



UNMEE PUBLIC INFORMATION

UNMEE/PIO/PR/71

5 February 2002

Eleventh Meeting of the Military Coordination Commission Held in Djibouti

The eleventh meeting of the Military Coordination Commission (MCC) was held on 5th February 2002 in Djibouti.

The meeting was chaired by the Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), Major-General Patrick Cammaert. Brigadier-General Peter Augustine Blay represented the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Ethiopia's military delegation was led by Brigadier-General Yohannes Gebremeskel, and Eritrea's delegation was led by Brigadier-General Abrahaley Kifle.

The Chairman congratulated the two delegations on the progress achieved to date in the peace process, and on the continuing respect for the integrity of the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) exhibited by the two parties.

The Commission received a comprehensive briefing on the status of UNMEE's deployment, as well as on the current military situation in all three sectors of the TSZ. The Chairman explained that since the last meeting, UNMEE had improved its monitoring of a set of "blind spots" north of the TSZ through a combination of prior-notification visits, intensified patrolling along major and secondary access routes, and a general improvement of working relations with Eritrean liaison officers and local commanders on the ground. As a result, UNMEE had acquired a better overall understanding of these restricted areas. Despite these advances, there remained room for improvement in the area north of the TSZ in the central sector. In addition, the larger issue of UNMEE's freedom of movement north of the TSZ remained unresolved. The Mission's overall assessment was that the situation in the TSZ was calm, and that there was no military build-up or change of posture on the part of either party.

There was also an extensive discussion of localized incidents such as those involving local herdsmen and instances of cattle-theft in the sectors West and Center. The Eritrean delegate rejected a proposal to have the relevant local civilian and military authorities from both sides meet on the southern boundary in sector West to discuss and resolve these issues.

The Commission agreed that the twelfth session of the MCC will be held in Djibouti in or around the beginning of March 2002.

*For additional information please contact: Jean Victor Nkolo, Spokesman
and Chief, Public Information Office, UNMEE Headquarters Addis Ababa, telephone: 251-1-443396;
Or UNMEE Headquarters Asmara, telephone: 291-1-150411
Or our tie line in New York: 00-1-212-963-3779 (E-mail: unmeepublicinformation@un.org)*