



BRIEFING TO THE AFRICAN GROUP

By

THE SPECIAL ADVISER ON AFRICA

Legwaila Joseph Legwaila

African Union Secretariat

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

The Chairman of the African Group;

Distinguished Members of African Delegations:

I hope it is not too late for me to wish you a happy and prosperous 2007 - - I don't believe it is ever too late for one to wish others well!

It is a pleasure for me to be with you again and to brief the African Group on my activities as Special Adviser on Africa to the UN Secretary-General. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity extended to me to provide this briefing.

Since my last briefing to you, on 20 November 2006, a number of significant events have taken place in the United Nations. I am sure you will agree that probably the most notable of these events was the assumption on 1 January 2007 of the office of Secretary-General of the United Nations by Mr. Ban ki-Moon, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea.

I have met with the Secretary-General a number of times since he took office, and I can assure you that his commitment to the United Nations Africa agenda is firm.

As you all know, in order to underline this commitment, the Secretary-General chose to visit four African capitals, including the seat of the African Union Headquarters, during his first official overseas visit. In each capital, he expressed his appreciation of the challenges that Africa faces and his support to the work that the United Nations is doing to help overcome those challenges.

Mr. Chairman,

As I mentioned a few moments ago, I am here today to apprise you of my recent activities, in particular on the Summit of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee and the meeting of the African Peer Review Forum, which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 28 to 30 January 2007.

I shall also brief you on my meetings with European Union officials at the EU headquarters in Brussels and with German Government officials in Berlin – the latter in the context of Germany’s presidency of the G8 for 2007 and of the EU for the first half of the year.

Perhaps I should start by noting (rather belatedly – but this is the earliest opportunity I have had to do so), that I represented the Secretary-General and delivered his message to the **Second Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region**, which was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 14 to 15 December of last year, and at which the region’s Heads of State and Government signed the landmark **“Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region”**. The event represented a welcome development indeed, and it is very much to be hoped that the Pact will be adopted expeditiously by all the eleven core member states of the Conference. The Secretariat of the Great Lakes Conference, which will assist in the implementation of the Pact, is being established in Bujumbura.

Summit of NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee and meeting of African Peer Review Forum

The **Summit of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee** took place on 29

January 2007. The key issues addressed included resource mobilization for the NEPAD Secretariat and the integration of NEPAD into the African Union structures and processes.

The members of the Implementation Committee received from the Chief Executive of the NEPAD Secretariat a report on the implementation of **programmes in the Agriculture, Information and Communications Technology, and Infrastructure sectors respectively**. Some progress has been made, both in preparation of the various programmes, and in the mobilization of resources for their implementation. The Chief Executive also urged African Member States to demonstrate to development partners their dedication to the African-owned and African-driven NEPAD by making timely payments to support the Secretariat.

The Committee on Integration of NEPAD into the structures and processes of the Union requested an extension of time until the next session to finalize its proposals. In addition, the Heads of State agreed to a proposal for a brainstorming session to be held in Algiers, Algeria, before the end of March 2007 to elaborate a roadmap for the integration process, including precise steps, stages and phases.

The meeting of the Heads of State of the **African Peer Review Forum** was updated by the Governments of Kenya, Ghana and Rwanda on their six-monthly progress in implementing the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Programme of Action. The updates revealed substantial progress in some areas of governance, limited improvement in others, and little advancement in some sectors.

Mr. Chairman,

Consultations in Brussels and Berlin with senior officials of the European Commission and the German government

After Addis Ababa, I proceeded to Europe, where I visited the EU headquarters in Brussels from 1 to 2 February for consultation meetings with officials of the European Commission and Berlin from 3 to 5 February for similar meetings with German government officials. The following issues were discussed during meetings with EU officials in Brussels:

? **EU Strategy for Africa:** The European Union's **Strategy for Africa**, adopted in 2005, aims to provide the EU with a holistic, integrated long-term framework for its relations with the African continent. It is an unprecedented consensus of the three key EU institutions, namely, the European Commission, the European Council, and the European Parliament, in supporting Africa's development. The strategy will, for the first time, consider Africa as one entity, and will be an important policy platform for implementing development aid to Africa, which is expected to increase by about 10 billion euros per year by 2010. The EU-Africa partnership is expected to be formalized with the conclusion of an **EU-Africa Joint Strategy** at the Second EU-Africa Summit, to be held in Lisbon in the fourth quarter of 2007.

? **African Peace Facility:** In recognition of the interrelated nature of peace, security, human rights and development, the EU is scaling up its efforts to promote peace and security in Africa at all stages of the conflict cycle. The **African Peace Facility** will provide African countries with the necessary means to identify their own solutions for managing and resolving their own conflicts. The next funding of the

Facility will be endowed with an amount of 300 million euros for 3 years (2008-2010).

? **European Governance Initiative:** The European Commission has a refreshingly positive view of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). For the European Commission, the progress achieved by the African Peer Review Mechanism represents a strong reaffirmation of the commitments made by the African countries to addressing governance issues. In order to promote governance systems, the EU has developed a **European Governance Initiative**, which will support the implementation of reforms following the recommendations of the APRM. By creating the European Governance Initiative, the European Commission has placed governance reform at the heart of the programming process of the 10th **European Development Fund** (which will total 10 billion euros for the period 2008-2013). The EU is determined to make aid effectiveness and donor coordination a central focus of its development partnership with African countries.

? **Economic Partnership Agreements:** The negotiation process for **Economic Partnership Agreements** (EPA) between the EU and the African-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) group of countries is under way. While ACP countries want guaranteed financial support for development programmes to offset the perceived economic and social costs of trade liberalization, the EC considers it unnecessary to give financial assistance in the short term.

While in Brussels, I also took the opportunity of the visit to meet with **Belgian government officials** to discuss arrangements for a conference OSAA is organizing jointly with the Belgian Government and with Swedish government support, on **disarmament, demobilization and reintegration** - or DDR, for

short - to be held in Kinshasa, DRC, 14-16 May 2007. The main purpose of the conference is to provide an opportunity for African DDR stakeholders to exchange experiences and consolidate their efforts.

I also met with the **Portuguese Ambassador to the EU**, who briefed me on his Government's plans for its presidency of the EU during the second half of this year and indicated that Africa would be high on the EU agenda.

The issues discussed during my consultation meetings with German government authorities were, by and large, variations on the same themes that dominated the discussions with EU officials.

? The Germany Presidency of the EU will give a special focus to Africa by concentrating on the implementation of the **European Consensus on Development**, which emphasizes the common values, principles and commitments of the EU in favour of poverty reduction.

? In the area of development policy, Germany, Portugal, and Slovenia have decided to outline their common priorities and to conduct initiatives during the 18 months of the EU presidencies of the three countries. They are committed to cooperating closely in order to build greater awareness and stronger support for development issues, as well as create value-added in promoting such issues together within the European framework and in the international arena. The three EU presidencies are committed to prioritizing cooperation with NEPAD.

? The German Presidency will strive to implement the EU commitments of providing more and better aid that were made at the **Monterrey Summit**. Germany will take a lead role in implementing the **Paris Declaration on Aid**

Effectiveness, and will encourage the implementation of the EU commitments on policy coherence for development in order to ensure better coherence between other EU policies and development efforts.

? Germany will support strongly the implementation of the **EU Strategy for Africa**. It will also support the adoption of the **EU-Africa Joint Strategy**, as this will constitute a common basis and serve as the strategic document for EU-Africa relations for the future.

? During the German Presidency of the EU, the G8 Africa agenda is expected to be set primarily by African partners. The preparation of the agenda of the next **EU-Africa Summit**, which is to be held in Portugal in late 2007, is still under discussion. The officials with whom I met indicated that Germany did not consider Zimbabwe's case to be an obstacle to a successful and meaningful Summit.

? The German government supports a successful completion of the **Doha Development Round**. It also supports full implementation of the commitments made at the **Gleneagles Summit** on debt cancellation. Since peace and security and development are interdependent, Germany will urge the G8 to give coordinated and systematic attention to peace in Africa.

I am gratified to note that both in Brussels and in Berlin, I found serious commitment to the strengthening of relations with Africa. Regarding the difficulties and delays relating to NEPAD integration into the structures and processes of the African Union, my interlocutors reminded me how long it had taken European countries to achieve full integration.

Mr. Chairman,

As I stated in a concluding remark during our last meeting, this briefing is being provided in keeping with my determination to keep the African Group informed about the activities of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, with a view to ensuring that the Office has your continued full support.

I thank you.