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**REPORT OF THE FIELD MISSION OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE AFRICAN
UNION TO COTE D'IVOIRE, 25 – 30 JULY 2011**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Delegation of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) undertook a field mission to Cote d'Ivoire, from 25 to 30 July 2011. The mission was undertaken in implementation of the Decision of the 273rd meeting of the PSC, held on 21 April 2011. The purpose of the mission was to gather views from the Ivorian Authorities and other relevant stakeholders on the challenges facing Cote d'Ivoire, which emerged from a devastating crisis in mid-April 2011. The views gathered are to help the AU to better tailor its support to the country as it undertakes its post-conflict reconstruction and development process.

2. The Delegation, which was led by Ambassador Ferdinand Montcho of Benin, Chairperson of the PSC for July 2011, comprised of the representatives of other Member States of the PSC, namely, Chad, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania and Zimbabwe, as well as personnel from the AU Commission (see Annex I).

II. CONSULTATIONS

3. Simply stated and summarized, the Ivorian and other stakeholders consulted by the PSC Delegation in Abidjan, from 25 to 30 July 2011, conveyed the same great message. The stakeholders that were consulted ranged from Ministers to the Prime Minister, who is also the Minister of Defence; from political parties and the Independent Electoral Commission to the Commission for Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation; and from sections of the diplomatic community, civil society organizations, humanitarian agencies to the leadership of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) (see Annex II attached to this Report). The message was that Côte d'Ivoire has irreversibly entered into a post-crisis/post-conflict phase, whereupon the consolidation of peace, reconciliation and the restoration of socio-political cohesion, as well as socio-economic recovery, constitute the major challenges at hand. The stakeholders stressed that Côte d'Ivoire is in need of urgent concrete support from the African Union and the broader international community to rebuild its political and socio-economic fabric.

4. During the consultations that the PSC Delegation held with the Authorities and other stakeholders, the main elements provided were the same. Apart from some differences with respect to specific concerns/pre-occupations, the message conveyed was the same.

a) Presentations Made by the Ministers

5. Addressing the PSC Delegation in separate meetings, on 26 and 27 July 2011, respectively, the Minister responsible for African Integration and the Minister of State for Justice (also acting for the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, then on trip with President

Alassane Quattara, to the USA), as well as the Deputy Minister for Defence, highlighted the important role played by the AU in the Ivorians' long search for peace; the successful reunification of the country; the integration of the different military forces into a single Army under a single chain of command; the initiative underway to re-integrate around 20,000 ex-combatants; the gradual deployment of the National Police and Gendarmerie to maintain law and order, with concurrent steps towards confining the Army to the barracks, some of which are being refurbished and new ones being built and the introduction of a national free health care system.

6. The Ministers noted that the major priorities of the Government in the short-term include the enhancement of security, consolidation of peace, re-activation of State institutions, reconciliation and restoration of social cohesion; return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPS) and refugees; mobilization of resources to provide compensation to ECOWAS business persons and others concerned in the country, who incurred losses and damage of property during the post-election crisis; undertaking socio-economic recovery programmes, and addressing the problem of indebtedness. They also stressed, as well articulated by the Minister of Justice, that those Ivorians who committed crime will face justice, either within the national system or under the International Criminal Court, depending on the nature of crimes. The Government will do everything necessary to deal with impunity, as part of healing the spirit and wounds of the victims. In this context, measures will be taken to revitalize the judiciary and the prison service.

b) Views and Concerns raised by the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) enlarged into the National Congress of Resistance for Democracy (CNRD)

7. During the meeting held on 28 July 2011, the CNRD, a coalition of political parties, trade unions, civil society organizations and some movements that supported the former Gbagbo regime, informed the PSC Delegation that it was willing to support the Government in its efforts to address the post-crisis challenges facing the country. The CNRD wants to contribute to the consolidation of peace and stabilisation in the country. However, it wants the Government to recognize it as an "official opposition in the country". For the Government to effectively implement reconciliation and other programmes, it needs to work with the CNRD, which is the largest political coalition out of the Government.

8. The CNRD raised the following concerns that it called on the Government to address: liberation of Mr. Laurent Gbagbo and his wife, who are currently under house arrest; payment of salaries (currently suspended) to parliamentarians; restitution of confiscated property to its owners, among them members of the opposition; immediate confinement of the Army to barracks and deployment of the police to maintain law and order; the use of the State Radio by the victors to spread partisan and anti-opposition information, contrary to the new spirit of reconciliation; witch-hunting by the Government against Mr. Gbagbo's allies and members of the opposition; the Government is not showing good faith in taking measures to facilitate the return of IDPs, refugees and exiles, yet some of those people are supposed to participate in the upcoming legislative elections.

c) Views expressed by the Union of Houphouëtistes for Democracy and Peace (RHDP)

9. The RHDP, which regroups seven political formations presently in power, commended the visit of the PSC Delegation, in follow up to earlier visits to the country, as a further testimony of unrelenting AU support to Côte d'Ivoire. Having stressed the need to consolidate peace, enhance security, achieve reconciliation and pursue accelerated socio-economic recovery, the RHDP made appeals to the opposition to join hands with the Government and provide support to its efforts in the various fields.

10. The RHDP raised the concerns that: the FPI and its allied political formations are spreading poisonous information, including rumours that Mr. Laurent Gbagbo is to return to power; the elements of the militia that were at the service of Mr. Laurent Gbagbo have disappeared into the population with arms and are running a campaign of terror against some communities; the opposition political parties must cooperate with and support the Government in the implementation of its programme to consolidate peace, democracy and ensure early socio-economic recovery of the country.

d) Views expressed by the Chairperson of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI)

11. Saying that the country has finally emerged from the post-election crisis, with important lessons to learn, the Chairperson of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI) stated that preparations for the legislative elections, slated for the end of the year, have already started. The Commission was putting in place the various requirements, including reviewing/updating the List of Voters, the same one used for the 2010 presidential election, replacing equipment and material destroyed during the post-election crisis, as well as the determination of the constituencies and polling centres. The United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) and partners will provide support towards the electoral process. The Chairperson appealed to the AU to provide support towards the legislative elections, of which the specific date is still to be fixed.

e) Views expressed by the Chairperson of the Commission for Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation

12. The Chairperson of the Commission for Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation informed the PSC Delegation that, as Côte d'Ivoire emerges from crisis, it was important that all the Ivorians collectively construct the pillars for rebuilding the country's moral, cultural and social cohesion that has been shattered by ten years of conflict. There is need to provide for a healing process in the country that should expose the facts about the gravity events, especially the violations of human rights and the commission of economic crimes, that took place since 2002, when the conflict first erupted, identify those responsible and find ways of responding to the issues in a way that allows the country to leave trauma to the past and move forward. The Commission, which has been established by an Ordinance, and was expected to be operationalized by the end of July 2011, has no judicial competency. It is only

a mechanism providing an opportunity to the Ivorians to speak to one another, get the truth about the traumatizing experiences that they have gone through and facilitate forgiveness and healing. The Chairperson clarified that national justice mechanisms and international justice mechanisms would take care of cases that may emerge in the process, but that are beyond the competence of the Commission. The Commission has two years in which to accomplish its mandate.

f) Views and observations made by sections of the diplomatic community

13. The sections of the diplomatic community consulted by the PSC Delegation included the Group of African Ambassadors, the Group of non-African Ambassadors and the EU Delegation in Cote d'Ivoire. The Group of African Ambassadors, whilst lauding the return of peace in the country and the efforts being deployed by the Government and other stakeholders to put the country back on its feet, was particularly concerned with the issue of compensation to ECOWAS citizens who were operating businesses in Côte d'Ivoire and suffered losses during the period of the post-election crisis. The Group expressed the need for communication between the Government and itself, in order to find the best ways of addressing the issue. Calling for remedy, the Group also expressed serious concern about the presence of free-running mercenaries in Côte d'Ivoire and in the region. The Group of non-African Ambassadors stressed the need for urgent measures to: enhance security; consolidate peace; achieve reconciliation; create conducive conditions for the legislative elections and undertake early socio-economic recovery. The EU Ambassador stated the lifting of sanctions against Côte d'Ivoire and the resumption of EU's funding support to the country, among other EU initiatives.

g) Views and concerns raised by Civil Society Organizations

14. In all, the PSC Delegation met separately with three Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including a women's organization. In common, those CSOs stated their commitment to play a role in the consolidation peace, restoration of social cohesion and the creation of conditions conducive for the upcoming legislative elections. The CSOs raised the following concerns that they want the Government to address: exclusion of civil society representation in the Commission for Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation; exclusion of civil society representation in the CEI; slow return to law and order based on policing; absence of dialogue between the Government and the opposition; poor representation of women in the Government, with only five posts for women, out of the top thirty six posts in the Government; slow measures being taken by the Government for the return of IDPs, refugees and exiles and the need for confinement of the Army to the barracks;

15. Indeed, the women CSO criticized the AU for undertaking several missions to Côte d'Ivoire with little impact and no follow up on requests made by the Ivorians and for being generally weak in conflict prevention and resolution.

h) Views and observations made by Humanitarian Agencies

16. Saying that they provide assistance in various social sectors, the humanitarian agencies (ICRC, Oxfam, Care, Médecins Sans Frontières, Save the Children, Fund and Action Against Hunger) informed the PSC Delegation that the education, health and other social sectors have been undermined by ten years of crisis, with further disruption being caused by the fighting during the post-election crisis. The northern and western parts of the country were more severely affected. Schools have either been destroyed or vandalized in some areas. In general, there are shortages of clean water, medicine, food and other basic necessities in most urban and rural areas of Côte d'Ivoire. A large number of teachers deserted schools and part of the medical personnel left health facilities. Administrative services in the countryside are in a weakened condition in these sectors. Consequently, more than 100,000 children are unable to attend school, whilst millions lack access to health services in the northern and western parts of Côte d'Ivoire. Gender-based violence has left a terrible impact in some communities.

17. Furthermore, as highlighted particularly by the ICRC, the humanitarian agencies noted that there are around 200,000 refugees located in Côte d'Ivoire's neighbors, with Liberia holding around 140 000 of them. Near to one million people have been displaced and lack access to basics. They called on the Government to take urgent measures to facilitate the early return of those IDPs and refugees.

i) Views and observations made by ONUCI

18. The leadership of the ONUCI, in two briefings at its Headquarters, one by the Special Representative of UN Secretary – General for Côte d'Ivoire, in charge of ONUCI, Mr. Young J. Choi, and another by senior ONUCI officials, informed the PSC Delegation that: ONUCI is building eight (8) barracks in the west of the country to help the Government in its efforts to confine the armed forces to barracks and to re-assure the local population; ONUCI will provide support to the competent institutions in their preparation for and conduct of legislative elections scheduled for the end of 2011; there is an urgent need for the Government to enhance security all over the country, especially through empowering Prefects and deploying the Police and Gendarmerie; the Government should take measures to reverse the general perception in the south of the country that the Forces républicaines de la Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI) is an Army of the victors, deriving from the north of the country and designed to promote and protect partisan interests.

j) Views expressed and Requests made by Prime Minister Guillaume Soro

19. Addressing the PSC Delegation at his Office on 28 July 2011, Prime Minister Guillaume Soro candidly and comprehensively provided a profile of the post-election crisis situation in Côte d'Ivoire and the challenges facing the country. He acknowledged the major contribution made by the AU since 2002, which he said took "decisive positions and decisions", thereby helping Côte d'Ivoire to finally emerge from its crisis. The Prime Minister

noted that the post-election crisis alone caused the death of around 3,000 persons, displaced thousands and created over 200,000 refugees.

20. Stating the progress made by the Government since 1 June 2011, when it took Office and the initiatives underway, Prime Minister Soro went on to precise that:

- The different military forces have been fully integrated into a single Army, in conformity to the relevant provisions of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and its Supplementary Agreements. The Government has established a single chain of command, with the appointment on 7 July 2011, of the respective commanders of the components of the FRCI: Infantry, Air Force, Navy, National Police and Gendarmerie. The grades/ranks have been harmonized and rationalized. The Government is mobilizing the requisite resources to ensure the sustained and effective functioning of all these vital State services and for the reintegration of ex-combatants that were not enlisted into the FRCI;
- Security has returned to the entirety of the country. Citizens are moving freely and commercial activities have started thriving again. The remaining gaps in security, particularly in the west of the country, will soon be filled;
- The Government is laying down the foundation for reconciliation. The Commission for Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation, as established and soon to be operationalized, has for sole task, to advance reconciliation and help re-establish social cohesion;
- The Government is working at full speed to re-establish the machinery of the rule of law all over the country;
- In pursuit of the relevant provisions of the Ouagadougou Political Agreement and its Supplementary Agreements, the Government, through the CEI and the Constitutional Council, with the support of ONUCI, has started the process of preparing for legislative elections to be held by end of 2011. The List of Voters used for the presidential election is the one to be used for the legislative elections, with the List being updated where necessary;
- The Government has introduced a free health care system, which indeed, requires large funding;
- The Government is taking urgent measures to re-energize the economy, including making payments to businesses that have and continue to provide necessary supplies to the Government, mobilizing investors and engaging international financial institutions;
- Efforts are being deployed by the Government to alleviate the humanitarian crisis, through improving security and creating other necessary conditions for the return of IDPs and refugees. In this respect, and responding to a request by the PSC delegation, Prime Minister Soro undertook that Côte d'Ivoire will take immediate steps to sign and ratify the AU Convention for Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons;

The Government is consulting with the neighboring countries regarding the Ivoirians who ran into exile, especially Ghana (host to most of the self-exiled Ivoirians), with a view to facilitating the return of those exiles. Indeed, those amongst them who

committed crimes will have to face justice. The Government will take stern measures against impunity, including through working with the International Criminal Court.

21. The Prime Minister also explained that, in May 2011, he invited the opposition parties to take part in the Government. Initially, the parties responded favourably. But thereafter, they declined to join it, saying that they had decided to stay as an opposition out of the Government.

22. Articulating the immediate challenges facing his country, the Prime Minister mentioned that:

- 4,000,000 people, especially among the youth, are currently unemployed. This is a risk and the Government has to take urgent measures to re-vitalize the economy;
- Around 200,000 refugees must be returned back home and all the IDPs resettled in their normal habitations;
- Côte d'Ivoire has a huge external debt, almost beyond its means, with its conflict-ravaged economy. There is an urgent need for debt cancellation;
- The Infantry, the Air Force, the Navy, the National Police and the Gendarmerie, are now in operation. These services are in dire need of skilled personnel. Hence training programmes must be provided, especially for the command and senior management level personnel.

23. Concluding his contribution, Prime Minister Soro made the following request to the AU, through the PSC Delegation:

“Côte d'Ivoire needs money from the African Union for early socio-economic recovery. You have brought nothing. Give us money; come back after two months and you will see what we are able to do. The AU should mobilize resources to enable Côte d'Ivoire to implement a Marshall Plan type of recovery and development programme. The AU should also undertake a robust advocacy for the cancellation of Côte d'Ivoire debt, most of which is owed to France and Germany. As for the issue of security and we know that it is vital for all Ivoirians and investors, it is a matter of time. The Government is in just two months of operation. It will take urgent measures to fill all the gaps in security all over the country”.

III. ASSESSMENT/FINDINGS

24. Having consulted with the Ivorian Authorities and other stakeholders during its four day stay in Côte d'Ivoire, it is the assessment/findings of the PSC Delegation that:

- Peace has returned in the country, but remains fragile;
- An atmosphere of residual insecurity still prevail in some parts of the country;
- The economy of the Côte d'Ivoire, once a shining beacon in Africa, has been severely fractured by the ten-year crisis, resulting in disrupted and dilapidated infrastructures, high unemployment (4,000,000 are unemployed, according to official sources),

- indebtedness and shortage of basics (medicine, school materials, clean water, disposable incomes, etc);
- Fear, suspicion, hatred and disinformation are still rife in some parts of the country; The humanitarian crisis remains in huge proportions, with urgent need for alleviation measures;
 - The upcoming legislative elections will have major demands for funding, material, logistics and security;
 - At the level of political parties, two major blocs dominate the current political landscape of Côte d'Ivoire, namely, the CNRD, which is the opposition and the RHDP, which is the footbase of the Government. Cooperation between the two blocs, which is not yet the case, is vital to give a chance to the Government to succeed in its current efforts and to boost reconciliation and social cohesion, as well as facilitating peaceful preparations for and conduct of the upcoming legislative elections, and,
 - Côte d'Ivoire needs confidence building and strengthening of good neighbourliness.

25. The above said, the comforting and promising news is that the Government is so determined and is working hard, doing everything within its limited means to restore peace, security and stability in the country. Also, Côte d'Ivoire has a huge self-evident potential for an early dynamic socio-economic recovery. Internal mobilization and the provision of international support is what is needed to unleash that potential. The Government has expressed its commitment to consolidating peace; enhancing security; re-activating State institutions and services, and creating new ones where necessary; promoting reconciliation and fighting impunity; re-energizing the economy; rehabilitating social and physical infrastructures; mobilizing domestic and international investment, and engaging international financial institutions, to lend support towards the country's early socio-economic recovery. Inevitably, it is in the undertaking of these complex interrelated tasks, that the Government and people of Côte d'Ivoire need to be accompanied and supported by the AU, ECOWAS and the larger international community.

IV. REQUESTS MADE BY THE IVORIAN AUTHORITIES

26. Notably, and specifically, the Ivorian Authorities have requested the AU to provide/mobilize support towards the following top priority areas, which constitute the current major lines of action of the Government:

a) Enhancement of security:

- Training of senior management of the FRCI;
- Rehabilitation and construction of additional army barracks;
- Construction of a new Army Staff College;
- Relocation back to the country of the Zambokro Peacekeeping Training Centre (relocated to Mali during the Ivorian crisis);
- Construction and rehabilitation of prison facilities (buildings and equipment), and,

- Reintegration of 20,000 ex-FDS and ex-FAFN combatants.

b) Return and resettlement of Refugees and IDPs:

- Carrying out a census of Ivorian refugees in the neighboring countries and assessing requirements for their early return to Cote d'Ivoire.

c) Strengthening good neighborliness and confidence building:

- Undertaking a study into the problem of free-running mercenaries, some of which are still hiding in Côte d'Ivoire and formulate long term remedies;
- Engaging Côte d'Ivoire's neighbors to facilitate the return of Ivorian exiles, some of whom are potential spoilers/threat to the ongoing pacification of Côte d'Ivoire, and may cause problems to host countries, and,
- Putting in place sustainable border patrol operations, especially along the Côte d'Ivoire/Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire/Ghana border areas.

d) Preparation for the Legislative Elections:

- Replacement of election equipment and materials, and provision of additional ones.

e) Implementation of early socio-economic recovery:

- Obtaining external debt cancellation for Côte d'Ivoire;
- Mobilization of private sector investors and support from international financial institutions, and,
- Organization, by the Government, of a Round Table in September 2011, to mobilize resources.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

27. In areas where its means/resources allow, the AU should respond to the request for support made by the Ivorian Authorities, to enable the Government to implement its early post-crisis/ post-conflict priorities. In this context, the AU should:

- a) Provide support for Security Sector Reform, including technical advice and exchange of experiences;
- b) Assist in post-conflict reconstruction and development and provide support to the Round Table planned by the Ivorian Government for September 2011;
- c) Undertake consultations to help strengthen good neighborliness and promote confidence building between Côte d'Ivoire and its neighbors. This should include

studying the problem of free-running mercenaries and laying parameters for a remedy;

- d) Engage in advocacy to assist Côte d'Ivoire to obtain debt cancellation (or reduction);
- e) Mobilize resources to facilitate the implementation of quick impact projects, particularly targeting areas/sectors that support reintegration of ex-combatants, and the return and resettlement of refugees and IDPs;
- f) Dispatch immediately a mission to assess the situation of Ivorian refugees in Côte d'Ivoire's neighbors and the requirements for their early return, and,
- g) Provide support to the Commission for Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation.

VI GRATITUDE

28. The PSC Delegation would like to express its gratitude to the Ivorian Government and all other stakeholders/interlocutors for receiving it and for facilitating its work. The Delegation would also like to extend its gratitude to Mr. Ambroise Niyonsaba, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission for Côte d'Ivoire, for his facilitation and support.