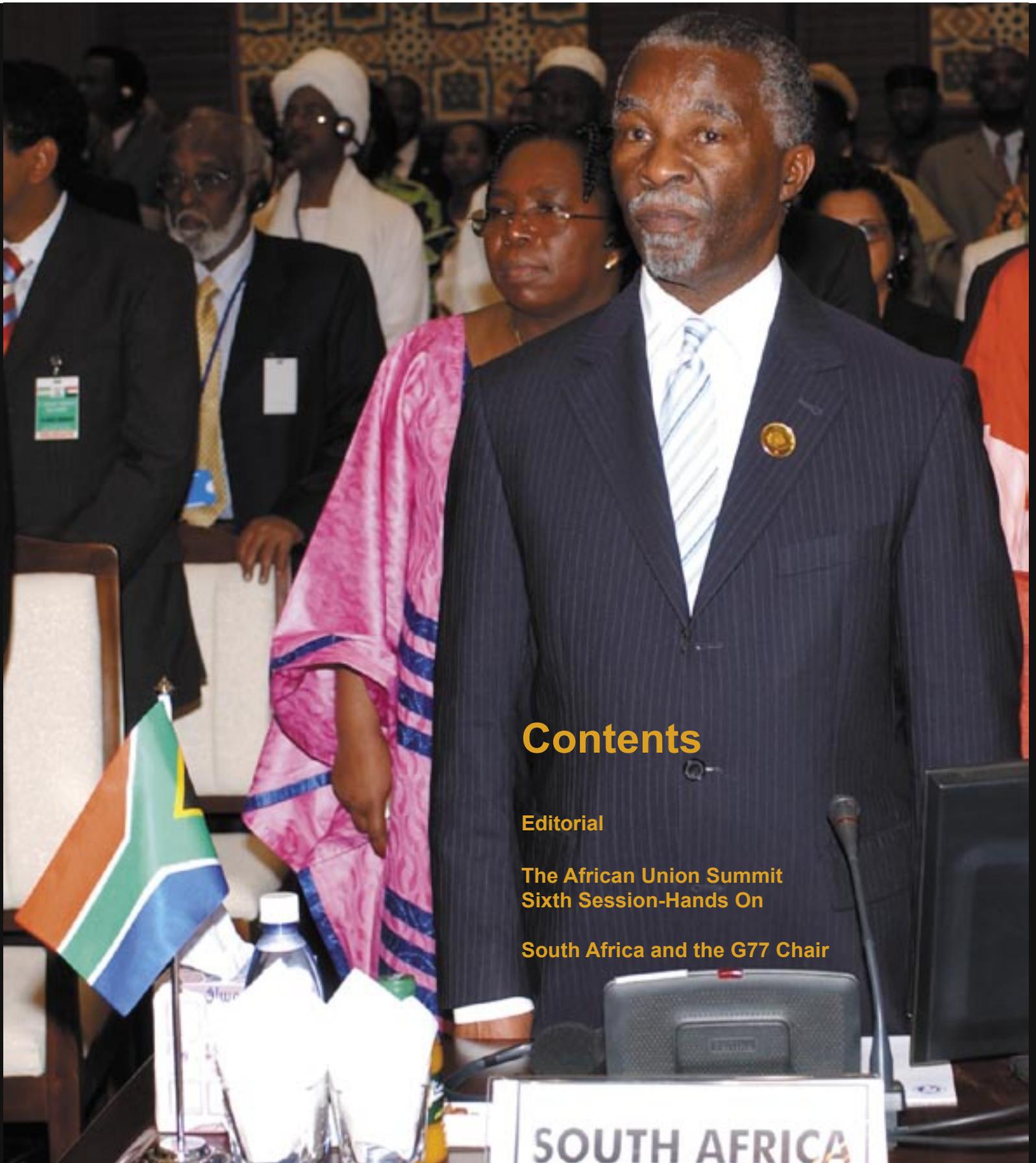




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# dfa **INow**

The voice to be heard



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## Editorial

**T**HIS ISSUE OF DFA NOW INAUGURATES THE NEW YEAR - and with every new

year there comes new roles and responsibilities. This issue focuses on South Africa's assuming the role of Chair of the Group of 77 (G77) and China. This is indeed a huge task; and the article concentrates on the responsibilities and challenges of leading this important international structure and advancing the agenda of the South.

This year also begins with crucial meetings of the African Union. DFA NOW takes a look at the recent AU Ministerial meeting that served to prepare for the AU Heads of State and Government meeting that has just concluded its business in Khartoum. This article also touches on some of the main issues facing the AU this year.

In a sense, every year offers us a new possibility for change, for solving problems that still remain and for strengthening our efforts to bring about a better world. I think we can be optimistic about 2006 and start the year on a positive note.

At an international level, part of this task in 2006 will be to reclaim development as a priority item on the agenda of the world's multilateral structures. South Africa will continue to play its role in this regard and champion the needs of Africa and of the South. Future issues of DFA Now will unpack further aspects of the development agenda and also explore our role in working towards an inclusive world where peace and justice prevails and where poverty is a thing of the past.

We hope that the articles in this first issue for 2006 will provide food for thought as indeed we also wish all readers a fruitful and fulfilling year. ▶

**Any direct feedback can be forwarded to The Editor at: [sadesk@foreign.gov.za](mailto:sadesk@foreign.gov.za)**



*Director-General of Foreign Affairs  
Dr Ayanda Ntsaluba*

## The African Union Summit Sixth Session – Hands On



*President Thabo Mbeki with newly elected President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.*

**T**HE AFRICAN UNION (AU) HAS HAD MANY SUCCESSES since its birth from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). In recent years, we seen some African countries holding democratic elections for the first time in their history, stability achieved in previously war-torn countries, and Africa having its first female head of state winning the elections in Liberia. These are some of the achievements that the AU can be upbeat about when it holds its 6th session this year. The AU's 8th Ordinary Ministerial Session, scheduled for 20-21 January 2006, was charged with the responsibility of preparing for the AU Summit of Heads of State and Government, which took place on 23-24 January 2006, in Khartoum, Sudan.

Central to the AU's mandate is the

Peace and Security Council. Hence, an annual Consultation Forum was established in April 2005 to address peace and security on the continent. The Union is currently in the process of improving its Peace and Security initiatives in conjunction with support from members of the G8 and European Union.

The forum was established with a sole purpose of addressing the following issues:

- African Continental Peace and Security Architecture (focussing on: African Standby Force, Continental Early Warning);
- Elaboration of an AU Framework for Post-conflict Reconstruction and Development;
- Exchange of views on the modalities for the establishment of a

Peace Support Facility complementary to the Peace Support Facility established by the European Union;

- Consultation and Coordination among donors.

It is well known that the AU does not have the full funding capabilities to maintain the Peace and Security Architecture it has envisaged. The opportunity therefore exists for institutions like the EU and developed countries to assist in this regard. It should be noted however, that South Africa engages all peace and security matters at a multilateral level. Should any other government, therefore, wish to invest in the Peace and Security architecture of the continent it would best be served if they did so at forums such as the one noted above.

## The Khartoum meeting would address these areas of challenge for the Council:



Above: Sudan President El-Bashir.

Below: Chad President Idriss Deby



**SUDAN-CHAD CRISIS:** The heads of the six-nation Central African Economic and Monetary Union (CEMAC) met in the Chadian capital, N'Djamena, for a special summit to discuss the country's dispute with Sudan. This follows a rebel group attack in the border town of Adre. The Chadian President Idriss Deby has accused Sudan of backing rebels opposed to him on Chad's eastern frontier with Sudan. A full-scale conflict between Chad and Sudan would have considerable consequences in the region. The Chadian President urged the United Nations on 04 January 2006, to take control of Sudan's volatile Darfur region, as Khartoum is using the conflict there to destabilise neighbouring states. The AU has sent a delegation to N'Djamena and Khartoum as part of efforts to reduce the tension between the two countries.

Chad has made clear its objection to Sudan hosting an AU summit in Khartoum in January 2006. This may create division within AU Member States, and particularly the CEMAC who took a position not to allow President El-Bashir to be the next President of the AU.

**COTE D'IVOIRE:** The country's new Prime Minister Charles Konan Banny has formed a transitional government that has 10 months to reunite the country, disarm fighters and hold presidential elections. This follows the failure by the previous transitional authority and the warring parties to resolve the issue of disarmament, citizenship entitlement, and the holding of the presidential elections. Prime Minister Banny appointed rebel leader Guillaume Soro as Minister of Reconstruction after several weeks of tough negotiations.

### NEPAD

Nigerian President Olesegun Obasanjo, as Chair of the NEPAD Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee (HSGIC), will be presenting a report to the Assembly on the progress made in the implementation of the AU's socio-economic development programme, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). In the past, the report has only become available during the meeting itself. President Obasanjo normally drafts the report himself, with the assistance of the NEPAD Secretariat. The Assembly usually welcomes, notes and adopts his report in the form of a Declaration on the Implementation of NEPAD. The Declaration customarily concentrates on the challenges that he has highlighted in his report and calls on all member states to popularise NEPAD, to support its implementation nationally, regionally, continentally and internationally, and to join the APRM.

### THE REFORM OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

The Resolution in September 2005 focused on reform of the Security Council and resolved to enlarge the Security Council, to accord the new members the same prerogatives and privileges as the current members, to grant Africa two permanent and five non-permanent seats in the Security Council and to increase its membership from fifteen to twenty six with eleven additional seats. Of these eleven seats, six will be Permanent and five Non Permanent.

The Permanent seats will be distributed as follows:

- two from Africa
- two from Asia,
- one from Latin America and Caribbean States
- one from Western European and other States

The Non-Permanent seats will be distributed as follows:

- two from Africa,
- one from Asia
- one from Eastern European States
- one from Latin America & Caribbean States

Finally, the African leaders decided to expand the Follow-Up Mechanism by five members to continue to negotiate with other regions of the world, and to consult with the Chairperson of the Union and the Commission when necessary.

**ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA:** The situation between Ethiopia and Eritrea has reached a stalemate. Ethiopia has failed to comply with a border demarcation decision while Eritrea is restricting the movement of the UN Mission Personnel over its half of the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ). Eritrea's recent request for the removal of UNMEE peacekeeping personnel originating from the United States of America, Canada, Europe and Russia has added to the volatile nature of the situation. Ethiopia has shown compliance by beginning a process of removing its troops in accordance with United Nations Resolution 1640 of November 2005. The resolution called upon both parties to reduce their force levels within 30 days, to the agreed force level of 16 December 2004. Ethiopia has not met the 30 December 2005 deadline.



Following the Sirte Summit, it was decided to hold an Extraordinary Session of the AU Assembly on 4 August 2005 to further consider the issue of United Nations reform. During this session, it was reported that there was no 'total' support in the world for the Common African Position on the reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), in particular, as enunciated in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration and Resolution. The Assembly thus decided to establish a Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government to advocate the Common Position to other regions of the world, and make appropriate recommendations thereon. Pending the report from the Committee of Ten, the Chairperson of the Assembly was further requested to submit such to another Extraordinary Session of the Assembly to be held on the margins of the UN General Assembly in September 2005.

The Follow-Up Mechanism met in Bamako on 02 December 2005 where various members reported on their respective consultations with different countries and groups around the world. The Mechanism decided that the time was appropriate to table the African Resolution based on the African Common Position to the United Nations General Assembly for consideration as soon as possible and before the end of December deadline as agreed to.

It is expected that the Report by the Chairperson of the Expanded Follow-Up Mechanism will report on these developments and provide an indication of whether the draft resolution was in fact submitted to the UN General Assembly by the deadline set. As a member of the Follow-Up Mechanism, South Africa remains committed to advocating the Common African Position and preserving African unity and solidarity on the issue.



*Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma and Chinese Ambassador Lin Songtian observe a Guard of Honour by the Chinese Peacekeeping corps at the UN office in Liberia.*

### AFRICAN COURTS

At the 8th ordinary session of the AU Executive Council from 20-21 January 2006, the merger of the African Court on Human and People's Rights and the Court of Justice of the AU will be discussed.

The Assembly of the AU endorsed recommendations of the Executive Council that the African Court of Justice (ACJ) and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACH-PR) should merge. During its previous session in Sirte in July 2005, the Assembly decided that a draft single legal instrument relating to the establishment of the merged court comprising the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Court of Justice should be completed for consideration by the January 2006 sessions of the Executive Council and the Assembly. Algeria and Ghana were tasked to drive this process. In order to avoid jeopardising the operationalisation of the African Court on Human and People's Rights at the expense of the merger, the Assembly further decided that all necessary measures for the operationalisation of the Human Rights Court should be taken, including the election of judges and the determination of the budget. The Eastern Region will host the seat of the merged Courts. In pursuance of the above, the AU Commission arranged a meeting of legal experts of Member States to consider the draft

instrument in Algiers from 21-25 November 2005. The single instrument comprises two parts, namely the Protocol and the Statutes of the single court. Since the group which met in Algeria did not constitute a quorum, a Working Group proceeded to discuss the merger instrument. Experts agreed that the proposed number of judges on the merged Court should be twelve taking into account budgetary constraints and given that the Court, at its initial stages, might have a limited number of cases to deal with.

### CONCLUSION

Taking into account numerous strides made by the AU in stabilising the continent, determination in assuming responsibility for peace and security, it is not an illusion to assert that this could be Africa's century. The establishment of the Peace and Security Council has undoubtedly been a landmark in the heads of state's efforts to give themselves the tools to succeed. As these leaders meet to resume talks on African Standby Force, to address the challenges on Nepad, the Reform of the UN Security Council and the African Courts, concerned citizens of African States would be watching to see how far will these meetings and policy makers will go in changing Africa from being seen as a risk to opportunity, new market, and number one continent in the world. ▀

## UN REFORM

Regarding Reform of the UN Security Council, the Assembly reaffirmed the Ezulwini Consensus, which is the Common African Position on the proposed reform of the UN. The Ezulwini Consensus resolves to enlarge the Security Council and to accord the new members the same prerogatives and privileges as the current members as well as to grant Africa two permanent and five non permanent seats in the Security Council. It also proposes increasing the membership from fifteen to twenty six with eleven additional seats. The Assembly also resolved to maintain the Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government as well as the Expanded Follow-Up Mechanism comprising eighteen member states, who are charged with the task of making Africa's views known to other regions of the world and engaging them for reciprocal support and wide acceptance of the African Common Position.

## ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL.

As per Article 5(1) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council, ten members of the PSC are elected for a term of two years, while another five members are elected for a three-year term. The first members of the PSC were elected in March 2004 during the 4th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council. Ten vacancies will arise in March 2006 as a result of the expiry of the terms of office of the ten members elected for two-year terms. These members are:

- **Central Region:**  
Cameroon, Congo
- **Eastern Region:**  
Kenya, The Sudan
- **Northern Region:**  
Libya

# DECISIONS OF THE 6TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AU ASSEMBLY

The theme of the Session was Education and Culture. An African University Conference preceded the Summit. The Session adopted a number of decisions pertaining to education and culture, which includes the Decision to proclaim the period 2006-2015 as the Second Decade of Education for Africa. The Assembly endorsed the framework of the Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Education. A Decision was also taken to adopt the revised Charter for the Cultural Renaissance of Africa as well as to adopt the Draft Statutes of the African Academy of Languages. Ministries of Culture and Education were urged to create fora for regular consultations and to streamline the linkages between culture and education, specifically through the African Academy of Languages, in the implementation of the Decision on reinstating the linkage between culture and education. A Decision was also taken to declare 2006 as the Year of African Languages.

- **Southern Region:**  
Lesotho, Mozambique
- **Western Region:**  
Ghana, Senegal and Togo

Only member states that are party to the PSC Protocol and not affected by sanctions are eligible for election. Retiring members of the PSC are eligible for immediate re-election. The AU Commission informed member states that selection of members of the PSC would be conducted at the regional level based on the modalities determined by each region, so as to ensure equitable regional representation and rotation. The deadline for submission of candidatures was 30 December 2005. South Africa will participate in regional consultations on the issue and promote the regional position.

## DECISION ON THE PROGRESS REPORT ON AIDS WATCH AFRICA (AWA) (ASSEMBLY/AU/DRAFT/DEC.1 (VI)) REV.1

The Assembly urged the AWA Heads of State and Government to intensify efforts to maximise the visibility of AWA as an advocacy platform. The Commission was requested to co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the AWA Strategic Framework and to report annually to the Ordinary Session of the Assembly on progress made.

## DECISION ON A SECOND DECADE OF EDUCATION FOR AFRICA (2006-2015) AND THE FRAMEWORK OF THE PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE SECOND DECADE (ASSEMBLY/AU/DRAFT/DEC.2 (VI)) REV.1

The Assembly endorsed the Framework of the Plan of Action of the Second Decade of Education for Africa and called for Member states to devote sufficient resources for its implementation. It also called upon the Commission, RECs and member states to strengthen cooperation

and support mechanism for operationalising this Plan of Action including the coordination of existing initiatives involved in education such as the Education for All, MDG's and NEPAD. The Assembly proclaimed the period 2006-2015 as the Second Decade of Education and appealed to the international Community, NGO's Civil Societies and other Development partners to provide technical and financial support for the implementation of this Plan of Action at National, Regional and Continental level.

**DECISION ON THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF AFRICAN FOOTBALL (ASSEMBLY/AU/DRAFT/ DEC.3 (VI))**

The Assembly declared 2007 the International Year of African Football and invited member states to support their national football associations in organising the Fiftieth Anniversary of CAF in 2007. The hosting of the FIFA World Cup in 2010 in South Africa was highlighted. The Commission was requested to cooperate with CAF in achieving this objective and to report to the Assembly in 2008 on the celebrations.

**DECISION ON THE REVISED CHARTER FOR CULTURAL RENAISSANCE OF AFRICA (ASSEMBLY/AU/DRAFT/DEC.4) REV.1**

The Assembly adopted the Revised Charter as recommended by the Executive Council and urged member states for its speedy signing and ratification.

**DECISION ON THE STATUTES OF THE AFRICAN ACADEMY OF LANGUAGES (ACALAN) (ASSEMBLY/AU/DRAFT/DEC.5 (VI)) REV.1**



*A colourful displays of traditional gear and dance at a cultural event during the AU diaspora conference held in Senegal 2005.*

The Assembly adopted the Draft Statutes and appealed to member states, RECs and other organisation to support the Commission in the promotion of the activities of ACALAN.

**DECISION ON THE RE-INSTATING THE LINKAGE BETWEEN CULTURE AND EDUCATION (ASSEMBLY/AU/DRAFT/DEC.6 (VI)) REV.1**

The Assembly urged ministries of Culture and Education to create a fora for regular consultation and streamlining culture in education and education in culture particularly through the rebuilding of African education systems and called upon the Commission in

collaboration with member state, RECs to facilitate the implementation of this decision specifically through the African Academy of Languages and report periodically on progress made. The Assembly also called upon UNESCO and other partners to provide support to the ministries of culture and education in strengthening the interface between culture and education.

**DECISION ON THE DROUGHT SITUATION IN THE IGAD SUB-REGION (ASSEMBLY/AU/DRAFT/ DEC.7) REV.1**

The Assembly underlined the need to sensitise the international community of the impending crisis before it escalates and called upon the relevant UN Agencies to render maximum support to prevent the loss of lives and displacement of persons.

**DECISION TO DECLARE 2006 AS THE YEAR OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES (ASSEMBLY/AU/DRAFT/ DEC.8 (VI))**

The Assembly declared 2006 as the Year of African Languages and requested the Commission in collaboration with UNESCO and other relevant partners to coordinate activities related

to the year.

**DRAFT DECISION ON THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF SEVEN HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT CHAIRED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA (ASSEMBLY/AU/DRAFT/DEC.9(VI))**

It will be recalled that the Sirte Assembly reaffirmed the ultimate goal of the AU as full political and economic integration leading to the United States of Africa (decision Assembly/AU/Dec.90(V)) and decided to establish a new Committee of Heads of State and Government, chaired by President

Obasanjo of Nigeria in his capacity as chairperson of the AU, to consider all the ideas on this goal, including the structure, process and timeframes to achieve this objective, as well as measures to be undertaken in the interim to strengthen the Commission's ability to fulfil its mandate effectively. Within this mandate, the President of Nigeria convened a regional conference from 12-13 November 2005 in Abuja, Nigeria on "Africa and the Challenges of the Changing Global Order: Desirability of the Union Government". The conference made some recommendations including that the formation of a Union government should be based on a multi-layered and phased approach at national, sub-regional and regional levels.

The Assembly reaffirmed that the ultimate goal of the African Union is full political and economic integration leading to the United States of Africa. The Assembly requested the Commission to follow-up on the Report of the Committee of Heads of State and Government in accordance with the Work Plan and the Framework of Action as well as to consider the contribution of the President of Libya and all pertinent issues that may arise during consultations with the relevant stakeholders and experts. The Commission is to submit a roadmap for consideration to the next Ordinary Session of the Assembly in June 2006.

## **DECISION ON THE ELECTION OF JUDGES OF THE AFRICAN COURT ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS (ASSEMBLY/AU/DRAFT/DEC.10 (VI))**

The Assembly appointed the following judges for the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights as elected by the Eighth Ordinary Session of the Executive Council:

1. Ms. Sophia A.B. Akuffo (Ghana) 2-year term
2. Mr. G.W. Kanyiehamba (Uganda) 2-year term
3. Mr. Benard Makgabo Ngoepe (South Africa) 2-year term
4. Mr. Jean Emile Somda (Burkina Faso) 2-year term
5. Mr. Hamdi Faraj Fanoush (Libya) 4-year term

6. Mrs. Kelello Justina Mafoso-Guni (Lesotho) 4-year term
7. Mr. Jean Mutsinzi (Rwanda) 6-year term
8. Mr. Fatsah Ouguerouz (Algeria) 4-year term
9. Mr. Modibo Tounry Guindo (Mali) 6-year term
10. Mr. El Hadji Guisse (Senegal) 4-year term
11. Mr. Gerard Niyungeko (Burundi) 6-year term

Two of the judges appointed are from Southern Africa (Justice Bernard Ngoepe from South Africa on a 2-year term and Mrs. Kellelo Justina Mafoso-Guni from Lesotho on a 4-year term).

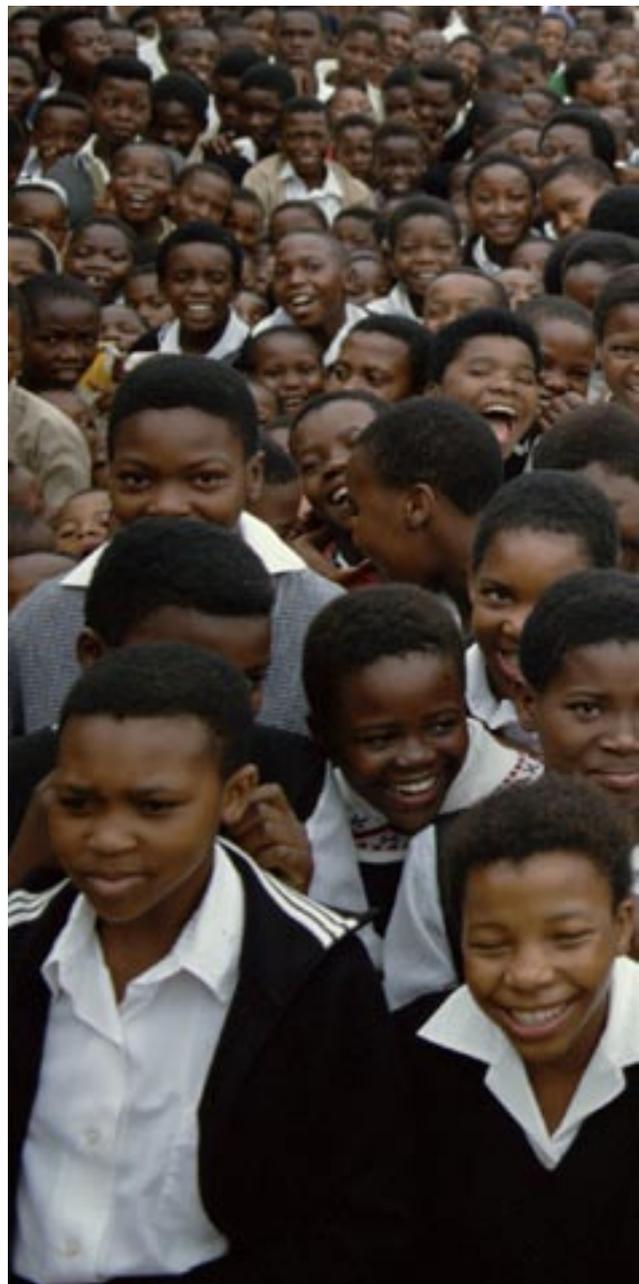
## **DECISION ON THE 19TH ACTIVITY REPORT OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS (ASSEMBLY/AU/DRAFT/DEC.11 (VI))**

The Assembly adopted and authorised the publication of the 19th Activity Report of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and its annexes except for those containing the Resolution on Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe. The Assembly requested the concerned member states to submit their views on the said Resolution within three months of the adoption of this decision to the ACHPR for the Commission to submit a report thereon to the next Ordinary Session of the Executive Council. The ACHPR was called upon to ensure that in future, the responses of all parties are enlisted to its Resolution and Decision prior submission to the Executive Council or Assembly for consideration. The Assembly urged member states who have not yet submitted their periodic reports to do so. The ACHPR was further requested to complete as soon as possible, the work undertaken on its relation with the various organs and institutions of the AU and submit appropriate recommendations to it. The ACHPR was also encouraged to take

part in the process of operationalisation of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

During the Session, member states felt that the independence of the ACHPR was at stake in view of the fact that external donors fund some of its activities. The Executive Council requested the AU Commission to allocate adequate resources from its operational budget to the ACHPR as provided for in Article 41 of the Charter, to enable the ACHPR to discharge independently its mandate under the Charter.

It will be recalled that at the 5th Ordinary Session of the Assembly (Assembly Decision Assembly/AU/Dec.7 (II)), the ACHPR was requested to complete the work undertaken on its relations with the various organs and institutions of the African Union,





including the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. The ACHPR was again requested to complete this work as soon as possible and to submit to it, appropriate recommendations relating thereto. The ACHPR was also requested to take part in the operationalization of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

During deliberations, the AU Commission indicated that they have no authority to vet the reports of the ACHPR. South Africa reminded the member states that the independence of the ACHPR was very important and that in terms of the original mandate, the ACHPR reports directly to the Assembly.

#### **DECISION ON THE ELECTION OF ONE (1) MEMBER OF THE AFRICAN COMMITTEE ON THE**

#### **RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD (ASSEMBLY/AU/DRAFT/DEC.12 (VI))**

It will be recalled that at the Sirte Summit in July 2005, the Assembly appointed 6 members of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child as elected by the 7th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council. The South African representative on the Committee, Dr Lulu Tshivula, completed her term in July 2005.

The Assembly appointed Mrs Dawlat Ibrahim Hassan, from Tanzania, as a member of the African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in accordance with the election of the 8th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council.

#### **DECISION ON THE HISSENE HABRE CASE AND THE AFRICAN UNION (ASSEMBLY/AU/DRAFT/DEC.13 (VI))**

The Assembly decided to set-up a Committee of Eminent African Jurists to be appointed by the Chairperson of the African Union in consultation with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. The mandate of this Committee would be to consider all aspects and implications of the Case as well as the

available option for the former President of Chad, Mr. Habre's, trial taking in to account the principles of total rejection to impunity, the international fair trial standards, jurisdiction over the alleged crimes indicted for, efficiency in terms of cost and time, accessibility to the trial by alleged victims and witnesses, priority for an African mechanism and non imposition of the death penalty. The Committee was further mandated by the Assembly to make concrete recommendations on how to handle issues of a similar nature in future and to finalise its work and submit a report to the next Ordinary Session of the Assembly in June 2006.

#### **DECLARATION ON THE OUTCOME OF THE 6TH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE HELD IN HONG**

#### **KONG, CHINA, 13- 18 DECEMBER 2005 (ASSEMBLY/AU//DRAFT/DECL.1(VI))**

The Assembly welcomed the Declaration of the 6th WTO Ministerial Conference to complete the Work Programme and to conclude the negotiations launched at Doha in 2006. To this end, the international community particularly the industrialised developed countries was called upon to show greater flexibility in their negotiating positions to eliminate the obstacles for the achievement of this objective by 2006. The decision by the WTO Ministerial Conference to ensure that the parallel elimination of all forms of agriculture export subsidies and discipline is completed by the end of 2013 was noted by the Assembly and a call was made for appropriate compensation of those African countries that may be adversely affected by the delay in the elimination of these agricultural export subsidies. The Assembly welcomed the extension of the TRIPs Agreement

#### **DECLARATION BY THE ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION (ASSEMBLY/AU/DRAFT/DECL.2 (VI))**

The Assembly expressed appreciation for the initiative by the President of the Sudan to accept the postponement of his term of Chairship for the African Union until 2007. The Assembly agreed that the Sudan will assume the Chairship of the Union in the year 2007. However, if the current situation in Darfur and between Sudan and Chad is not resolved, Sudan may not chair.

#### **RECOMMENDATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE AFRICAN UNION (ASSEMBLY/AU/RECOMMENDATION (VI))**

The Committee of Seven chaired by Botswana recommended that the Sudan should assume Chairship of the AU for the year 2007, with due respect to the principle of rotation between regions. To this end, it was recommended that a Committee be established to examine the implementation of the rotation principle. ▸



## South Africa and the G77 Chair

**T**HE LARGEST COALITION OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES in the United Nations (UN), the Group of 77 was established in 1964. The G77 was established to be a tool through which developing countries can promote and articulate their collective economic interests on international platforms. It is a tool with which developing countries can enhance their negotiating capacity on economic issues in the UN system. It is an organisation that was formed because developing nations were faced with a world in which the international trade structure perpetuated and exacerbated the marginalisation of underdeveloped economies and societies. Developing countries created this voice because international economic platforms, among them the UN, perpetuated the skewed international economic regime. The G77 was therefore created to elucidate developing countries' priorities to create an equitable trade and development regime.

In its dealings with the international economic and development challenges facing developing countries, the G77

**On Thursday 12 January 2006 South Africa assumed the role of Chairpersonship over the Group of 77 (G77) for the year 2006. To this end, Minister Foreign Affairs, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma accepted on behalf of the country the mantle of the Group of 77 Chair at the organisation's headquarters in New York, USA. South Africa was nominated by the African region to be chair at the conclusion of Jamaica's Chairship, the previous incumbent for 2005. The G77 chair rotates on a regional basis and is held for a year.**

adopted an approach of cooperation and non-confrontation. The organisation chose to function on the principles of interdependence of nations and the shared values and common destiny of nations. The G77 believes that equity and justice in international economic and financial dealings can make for a

stable and prosperous world.

During its initial stages, the G77 focussed on trade and development issues. Growth over the years has seen the organisation dealing with related issues of finance; external indebtedness; fraud; agriculture; education; the environment; industrialisation; health;

intellectual property; sustainable development and the environment; science and technology and the shaping of multilateral diplomacy.

The G77 has made a significant contribution to the effective functioning of the UN so that the UN is better able to provide a platform whereupon social and economic issues are dealt with. In the face of growing unilateralism, the G77 has sought to revive and strengthen the multilateral system in general, and the UN in particular. The revival of multilateralism under the ambit of the UN will make for improved negotiation platforms on issues of development. The G77 has thus contributed to the continued development of multilateralism within the UN system.

#### SA AND THE CHAIR

The Chair annually rotates on a regional basis between Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. The Chair has the responsibility of making statements in the General Assembly, the UN's Economic Social Council (ECOSOC) and other bodies under the UN dealing with international economic cooperation and development. The Chair has to ensure that it fully represents all members of the G77.

As Chair, South Africa will be leading the New York chapter of the G77, and the position confers significant responsibilities on the country. The country firstly, has to ensure that the G77 as an organisation functions efficiently and optimally. South Africa will strive to provide a well functioning Chair's office, organising meetings and timeously presenting statements that meet the expectations of the organisation's members. South Africa will also have to provide a Chair's office that is seen to be impartial on all issues. Perceptions of partiality on the part of the Chair can erode the incumbent's credibility and faith in the organisation's handling of development issues as they affect its members.

Another crucial responsibility around the Chairship of the G77 is advancing the development agenda of the South. The international meetings which are scheduled to take place during 2006 present challenges and opportunities for the G77 to effect a

*The G77 and the NAM are the principal vehicles through which developing countries discuss matters of common concern. While the G77 deals primarily with economic issues, the NAM has dealt with security and disarmament matters. As Chair of the NAM, part of South Africa's strategy was to bring the two organisations closer together. The Joint Co-ordinating Committee of the NAM and the G77 meets regularly and serves as a useful mechanism for co-ordinating positions taken by the two groupings.*

sustained engagement with industrialised nations. To this end South Africa will seek to maintain the close cooperation between the G77 and the Non Aligned Movement (NAM). The G77 and the NAM are the principal vehicles through which developing countries discuss matters of common concern. While the G77 deals primarily with economic issues, the NAM has dealt with security and disarmament matters. As Chair of the NAM, part of South Africa's strategy was to bring the two organisations closer together. The Joint Co-ordinating Committee of the NAM and the G77 meets regularly and serves as a useful mechanism for co-ordinating positions taken by the two groupings. The Chair will also seek to engage constructively with the development partners of the North.

Civil society has always played an important role in effecting development, holding Governments accountable to principles of good governance,

partnering society and Government in addressing socio-economic ills, and acting as a conduit between the lower strata of the populace and the elite. The G77 has worked to good effect with the civil society strata. This sector of society can continue to be an important partner of the G77 as the organisation responds to old and newly emerging challenges. South Africa can help the G77 pursue a more systematic relationship with non-state actors supportive of development goals that are championed by the G77.

The skewed international economic regime affects countries and regions differently. This also means that countries are at different levels of development. This diversity within developing nations brings with it diverging national interests and priorities. The different and competing interests of the member states will pose a particular challenge for South Africa because as Chair of the G77, the country will have to generate consensus among G77 members on a variety of issues. South Africa will also look to enhancing the standing image of G77 as a constructive and responsible partner in the promotion of North - South relations in the pursuit of the development agenda of developing nations.

Some of the issues that necessitated the formation of the G77 and others that the organisation dealt with at birth are still prevalent today. Among these are the skewed and inadequate resource flows, strong and stable commodity markets, reducing the debt burden and dismantling protective trade barriers. The organisation also has to deal with new issues like the degradation of the environment, sustainable development, social justice, good governance that have at times threatened to obscure the old issues which still remain relevant or pertinent.

There has been a marked acknowledgement of the socio-economic and development circumstances within which Africa finds itself. This has seen an increase in undertakings to commit the required resources to uplift the continent and accelerate the continent's development. Promises have been made to cancel debt, increase direct investments and in-

*“ South Africa is committed to a just and equitable global economic order as well as the achievement of sustainable development. We will spare no effort to actively pursue the needs and aspirations of developing countries to ensure that we harness the opportunities for developing countries and enhance the momentum arising out of the 2005 High Level Summit.*

*South Africa will continue to reiterate the importance of maintaining a balanced approach in addressing security and development. The success in taking development forward will depend not only on political support but also in making certain that there are adequate and reliable resources for addressing the permanent threat posed by underdevelopment.”*



*Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms Sue van der Merwe on the Occasion of the Planning Seminar to prepare for the South African Chairship of the Group of 77 in 2006, Pretoria, 11 December 2005*

crease the economic performance of the continent. South Africa will seek to enhance the capacity of the G77 so that the organisation influences the reform of international trade policies and practices so that exports from Africa contribute to the financing of African development. While there is acknowledgement that developing nations need to be given special attention to overcome their conditions, that acknowledgement has not always been met by actions. As Chair of the G77 South Africa will want to ensure that attention is not diverted from achieving the Millenium Development Goals which focused especially on water, housing and human settlement. The UN Development Agenda asserts that economic, social, gender and environmental matters are all inter-related facets of development.

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the sustainable development agenda remains one of the priorities of the G77. The G77 played a critical role in the success of the Rio (1992) and the World Summit of Sustainable Development (Johannesburg 2002) during which it ensured that a balanced approach to these pillars of sustainable development (environmental protection, social development and economic development) was pursued. The current agenda of the G77 on sustainable development focuses on effecting the Johannesburg plan of implementation.

The nomination of South Africa to chair the G77 by the African region points to the recognition and acknowledgement of the country's leadership in striving for the betterment of Africa and the entire world. The awarding of the Chair points to the acknowledgement of South Africa's contribution in the multilateral arena and the impact the country has made on development issues.

## What are the Millennium Development Goals?

**THE EIGHT MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS** (MDGs) – which range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015 – form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and all the world's leading development institutions. They have galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest.

### ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER

- Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day
- Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger

### ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

- Ensure that all boys and girls complete a full course of primary schooling

### PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

- Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005, and at all levels by 2015

### REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

- Reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under five

### IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

- Reduce by three quarters the maternal mortality ratio

### COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

- Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
- Halt and begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases

### ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources
- Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water
- Achieve significant improvement in lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020

### DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

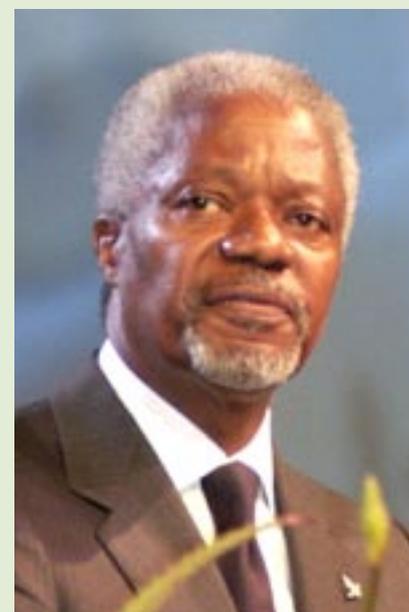
- Develop further an open trading and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory, includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction— nationally and internationally
- Address the least developed countries' special needs. This includes tariff- and quota-free access for their exports; enhanced debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries; cancellation of official bilateral debt; and more generous official development assistance for countries committed to poverty reduction
- Address the special needs of landlocked and small island developing States
- Deal comprehensively with developing countries' debt problems through national and international measures to make debt sustainable in the long term
- In cooperation with the developing countries, develop decent and productive work for youth
- In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries
- In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies— especially information and communications technologies

*"We will have time to reach the Millennium Development Goals – worldwide and in most, or even all, individual countries – but only if we break with business as usual.*

*We cannot win overnight. Success will require sustained action across the entire decade between now and the deadline.*

*It takes time to train the teachers, nurses and engineers; to build the roads, schools and hospitals; to grow the small and large businesses able to create the jobs and income needed. So we must start now. And we must more than double global development assistance over the next few years. Nothing less will help to achieve the Goals."*

*United Nations Secretary-General  
Kofi A. Annan*





*Back cover picture: A child in traditional gear at a cultural event during the AU diaspora conference held in Senegal 2005.*

*Front cover picture: President Thabo Mbeki (front) with Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma at the AU Summit Sixth Session-Hands On – Sudan, January 2006.*