

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

P. O. Box 3243, Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA Tel.: (251-1) 513 822 Fax: (251-1) 519 321
Email: oau-ews@telecom.net.et

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REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION
ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AU
LIAISON OFFICE IN LIBERIA

**Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the
establishment of AU Liaison Office in Liberia**

1. It is to be recalled that the AU played an active part in efforts made from the year 2001 onwards, to bring the parties to the Liberian conflict to the negotiating table. These efforts predated the negotiations that took place in Accra from June to August 2003, and culminated in the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement by the concerned parties in Accra, on August 18th 2003.

2. In the said Peace Agreement, the AU—together with the other key international mediators and facilitators, namely the UN, ECOWAS, the EU and the International Contact Group on Liberia – was given the overall responsibility for monitoring its implementation as well as mediating between the parties, as and when disagreements arise in the course of that. Thus for example, Article XXXIII of the Peace Agreement, in according a role to the international community, provides as follows: “The parties call on ECOWAS, the UN, the African Union and the International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL), to use their good offices and best efforts to ensure that the spirit and content of this Peace Agreement are implemented in good faith and with integrity by the parties.” In addition, Article XXXVI which is on the settlement of disputes, provides as follows: “Any dispute within the National Transitional Government of Liberia, arising out of the application or interpretation of the provisions of this Agreement, shall be settled through a process of mediation to be organised by ECOWAS in collaboration with the UN, the AU and the ICGL.” It is, therefore, understood that, together with the other above-mentioned key international players in the peace process, the African Union shall endeavour to lend support to the peace process, from beginning to end, culminating in the holding of elections in October 2005.

3. Apart from the above overall responsibility of the AU to guide the peace process to the end, the Peace Agreement also accords the AU certain specific responsibilities. One of these responsibilities relates to the monitoring of the cease-fire based on the Cease-fire Agreement signed between the warring parties on 18 June 2003 in Accra. In connection with the cease-fire Agreement, a Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC), composed of representatives of ECOWAS, the AU, the UN, the ICGL, as well as the parties to the cease-fire agreement, has been established. It is to be noted that this body is based in Monrovia and is already functioning.

4. The Peace Agreement also provides for the establishment of a National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NCDDRR), for the purpose of coordinating DDDR activities. The NCDDRR comprises representatives from relevant government agencies, representatives of the three former warring factions, ECOWAS, the AU, UN and ICGL. Like the JMC, the NCDDRR is already functioning and meets in Monrovia.

5. The Peace Agreement further provides for the establishment of an Implementation Monitoring Committee. By virtue of Article XXIX, which provides as follows, "The parties also call on ECOWAS, in collaboration with the UN, AU, EU and ICGL, to set up a monitoring mechanism in the form of an Implementation Monitoring Committee (IMC) in Monrovia that will ensure effective and faithful implementation of the Peace Agreement by all the parties." Article XXIX also provides for "regular joint meetings between this Implementation Monitoring Committee and representatives of the NTGL, in order to assess implementation of the provision of this Agreement and agree on recommendations for enhanced implementation." The IMC is also already functioning in Monrovia.

6. Apart from the above-mentioned JMC, NCDDRR and IMC, local meetings of the International Contact Group on Liberia, of which the AU is a member, also take place.

7. Clearly therefore, the AU needs to be physically represented in Monrovia on a permanent basis, in order to attend meetings of the above-mentioned bodies, some of which are convened on a weekly basis. Indeed, it is to be noted that pending the formal opening of an AU office in Monrovia, the AU representatives on the ground have been attending all the meetings of the four bodies. They have also, since August 2003, participated in the regular round of formal and informal consultations which take place among the representatives of the various international and sub-regional organisations mentioned above, all of whom are already physically represented in Monrovia on a permanent basis. These meetings of the four bodies and the consultations which take place outside the framework of these bodies involve a broad review of issues relating to the functioning of the National Transitional Government, (including disputes arising among the various signatories on positions allotted to them in the Government); the status of implementation of the cease-fire agreement; the status of implementation of the DDDR process the humanitarian situation, the organisation of elections, and disputes within the warring

factions. I should also like to indicate that my Special Envoy for Liberia, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, has visited Monrovia and other countries of the region on several occasions, as part of the AU's support to the peace process in Liberia.

8. The permanent presence of the AU in Monrovia, through the establishment of an office, will also afford the organization the opportunity to lend in concrete terms, its moral support to ECOWAS which, as the sub-regional organization concerned, counts on the continental organization to assist it in sustaining what is essentially an African peace process.

9. In the light of the workload and the variety of issues which such an office would be called upon to handle, it would be composed as follows: a Head of Mission, one Political and Humanitarian Affairs Officer, one Military Officer, and the required support staff. The total budget required amounts to US\$ 661,008.63 (see annexe), to be funded from the Peace Fund and extra-budgetary resources.

10. In the light of all the foregoing, the AU Commission submits that the establishment of a Liaison Office in Monrovia, equipped with the necessary staff, will enhance the capacity of the AU to effectively monitor the situation on the ground, collect information on a first-hand basis and, generally speaking, carry out its comprehensive responsibilities under the Peace Agreement to which it is signatory.