

## COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS OF THE ORGAN ON POLITICS, DEFENCE AND SECURITY COOPERATION

**April 3, 2003**

1. The Committee of Ministers of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation met in Harare, Zimbabwe on 3 April 2003 under the chairpersonship of Hon. Leornado Simao, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Mozambique and Chairperson of the Committee.
2. The following Member States were represented at the meeting: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
3. The Democratic Republic of Congo and Seychelles sent in apologies.
4. Also in attendance were Senior Officials from the above-mentioned Member States and Deputy Executive Secretary of SADC.
5. The opening session of the meeting was addressed by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Dr Stan Mudenge who welcomed his colleagues.
6. The Chairperson of the Committee, Dr Simao, also addressed the opening session.
7. The meeting received a briefing on the political situation in Angola, one year after the signing of the peace agreement between the Government of Angola and the UNITA movement. The meeting noted that the prevailing peace in Angola has resulted in the free movement of people and goods throughout the country and the return to places of origin by internally displaced persons and refugees. The meeting also noted that the Government of Angola was working with International Co-operating Partners to organise an international donors conference to be held in Brussels to mobilize resources for the reconstruction of the country. The meeting undertook to assist Angola in mobilizing international support for this conference.
8. On Zimbabwe, the meeting noted that the Fast Track land resettlement programme has been completed with only tidying up operations (which are consistent with principles of land reform to the country) remaining. The meeting also noted an appeal from Zimbabwe to the United Kingdom to honour its obligation to compensate white farmers whose farms have been used by the Government to resettle landless indigenous people in line with the commitments made under the Lancaster Agreement. In the meantime, the Government of Zimbabwe has opened an internal dialogue with the white farmers to determine how the Government could assist. In this regard a Memorandum of Understanding was presented to the farmers by the Government and a response is awaited.
9. With regard to the fate of the approximately two millions farm workers mainly of Malawian, Mozambican and Zambian origin, the meeting noted that the Government of Zimbabwe is promulgating a Citizenship Amendment Act, the import of which is to extend Zimbabwean citizenship to all SADC citizens who were resident in the country as at 18 April 1980.
10. On the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the meeting was informed that the Government of Zimbabwe had incorporated the issues of concern raised by the media into an Amendment Act, which is currently under consideration by Parliament. The meeting pledged support and solidarity with the Government of People of Zimbabwe.
11. The Zimbabwean Minister of Foreign Affairs also gave a brief on the recent mass stay-away organized by the opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change, and the consequent destruction of property that occurred. The Minister noted that the laws of Zimbabwe guarantee

the right of individuals to demonstrate freely, but stressed that those demonstrations must be peaceful and in accordance with the laws of Zimbabwe. The Minister circulated a statement detailing the destruction effected during the stay away.

12. The Meeting took note that those opposed to Zimbabwe have tried to shift the agenda from the core issue of land by selective diversion of attention on governance and human rights issues.
13. The Meeting also received a briefing from South Africa on the conclusion of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue on 2 April 2003 at Sun City, South Africa. The agreement signed in Sun City includes the adoption of an interim constitution and transitional arrangements such as the unification of the country and the army. The meeting commended South Africa for her role in the DRC Peace Process and pledged support for the DRC as it undertakes a delicate process, which will lead to the establishment of a democratic dispensation.
14. Mauritius briefed the meeting on the new leadership which will assume office in September 2003 in line with a 2000 electoral pact between the ruling coalition. The current Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth will assume the post of President with enhanced powers while the current Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Paul Berenger will take the post of Prime Minister.
15. The meeting also received a briefing from United Republic of Tanzania on the increased banditry on its western border with Burundi. Rwanda and DRC as a result of the inadequate humanitarian assistance provided for the more 600,000 refugees in the areas. The meeting appealed to the international community to honour its obligations to the refugees and provide adequate humanitarian assistance.
16. The meeting reviewed international political development and their impact on the region, in particular the Iraqi Crisis.
17. The meeting reiterated the AU and SADC positions for peaceful resolution of conflicts and in this regard, reaffirmed its opposition to the war in Iraq.
18. The meeting also noted that the Iraq crisis will have political, economic and security implications at both international and regional levels. These include the following:
  - increase in terrorist activities;
  - disruption of oil prices;
  - reduction in the levels of international travel and tourism
  - erosion of the importance and relevance of multilaterally agreed treaties, conventions, norms and standards; and,
  - slow down in the global economy and resultant erosion of investor confidence.
19. In this regards, the Committee:
  - appealed to all parties to put an end to hostilities;
  - urged the belligerents to adhere strictly to the provisions, norms and standards of international humanitarian laws, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention which deals specifically with the protection of civilians in times of conflict;
  - expressed its commitment to the multilateral process on matters of international peace and security; and
  - welcomed the UN Security Council Resolution adopted on 28 March 2003 in respect of the Oil for Food Programme;
20. With regard to cooperation with EU, the Meeting mandated the Troika of the Organ at Ministerial level to work towards the establishment of a channel of communication for dialogue between the EU and the Government of Zimbabwe with a view to convincing the former to lift sanctions against Zimbabwe.
21. The meeting welcomed the offer by the Government of Mozambique to host the fourth session of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security in Maputo, Mozambique in August 2003.
22. The meeting thanked the Government and people of Zimbabwe for their warm hospitality.

Harare, Zimbabwe  
April 3, 2003

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