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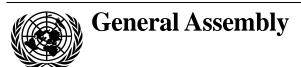
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**New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in
implementation and international support: causes of
conflict and the promotion of durable peace and
sustainable development in Africa**

Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Progress report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report addresses the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318). It is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 61/230 of 22 December 2006, which was adopted following the Assembly's consideration at its sixty-first session of the Secretary-General's progress report dated 2 August 2006 (A/61/213).

Section I of the report provides a brief overview of major political, social and economic developments in Africa since 1998. The section underlines the significant progress made in peace and security, and to some extent development. In section II, the report describes recent progress made by the United Nations system during the past year, focusing particularly on post-conflict peacebuilding activities and on the need to strengthen the capacity of African organizations.

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* A/62/150.

In accordance with resolution 61/230, the report also includes several proposals for United Nations actions in support of the goal of achieving a conflict-free Africa by 2010. The report concludes that after a decade of achievements and challenges, there is a strong case for a full review of commitments made, progress achieved and lessons learned in preventing conflict and promoting peace and development in Africa, and proposes a comprehensive review of the recommendations contained in the 1998 report.

Contents

I. A decade of achievements and challenges

1.   On 25 September 1997, the Security Council convened at the level of foreign ministers to consider the need for a concerted international effort to promote peace and security in Africa. In the presidential statement issued that day (S/PRST/1997/46), the Council observed that despite the progress achieved by some African States, the number and intensity of armed conflicts on the continent remained a matter of grave concern, requiring a determined response. In response to the request made by the Council in its presidential statement, I undertook a comprehensive analysis and submitted, in 1998, a report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318).

2.   In my report, I called upon African leaders and the international community to summon the necessary political will to produce positive change in the continent. In particular, I called upon Africa to demonstrate the will to rely upon political rather than military responses to problems; to take good governance seriously, ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law, strengthening democratization and promoting transparency and capability in public administration; and to enact and adhere to the various reforms needed to promote economic growth. I also urged the international community to summon the political will to intervene where it could have an impact, and to invest where resources were needed.

3.   To channel these efforts, I proposed a set of far-reaching recommendations designed to significantly reduce political tensions and violence within and between African States. The progress reports that I have issued since 2000 illustrate that some of these recommendations have been translated into action, although others have not yet achieved the results envisaged.

4.   Indeed, despite remarkable achievements in implementing some of the 1998 recommendations, the basic conditions required for sustained peace and development have yet to be adequately consolidated throughout the continent. Serious impediments to peace consolidation and development, including pervasive extreme poverty, weakness of State institutions, poor management of natural resources, failure to protect fundamental human rights and increased threats related to climate change, still loom large.

A. Responding to situations of conflict

5.   Africa today is afflicted by far fewer armed conflicts than it was a decade ago, but even so, one fifth of the population of the continent still lives in areas affected by conflict. In 1998, when I issued my report on the causes of conflict in Africa, there were 14 countries in the midst of war and another 11 were suffering from severe political turbulence. Today, while conflicts in Somalia and in the Darfur region of the Sudan are high on the international agenda, others such as the North-South war in the Sudan and civil wars in Angola, Sierra Leone and Liberia as well as the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have been resolved, and many other conflicts are in the course of being settled.

6.   In my 1998 report I recommended, among other measures, that the international community consider the appointment of special mediators or commissions, improve the effectiveness of sanctions, stop the proliferation of small

arms, co-deploy multinational peacekeeping forces with regional and subregional forces and strengthen Africa's own capacity for peacekeeping. Some of these measures have been implemented and have contributed significantly to reducing the number and intensity of conflicts in Africa.

7. In fact, the improved effectiveness and readiness of the international community, including African countries themselves, to respond to conflict through peacekeeping has been a major factor in containing violent conflict. There are currently 13 United Nations peacekeeping operations, special political missions and peacebuilding support offices in Africa. Over the last decade, United Nations peacekeeping operations have grown in complexity and now deal with much broader mandates which include, inter alia, human rights, gender and child protection, State administration, recovery, the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, the rule of law, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform.

8. Much of the credit for the improvement of the security situation rests, however, with Africa. In 2002, the Organization of African Unity was succeeded by a fundamentally redesigned, more effective and more proactive African Union. Within a few years, the African Union has made significant progress in elaborating the African Peace and Security Architecture, which consists of instruments, institutions and processes to anticipate, prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. The African Peace and Security Architecture comprises, inter alia, the African Union Peace and Security Council, a Panel of the Wise, a continental early warning system and the beginnings of an African standby force. The conflict management mechanisms of regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community, which provide additional capacity for peace and security, are important building blocks of this architecture. The African Union, various subregional organizations and a number of Governments have become more active in mobilizing military forces for peacekeeping missions and in defusing political crises before they escalate into large-scale violence.

9. The partnership between the United Nations and the African Union has been strengthened through the signing of the Declaration on cooperation in November 2006 between the two organizations. Efforts are under way to prepare a 10-year capacity-building programme for the African Union, which envisages, inter alia, enhanced cooperation in all phases of conflict management; early warning and preventive diplomacy; peacemaking; peacekeeping; post-conflict reconstruction; and peacebuilding and human rights. The United Nations and the African Union have, since 2004, strengthened cooperation in the context of crises such as those in Darfur and Cote d'Ivoire, and redefined the scope and content of the collaborative conflict management partnership.

10. Cooperation has also yielded positive results at the regional level. For example, in November 2004, the first International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, organized under the auspices of the United Nations and the African Union, adopted the Dar es Salaam Declaration of Principles on Peace, Security, Democracy and Development in the Great Lakes Region. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is now supporting the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region signed in December 2006 as

well as providing capacity and institutional support to the new Great Lakes Conference secretariat, which has just been set up in Bujumbura.

11. The United Nations has also addressed the need to adapt its structure and methodologies to the new realities. The Peacebuilding Commission has been established to support post-conflict peacebuilding efforts in a more sustained, coherent and effective manner. The Commission is the only major body including representatives of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and embodies a new approach to strengthening coherence and coordination among the major organs of the United Nations system in support of post-conflict peacebuilding, recovery and reconstruction.

12. Efforts continue to be made to control the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons which fuels armed conflicts and exacerbates organized crime and instability in Africa. In June 2006, the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms, Light Weapons, their Ammunition and Other Associated Material was signed by heads of State and Government in Abuja, replacing the voluntary moratorium established in 1998.

13. Delivering humanitarian assistance in Africa has remained a challenge throughout the decade. Violent conflicts and severe natural disasters, including widespread refugee movements, have stretched the capacity of both United Nations and African relief agencies and forced the humanitarian community to rethink the parameters and operational structures of relief operations to better link human security, human development and humanitarian aid. New donors have become involved; public concern over humanitarian issues has intensified; and new ways of working are being tried. In 2006, the world's largest humanitarian relief operation remained in effect but fragile in the Darfur region of the Sudan, while many other challenges persist in the region.

14. Despite these positive developments, sustained peace and stability in Africa are today threatened by problems the extent of which could hardly have been imagined a decade ago. These include the increased prevalence of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS; the effects of global warming and climate change; extremely high rates of youth unemployment; human trafficking; massive displacements of people; and the emergence of terrorist networks and the increased activity of transnational organized crime. In fact, a key feature of contemporary conflict is that it substantially overlaps with crime, particularly transnational organized crime, and tends to generate high degrees of criminality in the post-conflict period. These dynamics complicate conflict prevention and reconstruction efforts. Sustaining positive trends in both conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction will continue to depend on a clear understanding of the challenges, the political will to respond to those challenges, and the resources necessary to provide adequate responses.

B. Building durable peace and promoting economic growth

15. In my 1998 report I highlighted the problems associated with the long-term distortions in Africa's political economy and the authoritarian legacies of colonialism, which helped produce highly personalized forms of governance in parts of the continent. I identified the frequent absence of peaceful means to change or replace leadership and the often violent politicization of ethnicity as some of the

major factors hampering development and preventing African peoples from fully enjoying their rights and opportunities.

16. To address these challenges, I called, among other measures, for new sources of funding and a better use of existing resources, the elimination of trade barriers to African products and the enactment of trade and debt measures to enable Africa to generate and better invest its own resources. I asked donors and trading partners to consider opening international markets and to restructure international aid as a means of allowing equal opportunities for African products and businesses.[1]

17. Since my initial report, there have been considerable improvements in the economic and political conditions that had fostered tension and strife in the past. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), an Africa-owned and Africa-managed strategic development framework, was launched in 2001. NEPAD aims at eradicating poverty and at placing African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development and has become increasingly recognized as the region's blueprint for the future.

18. According to the 2006 report of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs entitled "World Economic Situation and Prospects", in broad terms, Africa is moving in the direction of economic prosperity with a growth rate of 6 per cent expected in 2007, a rise from 5.6 per cent in 2006. Although Africa's recent good growth record represents a major turnaround from previous decades of economic stagnation, it is still insufficient to meet the 7 per cent growth rate required to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

19. Growth in Africa is highly concentrated on a relatively narrow range of commodity exports, making many African economies extremely vulnerable to exogenous factors. In 2005, Africa received record foreign investment inflows of $31 billion, a 78 per cent increase over 2004, and the 2006 figures are expected to show an increase over 2005. However, economic growth has, in some instances, exacerbated problems of economic and social cohesion.

20. Among the recommendations outlined in my 1998 report, I encouraged African countries to enhance respect for basic human rights and the rule of law, promote transparency and accountability in public administration and create a positive environment for socio-economic progress in order to promote durable peace and sustainable development in the continent.

21. Increasingly, countries on the continent are holding democratic elections, the most recent success being the peaceful completion of the presidential elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, marking a milestone in the resolution of one of the longest and deadliest conflicts in Africa. Since 2002, the continent has held more than 50 elections, and under the Lomé Declaration of July 2000, the African Union pledged to oppose any unconstitutional change of government taking place in a member State.

22. However, the international community has come to recognize that good governance comprises much more than the holding of democratic elections. There are still compelling needs to enhance administrative capacity, to ensure the independence of the judiciary and to promote transparency and accountability at the

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[1] A full examination of the progress in these areas is contained in my fifth consolidated progress report on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/62/___).

national levels. To improve governance, African leaders established the African Peer Review Mechanism, a voluntary self-monitoring and assessment tool open to all members of the African Union. So far, 26 member States of the African Union have acceded to the Mechanism and 5 countries have already completed the assessment process, which entails conformity to principles, codes and standards in the basic declarations of NEPAD on democracy, political governance, economic governance and management, corporate governance and socio-economic development.

23. The last 10 years have also witnessed a gradual but profound shift in global norms with respect to the use of force and violence in inter-State relations. The rule of law has increasingly become the centrepiece of all policymaking processes. African countries are committed to respecting and promoting human rights, protecting civilians in times of conflict and upholding international law in their relations. Twenty-nine African countries are now parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and its Prosecutor has opened investigations in several African countries. The Special Court for Sierra Leone initiated proceedings against the former President of Liberia, and the African Union has made it clear that it will not tolerate grave violations of international humanitarian law.

24. Yet for all of this progress, there are still serious challenges ahead. Extreme poverty, together with lack of access to basic education, health care and adequate nutrition, continues to prevent millions of talented, promising young people in Africa from fulfilling their potential. At least 200 million people on the continent go hungry every day and agricultural production will have to be substantially increased to meet their needs. Even though civil society organizations have proved to be key partners in improving peace and development in the continent, the acute lack of capacity and funding prevents their further engagement and participation in local, national, regional and pan-African decision-making processes. Moreover, despite considerable advances, more support of women's participation and leadership in peace negotiations and post-conflict peacebuilding is needed.

II. Recent developments in addressing the causes of conflict

25. During the 2006-2007 reporting period, agencies of the United Nations system continued to implement relevant recommendations contained in my 1998 report. The United Nations system has increasingly adapted its programmes and priorities to the new African context, supporting Governments, regional and subregional organizations and civil society in facing existing and emerging challenges in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, economic development, humanitarian assistance and capacity-building. Individual agencies and the United Nations system as a whole are redefining their partnership with Africa in light of the profound transformations that the continent and its institutions have experienced over the past few years, going beyond development and crisis assistance by opening up a broader cooperation that involves issues of joint political concern and interest.

A. Conflict prevention, peacemaking and humanitarian affairs

1. Mediation and prevention

26. Third-party mediation has proved to be one of the most important means at the disposal of the United Nations to prevent and resolve deadly conflicts around the world. The Department of Political Affairs has now established the Mediation Support Unit to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to support mediation and good offices. The initiative stems from the 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1), which recognized the important role of my good offices, including in the mediation of disputes. In October 2006, the Unit held a seminar in Cape Town, South Africa, in partnership with the Centre for Conflict Resolution and the African Union, in which mediators were invited to reflect on their experiences and identify key aspects of mediation support. The Unit and other agencies have noted the importance of promoting inclusiveness as a key concept in resolving conflict, both substantially in the structures of government, and procedurally in peace negotiation processes. The Unit launched the United Nations Peacemaker website in October 2006, containing a database of peace agreements and a range of other tools for peacemaking professionals. Efforts are under way to establish a standby team of mediation experts who will be on call to assist in peacemaking efforts around the world.

27. The special envoys I dispatched to various countries continued to offer timely and discreet facilitation to prevent tensions from deteriorating into open conflict. For example, elections in Gambia took place peacefully in September 2006, despite an initial period of tense and polarized political discourse. Many actors in the country credited part of this success to the work of my special envoy for the Gambia, who acted as a mediator and facilitator before, during and after the elections.

2. Peace negotiations

28. In August 2006, the Government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) signed a cessation of hostilities agreement in Juba, southern Sudan. The United Nations, through the Department of Political Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, provided support for the African-led mediation efforts in northern Uganda. On 1 December 2006, a special envoy for the LRA-affected areas was appointed with a comprehensive mandate to support the peace process and to build regional support for national reconciliation in northern Uganda.

29. Amid a tense and violent environment, the United Nations Political Office for Somalia continued its efforts to enhance peace and national reconciliation in the country. The Office has supported the efforts of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the League of Arab States and the African Union in promoting a peaceful settlement of the Somali crisis. My Special Representative has played a key role in promoting a coordinated and concerted approach among members of the international community in support of peace efforts in Somalia, including through the International Contact Group on Somalia created in 2006.

3. Humanitarian coordination

30. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs continued to facilitate regional humanitarian coordination using the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to provide overall policy and technical guidance to ad hoc working groups, United Nations country teams and other partners. The Office has undertaken situation analysis within the Mano River Union region and in Côte d'Ivoire and enhanced information sharing with United Nations country teams from the region. Its work in the Mano River region is aimed at consolidating peace and security, promoting early warning measures, addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic and reinforcing environmental restoration and protection in the region. Humanitarian efforts increasingly provide the United Nations system with an early indication of potential crises.

B. Peacekeeping

1. Côte d'Ivoire

31. The United Nations continued to play a central role at the country level in harmonizing initiatives and coordinating support by the international community, in particular through its chairing of the International Working Group and through the presence of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) on the ground. Efforts were made in 2006 to enhance the cooperation of various stakeholders on humanitarian issues, particularly on the protection of civilians in Côte d'Ivoire. Two high-level meetings of Ivorian and regional leaders were convened in 2006 to address outstanding issues at the core of the conflict and support peace and mediation initiatives. On 4 March 2007, the Burkinabe-facilitated dialogue between the President and the leader of the Forces nouvelles led to the signing of a new comprehensive plan elaborated by the parties themselves, the Ouagadougou Agreement, which marked a major breakthrough in the peace process.

2. Liberia

32. As part of efforts to implement the integrated mission concept, coordination between the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the United Nations country team has been led by my Special Representative as coordinator of the United Nations operations in Liberia. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee cluster approach was introduced in Liberia in 2006 as a framework bringing together the United Nations, Government and other partners to enhance accountability, effectiveness and predictability of humanitarian responses. Although significant progress has been made towards recovery in Liberia, certain remote areas and vulnerable groups are still in urgent need of humanitarian support.

33. Following the inauguration of the new Government in January 2006, UNMIL established a task force on the rule of law which later became the Government-led "governance and rule of law" pillar of the Liberian Reconstruction and Development Committee. The Government's bilateral and multilateral partners also meet under the umbrella of the Economic Governance Steering Committee, which monitors progress in the implementation of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme. The country has made major strides towards restoring peace and stability, and during the reporting period the Security Council

lifted the ban on diamond and timber trade and has modified arms embargoes to incorporate additional exceptions.

3. Sierra Leone

34. The United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) continued to monitor developments in the subregion, including the dispute between Guinea and Sierra Leone over Yenga, as well as other developments within the framework of the Mano River Union. The Office is working towards building a network of mediators which will involve national security forces, local councillors, traditional rulers and civil society organizations.

35. In the area of conflict resolution, UNIOSIL was involved in mediating between the ruling party and other major political parties. It also facilitated the deliberation and signing of the political parties' code of conduct for elections and the finalization of the media code of conduct for elections, and helped the Political Parties Registration Commission to encourage constructive dialogue among political parties. As part of the post-conflict peacebuilding strategy, UNIOSIL is actively engaged in social and economic initiatives in the areas of youth employment, health and infrastructure development. UNIOSIL is assisting the Government of Sierra Leone and the assessment team from the Peacebuilding Commission in identifying priority areas to be addressed in the Sierra Leone Compact. On 1 March 2007, the Secretary-General announced that an allocation of $35 million from the Peacebuilding Fund had been made towards Sierra Leone.

4. The Sudan

36. The United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) continued to provide good offices and political support for the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, including defusing tensions in the highly militarized area of Phom el-Zeraf in Upper Nile, in the Abyei area, and in Malakal following a flare-up of hostilities in November 2006. The Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement was signed in October 2006. The redeployment of the Sudan People's Liberation Army from eastern Sudan was declared complete in July 2006, and significant progress has been made in the redeployment of the Sudanese Armed Forces from southern Sudan, scheduled for completion by July 2007.

37. Technical and capacity-building support was given to the Government of National Unity and the Government of Southern Sudan, with over 18,000 judges, lawyers and law enforcement and civil society members trained on issues relating to good governance and human rights. UNMIS also initiated a community policing programme, including in camps for the internally displaced, and continued to advocate for corrections reform.

38. In order to support the provision of social services by the Government of Southern Sudan, various United Nations agencies collaborated to provide offices, equipment and operating expenses in each of the 10 capitals of southern Sudan and assisted the Government in ensuring the safe return of approximately 20,000 internally displaced persons and 25,000 refugees. Mine action activities, including the clearance of over 135,000 mines and explosive remnants, facilitated the return of people to the south.

5. Darfur (Sudan)

39. The United Nations has designed two phases of support for the African Union, the light and heavy support packages. The light support package, which consists of police and military advisory personnel, material and equipment for the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS), has for the most part been delivered. Since 28 December 2006, the United Nations has deployed military personnel, police advisers and civilian staff to El Fasher, Nyala and other parts of Darfur. Completion of the first phase depends on contributions from Member States to fill outstanding requirements for staff officers and armoured personnel carriers. Major challenges to the full implementation of the light support package include the lack of security and the inadequate infrastructure within Darfur and the AMIS camps.

40. The implementation of the second phase, the heavy support package, which will include a range of force enablers, three formed police units, civilian personnel and mission support, commenced on 16 April 2007 with the agreement of the Government of the Sudan to the United Nations-African Union proposals and authorization of the heavy support package by the Security Council, as outlined in my report of 23 February 2007 (S/2007/104). On 12 June 2007, the Government agreed to support unconditionally the deployment of a hybrid United Nations-African Union peacekeeping force in Darfur, following talks in Addis Ababa to clarify the mandate, structure, components and tasks of the force. The United Nations and the African Union have pledged to seek African troops first, and during its visit to Khartoum, the Security Council noted that it would seek funding for the operation from the United Nations peacekeeping budget.

6. Democratic Republic of the Congo

41. Following the successful presidential, National Assembly and Provincial Assembly elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the National Assembly was installed on 22 September 2006. President Joseph Kabila was inaugurated on 6 December 2006, bringing the transition process envisaged by the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement of 2002 to a formal conclusion. Significant progress has been made in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups, especially in the Ituri region, where 4,500 combatants will benefit from the programme. The United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) has continued its work in building the capacity of the Congolese national police, training over 43,000 police officers so as to ensure security during and after the national elections. Many security challenges remain, however, in the eastern part of the country.

C. Post-conflict peacebuilding

42. United Nations post-conflict peacebuilding efforts to prevent relapse into armed conflict and to assist countries in the transition to development are being expanded. The recognition of the inextricable link between peace and development has opened a window for increased cooperation and coordination between different stakeholders, from Governments to United Nations agencies to civil society organizations. Issues related to human rights, governance, the rule of law, gender, children, youth and economic development are being dealt with in an increasingly holistic and comprehensive way. For peacebuilding the key challenge remains the

mobilization of sustained and adequate international support, including funding and resources as well as political commitment.

1. Strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery

43.   The Peacebuilding Commission became fully functional in 2006. In February 2007, the Commission agreed on the basic concept for an integrated peacebuilding strategy and its design process. The approach will provide an agreed framework to record commitments from the country under consideration, the Peacebuilding Commission and other partners, and to ensure greater coherence and coordination of efforts. During its first year of operation, the Peacebuilding Commission focused on articulating an integrated peacebuilding strategy for Burundi, which was completed in June 2007, and for Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leone Compact, a framework for the Commission's engagement, will be finalized and endorsed following the country's presidential and parliamentary elections in August 2007.

44.   The Department of Political Affairs, through its peacebuilding support offices in the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau, continued to provide the Governments of those countries with critical technical support for capacity-building of State institutions.

2. Women and peace and security

45.   The United Nations peacebuilding offices in the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau continued to carry out activities aimed at building capacity and increasing women's participation in peace, security and electoral processes by conducting workshops and seminars for local women and members of the Government. The United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone is supporting the initiative to achieve equal representation of women in Parliament, other legislative bodies and public offices. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been closely monitoring peace initiatives in countries in conflict with a view to securing the participation and representation of refugee women in peace negotiations, as has been the case in the Sudan.

46.   During the reporting period the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) played a convening and brokering role in building new partnerships and supported women's movements and organizations throughout Africa by providing capacity- and strategy-building tools. In Burundi, UNIFEM supported the participation of women from civil society in all technical groups of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers process to ensure that women's human rights issues and gender equality were fully taken into account.

47.   With regard to the promotion of gender justice, UNIFEM provided technical support to the regional high-level meeting on "Partners for gender justice in conflict-affected countries" which was held in Cape Town, South Africa, on 22 and 23 March 2007. In April 2007, UNIFEM launched a programme on "Supporting women's engagement in peacebuilding and preventing sexual violence in conflict: community-led approaches" which will be implemented in Liberia, Rwanda and Uganda. In Rwanda, UNIFEM has been instrumental in helping to set up a gender-based violence desk at the Rwandan national police headquarters to respond to and prevent cases of gender violence. This is contributing to national efforts to change community attitudes on issues related to gender-based violence and women's rights.

3. Children and youth

48. In 1996, the report by Graça Machel on the impact of armed conflict on children (A/51/306) proposed comprehensive actions to be taken by the international community to improve the protection and care of children affected by armed conflict. Much progress has been made in the last 10 years, including the Optional Protocols (2000), demobilization and reintegration programmes for children and the prosecution of perpetrators by international tribunals. My Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have co-convened a strategic review of the Machel report, the results of which will be submitted to the General Assembly in October 2007.

49. During 2006, UNICEF supported the implementation of a mechanism to collect reliable information on the recruitment and use of child soldiers in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and the Sudan. The objective of the tool is to integrate the needs of post-conflict youth into national development plans. In April 2007, UNICEF launched a youth survey on the impact of armed conflict on children on its website, the Voices of Youth, to enable the voices of children and young people to be considered in the strategic review of the Machel report.

50. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa convened an expert group meeting on "Youth in Africa: participation of youth as partners in peace and development in post-conflict countries" in Namibia in November 2006 to analyse the complexity and the challenges facing youth in post-conflict situations in Africa. The meeting proposed strategies and mechanisms for including youth as central stakeholders and key actors in rehabilitation, reconciliation, rebuilding of war-torn communities and contributing to sustainable development in their countries. The expert group meeting was organized in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

51. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs organized, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa, a capacity-building workshop on youth development in Africa in June 2006. The workshop aimed at sharing the knowledge and skills of experts with youth from various non-governmental organizations. The workshop helped to develop policies and programmes for the inclusion of youth in decision-making and for addressing major youth development challenges relating to employment, education and health, including HIV/AIDS.

4. Rule of law

52. Following the recommendations of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, a rule of law coordination and resource group was created on 24 November 2006, under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General, to help ensure policy coherence across the entire United Nations system. For countries emerging from conflict situations, the task of building confidence in legal and judicial systems is crucial for creating the conditions for sustainable peace and development.

53. United Nations field presences have increasingly been given rule of law mandates to help build the capacity of national institutions. There are six missions with rule of law components presently operating in Africa (the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire and the Sudan). The missions provide Governments with legislative assistance and support for the establishment of court infrastructure or the strengthening of police institutions and

prison systems. In Liberia, UNMIL supported national counterparts in developing a judicial reform strategy and assisted in re-establishing courts throughout the country. The mission's work has been instrumental in supporting the drafting of a law criminalizing rape and of a law providing for the budgetary autonomy of the justice system.

54. UNOCI advised national authorities on the legal framework for national identification, and supported and monitored the registration process in anticipation of elections. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUC provided training to legal professionals and assisted the Government in reforming the military justice system in line with international standards. MONUC also advised national authorities in the development of victim/witness support systems.

5. Small arms and light weapons

55. Though the illicit trade in small arms continues to fuel violent conflicts and destabilize entire regions, concrete steps are being taken to prevent, combat and eradicate this deadly traffic. In June 2006, ECOWAS transformed its moratorium on small arms into the binding Convention on Small Arms, Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Associated Material. UNDP has supported ECOWAS in the implementation of the Convention through the multipartner ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme and is also working with the ECOWAS Commission on preparing a regional conference on small arms and light weapons.

56. The Office for Disarmament Affairs assisted the Economic Community of Central African States, in preparing a legally binding instrument for the control of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa and is also elaborating a code of conduct for security and defence forces in the subregion. In 2006, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa launched the African Security Sector Reform Programme to promote peace and reinforce State stability through the establishment of a code of ethics that would regulate the behaviour of armed and security forces towards civilians.

6. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

57. The effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants remains a priority in securing the success of long-term peacebuilding initiatives. In December 2006, the integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standards, jointly developed by 15 United Nations entities, were launched. The standards are a comprehensive set of policies, guidelines and procedures covering 24 areas of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration that establish a United Nations integrated approach to the planning, management and implementation of the relevant processes.

58. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa organized the Second International Conference on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and Stability in Africa, which was held in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in June 2007. The Conference identified four major areas of focus for practitioners and policymakers: the linkage between disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform; transitional justice; children and women associated with armed forces; and armed groups and combatants on foreign soil. Practitioners offered concrete recommendations for effective policy formulation and operational strategies for programme improvement. The Conference brought together

practitioners from 23 African countries and provided an opportunity for them to share experiences.

7.   HIV/AIDS

59.   The risk of HIV spreading is particularly high in post-conflict situations, when the freedom of movement increases, different communities interact and armed forces demobilize. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has contributed to addressing HIV issues in post-conflict needs assessment missions, including in Somalia and the Sudan.

60.   A specific AIDS module has been developed as part of the integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standards (see para. 57 above). Inter-agency missions have been undertaken to test the module in the Sudan and Côte d'Ivoire. During the reporting period UNAIDS continued to support the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and national security agencies in their AIDS programming. The Department is actively pursuing its ongoing review of its peacekeeping AIDS policy, while all missions continue to have AIDS policy advisers or focal points.

8.   Human rights

61.   The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has been supporting Governments and non-governmental organizations throughout the continent through the human rights units of peacekeeping operations as well as through technical assistance programmes at the national and regional levels. The Office has provided support to key stakeholders involved in the Juba peace negotiations and prepared qualitative studies on accountability and reconciliation in northern Uganda. A human rights monitoring network has now been established in some conflict-affected areas of Uganda, strengthening national and local capacity to monitor and respond to conflict-related human rights violations.

62.   In the Sudan, the UNMIS human rights component has assisted the National Assembly in amending sections of the Criminal Act and the Evidence Act. In Sierra Leone, the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission in December 2006 paved the way for the formulation of a National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. The act empowers the National Human Rights Commission to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and to review legislation to ensure that human rights are adequately protected. In Burundi, the criminal code was revised to abolish the death penalty.

63.   On 2 May 2007, the International Criminal Court issued warrants of arrest for crimes against humanity and war crimes against the former Minister of State for the Interior of the Government of the Sudan, the Minister of State for Humanitarian Affairs and the leader of the Janjaweed militia. On 22 May 2007 the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court announced the decision to open an investigation in the Central African Republic after the Government had referred the situation to the Office of the Prosecutor on 22 December 2004. A breakthrough occurred on 4 June 2007 when the trial of former Liberian President Charles Taylor began in The Hague, with the Government of the Netherlands and the International Criminal Court facilitating the conduct of the trial by the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

9. **Risks to refugee security**

64.   By the end of 2006, Africa had some 2.4 million refugees and 6.8 million internally displaced persons. UNHCR continued to protect and assist them, despite difficulties arising from financial, logistical and operational constraints. In September 2006, UNHCR disseminated operational guidelines on maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of asylum to field locations.

65.   The consolidation of peace in several African countries allowed UNHCR to make significant progress in its search for durable solutions for a number of protracted displacement situations, especially in the case of refugees from Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia and southern Sudan and for internally displaced persons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Liberia. The establishment of the joint plan for returnees between the Government of the Sudan and UNMIS has facilitated the safe and voluntary return of 20,000 internally displaced persons between the north and the south of the country.

66.   Key political developments including the successful completion of elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the peace talks initiated between the Government of Uganda and LRA and the ceasefire agreement in Burundi between the Forces nationales de libération and the Government encouraged the return of thousands of displaced people. Overall, around 256,000 Burundians have returned home since the beginning of repatriation operations in 2002, some 45,000 of them during the past year. The reconciliation process in Togo also improved prospects for the repatriation of refugees, many of whom returned spontaneously in 2006.

67.   However, in some parts of the continent instability worsened, leading to more displacement, particularly in the Central African Republic, Chad, the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia. With over half a million refugees and internally displaced persons, the Darfur region of the Sudan continued to pose one of the biggest challenges for the United Nations system. In 2006, UNHCR actively engaged the Government of Chad to try to locate refugee camps farther from the Sudanese border, where military activity had been reported. The Office also supported the implementation of a memorandum of understanding on security to increase the capacity of the Chadian forces to provide security in and around refugee settlements.

D.   Capacity-building in Africa

68.   Over the last 10 years, capacity-building efforts and cooperation between the United Nations and African regional organizations have grown in depth and breadth. This process culminated in the signature of the declaration on cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in November 2006 in Addis Ababa. In building on previous agreements, the declaration provides a holistic structure for United Nations system-wide support for regional and subregional capacity-building efforts in a number of areas including peace, security and crime prevention; institution-building, political and electoral matters; governance, human rights and the rule of law; peacebuilding; humanitarian response, recovery and food security; social, cultural and health issues; and the environment. Moreover, the United Nations is preparing a 10-year capacity-building programme in support of the African Union in accordance with the recommendations of the 2005 Summit Outcome.

69. During the reporting period, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and others collaborated with and supported capacity-building of the African Union in a variety of ways including by providing training and promoting staff exchanges, establishing dedicated support capacities and providing technical and financial assistance to build institutional capacity and expedite institutional transformation.

70. Under a multipartner project valued at $10 million, the African Union has received technical and financial support from UNDP since 2006 to support conflict prevention, security and peacebuilding capacities. UNDP has also helped to strengthen the operational capacities of the African Union Peace and Security Council and its related institutions such as the Panel of the Wise, the African standby force and the continent-wide early warning system. UNDP-funded experts are providing technical backstopping for African Union peace negotiations in Darfur, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, the Sudan, Somalia, the Comoros, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia and Eritrea. In 2006, UNDP initiated a $2 million preparatory assistance project for institutional transformation of the African Union Commission.

71. Recognizing the need to enhance the African Union's peacekeeping capacity, the General Assembly approved the creation of a dedicated interdisciplinary capacity to implement a comprehensive support programme for African peacekeeping capacity. Consequently, a multidisciplinary African Union Peace Operations Support Team was established at the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, with a smaller component in New York, as part of the Department of Peacekeeping Operation's joint action plan. The team will assist the African Union in developing institutional capacity to manage complex multidimensional peacekeeping operations including the development of the African standby force operational capability. The team will also serve as the coordination point for all cooperation of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations with the African Union.

III. Concrete proposals for possible United Nations actions and plans in support of the goal of achieving a conflict-free Africa by 2010

72. In its resolution 61/230, the General Assembly requested that I include in the present report a number of concrete proposals for possible United Nations actions and plans in support of the goal of achieving a conflict-free Africa by 2010. Accordingly, I requested the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa to consult widely with relevant United Nations agencies, funds and programmes as well as the African Union to produce a preliminary set of proposals for consideration by Member States.

73. It should be noted that my core proposals recognize that the primary responsibility for a conflict-free Africa rests with Africa at the national, regional and continental levels. Accordingly, United Nations actions and plans should be focused primarily on providing effective support for Africa's own efforts, plans and programmes as articulated in both the African Union policy framework on post-

conflict reconstruction and development[2] and the multi-stakeholder integrated peacebuilding strategic frameworks emerging under the aegis of the Peacebuilding Commission.

74.   The entities of the United Nations system offered a range of proposals in response to the General Assembly's request, reflecting their varied mandates and experiences. Despite the enormous efforts undertaken by African and international partners and the commendable progress in bringing about greater stability on the continent, most agencies noted the tremendous challenges that lie ahead before a conflict-free Africa can become a lasting reality. While some of the recommendations contained in my 1998 report remain relevant, given the progress made in the continent and the emergence of challenges which could not be foreseen a decade ago, an updated long-term strategic plan will be necessary to achieve that goal. In the shorter term, United Nations agencies proposed the following measures:

(a)   To deepen the engagement of the United Nations system in support of the African Union in accordance with the call in the World Summit Outcome for a 10-year capacity-building programme in support of the African Union;

(b)   To fully exploit the strength of the United Nations in normative action to advance negotiations leading to a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms;

(c)   To establish a coordinated strategy for involving the United Nations system in the positioning of employment and income generation at the centre of early recovery and transition operations, including in the restoration of infrastructure, which would have a multiplier effect on recovery prospects;

(d)   To build up the capacity of African institutions to strengthen regional cooperation and integration so as to increase confidence and promote economic relations that benefit all countries, including better control of the exploitation of and trade in natural resources;

(e)   To develop and implement an effective strategy for engaging and strengthening civil society in post-conflict countries utilizing, inter alia, broad-scale programmes in the culture of peace and civic education including basic budgetary knowledge to enable better monitoring of government institutions;

(f)   To facilitate short-term assignments of United Nations personnel in administrative, managerial, public information, economic and social development fields to build the capacity of African regional and subregional organizations.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

75.   The last 10 years have witnessed many positive developments in Africa. The number of armed conflicts has been significantly reduced; the African Union has been established with a broader and more active mandate than the Organization of African Unity it replaced; development partners have increased their strategic, economic and political engagement with the continent; the United Nations has

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[2] See African Union document EX.CL/274 (IX) and decision EX.CL/Dec.302 (IX) adopted at the African Union Summit held in Banjul in June 2006.

established a Peacebuilding Commission, a Human Rights Council and other bodies to fill some gaps in post-conflict situations; NEPAD and the African Peer Review Mechanism have been established as a commitment of African countries themselves; African countries have begun to establish national early warning and conflict resolution mechanisms; and non-governmental organizations and the public have increasingly played a significant role in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacemaking in the continent.

76.   In the last decade, the number of development partners involved in peace and development efforts in Africa has increased. No one will today deny the important role of civil society and grass-roots organizations in preventing violent conflict and dealing with the scars of war. Few would envisage a sound, long-term economic recovery process without the involvement of the private sector, and the important role of the media in fostering peace and understanding is also widely recognized.

77.   However, the readiness of African countries and institutions to resolve their own peace, security and development challenges should not prevent the international community from providing the necessary support to these efforts. Indeed, more action is needed both to strengthen and support Africa's own efforts to bring peace to the continent and to tackle the wider global sources of armed conflict. African institutions are working hard to develop their capacity to anticipate, prevent and respond to crises, but sustained attention and investment from the United Nations and the international community at large will be necessary in support of such efforts, bearing in mind that the Security Council still bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

78.   In 1998 I endeavoured to identify the causes of conflict and to recommend means of promoting durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. It is time to undertake a systematic, comprehensive and joint review of the commitments made, action taken, progress achieved and lessons learned in preventing conflict and promoting peace and development in Africa. The review would consider the continued relevance of the 1998 recommendations and the array of mandates and resolutions on Africa, and whether it would be useful to have more systematic arrangements for coordinating action, monitoring progress and sharing lessons learned. None of this should, of course, imply a pause in implementing existing commitments or undertaking new commitments where these are appropriate.

79.   Appropriate and adequate institutional arrangements within the United Nations will hold the key to the success of our efforts in support of Africa. I intend to revamp these efforts by establishing greater institutional coherence among the main Secretariat entities dealing with issues that concern Africa, as well as establishing stronger system-wide organizational arrangements to ensure full implementation of activities in favour of Africa. As part of this approach I will seek to formulate strategic actions for the United Nations and the international community in support of achieving sustainable development in a conflict-free Africa.

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