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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
185TH MEETING
6 APRIL 2009
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR(CLXXXV)

PRESS STATEMENT

PRESS STATEMENT OF THE 185th
MEETING OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 185th meeting held on 6 April 2009, reviewed the situation in Darfur, in light of the briefings made by the Joint Special Representative (JSR) in Darfur and Head of the United Nations/African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), Mr. Rodolphe Adada, and Mr. Djibril Bassole, Joint AU/United Nations Chief Mediator for Darfur, as well as the statements made by the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to AU and the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia, in her capacity as the current Chair of IGAD.

Council noted the progress made in the deployment of the military, police and civilian components of UNAMID, and commended the personnel and leadership of the Mission for their dedication and contribution to the promotion of lasting peace and reconciliation in Darfur. Council noted the steady deployment of UNAMID military component, which reached 67 percent as of 31 March 2009, and looks forward to the completion of the process before the end of the year.

Council welcomed the existing cooperation between UNAMID and the Government of Sudan. In this respect, Council noted the regular consultative meetings of the Tripartite Committee between the Government of Sudan, the AU and the United Nations, which have proved to be an effective mechanism in addressing all matters relating to the deployment and operations of UNAMID.

Council called on all countries having the necessary capabilities to provide UNAMID with the required key military enablers, including medium transport units, an aerial reconnaissance unit and medium utility and tactical helicopters, to enhance the capacity of the Mission and enable it carry out its mandate more effectively. Council commended the Government of Ethiopia for having agreed to provide five tactical helicopters.

Council stressed the need to take all necessary steps aiming at safeguarding the progress made in the peace process. In this regard, Council called on all the parties to engage in dialogue without pre-condition with a view to reaching a comprehensive and lasting solution, to refrain from any military action, and to extend full cooperation to the Joint Chief Mediator.

Council encouraged the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC), as a means of ensuring the involvement of all the Darfurian populations' stakeholders in the search for peace and reconciliation, and called for increased financial support to the DDDC process.

Council expressed concern at the risk of deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Darfur. In this respect, Council stressed the importance of continued and adequate delivery of humanitarian assistance in Darfur. Council underlined the need for all concerned to take the steps required to meet the needs of the affected populations and find appropriate solutions to the problems encountered in this respect.

Council expressed concern at the continuing precariousness of the security situation in Darfur, including armed clashes of various nature, acts of banditry, kidnapping of humanitarian workers, which pose additional challenges to the deployment of

UNAMID, the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the overall efforts to promote peace, security and stability in Darfur and the region as a whole.

Council noted with satisfaction the commencement of the work of the AU High Level Panel on Darfur (AUPD), under the chairmanship of former President Thabo Mbeki, with the convening of its inaugural meeting in Addis Ababa, on 18 and 19 March 2009, and the conduct of its first visit to Sudan, from 1 to 4 April 2009. Council stressed the importance of the work of this independent Panel in the overall efforts aimed at promoting peace, justice and reconciliation, and called on all concerned to extend full cooperation to the Panel to facilitate the discharge of its mandate.

Council reiterated the relevant aspects of the Communiqués adopted at its 142nd and 175th meetings held respectively on 21st July 2008 and 5 March 2009, and urged the UN Security Council to positively respond to its call relating to the need to activate article 16 of the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court in order to facilitate and promote sustained progress on all issues pertaining to peace, national reconciliation and justice in Sudan.

Addis Ababa, 6 April 2009