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**MINISTERIAL MEETING ON THE  
COMMON AFRICAN POSITION ON  
ANTIPERSONNEL LANDMINES**

**NEW YORK,  
23 SEPTEMBER 2004**

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**REPORT OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> CONTINENTAL CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN  
EXPERTS ON LANDMINES – “KEMPTON PARK, SEVEN YEARS AFTER”  
ON THE COMMON AFRICAN POSITION ON  
ANTIPERSONNEL LANDMINES**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA,  
15 – 17 SEPTEMBER 2004**

**REPORT OF THE 2<sup>ND</sup> CONTINENTAL CONFERENCE OF AFRICAN  
EXPERTS ON LANDMINES – “KEMPTON PARK - SEVEN YEARS AFTER”  
ON THE COMMON AFRICAN POSITION ON ANTI-PERSONNEL LANDMINES**

1. The 5<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Executive Council, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 12 to 14 March 2004, adopted Decision EX.CL/Dec.164 (V) on a Common African Position on Anti-Personnel Landmines. In that Decision, Council:

- took note of the recommendations of the African Groups in New York and Geneva on the need for a Common African Position on Anti-Personnel Landmines;
- requested the Commission to convene a Meeting of Experts, in September 2004, in Addis Ababa, to elaborate a Common African Position, based on the relevant Decisions of the OAU/AU, particularly the Plan of Action of Kempton Park of May 1997, and the Ottawa Convention, for submission to the Nairobi Review Conference, in November 2004; and
- further requested the Commission to submit the report of the Meeting of Experts to a Ministerial Meeting to be held on the margins of the UN General Assembly Session in 2004, for consideration.

2. As a follow-up to this Decision, the Commission, on 23 July 2004, sent Note Verbal Ref.: PSD/104/16/1691 to Member States, informing them that the Experts Meeting referred to above would be held in Addis Ababa from 15 – 17 September 2004. On 6 August 2004, the Commission sent another communication (Ref.: PSD/104/16/1779) to Member States, informing them that the Ministerial Meeting referred to in Decision EX.CL/Dec.164 (V) would be held in New York, on 23 September 2004, starting from 15.00, at the UN Secretariat.

3. As scheduled, the Experts Meeting (which was the 2nd Continental Conference of African Experts on Landmines, following the 1<sup>st</sup> Continental Conference of African Experts on Landmines – Towards a Landmine-Free Africa: The OAU and the Legacy of Anti-Personnel Mines, held in Kempton Park, South Africa, from 19 – 21 May 1997) was held in Addis Ababa from 15 – 17 September 2004. The Conference was entitled “Kempton Park – Seven Years After”.

4. The Conference was attended by Member States of the AU, as well as various United Nations (UN) specialized agencies, other international organizations, a wide spectrum of representatives of the donor and mine action communities and relevant Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). It is worth mentioning that the President-Designate of the Nairobi Review Conference, Amb. Wolfgang Petritsch, attended the Conference.

5. The Conference was opened by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, who delivered a speech on behalf of the Chairperson the Commission. During the opening, statements were also made by the United Nations, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

6. The Conference elected a Bureau, composed as follows:

- Kenya (President)
- Zimbabwe
- Cameroon
- Senegal (Rapporteur), and
- Tunisia.

7. The Conference, which was chaired by Amb. Esther M. Tolle, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kenya and Secretary-General of the Review Conference, deliberated on a Common African Position, in preparation for the First Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (hereinafter the APM Ban Convention), the Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World, which will be held in Kenya, from 29 November to 3 December 2004.

8. In the course of its deliberations, the Conference recalled the commitment of African leaders to promote lasting peace and security, through initiatives such as the Solemn Declaration on the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa (CSSDCA), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP).

9. The Conference reviewed relevant OAU/AU Resolutions/Decisions, including Decision CM/Dec.363 (LXVI) adopted by the 66<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the OAU Council of Ministers, held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in May 1997; Decision AHG/Dec.135 (LXX) adopted by the 35<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, held in Algiers, Algeria, in July 1999; and Decision EX.CL/Dec.164(V) adopted by the 5th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the AU, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in March 2004.

10. The Conference took stock of developments since the adoption of the Kempton Park Plan of Action towards the elimination of anti-personnel landmines in Africa and the establishment of the continent as an Anti-Personnel Mine-Free-Zone.

11. In this respect, the Conference noted that significant progress has been made in Africa towards the goal of eliminating anti-personnel mines. However, more needs to be done to ensure the full universalization of the APM Ban Convention in Africa; to assist the Member States Parties concerned to fulfil their obligations to destroy their stockpiles within their four-year deadlines, and develop and implement national demining

programmes with the view to meeting their ten-year mine clearance deadlines; to enhance the assistance provided to mine victims and to provide for their social and economic reintegration; to promote and develop Inter-African Cooperation and Africa's capacity in the field of mine clearance and mine victim assistance, and to further mobilize the international community in support of the continent's efforts.

12. Accordingly, the Conference recommended that the Ministers of Foreign Affairs/External Relations, on the occasion of their meeting in New York, on 23 September 2004, on the margins of the UN General Assembly, adopt the attached Common African Position in preparation for the Nairobi Summit. In this context, the Conference noted the symbolism and opportunity in the APM Ban Convention's First Review Conference taking place in Africa - the most affected continent - following the First Meeting of States Parties, which also took place in Africa (Maputo, Mozambique, May 1999), and urged all Member States to actively participate in the Review Conference - the Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World - at the highest possible level.

13. It should be noted that the delegation of the Arab Republic of Egypt expressed a reservation on the format of the Common African Position as adopted. The delegation held the view that the format contradict the draft recommendations negotiated by the African Groups in New York and Geneva, and which were taken note of by the Executive Council in Decision EX/CL/Dec.164. The delegation requested that the format agreed upon by the African Groups in New York and Geneva be respected and that the phrase 'We, the African States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction' be added to the Preamble.

14. All the other delegations held a contrary view, stressing that:

- the Commission was mandated to convene a Meeting of Experts to elaborate a Common African Position, based on the relevant Decisions of the OAU/AU, particularly the Plan of Action of Kempton Park of May 1997, and the Ottawa Convention;
- the Conference was not a meeting of the African countries which are Parties to the Convention, but a Conference bringing together all Member States in the context of the objective set in the Kempton Park Plan of Action to eliminate anti-personnel landmines in Africa and to establish the continent as an Anti-Personnel Mine-Free-Zone;
- restricting the Conference to the States Parties to the Convention would have resulted in the exclusion from the proceedings of those Member States supporting the objectives expressed in the Common Position but who are not yet Parties to the Convention.