

United Nations



# General Assembly

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## **I. Introduction**

1. The report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318), which was considered by the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, contained a number of specific as well as broad recommendations on issues ranging from peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building to growth, sustainable development and the mobilization of resources for Africa's development. The report stressed the link between peace and development and advanced a comprehensive and holistic approach to conflict prevention, poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa.

2. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/92 of 7 December 1998, an open-ended ad hoc working group of the General Assembly was established to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 1998 report of the Secretary-General. The Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa held substantive sessions in 2000 and 2001, and its reports (A/55/45 and A/56/45) were considered by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions respectively. By resolution 56/37 of 4 December 2001, the Assembly endorsed some of the recommendations of the Working Group and decided to suspend the activities of the Working Group during the fifty-sixth session of the Assembly in order to consider further measures for the implementation and monitoring of initiatives on Africa. However, it decided to continue to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General and requested him to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session a comprehensive report on the implementation of the recommendations and to designate the already established interdepartmental/inter-agency task force as the permanent focal point within the Secretariat mandated to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report. The Under-

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economic livelihood programme, and skills-upgrading centres to train young persons and ex-combatants.

#### **Avoiding a proliferation of mediation efforts**

6. Whenever a mediation effort has been launched by a Member State or by a regional or subregional organization, every effort is made by the Secretary-General and senior United Nations officials to extend support to that effort rather than engage in a parallel initiative. The more recent examples of such efforts are in Madagascar and the Mano River Union countries. For Somalia, the Secretary-General has established a contact group of relevant countries to promote coherent policy approaches and to consolidate support for peace and reconstruction. With regard to the peace mediation in Angola, the United Nations is recognized as the sole mediator under the Lusaka Protocol.

#### **Mobilizing international support for peace efforts**

7. Progress in this area has been rather slow in terms of fulfilling the pledges made by donors during the special donor conferences for Burundi in 1999 and the Central African Republic in 2000, despite the time and energy expended to plan and hold them. Since donor pledges during the conference were not followed up, the implementation of programmes of the United Nations system which had already been approved was severely hampered. As promoter of a women's common agenda for peace, the United Nations

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Secretariat in the process. Eight African countries have already established national commissions to tackle the issue of small arms proliferation.

10. Some African countries are reducing their military expenditure as recommended in the report of the Secretary-General. The defence budget in Angola was reduced in 2001 for the first time and additional funds were allocated to the social sector. However, defence spending in many African countries remains well above the target of 1.5 per cent of GDP recommended in the report. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the system for standardized reporting on military matters, including transparency in military expenditures, are the two arms transparency instruments of the United Nations in which participation is voluntary. African States' participation in the Register is the lowest among the

initiatives. In 2001, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) continued to work with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and other relevant United Nations entities on peace-building initiatives, specifically with MONUC, on the separation of armed elements in Zongo, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

**Supporting African initiatives to resolve disputes**

14. The United Nations is increasing cooperation with OAU (on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, the Central African Republic) and ECOWAS (on the Mano River Union countries and Guinea-Bissau) in peacemaking and peace-building. The United Nations recently established the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa in support of ECOWAS efforts to promote peace and stability in the subregion. It actively supports the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) peacemaking efforts in the Sudan, and the efforts of the Facilitator for the inter-Congolese dialogue. The close cooperation between ECOWAS and UNAMSIL on all aspects of peace efforts has proved useful in advancing the peace process in Sierra Leone. UNIFEM is supporting IGAD in the integration of a gender perspective in its conflict

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**Establishing post-conflict peace-building support structures and creating the preconditions for reconstruction and development**

22. Peace-building elements have been identified and incorporated in the mandate of several peacekeeping operations. As the mandate of UNAMSIL draws to an end, the United Nations Country Team is finalizing a strategy for the transition from humanitarian assistance to support for national recovery and peace-building in Sierra Leone. In his fourteenth report to the Security Council on UNAMSIL, the Secretary-General is to propose a plan for post-conflict support for Sierra Leone. Phase III of MONUC deployment, principally the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, is also part of the implementation of the recommendations related to post-conflict priorities, as it seeks to create social and economic conditions favourable to the reinsertion of ex-combatants. Acting as a facilitator in support of national efforts to consolidate and maintain peace and stability, the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) has been instrumental in helping the Government to elaborate a programme for the voluntary collection of arms and explosives held illegally by civilians. Security and the proliferation of small arms in the subregion are of great concern to the Government of the Central African Republic. In this regard, the Government and the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA), in collaboration with UNDP, initiated a disarmament programme to collect arms held illegally by civilians and irregular groups and to reintegrate ex-combatants. With the end of civil conflict in Angola, international support for post-

### **III. Building durable peace and encouraging sustainable development**

#### **A. Promoting good governance**

##### **Promoting transparency and accountability in public administration**

25. Relevant United Nations organizations have continued to support African countries in building and



infrastructure, including air transport, is an important element for a country's drive to attract private investment, including foreign direct investment. The International Civil Aviation Organization has promoted the development of airports, the provision of air navigation services and the training of civil aviation personnel in Africa. Information and communication technology is also critical for business development. UNDP, through its Internet Initiative for Africa, is providing technical expertise and financing on a 50/50 basis to 10 African countries to strengthen Internet infrastructure and services to accelerate the social and economic development of Africa, and promote private sector development.

#### **Investing in human resources**

29. UNESCO is supporting the development of human resources through the establishment of multi-purpose community telecentres with the aim of assessing the potential of community radio as a way to overcome access challenges in under-privileged communities and share the benefits of new information and communication technology to mitigate the digital divide. Currently, such pilot centres have been established in five African countries for which funding has been obtained. UNESCO has also established Chairs in some African universities with the aim of strengthening knowledge transfer and capacity-building through North-South and South-South cooperation. The World Intellectual Property Organization has been developing programmes for African universities and research and development institutions with the aim of promoting technological improvements in their economies.

announced grants worth \$378 million over two years to

context of the Paris Club and provided for full cancellation of eligible debt. The issue of debt relief to Africa, inter alia, also received some positive consideration at the last summit of the Group of Eight held in Kananaskis, in June 2002.

36. Notwithstanding some progress in the HIPC initiative, the process is slow, the procedures are cumbersome and debt relief is linked to adjustment programmes, including the preparation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. The initiative does not cover many middle and low-income African countries. These efforts notwithstanding, **the Secretary-General may wish further to urge the creditors to find a lasting solution to addressing the debt situation of not only African heavily indebted poor countries, but also other heavily indebted African countries. It is also important that HIPC relief not be offset by**

Coordination, at its April 2001 meeting, affirmed that there would be no new United Nations initiatives on Africa and pledged coordinated system-wide support for African-owned and African-led initiatives. Reinforcing this issue at its March 2002 meeting, the High-level Committee on Programmes recommended to the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination that it address, inter alia, a coordinated United Nations system approach to support NEPAD. It also recommended that efforts be made to use and build up on existing United Nations mechanisms at the national and regional levels as well as other regional mechanisms to implement NEPAD. The special high-level meeting during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, scheduled for 16 September 2002, will provide a forum for the commitment of the international community, including the United Nations system, to a coordinated response and support for the implementation of NEPAD.

#### **IV. Concluding observations**

41. The report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council clearly articulates and underscores the link between peace and sustainable development in Africa. NEPAD also underlines peace and stability, good governance, democracy and respect for human rights as preconditions for development. By adopting NEPAD, African leaders have acknowledged this link and committed themselves to strengthening the continent's capacity for conflict prevention, management and resolution. They are also increasing their resolve to promote democracy and human rights in their respective countries by developing clear standards for accountability, transparency and participatory governance. The voluntary establishment of the African Peer Review Mechanism to monitor progress in compliance with such standards demonstrates the resolve of African leaders to achieve these objectives. African Governments are increasingly enabling civil society, including women's organizations, to work in partnership with Governments in promoting peace, security and development in Africa. These are welcome developments which will further contribute to the implementation of the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General and deserve the resolute support of the international community.

42. Following the 1998 report of the Secretary-General, the international community increasingly recognized the importance of addressing conflict prevention and resolution issues in Africa, as well as the linkages between relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and long-term development for peace-building in the region. The debate on conflict prevention and peace and development in Africa has

Saharan Africa will not achieve this goal unless an accelerated growth rate is achieved and sustained. Sub-Saharan Africa will also be behind other regions in achieving the remaining goals. Aid to Africa is declining despite the efforts of African Governments towards better growth and poverty reduction programmes. Their efforts need to be rewarded. Nowhere is the need for enhanced financial resources more evident than in Africa where the scourges of poverty and HIV/AIDS, among other social and economic upheavals, are two of the critical challenges facing the region.

45. The Group of Eight Africa Action Plan adopted at