



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO THE SECURITY
COUNCIL ON THE REPORT OF THE AU-UN PANEL ON FINANCING OF
AFRICAN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS
New York, 18 March 2009

Mr. President,

I am pleased to be able to participate in this meeting of the Security Council, and welcome the opportunity to focus on both strengthening the United Nations - African Union relationship, and on efforts by the international community to further enhance the AU's capacity for peacekeeping.

Let me take this opportunity to welcome H.E. Mr. Romano Prodi to the United Nations and express my appreciation for his leadership of the Panel, whose report on 'the modalities for support to African Union peacekeeping operations' (A/63/666 - S/2008/813 dated 31 December 2008) is before the Council today.

Last year's high level debate on Peace and Security in Africa, chaired by former President Mbeki on 16 April 2008, provided the UN Security Council, and the AU Peace and Security Council, with an opportunity to look more closely at the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in ensuring peace and security in Africa. The Panel's report before you today presents a number of ideas to strengthen this partnership, with a view to improving our collective response to addressing conflicts in Africa.

The role played by Regional Organisations in peace and security is indispensable to the work of this Council. I am encouraged by the progress we have made in our cooperative endeavours with the African Union Commission towards achieving peace and security in challenging areas like Darfur and Somalia. Lessons learned from these endeavours will strengthen our cooperative work in the future.

The African Union continues to develop its capacity for peacekeeping. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations is supporting these efforts with a dedicated capacity and, through specific programmes. The panel's report, while outlining significant remaining challenges, offers various recommendations that draw on the lessons of the past and aim at an enhanced relationship in the future.

Central to this analysis is the strategic relationship between this Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, which is supported by that between the UN Secretariat and the AU Commission. In both cases, that relationship has been much expanded but it has yet to develop the responsiveness that will enable us to work together

to prevent conflicts rather than only respond to crises. The Department of Political Affairs has instituted a series of desk-to-desk meetings with AU counterparts and I hope that we can build on this initiative to quickly develop a more comprehensive approach for the future.

Many of the challenges facing the African Union result from the difficulties it faces in securing the necessary resources to support both its deployments and its own long term development. A peacekeeping mission that is under-resourced can imperil the initial benefits gained through its deployment, and can raise expectations without providing the means of fulfilling them.

It was in this context that the Panel made its recommendations to address issues of funding and resources. These recommendations have far-reaching implications and will require detailed analysis, particularly in the case of assessed contributions which need to be considered by the requisite UN legislative bodies and processes. Notwithstanding the complexities, the report offers a first step in a process through which these issues can be examined comprehensively while allowing us to develop a more effective partnership. I look forward to a constructive interaction with key member states including the members of this Council, the AU members, the Troop Contributing Countries, and other stakeholders. The forthcoming retreat with Security Council members this weekend will offer a valuable opportunity to look at this issue in greater detail.

The development of the African Peace and Security Architecture is crucial to an effective long-term approach to conflict prevention and resolution. This requires the sustained support of the international community, including the European Union and many bilateral partnerships. The strategic relationship between the UN and the AU is at the heart of this evolving framework and has the potential to affect millions of people on the African continent.

Thank you.