

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE WORKING-GROUP  
XXXX MEETING

Rome ~ 17-18 February 2000

The Wrap up of Africa Month (January) in the Security Council

1. How did some prominent personalities assess the month of Africa in the Security Council?
  - I have been asked to brief on the Wrap of Africa Month – January in the Security Council. I must say in the process of consulting with various colleagues within and outside the United Nations; I received very interesting comments and assessment of the Africa month. Some cynics and pessimists called it Ambassador Holbrooke's month and that other than achieving a high profile for the President of the Security Council nothing, was achieved for Africa. The optimists were many and willing to go on record saying that the 31 of January, "marks the end of an unprecedented and highly significant month for Africa in the Security Council, during which a number of very important issues affecting the continent have been addressed," said President F JT Chiluba of Zambia. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Namibia who is also the President of the General Assembly called it a month that dedicated to African issues and also sought solutions for them. I was also impressed by the assessment of Dr. Nkosazan Dlamini-Zuma, the Minister of Foreign Affairs for the Republic of South Africa who called, "the end of an extraordinary month in the Security Council where various difficult issues to Africa were discussed, some for the very first time." I believe we all know what such issues. (Please you are free to pick of copies of the assessment of the month by President Chiluba, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Namibia and South Africa).
  - However, I would like to bring to your attention the wrap of Speech of the Deputy Secretary-General because it was comprehensive and also because we provided some inputs. The Deputy Secretary-General saw it as a month that brought both the executive and the legislative branches of the USA government, at a very high level to the United Nations. She hoped that such experience would "mark the beginning of a new era of positive engagement by the United States in all aspects of this organization's work." As regards focusing January month to Africa, she gave a very interesting assessment when she said, "No part of the world is in greater need of our help. And none has greater potential to reward our efforts if we apply them in a wise and timely manner. Sub-Saharan Africa, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit, is likely to be the world's fastest –growing region this year in economic terms," I cannot wait to see this, I want you to know that I am an optimist!

2. What issues were addressed and what were the achievements?

- The very decision of Ambassador Holbrooke to designate his Presidency in the Security Council as the “Month of Africa” devoted a high profile attention largely to African issues.
- During this month the SC recognized the scourge of HIV/AIDS as “a security threat for Africa – both as a direct killer of millions of Africans and as an agent of social, economic and political instability.” While the SC/international community has a clear understanding that HIV/AIDS has to be addressed in the same context as peace and security, has IASC a position on whether HIV/AIDS is a humanitarian emergency and how it should be addressed? Some of the achievements on this issue (HIV/AIDS) are “the impetus that has been given to the fight against this disease and the alliance against AIDS in Africa which is currently being built under the leadership of UNAIDS.” Vice president Gore also pledged some material and financial support for the struggle against the disease.
- The increasing problems and debilitating effects of refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa were highlighted. The call made by Mrs. Ogata for urgent and increased assistance to mitigate the inhuman and shameful situation in which many millions of African refugees and internally displaced persons find themselves, was included in the speech of the President of the General Assembly. On this issue the DSG called for generous funding of the humanitarian appeals launched by the United Nations. I think the focus on IDPs during this month, rightly or wrongly will, I hope, force IASC to not only address this issue in an inclusive and comprehensive manner but also take a clear position.
- The speech of the Secretary-General on Burundi is one of the toughest briefings we have ever seen him give. Referring to the situation in Burundi, he said, “but the most pressing need of all is humanitarian. Hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women, and children in the region surrounding Bujumbura are currently being herded into camps, where they are deprived not only of their freedom but also of the most elementary means of subsistence. We are on the verge of another humanitarian catastrophe, for which the world will undoubtedly hold the government of Burundi responsible. I fully endorse the statement on this subject issued today by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. I urge the Government to halt and reverse its regroupment policy, to permit full access to the humanitarian agencies, and to ensure the safety of humanitarian workers, both international and local.” The SG also addressed the issue of the killing of our colleagues from UNICEF and WFP and called upon the government of Burundi “to pursue with greater vigour its investigation into the cold-blooded killing.”
- The SG’s strong briefing to the SC, the condemnation of the policy of regroupment by most of the members of the SC, the participation of former President Mandela in Security Council debate on Burundi and the building of support for his facilitation efforts, may have influenced the decision by the Government of Burundi to dismantle 10 of the regroupment camps in that

country. The focus on Burundi during this month has indeed produced tangible results, i.e. the endorsement of the security protocol, the release of the communication equipment, the visit of ASG Deng, the quick deployment of RC/HC a.i., the HDC workshop, meeting which took place between President Buyoya and President Mandela on 7 February and above all a strong SC resolution.

- On Angola, the main achievements are the energizing of the search for peace through the important work of Ambassador Fowler, committing the Security Council to tighten sanctions against UNITA and the statement made by the Vice-Minister for External Relations of the Republic of Angola that, “my government remains committed to a democratic and reconciled Angola, through the Lusaka Protocol and will continue to cooperate with the United Nations and other institutions.” We are also told that the government has ratified the SOMA.
  - A SC resolution expanding the UN peacekeeping force to over 11,000 in SL was passed. This passed very quietly.
  - Last but far from being the least, the SC’s discussions on the DRC and the participation by seven African Presidents as well as by the OAU Secretary-General, the Facilitator of the national Dialogue and the representative of the Current Chairperson of OAU. Despite some fireworks during the Opening Session, the very fact that seven African leaders came to New York to discuss the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was encouraging. At the end of the meeting, the Leaders came of the sub-region re-affirmed their commitment to the Lusaka Agreement as a valid instrument to end the conflict. There was also unanimous agreement by them for the United Nations to deploy peacekeepers to the DRC as soon as possible. In this regard, the SC has begun debating the draft resolution to give effect to the pressures of the region for the early deployment there of a sizeable UN Peacekeeping Force. The draft resolution contains observers along with support troops, which would have appropriate mandate as well as robust rules of engagement permitting them to defend themselves as well as the civilian population around them, which may be at risk. On the humanitarian side the achievement is the presidential statement which had a strong humanitarian language. We are negotiating with members of the SC to strengthen a humanitarian language in the current MONUC draft resolution.
3. Now that the Africa month is over, the legitimate question is: what next?
- The following input is from Amb. Gambari, Special Advisor to the SG on Africa: There is now a greater expectation the SC should match its words on African issues with concrete actions. These should be in the form of follow-up to the decisions made and conclusions reached. In this regard, there are suggestions including greater co-operation and collaboration with the OAU on a more regular and sustained basis. There is also the suggestion by the delegation of the UK on

the establishment of an informal working Group of the SC to examine African issues on an on-going basis.

- There are actions that need to be taken by the African countries themselves (including those by parties to the conflicts, regional leaders and the OAU, e.g. meeting of belligerents in the DRC to take place in Africa soon) aimed at advancing the peace processes in Burundi, the DRC and Angola.
- Actions which need to be taken by the wider international community to support, concretely, the peace processes in Africa and also to address the horrendous problems of HIV/AIDS and the African Refugees and IDPs.

#### 4. Action taken by the SG and IASC

- The SG has appointed a Special Representative for the Great Lakes sub-region, Ambassador Dinka;
- He has also appointed the USG and Special Advisor on Africa with special focus on Angola, the DRC, the Great Lakes, Central and Southern Africa;
- He has obtained the SOMA from the Angolan government and the UN office is now functioning
- He also convened a Mini Summit of the visiting African Leaders which included the SG of OAU, the Facilitator, of the International Dialogue and Chairperson of the JMC for the DRC to discuss the DRC related sub-regional security issues. He chaired the meeting and outlined the proposals in his report to the SC for a United Nations Peacekeeping Force Operation in the DRC. His report formed the basis of the resolution on the DRC, which is expected to be adopted soon.
- As for IASC there is a need for a policy on regroupment, a position on IDPs and HIV/AIDS, funding , advocacy, the strengthening of UN capacity on Burundi, the HC/RC for Burundi, SF for SL and so on.