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STRENGTHENING OF SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN THE
MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Letter dated 26 January 1990 from the Permanent Representative of
Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the final declaration adopted by the first regular session of the Presidential Council of the Arab Maghreb Union, held at Tunis from 24 to 26 Jumada II A.H. 1410, corresponding to 21 to 23 January A.D. 1990.

I should be grateful if you would have the declaration circulated as a document of the General Assembly under the item entitled "Strengthening of security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region".

(Signed) Ahmed GHEZAL
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Final declaration of the first regular session of the Presidential
Council of the Arab Maghreb Union, held at Tunis from 21 to
23 January 1990

At the invitation of His Excellency Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia, and pursuant to articles 4 and 5 of the Treaty instituting the Arab Maghreb Union, the first regular session of the Presidential Council of the Arab Maghreb Union was held at Tunis, Republic of Tunisia, from 24 to 26 Jumada II A.H. 1410 (1399 from the death of the Prophet), corresponding to 21 to 23 January A.D. 1990, and was attended by Their Majesties and Their Excellencies:

King Hassan II of Morocco;

President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali of the Republic of Tunisia;

President Chadli Bendjedid of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria;

and Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, leader of the great 1 September revolution, of the great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

The meeting was also attended by His Excellency Commandant Cheikh Sid' Ahmed Ould Baba, member of the Military Committee for National Salvation and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, representing His Excellency Colonel Maawiya Ould Sid' Ahmed Taya, Chairman of the Military Committee for National Salvation and Head of State of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

The session was opened by His Majesty King Hassan II with an address in which he expressed deep gratitude to President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and to the Tunisian people for their warm reception and kind hospitality and reviewed the broad outlines of the activities of the Union and the progress made in establishing its structures and in joint Maghreb action.

His Excellency Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia and Chairman of the Union, gave an address in which he welcomed his fellow Arab Maghreb leaders and commended the sustained efforts made by His Majesty King Hassan II during his term of office as Chairman of the Union, praising the worthy achievements of that period in various fields, stressing that one and all were prompted, by a strong and determined political will, to proceed forward on the road of solidarity and integration, and justifying the continued efforts that awaited the Union in the coming phase in realizing the aspirations of the fraternal Maghreb peoples.

The Presidential Council studied the progress being made in the development of the Union, welcomed the entry into force of the Treaty, following its ratification by the constitutional institutions of the member States, and took note of the establishment of the organs of the Union.

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The Presidential Council examined the report submitted to it by the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Union following its preparatory meeting held at Tunis on 15 and 16 Jumada II A.H. 1410 (1399 from the death of the Prophet), corresponding to 12 and 13 January A.D. 1990, and, with respect to the matters set forth hereunder, decided as follows:

I. Structures

(a) To approve an increase, from 10 to 20 from each State, in the number of members of the Consultative Council and the necessary amendment to that effect to the Treaty instituting the Union.

(b) To approve the formation of four specialized Ministerial Committees, namely a Food Security Committee, an Economic and Financial Committee, an Infrastructure Committee and a Human Resources Committee, and to adopt the proposed calendar of conferences for those committees, as follows:

Human Resources Committee: Tunisia; February 1990

Economic and Financial Committee: Algeria; beginning of March 1990

Food Security Committee: Morocco; February 1990

Infrastructure Committee: Libyan Arab Jamahiriya; March 1990

Ministers of the Interior: Nouakchott; March 1990

(c) To approve the setting up of a permanent secretariat for the Union to be established by the Presidential Council, which would determine its seat, establish its terms of reference and appoint its Secretary-General.

(d) To invite the Judicial Organ to hold its inaugural, constituent meeting at Tunis as soon as possible.

(e) To approve the establishment of a periodic schedule for the convening of the Presidential Council.

(f) To invite Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Ministers of Defence to meet for the purpose of elaborating a framework for co-ordination and co-operation in the field of defence and to submit a report thereon to the Presidential Council at its next session.

II. Plan of execution

The Presidential Council endorsed the proposals made with regard to the programme of work and plan of execution and charged the organs of the Union with their implementation.

III. The Presidential Council studied the proposals made with a view to promoting co-operation between the Arab Maghreb Union, the Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf and the Arab Co-operation Council.

In its belief in the common destiny and bonds of kinship uniting the Arab nation, and in its commitment to the Pact of the League of Arab States, the Presidential Council urged the organs of the Union to strengthen relations of co-operation in all fields and to consult with the regional groupings in question within the framework of the League of Arab States in order to achieve the common goals of integration and unity. The Presidential Council further sanctioned the bilateral and collective measures for Arab unity being taken in the Arab world, which it considered a preliminary step towards full Arab unity, and, in that connection, it affirmed its support for the measures for unity adopted by the two parts of Yemen.

In its conviction that a fully developed Maghreb entity would enable the States of the Union to promote joint action with other fraternal African countries for the progress and prosperity of the African continent, the Council urged the establishment of closer relations with regional African groupings similar to the Union and the promotion of dialogue and increased consultation between the organs of the Union and those of the regional groupings in question so as to strengthen African solidarity and bolster joint efforts for development, progress and peace.

The Presidential Council considered future relations between the Union and the European economic groupings, in particular the European Economic Community, given the socio-cultural linkage between the States of the Union and those groupings and in the light of the Council's conviction that there was a need for action to promote security, peace and co-operation in the region and to establish relations of equality in the interests of its peoples.

The Presidential Council expressed its deep concern at the situation of the Maghreb emigrant community and for its future in the countries of the European Economic Community, and it instructed the Council of Foreign Ministers to monitor that situation, to take the necessary measures to preserve the identity, rights and interests of that community and to submit a report on the matter to the Presidential Council at its next session.

The Presidential Council further entrusted the organs of the Union with the task of examining relations with other regional groupings and elaborating appropriate schemes for dialogue with them.

IV. The question of Palestine

The Presidential Council carefully reviewed the situation in Palestine, recalling the resolutions adopted by the Arab Summit Conferences, particularly those held at Algiers and Casablanca, on the question of Palestine, and it expressed its admiration for the heroic struggle being waged by all classes of the Palestinian people within the occupied territory. It hailed the valiant intifadah, which had entered its third year stronger and more defiant than ever and had thereby merited world recognition of the legitimacy of the Palestinian cause and of

the right of the Palestinian people to exercise self-determination and to establish an independent State in its own land under the leadership of its sole legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The Council, in expressing its support for the blessed intifidah until such time as it achieves its goals, called upon the international community to take action to halt the repressive Israeli practices and to enforce respect for international covenants and treaties and the observance of the human rights persistently violated by the Zionist entity. The Council affirmed its support for the convening of the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties concerned, on an equal footing, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, in order to devise a permanent and comprehensive solution to the Palestine issue.

V. The situation in Lebanon

The Council considered the question of Lebanon and commended the national reconciliation agreement, which had laid the appropriate foundation for advancing the issue towards a desirable solution, expressing its pride in the positive role played by the States of the Union in that respect and in the sustained efforts made by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd Bin Abdul-Aziz Al Saud, His Majesty King Hassan II and His Excellency Mr. Chadli Bendjedid in the framework of the High-level Arab Committee, which efforts had resulted in the firm establishment of constitutional legitimacy in Lebanon.

The Council further stressed its support for His Excellency Mr. Elias Hrawi, President of the Lebanese Republic, and for the Government of National Reconciliation in their endeavour to safeguard Lebanon's unity and Arab character, its territorial integrity and the extension of its sovereignty to all of its national soil, and it urged the international community to promote constitutional legitimacy in Lebanon and assist the efforts of the High-level Arab Committee on the basis of the national reconciliation agreement.

VI. The situation between Iraq and Iran

The Council reviewed the situation between Iraq and Iran and the stage reached in the negotiations between the two countries under the auspices of the United Nations. In commending the efforts made by the Secretary-General in that regard, it reaffirmed its support for Security Council resolution 598 (1987) as the basis for a just and durable solution and the establishment of peace between these two Muslim peoples.

VII. Namibia and South Africa

The Presidential Council discussed recent developments in South Africa and noted with satisfaction the exercise by the Namibian people of its legitimate right to self-determination and its imminent elevation to the rank of an independent State, affirming, at the same time, its active support for the struggle of the peoples of South Africa for the removal of the hateful régime of racial discrimination and the establishment of majority rule.

VIII. Indebtedness and development

The Council studied the question of indebtedness and its serious repercussions on the economies of the States of the Union, of Africa and of the third world in general. In expressing its concern at the aggravation of that phenomenon, which perpetuates the gap between wealthy countries and developing countries, it welcomed all the efforts made, particularly those within the United Nations framework, to mitigate the burdens and establish a new international economic order characterized by justice and providing the means for balanced development.

IX. International changes

The Council followed with great interest the developments taking place in international relations and the resulting profound changes in the balance of power. While heralding international détente and the moderation of the policy of blocs and axes that these changes imply, it considered that such changes make Maghreb solidarity even more pressing and more assured so that the ability of the States of the Union to confront major challenges can be enhanced, and it expressed the hope that détente will assist in justly resolving the issues of peace and development in the world.

X. Political consultation

Proceeding from the principles laid down in the Treaty instituting the Arab Maghreb Union and in view of the importance of the above-mentioned topics and the need to monitor developments relating thereto, the Presidential Council decided to step up political dialogue among the States of the Union and instructed the Council of Foreign Ministers to monitor all international issues of common interest and to consult and co-ordinate thereon.

XI. The Council expressed its sense of gratitude and appreciation to His Excellency President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and to the Government and people of Tunisia for their kind hospitality and warm reception, for their able organization of the session of the Presidential Council and for providing the necessary means for the success of its work.
