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**REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE
DECLARATION ADOPTED BY THE 7TH MEETING OF THE STDCSS REGARDING
THE PROPOSED AU POLICE COOPERATION MECHANISM, AS ENDORSED
BY DECISION ASSEMBLY/AU/DEC.491(XXII)**

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE DECLARATION OF THE 7TH MEETING OF THE STCDSS REGARDING THE PROPOSED AFRICAN MECHANISM FOR POLICE COOPERATION, AS ENDORSED BY DECISION ASSEMBLY/AU/DEC.491(XXII)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In the Declaration adopted at its 7th ordinary meeting held in Addis Ababa, on 14 January 2014, the Specialized Technical Committee on Defense, Safety and Security (STCDSS) welcomed the offer by Algeria to host a Conference of Heads of Police in Algiers. The 22nd ordinary session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Addis Ababa, from 30 to 31st January 2014, endorsed the STCDSS Declaration [Assembly/AU/Dec.491(XXII)]. It is against this background that the African Conference of Police Directors and Inspector-Generals took place in Algiers, from 10 to 11 February 2014.

2. The present report recalls the background against which the Algiers meeting was held and provides a summary of its main conclusions and recommendations. The report concludes with recommendations on the way forward.

II. BACKGROUND

3. During the first meeting of the AU-Regions Steering Committee on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), held in Addis Ababa from 20 to 21 February 2013, the Commission presented elements of a concept for a possible police coordination mechanism in the context of the Solemn Declaration on the Common African Defense and Security Policy (CADSP). The members of the Steering Committee welcomed the proposals and encouraged the Commission to pursue its efforts. At its 2nd meeting held in Arusha, Tanzania, from 18 to 19 November 2013, the Steering Committee, following an update by the Commission, requested the latter to convene a meeting of Member States experts in order to elaborate the concept for the proposed police coordination mechanism and to submit it for consideration by the relevant AU organs in June 2014.

4. It should be recalled that the AU-Regions Steering Committee, which was established in June 2008, brings together the AU Commission and representatives of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Its objective is to coordinate efforts towards addressing issues relating to SALW and DDR. So far, the Steering Committee has met eight times. Its recommendations feed into the elaboration of relevant AU Policies, such as the Strategy on the Control of Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of SALW. The Strategy was submitted to the 20th ordinary session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Addis Ababa, from 27 to 28 January 2013. The Assembly, in turn, noted with satisfaction the finalization of the Strategy by the Commission, in the context of decision Assembly/AU/Dec.369(XVII) of July 2011, and encouraged Member States to make use of this document and its Action Plan [Assembly/AU/Dec.472(XX)], as part of Africa's efforts to address the challenges at hand.

5. Other meetings have also called for the establishment of a continental police cooperation mechanism in Africa. These include the Africa Police Chiefs Regional Organizations meeting on SALW, held in Kigali, Rwanda, from 26 to 27 May 2011, as well as the 22nd African Regional Conference of the International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO), commonly known as INTERPOL, held in Oran, Algeria, from 10 to 12 September 2013.

6. The relevance of a continental police mechanism cannot be overemphasized. Indeed, organized crime syndicates are becoming increasingly more complex and internationalized. More often than not, crime syndicates activities are shaped by events outside their borders. Accordingly, they often operate outside their own countries, regions and even continents.

7. There are a number of police coordination mechanisms at both global and regional and sub-regional levels. At the global level, coordination of police activities, especially against organized crime, is being done through INTERPOL. Some regions already have coordination mechanisms such as EUROPOL for the European continent, AMERIPOL for the Americas, and FRANCOPOL for the French-speaking police community. In Africa, and at the sub-regional level, mention should be made of the Eastern Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (EAPCCO), the Central African Police Chiefs Committee (CAPCCO), the West African Police Chiefs Committee (WAPCCO), and the Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization (SARPCCO).

8. In parallel to the efforts to establish a continental police cooperation mechanism, the AU has also taken steps to buttress the police component of the African Standby Force (ASF), to provide the AU with the multidimensional capacity needed to address the complex peace and security challenges confronting countries where AU-led peace support operations are deployed. The December 2013 assessment report of the ASF, whose outcome was endorsed by the 7th meeting of the STCDSS, made a number of recommendations in this respect, including the convening of a special meeting of the chiefs of police to consider all aspects related to the role of police in the ASF and in AU peace support operations. Such a meeting will provide an opportunity to look into the contribution that police units and personnel deployed within AU peace support operations could make to the overall efforts aimed at facilitating a coordinated continental response to transnational organized crime and other related threats.

III. MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ALGIERS MEETING

9. As indicated above, the African Conference of Police Directors and Inspector-Generals took place in Algiers on 10 and 11 February 2014. The meeting, which was attended by representatives of 40 Member States, was opened by the Prime Minister of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Mr. Abdelmalek Sellal. The AU Commissioner for Peace and Security also addressed the meeting.

10. Following its deliberations, the meeting adopted the "Algiers Declaration on the Establishment of the African Mechanism for Police Cooperation – AFRIPOL", copy of which is attached as annex. In its preamble, the Declaration notably:

- made reference to the Declaration of the 7th STDCSS meeting and other relevant African initiatives;
- emphasized the strong determination of the African Police Institutions to work in a concerted manner and within a standing framework, taking into account the specificities of the African region;
- expressed awareness of the common challenges facing the African countries in terms of terrorism and organized transnational crime;

- expressed concern at the alliances among criminal organizations, as well as at the complexity of their actions and methods of operations; and
 - highlighted the need to promote African police coordination at strategic, operational and tactical levels.
11. In light of the above, the Conference agreed to:
- establish, under the aegis of the AU, a mechanism for African police cooperation, called the African Police Cooperation Organization - AFRIPOL;
 - designate Algeria as the host country for the headquarters of AFRIPOL in Algiers;
 - request the Commission to submit a report on the establishment of AFRIPOL to the next AU Summit scheduled to be held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, in June 2014, and proceed to its operationalization; and
 - further request the Commission to facilitate the effective setting up of an *ad hoc* committee co-chaired by Algeria and Uganda and bringing together the representatives of African regional organizations of police cooperation, to develop the draft statutes of AFRIPOL and other legal texts that will govern its organization, operation and funding.

IV. OBSERVATIONS

12. The convening of the Algiers meeting, as part of the follow-up to the Declaration of the 7th STDCSS meeting, as endorsed by the 22nd ordinary session of the Assembly of the Union, and the adoption of the Declaration establishing AFRIPOL mark an important step in the process aimed at enhancing cooperation among African police institutions. This process is part of the overall efforts to further collective security on the continent, in line with the CADSP. The Algerian Government should be commended for having hosted the meeting and availed the required facilities for its successful convening.

13. AFRIPOL fits in well with the current AU trend of providing continental mechanisms for sustainable peace and security as required by the CADSP. Examples of earlier continental approaches in the area of peace and security include the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba), which led to the establishment of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCON), the Strategy on SALW, the African Model Law on Counter Terrorism, the Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform and the Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development.

14. The operationalization of AFRIPOL will greatly enhance the capacity of the continent to address the threat posed by transnational organized crime. Indeed, it will enable Member States to pool their resources together and better coordinate their efforts. It will also facilitate the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the AU and INTERPOL in 2011, which commit the two organizations to “set up the appropriate channels for communication and exchange of information in order to ensure close consultations and exchange of views between the Parties...”. It is, therefore, recommended that the Executive Council endorses the Algiers Declaration and requests the Commission to actively work towards its full implementation, including the elaboration of the draft statutes and other relevant documents, as well as the funding modalities of AFRIPOL. It is understood that the Commission would then submit regular progress reports to the policy organs.