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**REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
AFRICAN UNION HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION PANEL (AUHIP) ON SUDAN**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Council will recall that, at its 207th meeting held on 29 October 2009, in Abuja, Nigeria, at the level of Heads of State and Government, it endorsed the Report of the African Union High-Level Panel on Darfur (AUPD) and the Recommendations contained therein, and requested me to establish an AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), comprised of former Presidents Thabo Mbeki, Pierre Buyoya and Abdulsalami Abubakar, to assist in the implementation of all aspects of the AUPD Recommendations, as well as in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and other related processes, as part of the democratic transformation of the Sudan [Document PSC/AHG/2(CCVII) and Decision PSC/AHG/COMM.1(CCVII)]. Council requested that regular reports on the activities of the AUHIP be submitted to it.

2. The present report is submitted in pursuance of Council's decision and provides an update on the activities undertaken to date by the AUHIP, within the framework of its mandate. It concludes with observations on the importance of the ongoing processes for Sudan, the region and Africa as a whole and the need for continued efforts to help the Sudanese people successfully meet the challenges confronting them.

II. BACKGROUND

3. It should be recalled that the AUPD was established pursuant to the communiqué issued by Council at the end of its 142nd meeting held in Addis Ababa on 21 July 2008, with the mandate to make recommendations on how best to address the three interlocking issues of peace, justice and reconciliation in Darfur. The decision was subsequently endorsed by the 12th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Addis Ababa from 1 to 3 February 2009 [Assembly/AU/Dec.221 (XII)] The Panel, which was chaired by former President Thabo Mbeki and comprised, among others, former President Pierre Buyoya and Gen. Abdulsalami Abubakar, former Head of State of Nigeria, was inaugurated in Addis Ababa on 19 March 2009. In pursuit of its mandate, it consulted extensively and systematically with the people of Darfur; it spent more than forty days in Sudan, principally in Darfur. As a result, its Recommendations consisted principally in the recommendations of the Darfurian people themselves and other Sudanese stakeholders, subject to the Panel's reflections and elaboration. Having drafted its Recommendations, the Panel returned for a final visit to Sudan, during which it presented its proposals to each of the groups that had been consulted earlier.

4. The report of the AUPD was formally handed over to me during a ceremony organized in Addis Ababa, on 8 October 2009. The main message which the Panel heard and transmitted can be encapsulated in the definition of the crisis as "Sudan's crisis in Darfur". Indeed, while

many other factors are at play, it is fundamentally the historical legacy of Sudan's inequitable governance that led to armed uprisings in various parts of the country and the resulting cycle of conflicts. The Panel saw the Darfur crisis as a symptom of the wider Sudanese national crisis.

5. The Panel made a number of recommendations, which were adopted by Council, as AU policy. Accordingly, the AUPD Recommendations referred to hereafter are part of AU policy. As a starting point, the Panel stressed that the problem of Darfur requires a political settlement and a process of negotiations that addresses all the issues of peace, justice and reconciliation. It made the point that the Darfur negotiations should be inclusive, with the participation of the Government of Sudan, armed belligerents, political parties, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, traditional leaders, native administration, pastoralist groups and civil society. One key component of the AUPD Recommendations relates to measures to ensure that justice is done. In that regard, the Panel recommended the establishment of a Hybrid Court to try those responsible for crimes in Darfur. The Panel also made recommendations on reconciliation, bearing in mind that justice and reconciliation are inextricably linked and should be approached and implemented in a coordinated manner. Among others, the Panel proposed the establishment of a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, to promote truth telling and appropriate acts of reconciliation, as well as to grant pardons as considered appropriate.

6. The Panel held the view that many of its Recommendations could be implemented by the Sudanese Government on a unilateral basis. These are both confidence-building measures and steps to facilitate the holding of the elections, then scheduled for April 2010, and the acceleration of the peace process. Prominent among these unilateral steps are the improvement of security in Darfur, especially for IDPs.

7. As indicated above, at its meeting in Abuja, Council endorsed the Report of the AUPD and the Recommendations contained therein, and underlined that these Recommendations provide a clear roadmap for achieving peace, reconciliation, justice and healing in Darfur, thus promoting the achievement of sustainable peace and stability in the Sudan. Accordingly, it decided that they would be the basis for AU's engagement in Darfur and its interaction with its international partners. Council requested me to establish the AUHIP to assist in the implementation of all aspects of the AUPD Recommendations, as well as in the implementation of the CPA and other related processes. The 14th Ordinary Session of the Assembly, held in Addis Ababa from 31 January to 2 February 2010, welcomed the AUPD report and endorsed the Abuja Council's communiqué [Assembly /AU/Dec.268(XIV)Rev.1].

III. PROGRAMME OF ACTION (PoA) FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AUHIP MANDATE

8. The AUHIP held its inaugural meeting in Addis Ababa, from 3 to 4 December 2009, to develop its program of work. Following consultations with the Sudanese stakeholders in

Khartoum and Juba, from 12 to 16 December 2009, the Panel convened in Addis Ababa, from 18 to 20 January 2010, further to elaborate its Programme of Action (PoA) to guide the implementation of its mandate. The PoA revolves around the following nine areas: (i) helping to accelerate the process towards the resolution of the conflict in Darfur; (ii) helping to ensure the implementation of the CPA; (iii) assisting the parties to address the post-referendum issues; (iv) working with the Government of Sudan (GoS) and with the Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS), Sudanese political parties and other stakeholders, to develop a national consensus about the challenges facing the country, including making unity attractive; (v) working with the Southern Sudan political parties to develop a consensus about the challenges facing Southern Sudan; (vi) working with the GoSS and others to address the issue of inter-communal conflict in Southern Sudan; (vii) helping to ensure the April 2010 General Elections are free and fair; (viii) helping to ensure that Sudan's neighbors support Sudan's conflict-resolution process; (ix) and helping to coordinate international action on Sudan. The Panel returned to Sudan from 20 to 26 January 2010, to engage the Sudanese stakeholders and international players on the PoA.

9. In pursuance of this PoA, the Panel has visited Sudan six times, between January and June 2010, meeting with President Omar Hassan Al Bashir, 1st Vice-President Salva Kiir, Vice-President Ali Osman Taha and other Government officials, representatives of political parties and civil society, as well as with members of the international community, including the Heads of UNAMID and UNMIS and the Joint Chief Mediator (JCM). In March 2010, the AUHIP received a response from the Government of National Unity (GoNU) on the PoA, which reiterated the latter's commitment to cooperate with the Panel.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PoA ON DARFUR

10. More than seven years after the onset of the conflict in Darfur, a comprehensive political solution has yet to be achieved. While the situation on the ground has significantly changed since the peak of the crisis in 2003 – 2004, the political process continues to face serious challenges, including the deadlock in the implementation of agreements signed between armed belligerents and the lack of inclusivity. In addition, issues of justice, reconciliation and recovery are yet to be effectively addressed.

11. As indicated above, in March 2010, the Panel received a response from the GoNU on its proposed PoA. This response reiterated the GoNU's commitment to cooperating with the Panel. The implementation of the provisions of the PoA relating to Darfur is closely coordinated with the AU-UN Hybrid Operation for Darfur (UNAMID) and the Joint Special Representative (JSR), Ibrahim Gambari. The Panel is also working closely with a number of other international actors.

12. Following the elections, the Panel met with the President and Vice-President and agreed on the following: specific action points regarding unilateral actions to be taken by the Government to improve security; the establishment of mechanisms to take forward the justice

and reconciliation strategy for Darfur – the Government has just appointed a team to initiate consultations with the AUHIP, with the view to agreeing on the best way forward; and the convening of a Darfur-Darfur Conference (DDC) as an inclusive and comprehensive political process intended to achieve a Global Political Agreement (GPA) to end the conflict in Darfur. The Panel is working closely with UNAMID towards the early convening of the DDC, as part of the overall efforts to domesticate the peace process and make it more inclusive, building on the efforts being conducted in Doha, under the auspices of the JCM, Djibril Bassole. Furthermore, on 21 March 2010, in Cairo, the Panel attended the International Donors' Conference for Development and Reconstruction in Darfur, convened by the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), with the support of the Egyptian and Turkish Governments.

13. In approaching its task, the Panel was guided by the clear mandate it had been given, namely to examine the three principal pillars of peace, reconciliation and justice in the context of Darfur. In the view of the Panel, the objectives of peace, reconciliation and justice in Darfur are interconnected, equally desirable, and must be pursued in a manner consistent with the need to achieve democratic and socio-economic transformation in Sudan.

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PoA ON CPA

14. The Panel has remained abreast of all outstanding CPA issues and stands ready to offer its facilitation, if required. All Panel activities with regard to the CPA are coordinated fully with the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) for Sudan, Haile Menkerios. The Panel has also maintained close consultation with the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the League of Arab States (LAS), the Special Envoys of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (P5), the European Union (EU) and Norway, in its capacity as member of the CPA "Troika", as well as with the Chairman of the CPA's Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC), in order to best ensure that its activities are fully coordinated with existing efforts to support the implementation of the CPA.

15. While significant progress has been made in the implementation of the CPA, a number of challenges remain that require the Parties' immediate attention and action, especially as the implementation process approaches the Referenda scheduled to be held in Southern Sudan and Abyei, in January 2011, as well as the Popular Consultations in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan States. Since its establishment, the AUHIP has devoted considerable efforts towards the resolution of these outstanding issues.

(a) Referenda Commissions

16. The Panel has followed closely the steps taken by the Parties to establish the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission and the Abyei Referendum Commission. It has repeatedly urged the Parties to expedite the establishment and functioning of these two Commissions in order for the Referenda to be conducted on time and in a credible manner. The Parties have

specifically requested the Panel to examine the issue of the eligibility criteria for voters in the Abyei Referendum. The Panel is investigating the issue and considering how best to respond to this request.

(b) North-South Border

17. The Panel has attended to the question of the North-South border, and has been briefed extensively by the *Ad Hoc* Technical Committee for the Demarcation of the North-South Border. The Panel has, in consultation with UNMIS, examined the unresolved issues surrounding the border and has pressed the Technical Committee and the Parties to finalize the report as soon as possible, so that the outstanding issues can be resolved at the level of the Presidency.

(c) Transitional Areas

18. The Parties have requested the Panel to pay attention to the States adjacent to the internal North-South border, which would be most affected by any vote for separation in southern Sudan. Two of these States (Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile) are located within northern Sudan, but contain substantial minorities that are ethnically affiliated with southern Sudan and possess strong SPLM constituencies. The Panel attended the inaugural Conference of Governors of these States, in Kadugli, South Kordofan State, on 27 February 2010, and will help guide the agenda and format of a planned subsequent Conference.

(d) Inter-Communal Violence in Southern Sudan

19. The Panel was asked to attend to the problem of inter-communal violence in southern Sudan. On this issue, the Panel has consulted key stakeholders, including the GoSS and the leaders of the Sudanese churches (the Roman Catholic and Anglican Archbishops and the Secretary-General of the Sudan Council of Churches), with a view to deepening understanding of a potential Panel role, in support of existing initiatives.

VI. PROGRAMME OF ACTION IN SUPPORT OF DEMOCRATIZATION

20. One of the CPA's key features is the democratic transformation of the Sudan, as a way of addressing the underlying causes of Sudan's national crisis. In this respect, and among other steps, the CPA provided for the holding of General Elections, midway into its implementation.

21. During the period January-April 2010, and in anticipation of the April General Elections, the Panel's priorities included steps to promote the democratization of Sudan and especially doing all that was necessary to ensure a free, fair and inclusive election. The Panel was in constant consultation with the leaders of all the main political parties in Sudan, both the two signatory parties to the CPA (the National Congress Party - NCP and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement - SPLM) and other parties, in Government and in opposition, and with other key stakeholders, such as civil society organizations.

22. While consulting with the Sudanese political parties, the Panel accepted the proposal to convene summit meetings of political parties, at national level and in southern Sudan, to agree and adopt an Electoral Code of Conduct (ECoC) and a Declaration of Common Commitments (DoCC) relating to the wider political environment, including the implementation of the CPA and achieving peace in Darfur. It was hoped that such a process would help to develop a national consensus about the challenges facing Sudan, entrench democratic values, create a common understanding of the democratic process, and provide an agreed framework under which the political parties could face the exceptional challenges of Sudan during the coming year.

(a) Summit of Political Parties at National Level

23. During February, the Panel engaged the leaders of the political parties to organize and convene the proposed summit meeting. The NCP and the major parties of the “National Consensus Forces”, also known as the “Juba Alliance”, agreed with this proposal. The Juba Alliance parties, including the SPLM, the Umma National Party, the Umma Party (Reform and Renewal), the Popular Congress Party (PCP) and the Sudan Communist Party, requested prior meetings to clarify the agenda and participation. Meanwhile, the Panel drafted the ECoC, drawing upon different Sudanese, African and international experiences and models and consulting with diverse Sudanese stakeholders, for discussion by the Parties. It also developed the DoCC designed to reinforce the commitment of all parties, including non signatory parties, to the implementation of the CPA and to the pursuit of a comprehensive and integrated approach to peace and justice in Darfur, in line with the AUPD Recommendations. These documents provided the agenda for discussion among the Parties, leading to broad agreement on their substance.

24. However, the Panel faced difficulties in obtaining agreement between the NCP and the “National Unity Parties”, on one hand, and the Juba Alliance parties, on the other, on the agenda for the proposed summit. The latter parties were insistent that the agenda should include a list of demands that they said needed to be met before the elections could proceed. The proposal for the summit meeting was also discussed with the Political Parties Affairs Council and presented at a meeting attended by 55 of the smaller political parties, on 14 February. These parties welcomed the Panel’s proposals. The Panel held two additional meetings with the NCP leadership and six with the Juba Alliance leaders, collectively or separately, and two meetings of the Steering Committee that included leaders of both. It soon became clear that agreement would not be reached rapidly, and the Summit was postponed. While consensus was reached on almost all matters of substance in the ECoC and DoCC, the Parties could not reach agreement on the agenda of the summit meeting.

(b) Summit Meeting of Political Parties in Southern Sudan

25. While it proved impossible to convene the summit meeting of political parties at the national level, the Panel was able to convene the summit meeting of the political parties

contesting elections in southern Sudan, in Juba, from 1 to 2 March 2010. This meeting was convened with similar agenda and objectives to the meeting that had been planned for the national level, namely to discuss and adopt the ECoC and the DoCC, and to set up a mechanism to resolve election-related disputes and to monitor the implementation of the ECoC, namely the Political Parties Council (PPC), in which all registered political parties are represented. The meeting was attended by representatives of fourteen political parties. A separate meeting of nine independent gubernatorial candidates was convened in parallel.

26. The summit meeting was opened by the GoSS President, Salva Kiir Mayardit. It was chaired by an AUHIP member, former President Pierre Buyoya. It was notable for the presence of the leader of the SPLM-Democratic Change, Lam Akol, and concluded with the adoption and signature of the ECoC and DoCC and a decision to establish the PPC. Subsequently, the Panel's experts conducted training workshops for the PPC members, leading to agreement on the membership of the Council, the establishment of rules of procedure and a complaints mechanism. The Panel also sourced funding for the PPC, which enabled it to recruit staff and rent offices. The AU Commission provided monitors to assist the PPC in fulfilling its functions. The PPC was formally inaugurated in Juba on 31 March, at a meeting presided over by Vice-President Riek Machar.

27. Subsequent to the summit meeting of parties contesting elections in southern Sudan, the NCP and several of the National Unity Coalition parties signed the ECoC and the DoCC at the AU Liaison Office in Sudan, and an original copy of the ECoC was deposited with the Chairperson of the National Election Commission in Khartoum.

(c) Elections

28. The Panel was present in Sudan during the voting period of the General Elections (11-15 April) and its aftermath. During this period, it consulted closely with the AU Elections Observer Mission, headed by former President John Kufour, as well as with other election Observer Missions, including the Carter Center (team headed by former President Jimmy Carter, Justice Joseph Warioba and Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi), the EU, IGAD, LAS and the Japanese Observer Missions. President Mbeki visited polling stations in Khartoum, Juba and at IDP camps, near El Fashir, during the voting.

29. During this period, the Panel met with the leaders of the GoS and all the major political parties. Among those consulted were First Vice-President Salva Kiir, Vice-President Ali Osman Taha, Assistant to the President, Nafie Ali Nafie, NCP Campaign Coordinator, Ibrahim Ghandour, Vice-President of GoSS, Riek Machar, President of the Umma Party, Sadiq al Mahdi, President of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Mohammed Osman al Mirghani, leader of the Popular Congress Party (PCP), Hassan al Turabi, leader of SPLM-DC, Lam Akol, and leader of the Umma Party/Reform and Renewal, Mubarak al Fadil. The Panel remained in Sudan during the period of the counting of votes and the declaration of the results, consulting regularly with the parties in order to best ensure that the winners of the elections acted in a

spirit of generosity and inclusiveness. The Panel also remained in close contact with the other political parties to monitor their reactions to the electoral outcomes and respond accordingly.

VII. NEGOTIATIONS ON POST-REFERENDUM ARRANGEMENTS

30. The CPA directs that, in preparation for the Referenda that are scheduled to take place in January 2011, the Parties must conclude agreements on a number of issues related to their post-referenda relationship, regardless of the outcomes of those exercises. These include nationality and ownership, currency, public service, position of Joint Integrated Units, National Security and Intelligence, international agreements and conventions, assets and debts, oil fields and other related matters and water.

31. The Panel met with the task forces for post-referendum negotiations put in place by the NCP and SPLM, respectively, on 12 and 13 May 2010. It also discussed post-referendum arrangements with the leaders of the Parties on several occasions, as well as with UNMIS, the Assessment and Evaluation Commission (AEC) and international partners. Subsequent to these discussions, the Parties agreed to conduct the negotiations on post-referendum arrangements on a bilateral basis, with the Panel on call to assist the negotiators, as and when requested, and to liaise with the rest of the international community.

32. The Panel prepared a Framework Document to help guide the negotiations. This was submitted to the Parties in June, to serve as the basis for discussion in an early round of the negotiations. The preparatory discussions for the post-referendum arrangements took place in Mekelle, Ethiopia, from 21 to 23 June 2010, convened by the AUHIP. The outcome of that meeting was a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the Parties, agreeing on the modalities for the substantive negotiations, scheduled to start at the beginning of July 2010.

VIII. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION

33. In Abuja, Council called on the international community to fully support the implementation of the AUPD Recommendations and that of its decision. It further requested me to mobilize the broadest support possible to this end. With the support of the Commission, the Panel has actively engaged a number of international players.

(a) Engagement with the Region

34. Ensuring regional and international coordination of engagement in Sudan has been a major focus of the Panel's activities. During February 2010, the Panel consulted with the neighboring States, including Ethiopia (January 2010), Uganda (4 to 5 February), Kenya (5 to 8 February), Chad (10 February), Egypt (11 to 12 and 13 to 14 February), Libya (12 to 13 February). The members of the Panel also visited Eritrea (22 to 23 April). During all these visits, the Panel met with the Heads of State and Government of the countries concerned, with a view to encouraging them to support Sudan's peace process, soliciting such views as they

might hold about how best to speed up the search for lasting peace and democratization in Sudan and mobilizing support for the work of the Panel in this regard.

35. On 22 June 2010, the Panel had another meeting with Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, Chair of IGAD, to review the situation in the aftermath of the April General Elections and in light of the preparations for the self-determination referendum and negotiations on the post-referendum arrangements. Furthermore, it is to be noted that, on 9 March 2010, the Panel participated in the summit meeting of IGAD States, in Nairobi, devoted specifically to the situation in the Sudan.

(b) League of Arab States

36. The AUHIP has maintained close consultation with LAS officials, including Secretary-General Amre Moussa, during its visits to Cairo, in February and March 2010. Needless to stress the critical role that the Arab League plays in Sudan and the importance of close partnership between this organization and the AU.

(c) United Nations

37. On 21st December 2009, I led a delegation comprising of the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ramtane Lamamra, and two of the AUHIP members, namely former Presidents Thabo Mbeki and Pierre Buyoya, to brief the UN Security Council. In the press statement issued at the end of the meeting, the members of the Security Council welcomed the AUPD report and underlined their appreciation for the balanced and comprehensive nature of the recommendations to promote peace, justice and reconciliation in Darfur and Sudan as a whole. They looked forward to the implementation of a holistic approach to the problems facing Sudan and supported efforts aimed at the peaceful and democratic transformation of Sudan. The members of the Security Council called for the Government of Sudan and other parties in Sudan and the region to work with President Thabo Mbeki and his colleagues, in coordination with the international community as appropriate.

38. The Panel visited New York again, from 13 to 15 June 2010. On 14 June, the Chair of the Panel briefed the Security Council, informing its members of the Panel's activities. The members of the Security Council made statements underscoring the challenges facing the Sudan and the need for supporting the Sudanese Parties. They expressed their support to the strong engagement of the AU, particularly through the AUHIP, to secure long-term peace in the Sudan. The Panel also met the African Group of Ambassadors at the meeting convened by the AU Permanent Mission to the United Nation.

39. On 14 June, the Panel held a meeting with UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Alain Le Roy, JSR Ibrahim Gambari, SRSG Haile Menkerios and JCM Djibril Bassolé, to review the status of the peace talks in Doha, the activities of UNAMID, the Darfur political process and challenges facing the implementation of the (CPA). The

meeting noted that, as per the Addis Ababa meeting of 8 May, the Doha peace talks should continue, while the Darfur-based inclusive political process must start, bringing in all stakeholders, with a view to conclude the talks before the referendum. On 15 June, the Panel briefed the members of the African diplomatic corps.

40. As part of efforts to coordinate and harmonize AU and UN engagement, the Panel works in constant coordination with the Heads of the two Missions in Sudan, namely the UNAMID JSR Ibrahim Gambari and SRSO Haile Menkerios. To further institutionalize and strengthen this partnership, the AU Commission convened a High-Level Strategic Review Meeting of the AU and the United Nations in Addis Ababa, on 7 May. The meeting, which I chaired, was attended by members of the AUHIP, the Commissioner for Peace and Security, the UN Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, the JSR, the JCM, and the UN SRSO for Sudan. The meeting reviewed and assessed the political situation in Sudan in the aftermath of the elections and in anticipation of the final year of the CPA implementation. The meeting agreed on mechanisms for coordination and the need for greater support from the international community, in support of the Sudanese actors.

(d) Norway

41. On 22 March, at the invitation of Norwegian authorities, the Panel travelled to Oslo, where it consulted with a number of officials, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Norwegian authorities expressed their commitment to the implementation of the CPA and support to the AU and the efforts of the Panel, as well as their readiness to provide assistance in areas such as the post-referendum process, border demarcation, and the reconciliation process and capacity building in southern Sudan.

(e) European Union

42. From 23 to 24 March 2010, the Panel visited Brussels, where it met with a number of EU officials and institutions, including Baroness Catherine Ashton, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, the Peace and Security Committee, the European Parliament, and the EU Special Envoy for Sudan, Torben Brylle. These meetings provided an opportunity to conduct detailed and comprehensive discussions on all aspects of the situation in the Sudan. The EU officials expressed their support for the report of the AUPD and AU's efforts, stressing the EU's readiness to provide support to the work of the Panel. While in Brussels, on 24 March, the Panel met with members of the African Group of Ambassadors accredited to the EU and briefed them on the Panel's activities.

(f) United States

43. From 15 to 18 June 2010, the Panel visited Washington DC. On 16 June, the Panel met with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Gen. Scott Gration, US Special Envoy for the Sudan,

Amb. Jeff Herbst, Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, Ms. Esther Brimmer, Assistant Secretary for International Organisation, Amb. Johnny Carson, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, and other senior Administration officials. That same day, the Panel met with President Barack Obama, the National Security Advisor, Gen. James Jones, and other senior National Security Council officials. President Obama and the other senior officials expressed their appreciation for the efforts of the AU, and underscored the support of the Administration to the work of AUHIP and their commitment to the successful conclusion of the ongoing processes in the Sudan. On 17 June, the members of the AUHIP met with leaders of Congress and the Senate. They also briefed the African Group of Ambassadors at the meeting convened by the AU Mission in Washington. President Mbeki had, earlier, on 10 June 2010, also met US Vice President Joe Biden in South Africa, during which meeting they discussed the situation in Sudan.

IX. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SUDAN CONSULTATIVE FORUM

44. As Council will recall, at its Abuja meeting, it requested me to undertake consultations with the UN Secretary-General and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, for the speedy establishment of a Consultative Forum, involving relevant stakeholders and Sudan's neighboring countries, as well as AU partners, to receive regular reports on the implementation of the decision adopted in Abuja and to serve as a coordinating mechanism to support and promote the implementation of this decision. It is in this context that I convened the inaugural meeting of the Sudan Consultative Forum, in Addis Ababa, on 8 May 2010. In addition to the Commissioner for Peace and Security and the members of the AUHIP, the meeting was attended by IGAD (Ethiopia, as Chair, and the Secretariat), the United Nations, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the European Union, neighboring countries of the Sudan (namely, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Kenya, Libya and Uganda), the Special Envoys or their representatives of the P5, other AU partners, as well as representatives of Qatar, Italy (Chair of the IGAD Partners Forum) and the AEC. Burundi (Chair of the PSC for May 2010), and Malawi, as Chair of the AU, also participated. The JSR (UNAMID), the SRSG (UNMIS) and the JCM attended.

45. The meeting had the following objectives: (a) facilitate the ongoing process of democratic transformation of the country, in line with the vision of the CPA; (b) support the implementation of the remaining provisions of the CPA and the resolution of issues related to post-referendum arrangements; (c) speed up the search for a political resolution of the conflict in Darfur; and (d) ensure a coordinated approach and action by the international actors engaged in the Sudan. The meeting formally established the Sudan Consultative Forum and identified its role to work closely with the Sudanese Government and parties. The Consultative Forum will meet every two months to provide a coordinated and harmonized guidance for international engagement based on Sudanese ownership and Africa's primary leadership.

46. With respect to the CPA, the meeting agreed on the following: (a) the need to do everything possible to assist the Sudanese parties to fulfill their commitments under the CPA;

(b) creating the necessary conditions, including at the technical level, for the successful holding of the referenda in Southern Sudan and Abeyei; (c) assistance to the parties as they negotiate post referendum arrangements to ensure that relations between the North and the South are peaceful and mutually beneficial; (d) support for capacity building and conflict mitigation in Southern Sudan; (e) continued and strengthened coordination between the AUHIP and UNMIS and other international partners. With respect to Darfur, the meeting resolved that a Darfur political process should be initiated, in accordance with the Recommendations of the AUPD, that is inclusive of all stakeholders in Darfur (belligerent and non-belligerent), and which comprehensively addresses all issues, including justice and accountability, leading to a Darfur Global Political Agreement. The meeting emphasized that the Doha peace process, conducted between the belligerents, should, in the meantime, continue with the objective of finding an end to armed conflict between the GoS and the armed movements, as an essential component of this process.

X. OBSERVATIONS

47. The future of Sudan, including the resolution of the conflict in Darfur and the successful implementation of the CPA and agreement on post-referendum arrangements, is a matter of vital interest to the African continent. Africa has responded to the challenge of Sudan by undertaking its most ambitious and comprehensive political response, which has decisively taken the leadership in tackling a wide range of issues in Sudan. While the remaining challenges are daunting, the AU, notably through the AUHIP, has made significant progress since Council's decision of October 2009.

48. The Commission and the Panel have worked to address all aspects of the Sudanese challenge in an integrated and comprehensive way, consistent with the October 2009 Council's decision. It is not possible to separate out the requirements of a successful political process for Darfur, the implementation of the remaining provisions of the CPA, including the exercise in self-determination for southern Sudan, democratization at all levels, and an agreement on post-referendum arrangements between northern and southern Sudan, into distinct packages to be addressed separately. It is not possible to resolve Sudan's problems by the application of existing technical and bureaucratic procedures. Political leadership is required, from Sudan and from Africa, and Africa is leading by example. That leadership has, in turn, succeeded in coordinating regional and international engagement in Sudan in support of AU and UN efforts.

49. Failure is not an option. The future of the Sudanese nation and its 40 million citizens hangs in the balance. Success in navigating the many existing challenges will leave Sudan, whether as one nation or two according to the choice of the southern Sudanese people, a stable, peaceful, democratic and prosperous member of the African community of nations. Sudan's successes, just as its troubles, will have reverberations throughout the continent.

50. I would like to express my most sincere thanks to the Chairperson of the Panel, its members and experts for their dedication and commitment, and for the invaluable

contribution they have already made towards the promotion of lasting peace, justice and reconciliation in the Sudan. The Commission will continue to provide whatever support is required to facilitate the successful accomplishment of the Panel's mandate. I express my gratitude to the Governments of South Africa, Burundi and Nigeria for all the facilities extended to the members of the Panel in the discharge of their responsibilities.

51. I thank the Sudanese Government and Parties for the cooperation extended to the Panel. I would like to assure them of the AU's unflinching commitment to continue supporting them in their efforts. As the AUPD rightly stressed in its report, when the attention of the international community turns elsewhere, Africa will still be engaged in Sudan. It cannot be otherwise because Sudan's crisis is also Africa's crisis. Africa, therefore, has a continuous duty to respond to the events that unfold in that country. In addition, the conflict has far-reaching repercussions for the African continent, for it profoundly affects the continent's largest country at a critical moment in its national history, as well as its many neighbours, and the AU itself. I have no doubt that, with genuine international support, the Sudanese can successfully meet the challenges facing them.

52. I express my appreciation to IGAD and the League of Arab States, as well as to the EU, the United Nations, the US and Norway for their support. I call on our partners and the larger international community to fully rally behind the AU and support the work of the Panel and the efforts of the Sudanese stakeholders, for Africa's leadership and Sudanese ownership are the key ingredients for a successful peace and reconciliation process in the Sudan.