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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 60/223 of 23 December 2005, which was adopted following the Assembly's consideration at its sixtieth session of the Secretary-General's progress report dated 1 August 2005 (A/60/182).

This report describes recent conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding activities undertaken by African countries, African regional organizations and the United Nations system. The report highlights efforts to strengthen African peacekeeping capacity and to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and the African regional organizations and the effectiveness of their efforts. It identifies key challenges, addresses cross-cutting issues and provides policy recommendations that may support the transition from war to peace and prevent conflict.

The report notes that, while steady progress is being made in preventing, managing and resolving conflict and in building and consolidating peace, increased and concerted action is needed to prevent simmering crises from escalating and to ensure that the hard-won peace in countries emerging from conflict becomes irreversible.

* A/61/150.



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I. Introduction

1. The progress made in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 1998 report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318) has been monitored and reported to the General Assembly since 2000. The present report, which responds to Assembly resolution 60/223 of 23 December 2005, should be read together with the Secretary-General's fourth consolidated report on progress in implementation of and international support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (A/61/212), which monitors the implementation of recommendations related to economic and social development in Africa.

2. The peace and security situation in Africa is very complex. While prospects for peace in a number of countries have improved during the year, some situations have worsened, despite considerable efforts by African countries, regional organizations and the international community. Between June 2005 and June 2006, the Security Council deliberated on potential or actual threats to peace and security in Burundi, Chad, the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan and Western Sahara, as well as on subregional and cross-border issues in the Great Lakes region.

3. The underlying causes of conflict in Africa were identified in the Secretary-General's 1998 report. Disaggregating these causes into enabling factors, mobilizing factors and triggering events as well as root causes of conflict may further enhance understanding of conflict dynamics. Root causes lead to conflict by generating deep political, social, economic and cultural divisions that can be exploited; such causes may include extreme poverty, gross inequalities and weak State capacity. Enabling factors are not sufficient on their own to cause conflicts but exacerbate root causes or contribute to an environment that facilitates armed conflict. Exclusionary government policies, external support for repressive regimes, and small arms proliferation are a few examples of such enabling factors.

4. Mobilizing factors are issues of individual or collective significance, such as religion, ethnicity and economic conditions, through whose utilization people can be readily induced to engage in violent action while forsaking civil responsibility. Often, these issues are only loosely connected to the original underlying grievances but the promoters of conflict exploit such factors in an effort to mobilize youth and win over domestic and international public opinion, turning them into formidable obstacles to peace. Finally, immediate causes or triggers are factors that affect the timing and onset of the violent outbreak but are neither necessary nor sufficient to explain it.

5. Analytical research on the specific causes of conflict in each situation is needed to improve the effectiveness of conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding efforts, including the work that will be undertaken by the newly established Peacebuilding Commission. Greater efforts must be undertaken by key stakeholders to address root causes of conflict and to reduce opportunities for conflict by encouraging leaders to resolve disputes peacefully and for the good of the country. Finally, enhanced measures to deter, sanction and penalize conflict entrepreneurs and profiteers must be supported at various levels.

6. The purpose of this report is twofold: first, to report on progress in addressing causes of conflict in Africa as requested in General Assembly resolution 60/223, and second, to identify key issues emanating from the discussion of conflict resolution efforts and to propose recommendations that may support the transition from war to peace and prevent conflict.

II. Recent developments in addressing the causes of conflict

A. Conflict prevention and peacemaking

7. Conflict prevention is at the heart of the United Nations mandate to foster peace and development; the Organization has long supported the efforts of Member States to fulfil their primary responsibility for preventing conflict and its recurrence. The United Nations system is engaged in both operational prevention, encompassing activities dealing with an imminent crisis, such as preventive diplomacy or mediation, and structural prevention, involving measures to address root causes of conflict so that crises do not emerge.

8. A key element of structural prevention entails improving political and economic governance. Since many causes of conflict, including inequality and exclusionary politics, have their roots in weak governance, measures to prevent conflict and its recurrence have a better chance of succeeding if they are accompanied by actions promoting effective, inclusive and legitimate governance. Another important factor in effective conflict prevention is the development of comprehensive early warning systems to ensure that timely measures, such as mediation and preventive diplomacy, can be undertaken to avert violent crises. Progress in governance, early warning and mediation will be discussed in the following sections.

1. Improving governance

9. Free and fair elections are a key conflict prevention and post-conflict peacebuilding element, as they enable the peaceful alternation of power and can contribute to the effective management of grievances. A number of peaceful referendums and presidential and legislative elections were held in 2005 and 2006. The United Republic of Tanzania and Benin joined Mozambique in entering the ranks of the growing number of countries that enjoyed an orderly change of government. Liberia and Burundi held a series of successful elections during 2005. More positive developments are hoped for as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Côte d'Ivoire engage in delicate political transitions in 2006.

10. While successful elections can put a country on the path to peace and stability, rigged or heavily contested elections can push the country to the brink of war. A tainted, manipulated or irregular election is often a triggering event leading to armed conflict or coup attempts, as it signals to the opposition that peaceful, democratic means of resolving differences have been exhausted. **Efforts must be strengthened to ensure that elections as well as their preparations, including campaigning, voter registration and candidature eligibility, are free and fair and are also recognized as such by key stakeholders.**

11. Independent and effective national election commissions can help in this process. The United Nations supported and provided technical assistance to election commissions, inter alia, in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Burundi. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in close cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-supported Electoral Assistance Project, is undertaking the largest electoral assistance programme in history by providing technical assistance to the Congolese Independent Electoral Commission at Headquarters as well as in 15 field locations nationwide. **Efforts to strengthen the capacity, competence and independence of national election commissions should be continued and expanded. The role of regional and subregional actors and civil society is critical in this process.**

12. Key elements of good governance include not only holding free multiparty elections but also increasing the inclusiveness of the political process, broadening consultations with civil society, encouraging an independent and responsible media, promoting a transparent and accountable public revenue administration, protecting human rights, and dispensing justice fairly and efficiently. Of critical importance to long-term national stability are credible and successful efforts to provide basic services to the population, reduce poverty and provide genuine income opportunities to a broad cross-section of society.

13. In an effort to enhance the quality and effectiveness of governance in Africa, the Sixth Summit of the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, held in March 2003, adopted the Memorandum of Understanding on the Africa Peer Review Mechanism. This self-monitoring mechanism is voluntarily acceded to by member States of the African Union with the aim of fostering the adoption of policies, standards and best practices that will lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated regional and economic integration. To date, 25 countries have voluntarily acceded to the Mechanism and three countries, Ghana, Rwanda and Kenya, have completed their reviews.

14. Both African leaders and civil society need to take bold measures to peer-review, monitor and encourage good political, economic and corporate governance when it matters most for peace and security — in the post-conflict period. **Encouraging good governance structures and policies in the immediate post-conflict reconstruction period, thereby creating an environment conducive to attracting the foreign direct investment (FDI) necessary for economic recovery, is key to preventing conflict recurrence and laying the foundation for growth and development.**

2. Early warning systems

15. In its resolution 60/223, the General Assembly urged the United Nations and other relevant partners to support the establishment of the African Union continental early warning system as a matter of priority. To discuss the establishment of such an early warning mechanism will be part of the mission of a United Nations interdepartmental task force that I will send to African Union headquarters in the coming months to elaborate the comprehensive 10-year Capacity-building plan.

16. Support for a comprehensive early warning mechanism must be built up through coordination by the African Union with subregional mechanisms including

the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). In view of their strong presence in the field, African civil society organizations could be especially important partners in identifying, preventing and monitoring early stages of crises. African and international think tanks can also make an important contribution to this process, as they possess critical research and analytical capacities, often resident in conflict-prone countries.

17. Transforming early warning into early action by generating sufficient public attention, political will and a corresponding sense of urgency is a difficult yet vital task and one that is often ignored. Civil society, local and international media and regional and subregional organizations can play a useful role in galvanizing the international community into taking action in a timely manner.

18. During the past year, cooperation by United Nations organizations with ECOWAS contributed to a more coherent and harmonized regional approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. A non-governmental organization, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding, is helping ECOWAS to operationalize the regional early warning system by establishing a comprehensive database which will then be coordinated at the ECOWAS Observation and Monitoring Centre in Abuja. **While support for ECOWAS in the area of peace and security has increased over the last few years, donors should review its proposals, particularly those relating to the conflict prevention framework, with the utmost seriousness so as to ensure the capacity of ECOWAS to prevent and resolve conflict.**

3. Mediation and preventive diplomacy

19. Within the reporting period, I continued to use good offices on multiple fronts, including: efforts to achieve a lasting settlement in the territorial dispute between Gabon and Equatorial Guinea; preventive diplomacy and regional strategies to support political transitions and peacebuilding in West Africa; efforts to resolve the dispute over Western Sahara; and continuing support to the peaceful resolution of border disputes in Africa. A good example of successful preventive diplomacy concerned Nigeria and Cameroon: the United Nations helped broker an agreement on the implementation of the International Court of Justice ruling on the Bakassi Peninsula. This success underscores the value and cost-effectiveness of conflict prevention measures in promoting peace on the continent.

20. The Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat will also be strengthening its peacemaking support capacity through a web-based knowledge-sharing and operational support tool called UN Peacemaker (www.un.org/peacemaker) which is to be launched later this year. This tool will enable United Nations personnel and partners across the world to access information on previous peace agreements and knowledge from previous experiences for ready application to current efforts. This web-based databank is expected to be particularly useful for regional organizations and other partners assisting in peacemaking efforts. I note with appreciation that during the past year, Member States supported my recommendation to expand United Nations technical capacity and field-oriented expertise in mediation, negotiation and dialogue facilitation. I have also urged Member States in my recent report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/60/891)

to provide the requisite funding and support to improve strategic leadership, cooperation and dialogue on conflict prevention at the international level.

21. It is important to recognize that African leaders themselves — both as part of a regional coalition and at the level of the African Union — have been the principal mediators in many conflicts in Africa, including in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Somalia and the Sudan. Yet, the regional and subregional organizations that are spearheading negotiations often experience funding and capacity constraints which limit their capability to undertake systematic, professional and sustained peacemaking efforts. **The United Nations and the donor community must increase efforts to build African mediation and negotiation capacity, provide training and ensure more predictable and timely funding, including to grass-roots organizations using traditional approaches to conflict resolution.**

4. Peace negotiations

22. It is vitally important to create inclusive peace agreements that involve civil society organizations, including women's groups, at an early stage in the peace negotiations. Peace agreements must address the needs and grievances of the whole population, not only those of the armed factions. In Arusha in December 2005, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa held an "Expert Group Meeting on Democratic Governance in Africa: Strategies for Greater Participation of Women". **The experts recommended that international organizations employ female mediators and facilitators; establish a funding mechanism at the international level to advance the participation of women in democratic governance; and provide funding to women's movements and civil society to enable them to undertake studies on experiences in post-conflict countries and to share the lessons learned.**

23. During the past year, the United Nations Political Office for Somalia, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), provided technical advice and assistance in capacity-building to the Somali women delegates to the peacemaking process in Somalia. The United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic had organized workshops on strategies through which women could improve access to development and peacebuilding processes and also provided assistance in capacity-building for female candidates in the legislative elections which resulted in an increase in the number of women in parliament and the national assembly.

24. **Peace agreements must involve a broader group of national stakeholders and go beyond political and security issues by considering critical economic dimensions at an early stage. Peace agreements that committed all signatory parties to genuinely addressing the need for transparent natural resource and revenue management mechanisms, equitable distribution of resources, poverty reduction and anti-corruption measures would lead to earlier and more sustainable peace dividends for the population and thereby reduce the likelihood of the recurrence of conflict.**

B. Progress in countries with United Nations peacekeeping missions

25. Over the past few years, the international community has witnessed a major surge in demand for United Nations peace operations, including a fivefold increase

in field personnel since 2000. New multidimensional missions and massive deployments of military and civilian personnel have put strains on the planning, recruitment and management capacities of the United Nations. As of 31 May 2006, there were over 63,000 troops, police and civilian personnel deployed in seven United Nations peacekeeping missions in Africa.¹ This constituted some 75 per cent of total United Nations troops, police and civilian personnel forces deployed throughout the world.

26. Gradually, the scope of peacekeeping operations has expanded towards peacebuilding activities, requiring improved coordination between United Nations departments and organizations and other stakeholders. In order that coherence in peacebuilding support may be maintained after the departure of a peacekeeping mission, integrated missions are being developed in the field to enhance coordination of a broad range of substantive issues including gender, HIV/AIDS and human rights. The first of these types of missions, the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), was established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1620 (2005) to help consolidate the peace as a follow-up to the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone. It will assist the Government in strengthening human rights, developing the economy, improving transparency and holding elections in 2007.

27. Certain factors are critical to the success of any United Nations peacekeeping operation. Specifically, there must be a peace to keep and all key parties to the conflict must accept the role of the United Nations in helping to resolve the dispute including the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping mission. It is crucial that members of the Security Council agree on a clear, achievable mandate that fits the political realities of the country and provides timely and adequate resources for effective fulfilment of the mandate.

1. Burundi

28. Progress in Burundi during the past year has been highlighted by a peaceful transfer of authority to a democratically elected Government. The Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat actively supported communal, presidential and colline elections, inter alia, by giving technical support for the establishment of the National Independent Electoral Commission. Following Burundi's constitutional referendum in February 2005, peaceful communal elections were held in June 2005 and the parliamentary election of the new President were held in August 2005. During its deployment, the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) played a critical role in support of the national elections and in the disarmament and demobilization of over 17,000 former combatants as well as in the training of the newly established National Police.

29. Despite improvements in the security situation since the completion of the transitional period, there remain significant factors of instability in Burundi that constitute a continuing threat to peace and security. Therefore, the recently established Peacebuilding Commission has decided to consider the situation in that country. Key peace consolidation efforts must include government capacity-building

¹ United Nations Operation in Burundi; United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire; United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea; United Nations Mission in Liberia; United Nations Mission in the Sudan; United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara.

to ensure provision of basic services, continued strengthening of the security sector, resolution of land issues, diversification and modernization of the economy and increased assistance for the reintegration of former combatants, internally displaced persons and refugees.

2. Côte d'Ivoire

30. The failure to have held elections in Côte d'Ivoire by 31 October 2005 created a potential constitutional crisis. The Security Council in resolution 1633 (2005) called for the formation of a Government of National Reconciliation, led by a new prime minister, which was achieved on 28 December 2005. The Independent Election Commission continues to prepare for elections to be held before the end of October 2006. The Secretary-General appointed a High Representative for the elections in Côte d'Ivoire to assist the Commission in the preparation of national elections. Ethnic tensions persist and remain central to the concerns regarding identification and registration of voters. Aggressive propaganda campaigns in the media exacerbated ethnic tensions and fuelled negative sentiment against the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, resulting in attacks in January 2006.

31. In February 2006, the Security Council applied targeted 12-month sanctions and travel bans against three alleged leaders of the attacks on United Nations personnel and property, an action that has been viewed as helpful in moderating violent activity in Côte d'Ivoire. On 5 July 2006, I met with regional leaders, including President Gbagbo and Prime Minister Banny, in Yamoussoukro to discuss the implementation of the road map for advancing the peace process and elections in Côte d'Ivoire. New agreements and interim deadlines were produced, including establishing mobile courts for public meetings, deploying members of the electoral commission around the country, implementing disarmament timetables and disbanding all militia in order to prepare for planned elections in October 2006. Success in meeting the agreed deadlines will be reviewed by regional leaders in September 2006 in the margins of the General Assembly.

3. Democratic Republic of the Congo

32. Considerable progress and stability have been achieved by the Transitional Government with the support of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the broader international community. The successful registration of some 25 million voters, and the overwhelming approval on 18 December 2005 by referendum of a post-transitional constitution, reflect the high expectations of the Congolese people for elections. The holding of presidential and national legislative elections on 30 July 2006 has been a critical step towards the restoration of lasting peace and stability. Much progress has been made in stabilizing the security situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, tensions between local communities in Kivu continue and have heightened including between ethnically based armed factions designated for integration into the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

33. While the successful holding of elections is a milestone with respect to the future of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the surrounding region, it is equally important that the population see tangible improvement in the post-election period. **Key challenges include the effective extension of State authority, accelerated and sustained progress on security sector reform, progress in**

reforming the judicial system and ending impunity, and enhancing the capacity of the Government to deliver basic services to the population. There will be a need for continued and sustained international support with regard to these challenges.

4. Ethiopia and Eritrea

34. In the course of 2005, the stalemate in the peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea had become more entrenched, and the possibility of an outbreak of hostilities increased. The situation further worsened when Eritrea imposed restrictions on the freedom of movement of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), including a ban on all Mission helicopter flights in the Eritrean airspace. The restrictions severely hampered the Mission's ability to carry out its mandated monitoring tasks. In turn, this led to increased tensions in the border area, with the parties accusing each other of preparing for hostilities. In May 2006, following a second meeting of the independent Boundary Commission at which the parties were unable to make any progress, the Security Council in its resolution 1681 (2006) took a decision to reduce the troop capacity at the Mission from 3,200 to 2,300.

5. Liberia

35. On 11 October 2005, the Liberian people took part in presidential and legislative elections followed by a presidential run-off election on 8 November 2005 in which they selected the first elected female Head of State in Africa. The security situation in Liberia has remained stable and good progress is being made by the new Government, with the support of its international partners, in addressing the underlying causes of conflict. Nevertheless, the country faces formidable challenges to long-term recovery including massive youth unemployment, deep poverty and lack of infrastructure and basic services. The recent lifting (see Security Council resolution 1689 (2006)) of the Council sanctions on Liberian timber should provide much-needed financial resources. **Technical and financial assistance for the implementation of infrastructure projects is needed from the international community, as such projects could contribute both to stimulating the economy and to constructively employing youth.**

6. Sierra Leone

36. On 31 December 2005, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) completed its mandate and was replaced by the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL), to help the Government consolidate peace in that country. The Integrated Office is working closely with the Government to address the fragile security situation and resuscitate economic activity. While judicial sector reform is under way and is showing results, the process is slow and hampered by lack of institutional capacity and adequate personnel. A key challenge for Sierra Leone remains growing unemployment which is most acute among the youth, a significant number of whom are ex-combatants. In recognition of these challenges, the Security Council has requested the assistance of the Peacebuilding Commission with a view to strengthening the consolidation of peace in Sierra Leone.

7. Sudan

37. The United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS), which was established in March 2005, has a broad mandate in the North-South peace process to assist in areas ranging from good offices and political support, to security, governance, humanitarian assistance and development. Some progress has been made in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (S/2005/78, annex) which was signed by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army and the Government of the Sudan on 9 January 2005; however, there have been significant delays in several areas, thus creating mistrust and stifling popular support for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. The National Petroleum Commission, a key element of the wealth-sharing arrangements of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, has been established but is not yet performing as envisaged. It is critical that the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army be supported in strengthening its new leadership after the untimely death of John Garang only three weeks after his having been sworn in to office as the first-ever Southern Sudanese Vice-President of the Sudan.

38. The signing of the Darfur Peace Agreement by the Government and one faction of the Sudan Liberation Army in May 2006 was a major breakthrough and could lay the foundation for a handover of the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS) to a larger United Nations force. In June 2006, the African Union expressed its intention to increase the African Union Mission in the Sudan force of 7,000 by an additional 3,000 troops in response to continuing violence and human rights violations in Darfur. Despite the pressure expected during the June-July 2006 African Union Summit, the Government of the Sudan did not agree to accept a United Nations peacekeeping force. Accordingly, the African Union extended the mandate of the Mission to 31 December 2006 and will need continuing support from the donor community to maintain its presence in Darfur.

39. Relations between the Sudan and Chad seriously deteriorated despite the fact that the two countries had signed the Tripoli Declaration and Agreement on 8 February 2006. A power vacuum on the porous Chad/Sudan border has developed, with arms, fighters, and displaced persons from both sides traversing the border. In the report of the recent Security Council mission to the Sudan and Chad (4-10 June 2006) (S/2006/433), the mission noted the very high level of distrust subsisting between N'Djamena and Khartoum. Continuing instability in Chad and in the Chad-Sudan border area will further exacerbate the Darfur crisis and is likely to endanger the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement as well as, potentially, to have a regional spillover effect in the Central African Republic.

8. Western Sahara

40. During the past year, the deadlock between the parties has persisted. In August 2005, I had appointed a Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, to work with the parties, neighbouring States and other stakeholders to overcome the political impasse. The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) has continued to monitor the ceasefire, foster overall security in the region and help build confidence between the two parties. Nevertheless, violent demonstrations in the Territory, coupled with allegations of human rights abuses, have continued since May 2005. The increased presence of stranded migrants in the Territory placed heavy demands on the Mission's available resources and negatively

impacted the discharge of its core mandate. The continuing stalemate in Western Sahara clearly illustrates the limitations of the effectiveness of the United Nations in situations where the parties to the conflict lack the political will to effect change.

C. Post-conflict peacebuilding

41. Building and consolidating peace are complex endeavours that, starting from the immediate post-conflict period and lasting over a long period of gradual normalization, involve a multitude of actors and affect a wide range of areas. The range of tasks may include (a) rebuilding a country's economic and social fabric; (b) addressing the root causes of the conflict such as inequalities, discrimination and poverty, among others; (c) reducing "conflict opportunities", that is to say, diminishing the attractiveness and profitability of conflict by preventing powerful groups from acquiring weapons, generating funds and recruiting troops to wage war; and (d) creating durable peace-supportive security, governance and rule-of-law structures, while laying the foundation for pro-poor economic growth and development.

42. Given the enormity and complexity of peacebuilding efforts, one of the foremost challenges is generating and maintaining strong political support from key stakeholders. This support is critical to preventing a relapse into conflict which would waste the valuable financial, human and political investments that were made to bring about the initial peace. Mobilizing sufficient resources, including from domestic and regional sources, has proved equally challenging. Additionally, achieving enhanced coordination of the myriad of State, intergovernmental, non-State and private actors and effecting greater coherence of peacebuilding strategies have been identified as essential steps towards improving international peacebuilding assistance.

1. Peacebuilding Commission

43. By establishing a Peacebuilding Commission,² world leaders have taken steps to close the institutional gap within the United Nations system that previously left some key political, financial and coordination issues unaddressed in the peace consolidation phase. The Commission will, for the first time, bring together all key stakeholders of the peacebuilding process and draw on the whole range of United Nations expertise to ensure enhanced coordination and policy coherence. It will also marshal additional resources and work closely with the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly to ensure that post-conflict countries do not face a shortfall in assistance and attention once they disappear from the headlines of the international media.

44. The establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission and its associated Peacebuilding Support Office and Peacebuilding Fund represents a significant step forward which should lead to better-financed and more coherent and effective peace consolidation. The Commission is an advisory body, and much of its influence will flow from its diverse and high-level membership as well as from the quality of its

² See Security Council resolution 1645 (2005) and General Assembly resolution 60/180, both of 20 December 2005, by which the Council and the Assembly, acting concurrently, decided to operationalize the decision taken by the 2005 World Summit to establish the Peacebuilding Commission.

advice. At the inaugural meeting of its first session, held on 23 June 2006, the Commission adopted its rules of procedure, elected Angola as Chair and El Salvador and Norway as Vice-Chairs of the Organizational Committee and considered a letter dated 21 June 2006 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General (PBC/OC/1/2) in which the Council had requested the advice of the Commission on the situations in Burundi and Sierra Leone.

2. Peacebuilding support and post-conflict reconstruction

45. The Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat managed special political missions and peacebuilding support offices engaged in conflict prevention, peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding in West and Central Africa.³ These Department of Political Affairs-led field operations provide political analysis and a platform for preventive diplomacy and other activities across a range of disciplines. The peacebuilding support offices in Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic aim to help these two countries consolidate peace through comprehensive peacebuilding strategies developed and carried out by national actors in cooperation with United Nations development and humanitarian entities on the ground.

46. The World Bank supported the transition from conflict to peace by assisting affected countries in restarting economic activity and social services. It built on political processes and sometimes joined peace negotiations to facilitate economic and social development plans. The Bank was engaged in 17 conflict-affected countries in Africa during the reporting period. An assessment of the Bank's "conflict portfolio" in fiscal year 2005/06, primarily comprising International Development Association grants and loans, was an estimated \$3,143.3 million, with some 54 active projects. The Bank also raised over \$1 billion in its current portfolio by way of multi-donor trust funds, including the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) for the Great Lakes region.

3. Challenges and constraints

47. Despite these positive peacebuilding developments, major challenges remain. There is a need to better understand the specific causes of conflict and post-conflict dynamics of individual societies. The international community has learned from recent events that detailed knowledge of domestic political dynamics is critical to success. Furthermore, the support and involvement of the local population in peacebuilding initiatives are needed if peace is to be sustained over the long term.

48. Peace will remain fragile if the socio-economic condition of ordinary people, and particularly the youth, is not improved. Therefore, peace consolidation strategies must be based on a realistic plan for effective and sustainable pro-poor economic recovery. Appropriate economic policies such as preferential trade and aid agreements and significant debt relief can expedite post-conflict economic recovery and thus produce critical peace dividends for the population. Peace consolidation strategies must address critical issues such

³ Namely, the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic; the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region; the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau; the United Nations Office for West Africa; and the United Nations Political Office for Somalia.

as land reform, massive unemployment and better management of natural resources so as to provide financing for development.

D. Cross-cutting issues

1. Youth

49. While nearly two thirds of Africa's population are under age 24, their majority status has not yet resulted in a corresponding level of political or economic influence in most societies. Youth unemployment in Africa is among the highest in the world and 55 per cent of African youth aged 15-24 live on less than US\$ 2 a day.⁴ **Political and economic marginalization of youth is a structural source of conflict and therefore constitutes a major impediment to the transition from war to peace and to the prevention of violent conflict.**

50. **Measures to address this challenge should include improving access to productive assets for youth, empowering them politically and economically, creating and expanding income-generating activities and involving them in community-based decision-making so as to provide them with the opportunity to become active agents for building peace, preventing conflict and promoting a culture of peace.**

51. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its country offices work extensively with youth in conflict and post-conflict situations in Africa. In Liberia, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) supported a youth parliament to ensure the active involvement of young people in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of decisions that affected them. In preparation for the 2005 elections, UNICEF used the parliament to advance youth participation in political dialogue. The World Bank supported the creation of the Youth Employment Summit Campaign (2002-2012), aimed at influencing national and regional policies in order to better tackle youth unemployment.

52. Over the last few years, the Security Council and the General Assembly have drawn attention to the desperate plight of children in armed conflict. In 2005, the Council adopted resolution 1612 (2005) which, together with earlier resolutions, focused on the need to implement international norms and standards for protecting children in armed conflict.

53. In order to address the gravity of the challenges faced by youth in African countries emerging from conflict, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa will convene an Expert Group Meeting from 14 to 16 November 2006, entitled "Youth in Africa: participation of youth as partners in peace and development in post-conflict countries", to identify strategies for creating income-generating activities, integrating youth more fully into political life and enhancing community-based rehabilitation.

⁴ See Economic Commission for Africa, "Youth: a vital role to play", *The Web Magazine* (Addis Ababa), 13 September 2005 (available from http://www.uneca.org/mdgs/about_the_web_magazine.asp. Path: previous stories).

2. Natural resource exploitation in post-conflict countries

54. In the last decade, few issues have engaged international attention concerning Africa as much as the numerous conflicts involving the ownership, management and control of natural resources. While conflicts involving natural resources increased and their devastating consequences widened, interest in ensuring that natural resource endowments become instruments of peace, stability and peacebuilding has also grown. This is evidenced by the expanding number of national and international initiatives designed to stem illicit exploitation and sale of natural resources.

55. For African countries emerging from conflict, a major challenge is to develop mechanisms to promote responsible, economically productive resource management and to ensure equitable distribution of wealth to all stakeholders. Inadequate global economic and financial regulations, high profit margins and weak administrative and technical capacity in a number of African countries make managing the natural resource sector particularly difficult.

56. Unresolved ownership issues in some areas are also linked to illegal exploitation of natural resources, as private citizens and diverse groups enter into conflict on the strength of their perceived ownership of such resources. The difficulty of integrating incompatible land tenure systems, for which the local communities have varying degrees of recognition and respect, remains a major challenge in some African countries.

57. In June 2006, an Expert Group Meeting entitled, "Natural Resources and Conflict in Africa: Transforming a Peace Liability into a Peace Asset" was held in Cairo. The Meeting was organized by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa in cooperation with the Government of Egypt and with the support of the Government of Sweden to address the key issue of improving governance of natural resource management in post-conflict countries.

58. The final summary of the discussion at the Meeting including the full set of recommendations is available from the website of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (<http://www.un.org/africa/osaa/>. Path: What's New in OSAA). Experts recommended that the international community should support the African Union-led process of developing minimum standards for natural resource governance; enhance governmental and civil society capacity for natural resource management, including the strengthening of monitoring and enforcement mechanisms; involve the private sector as a partner in post-conflict reconstruction and development activities; and strengthen existing mechanisms, particularly the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.

3. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants

59. Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programmes have been critical for the consolidation of peace processes and sustainable development. To complement the work of the United Nations Inter-agency Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and the Stockholm Initiative on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa organized an International Conference on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Stability in Africa from 21 to 23 June 2005 in Freetown, in which over 100 African practitioners and their development partners participated. **The Conference stressed the need for African ownership, regional and**

integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration approaches and the promotion of parallel development and support programmes to facilitate community-based reintegration. Participants agreed that a regular dialogue between African practitioners themselves, as well as with international practitioners of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, would contribute to improving disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. The Office of the Special Adviser on Africa will convene the next forum for practitioners of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in early 2007, focusing on issues related to combatants on foreign soil, transitional justice, child soldiers, and the linkage between security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes.

III. Building African capacity and enhancing cooperation

A. Peace efforts of the African Union

60. At its fifth ordinary session in July 2005, the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government pledged to address conflict and political instability on the continent with the aim of achieving a conflict-free Africa by 2010. The mediation, conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts of the African Union and subregional organizations are increasingly important complements to the actions of the United Nations. Indeed, there have been occasions (for example, prior to the reaching of a peace agreement between the parties) and situations (in which, for example, Governments were hesitant to allow international troops to intervene) where African peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts played the key role.

61. During the past year, the African Union has been involved in mediations in Chad, Côte d'Ivoire and the Sudan. In its peacekeeping work in the Darfur region of the Sudan, the African Union Mission in the Sudan has worked hard to contribute to stability and security despite severe resource and logistic constraints and amid increased tension, violence and human suffering. As of 23 June 2006, the Mission had a strength of 5,738 military and 1,458 police personnel, with the majority of troops coming from Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa and Ghana.

62. The African Union is also playing a significant normative and operational role in promoting good governance. The Constitutive Act of the African Union binds member States to uphold a number of democratic principles, among them the condemnation and rejection of unconstitutional changes of government and the application of sanctions against regimes in violation. Current efforts by some leaders to alter constitutional term-limit provisions so as to enable incumbents to remain in office may undermine democratic achievements of the last two decades on the continent. In April 2006, member States of the Union considered a draft charter on democracy, elections and governance⁵ which is intended to reinforce the commitment of AU member States to democracy, development and peace.

⁵ Further information is available from <http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/conferences/past/2006/april/pa/apr7/meeting.htm>.

B. Cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union

63. In Darfur, the United Nations and the African Union Mission in the Sudan are working together through the deployment of the United Nations Assistance Cell in Addis Ababa; through their respective Special Representatives in Khartoum; and on the ground in Darfur. The United Nations has continued to provide support to the African Union, including to the enhancement of African peacekeeping capacity, in collaboration with the European Union (EU) and bilateral donors. The United Nations also helped to organize a recent map exercise (MAPEX) that brought together the United Nations, EU, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the African Union, and helped the African Union identify its broader capacity-building needs.

64. During the reporting period, the United Nations has worked closely with the African Union on conflict mediation, peace processes and national reconciliation in Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Chad. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights supported enhancement of the operations of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. The Office of the High Commissioner also initiated and participated in consultations convened to establish an African human rights defenders' award.

C. Building African Union capacity

65. Given the willingness of the African Union to play a major role in establishing and maintaining peace on the continent, and the international community's support of this regional role (see General Assembly resolution 60/1, para. 68), efforts must be made to enhance formal collaboration with the United Nations and to expand technical and financial assistance to the Union. The Union has endeavoured to finance its work through contributions of its own member States. However, it is increasingly apparent that the demands for Union assistance and services exceed member-supported resources. Non-African States have, in the past, provided financial support for Union programmes and it may be timely for donors to renew and strengthen their support.

66. To meet the request of the African Union for enhanced cooperation, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations Secretariat proposes to put in place dedicated capacities to support the enhancement of Union peacekeeping. This would constitute an interdisciplinary capacity based primarily in Addis Ababa, focused on the priority areas identified by the Union, and designed to elaborate and implement a comprehensive programme of support to African peacekeeping capacities. The structure would include military, police, logistics, administration and finance, information management, and communications expertise. It would build on the experience and cooperative relations already established in the context of the United Nations Assistance Cell in Addis Ababa and would provide guidance and assistance on cross-cutting issues such as doctrine and training. The integrated capacity would be supported by a small team at Headquarters in New York to facilitate the provision of support from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

67. The increased efforts of some individual agencies and departments notwithstanding, a more coordinated and comprehensive and more clearly articulated approach is needed. In December 2005, the African Union identified the following priority areas for cooperation with the United Nations: capacity-building for mission planning and management; training of military, police and civilian personnel for peace operations; and logistics support, in particular the provision of equipment and development of African Union air- and sealift capacities.

68. In line with the decision of world leaders at the 2005 World Summit, I undertook a preliminary review in January 2006 of the United Nations system capacity to meet the priority needs identified by the African Union. I am now preparing to send an interdepartmental task force from the United Nations to the African Union to develop a comprehensive 10-year capacity-building plan.

69. **Key challenges that must be addressed by the mission include:**

- **Establishing closer and more structured cooperation between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, including holding joint meetings and developing a collaborative reporting mechanism**
- **Improving early warning and mediation skills; building capacity, inter alia, to improve the management of peace support operations and the planning of emergency responses; and supporting key peacebuilding needs such as security sector reform**
- **Beyond peacekeeping assistance, supporting the African Union in building capacity regarding political and electoral matters, governance, human rights and the rule of law, peacebuilding, and humanitarian assistance.**

70. The road map of African peacekeeping capacity has received international support and is designed to assist the development of the African Standby Forces. Yet, it can be implemented only with sustained, generous and coordinated support from the international community. **The specifics of the African Union-United Nations capacity-building programme should be elaborated and agreed by June 2007 and I request that the utmost consideration be given by Member States to providing appropriate financial, logistic and human resource support. Finally, I strongly urge donors to replenish the African Union Peace Facility whose funds are nearly exhausted by the efforts in the Sudan.**

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

71. There has been steady progress in the 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. While Africa has seen a significant decline in the number of areas experiencing conflict and violence over the last few years, new crises with the potential to grow into major conflicts have arisen within the reporting period and there are old crises bearing the same potential.

72. **Challenges mentioned in the previous progress report continue to hamper the achievement of peace and stability on the continent.** Greater efforts are required to effectively address youth unemployment, the devastating social,

economic and political impact of the HIV/AIDS crisis, the illicit exploitation of natural resources, and the illegal flows of small arms. Enhancing United Nations cooperation with African regional organizations, strengthening African peace support and early warning capacity, increasing financial resources for peace and development, and improving the coordination of all stakeholders will remain key to achieving a conflict-free Africa by 2010.

73. Of genuine concern are a number of developments, including in countries of great regional importance as well as in countries with relatively good track records, that may undermine achievements and investments made in the rule of law, democracy, political freedom, peace and development. Unconstitutional takeovers, efforts to prolong terms in public office, attempts to undermine or disqualify opposition members, incitement of hatred and attacks for political and electoral gain are potentially serious threats to peace and development in Africa. **Such problems must continue to be tackled by all Africans, and particularly by African Member States and regional organizations supported by the international community, with full determination and in a swift and effective manner that sends a clear message.**

74. Good governance is critical in countries emerging from conflict. Pre-existing weak State capacity has often been further crippled by conflict, while war economies thriving on illicit trade and production have diminished the residual elements of transparency, accountability and equitable access to and use of public revenues. **The post-conflict period provides a unique opportunity for Governments to create new governance structures, with the help of regional organizations and the international community, through which to foster sound management and equitable distribution of a country's wealth so as to help lift people out of poverty and to lay the basis for prosperity and sustainable development.**

75. I therefore call on African Member States, including at the level of the African Union and subregional organizations, to assist those African countries emerging from conflict in devising natural resource and public revenue management structures that will transform these resources from a peace liability into a peace asset. I also urge the international community, including the United Nations system and donor countries, to assist African countries in this important process by providing adequate financial and technical assistance.

76. I urge African leaders to continue to spearhead normative and regulatory innovations on a regional level, including policies aimed at providing various incentives that will help domestic and international actors engage in business practices and political activities that contribute to peace, development and good governance. The international community, including donor countries, must stand ready to fully and wholeheartedly support these African efforts through generous financial and technical assistance and full cooperation.

77. As I pointed out in paragraph 168 of my first report on the prevention of armed conflict (A/55/985-S/2001/574 and Corr.1), Governments that live up to their sovereign responsibility to peacefully resolve situations that might otherwise deteriorate into threats to international peace and security, provide the best protection for their citizens against unwelcome outside interference. Prevention continues to be better, and far more cost-effective, than cure. This entails the

prevention of conflict outbreak as well as of conflict recurrence. Addressing root causes of conflicts is the surest way to avert violent conflict and human suffering; nevertheless, reducing “conflict opportunities” that enable, facilitate or fuel conflict is also essential.

78. The role of the media is critical in conflict prevention, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding. A responsible media can support peace efforts through educating the population about the benefits of peace and the negative implications of war, promote reconciliation and mutual understanding, hold parties to the peace agreement accountable and help combat and discourage corruption and bad governance. The media also play a critical role in early warning and in generating the political will necessary for early action. However, negative use of the media has also contributed to hatred, and instigation and escalation of violence, and has fomented societal division. **Therefore, it is important to discourage hate media and promote responsible journalism through training of journalists, promoting journalistic ethical standards and objectivity, and adequately remunerating journalists. Current efforts to create pan-African television and radio stations should be welcomed and supported.**

79. One of the most important factors in preventing the recurrence of conflict is providing people with basic livelihoods and opportunities to escape poverty. Good governance, human rights and democracy by themselves may not prevent conflict if people continue to be impoverished and have to fight for their daily survival. Better policies must therefore be found to stimulate strong economic recovery in order to provide employment opportunities for large numbers of youths. **Merging peace and development elements into one coherent holistic peacebuilding response will be the task of the Peacebuilding Commission, by which all relevant stakeholders in the formulation of peacebuilding strategies will be brought together for the first time. I call upon all actors, including the Bretton Woods institutions and development partners, to fully engage and commit to this important process.**

80. To help Africa achieve its ambitious yet realistic goals of achieving peace, security and prosperity, including a conflict-free Africa in 2010, I call on Member States to consider the creation of millennium peace and security goals. Mirroring the Millennium Development Goals, these goals would commit the international community to making the security of civilians a priority and would systematize efforts to achieve this objective.
