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**MILITARY COORDINATION COMMISSION HOLDS 32nd
MEETING IN NAIROBI**

The 32nd meeting of the Military Coordination Commission (MCC) was held on 23 September 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya. Major-General Rajender Singh, Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), chaired the meeting. The Ethiopian delegation was led by Major-General Yohannes Gebremeskel, Commissioner for Coordination with UNMEE in Ethiopia. Colonel Zecarias Ogbagaber, Acting Commissioner, Commission for Coordination with the UN Peacekeeping Mission (CCPM) in Eritrea led the Eritrean delegation. The African Union was represented by its Senior Military Representative, Brigadier-General Otisitswe Tiroyamodimo.

In his opening statement, the Force Commander thanked the representatives of both the countries for their continued support for the MCC process and their cooperation with UNMEE in discharging its mandated tasks. He assessed that the overall military situation inside the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) and the adjacent areas had remained relatively stable and peaceful. The Force Commander noted with satisfaction that the Sector level Military Coordination Commissions (SMCC) had continued to promote trust, mutual understanding and cooperation among the local military commanders. He conveyed his appreciation to both Parties for taking measures to ensure that there were no violent incidents since the previous MCC. He lauded both Ethiopian and Eritrean delegations for the decrease in other incidents and measures such as the voluntary return of cattle. The Force Commander informed the delegates that along with the extension of its mandate, UNMEE has also been given some additional resources for more effectively accomplishing its authorized tasks.

Brigadier-General Otisitswe Tiroyamodimo of the African Union in his opening statement urged both parties to carry out their own internal investigations whenever allegations are reported from the other side, through UNMEE. While appreciating both the countries for supporting the efforts of the Sector level MCCs, he asked both Parties to empower their representatives in these forums to take decisions.

Eritrea's Colonel Zecarias Ogbagaber in his statement said that the security situation in the TSZ and adjacent areas cannot be described as stable when the stalemate in the peace process is continuing and the additional troops from Ethiopia remain in the border areas. He stated that the extension of UNMEE's mandate would have relevance only when it is supplemented by progress on implementation of the EEBC's decision. He acknowledged the work of UNMEE and appreciated the humanitarian projects that are being undertaken by the contingents in conjunction with the local administrators.

Major-General Yohannes Gebremeskel of Ethiopia in his remarks, said that he highly appreciated UNMEE's performance in maintaining stability and peace inside the Temporary Security Zone and the Adjacent Areas. He assured the meeting of full cooperation in investigating incidents and urged UNMEE to continue to assist the two sides in resolving local disputes. He expressed satisfaction over the reduction of incidents and increased cooperation in tackling cattle rustling incidents. He said that the nine-point peace proposal agreed to at the 30th MCC has contributed to peace in the TSZ and needed to be further pursued. He reiterated his side's commitment to transparency and cooperation.

During the meeting, the new sector commander of Sector West, Col Mohammad Al-Dwairi, was introduced to the delegates. He then gave a presentation on the activities of UNMEE in his sector.

The meeting was held in a cordial and a constructive atmosphere with both sides expressing their willingness to cooperate with UNMEE in maintaining peace and tranquillity in the Area of Responsibility.

The Force Commander concluded the meeting by thanking both Major-General Yohannes and Colonel Zecarias Ogbagaber for their frank and free exchange of views and concerns. He expressed the hope that with continuing cooperation from both sides, the TSZ will remain peaceful and militarily stable. He expressed his confidence that the MCC process would continue to demonstrate its value and prove to be an indispensable mechanism in the peace process.