

<b>UNITED NATIONS</b> <b>United Nations Mission</b> <b>In Ethiopia and Eritrea</b>		<b>NATIONS UNIES</b> <b>Mission des Nations Unies</b> <b>en Ethiopie et en Erythré</b>
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## UNMEE PUBLIC INFORMATION

UNMEE/PIO/PR/107

16 March 2005

### MILITARY COORDINATION COMMISSION HOLDS 29<sup>th</sup> MEETING IN NAIROBI

The 29<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Military Coordination Commission (MCC) was held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya. The Deputy Force Commander of the United Nations Mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), Brigadier-General Abraham M. Wambugu chaired the meeting. The Ethiopian delegation was led by Major-General Yohannes Gebremeskel, Commissioner for Coordination with UNMEE in Ethiopia and the Eritrean delegation by Colonel Zecarias Ogbagaber, Chief Acting Representative, Commission for Coordination with the Peacekeeping Mission (CCPM) in Eritrea. Brigadier-General Otisitswe Tiroyamodimo represented the African Union (AU).

In his opening statement, the Deputy Force Commander, Brigadier-General Wambugu welcomed the delegations and informed them that the general situation in the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) remained stable and calm. The Deputy Force Commander stated that the sanctity and the stability of the Temporary Security Zone was being maintained effectively by the UNMEE Force and that incidents of cross border violations, cattle rustling and restrictions on freedom of movement had generally remained at the usual levels. The Deputy Force Commander thanked both the Commissioners for their continued cooperation with UNMEE and for the transparency demonstrated by both countries, in helping UNMEE undertake its mandated tasks. The Deputy Force Commander informed the delegations that the Sector MCC's were continuing smoothly and that through this mechanism many local misunderstandings continued to be addressed, which in his view, was a very positive sign. Brigadier-General Wambugu thanked both the Senior Military Representatives for their continued support for the holding of the Sector MCC's on a regular basis, and their role in the creation of an environment of trust and confidence along the border.

Brigadier-General Wambugu also informed the delegates that the mandate of UNMEE had been reviewed by the Security Council in the past week and had now been extended for another six months by the Council's adoption of Resolution 1586. The Deputy Force Commander expressed the view that he was fairly satisfied with the security situation in the Mission area and had called on both countries to show restraint and caution, so as not to disturb the existing stability.

Brigadier-General Otisitswe Tiroyamodimo, representing the African Union, made a brief introductory statement; during which he stated that the African Union was fully committed to the peace process. He expressed optimism that the MCC's

and the Sector MCC's would create a better understanding between both the Parties and lead to a peaceful resolution of the peace process. He requested both countries to show restraint and not to react to provocative newspaper articles and unconfirmed allegations. He also expressed the view that the military situation inside the Temporary Security Zone and the Adjacent Areas was stable.

General Yohannes Gebremeskel, representing Ethiopia, expressed his gratitude to UNMEE for successfully maintaining the sanctity of the Temporary Security Zone and creating an environment of cooperation and understanding. He said he was in agreement with the assessment of the security situation by UNMEE and the AU. General Yohannes also clarified for the meeting that the redeployment of Ethiopian army troops along the Eritrean border was a purely defensive measure, and part of the reorganization of the Ethiopian Army. The Commissioner stated that incidents in the border areas should be given due attention by UNMEE and suitably reflected in its reports, so as to prevent any provocative act or create instability.

Eritrea's Colonel Zecarias Ogbagaber, Chief Acting Representative, also expressed his agreement with the assessment of the security situation by UNMEE. He stated that the peace process was at a crossroads and any instability in the security situation could put the peace process at risk. He expressed serious concerns about the movement of additional Ethiopian troops towards the southern boundary of the Temporary Security Zone. He reiterated his position that he did not consider these deployments defensive in nature and interpreted them to be provocative.

During the meeting, the delegations discussed the current military situation and reviewed the functioning of the SMCCs. The discussions were held in a cordial and a constructive environment and both sides expressed their willingness to cooperate fully with the UNMEE to resolve all relevant issues.

The Deputy Force Commander concluded by thanking both the Commissioners for the excellent cooperation extended by both countries to him, as well as to the UNMEE troops.

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