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LETTER DATED 18 SEPTEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF AUSTRIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF  
THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to enclose a letter dated 18 September 1998 from the  
Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria,  
Mr. Wolfgang Schüssel, addressed to you.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and  
its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ernst SUCHARIPA  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of Austria  
to the United Nations

Annex

Letter dated 18 September 1998 from the Vice-Chancellor and  
Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria addressed  
to the President of the Security Council

I have the pleasure to write to you in my capacity as President of the Council of Ministers of the European Union (EU).

On the occasion of the meeting of the Security Council at the ministerial level on 24 September 1998, the European Union would like to reiterate its deep appreciation to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for submitting his report dated 13 April 1998 on "The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" (A/52/871-S/1998/318). The European Union highly values the holistic approach taken in the report, with the central focus on human security and human development. While looking forward to an in-depth discussion of the various aspects raised in the report in the respective United Nations forums, the European Union would like to make the following observations on areas which fall within the purview of the Security Council.

The European Union is fully committed to a proactive policy on conflict prevention and resolution, focusing on preventing the outbreak of violent conflicts at an early stage as well as on post-conflict peace-building and using the full range of policy instruments available. These goals are set out in the European Union's common position on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa and are complemented by the European Union's common position on human rights, good governance, democracy and the rule of law in Africa. Good governance, including the respect for human rights and the rule of law, are crucial elements for an environment in which durable peace, based on human security and human development, is sustained and economic growth promoted.

Early warning must be complemented by early action, such as well-focused diplomatic efforts at early stages in unfolding crises as well as humanitarian assistance and development aid as integral components of early action. The European Union is the largest donor of international humanitarian aid and the world's leading source of development assistance to Africa. We fully endorse the call of the Secretary-General for greater coordination in the provision of humanitarian assistance, which has to be fully consistent with broader United Nations peace and development activities. The European Union reiterates its strong concern for the safety and security of United Nations and related personnel as well as other international personnel, which have to be fully ensured.

The European Union welcomes the statement of the President of the Security Council of 16 September 1998 (S/PRST/1998/28), in which the Security Council, having the primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for international peace and security, affirmed, inter alia, the need to strengthen Africa's capacity to actively participate in all aspects of peacekeeping operations, including their military, police, humanitarian and other civilian components. We encourage bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the field of

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peacekeeping, especially capacity-building, between member States, the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity as well as subregional organizations and arrangements in Africa. We are determined to continue our cooperation and assistance, focusing in particular on peace-building and conflict prevention, management and resolution. In this context we intend, inter alia, to further develop the consultative mechanism we established with the Organization of African Unity. The European Union welcomes the adoption on 18 September 1998 of Security Council resolution 1197 (1998), which aims at supporting regional initiatives in Africa as well as enhancing coordination between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity in the field of conflict prevention and maintenance of peace.

The European Union welcomes the Secretary-General's ideas on establishing an international mechanism to assist host Governments in maintaining the security and neutrality of refugee camps and settlements. We are awaiting with the greatest interest the result of the working group of the Security Council established in accordance with Security Council resolution 1170 (1998) of 28 May 1998.

An essential element of conflict prevention is preventing the destabilizing accumulation of arms. The European Union welcomes the efforts to introduce a moratorium on the production and transfer of small arms in West Africa and encourages similar regional initiatives. All African States should participate in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and additional confidence-building measures should be elaborated. Effective national control measures on the transfers of conventional arms should be established; illegal arms trafficking should be strictly combated. On 8 June 1998, the European Union adopted a Code of Conduct on arms exports. Anti-personnel landmines have to be cleared and banned.

Sanctions, a tool of the international community in cases of threats to international peace and security, should be better targeted at decision makers and should be more rigorously enforced by the international community. We support the need for effective measures to ensure the strict implementation of arms embargoes and welcome in this context the provisions of Security Council resolution 1196 (1998) of 16 September 1998.

In conclusion, we would like to share with the international community that, in the context of wide-ranging European Union cooperation, we are pleased to host the third in a series of ministerial meetings between the Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Vienna in November 1998. We are working to enhance our dialogue with other subregional organizations, such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Furthermore, the European Union is currently preparing a summit with the African States in the year 2000.

The primary responsibility for the future of Africa rests with the African people and their leaders. The European Union is committed to assisting the continent on its path to a peaceful and prosperous future.

(Signed) Wolfgang SCHÜSSEL  
Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria  
President of the Council of Ministers  
of the European Union

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