their continued commitment, and strongly condemn the attacks perpetrated against them.

49. I welcome the efforts being exerted to address the issue of piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia. However, there will be no lasting solution to this scourge unless the underlying problems within Somalia itself are effectively addressed. The deployment of a peacekeeping operation in support of the ongoing political process will go a long way in creating conditions for durable peace, reconciliation and stability in Somalia.

50. I pay tribute to the humanitarian organizations for their dedication and work on the ground. I strongly condemn the attacks against the humanitarian workers and the civilian population. I appeal to the international community, including AU member States that are in a position to do so, to contribute to the humanitarian assistance towards the Somali population. In this respect, it is imperative that the international community respond generously to the consolidated appeal for Somalia launched in Nairobi on 2 December 2008 and amounting to 900 million dollars and do so with the flexibility required to enhance the effectiveness of the work of the humanitarian agencies on the ground.