

**Mr. President,**

**Dear Members of the Sanctions Committee,**

We thank you, Mr. President, for arranging this informal consultation; and we also thank members of the Committee for readily agreeing to the holding of this meeting. Both in the interest of peace and stability in the Horn of Africa and the credibility of the Security Council and the United Nations, in showing resolve in the fight against terrorism have made it imperative that the truth be told. That task should not be defeated by gimmicks and mendacious statements that are designed to conceal the truth.

The Sanction Committee should ask itself why so many countries and their sub-regional organization in one voice are appealing to the Security Council to help them stop the Eritrean leadership from pushing the region into a more and more dangerous situation.

**Mr. President,**

One thing has become very obvious over the last few weeks: The Eritrean government does not comply with the laws of nations unless it knows that there would be serious consequences for blatant violations of these laws. We should not allow short memories to affect our judgment. Until two weeks ago, the Eritrean President would not even receive calls from the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The previous Chairperson of the African Union Commission, himself a previous President of an African country, finished his term without ever having an audience with the Eritrean President

despite repeated requests. The current Chairperson of the African Union Commission is yet to see the Eritrean President.

There have been more than that thirty efforts made by various would be mediators to bring the Ethiopian Prime Minister and the Eritrean President together. Each time, the Ethiopian Prime Minister had agreed to the initiatives, adding that it would not matter where the venue might be; on the other hand, all the initiatives were rejected by the Eritrean President out of hand, and in a way which was demeaning to those who wanted to help.

**Mr. President,**

Suddenly, over the last few weeks, we hear the Eritrean leadership assuming the status and role of the underdog. Having snubbed the UN Secretary-General for so long, they did not find it difficult to pester the UN for a meeting between the Eritrean President and the Secretary-General. They met in Juba on July 9 on the occasion of the independence of South Sudan. It was around the same time that Eritrea wanted to see the Security Council. It was not coincidental that the request was for them to see the Council between June 15 and June 24. Both the ostensible change of behaviour and the request to see the Council had one purpose - to try to discredit the Eritrea-Somalia Monitoring Group and its report which they had come to know might be before the Security Council starting from the first week of July or thereabouts. Now we hear, Eritrea has decided to reactivate its membership of IGAD. All this would have been saluted if it was for a good purpose. But it is not.

The whole Eritrean activities over the last few weeks has been geared toward undermining the dominant Monitoring Group narration that Eritrea continues to be a destabilizing force in the Horn of Africa; now, in fact, scaling up its violent behaviour, including engaging in terrorism as happened last January in Addis Ababa. We are hoping, the Security Council would not be misled.

**Mr. President,**

It is a terrible mistake to assume that Eritrea is ready to change its behaviour. But it does not mean it would not; but that depends on what the Security Council does by way of taking concrete steps to show Eritrea that terrorism, no matter how noble the cause, cannot be countenanced by the international community.

**Mr. President,**

Eritrea should not be allowed to get the Council to be bogged down in the intricacies of secondary issues which at present are almost non-issue. That applies to the boundary issue which has never been the cause of the conflict in the first place and is not now that difficult to resolve given the good will of the two parties. It is precisely for this reason and in order for the Council to focus on what Eritrea is doing in Somalia in cahoots with Al-Shabaab and its terrorist plot in Addis Ababa last January that we have not talked about how the Ethio-Eritrea crisis exploded in May 1998.

Should it be necessary to remind the Sanction Committee that that war was a war of aggression committed against

Ethiopia by Eritrea? The following was the verdict of an international tribunal, the Ethio-Eritrea claims Commission, that was set up, along the Boundary Commission, by the two parties. This is what the Tribunal said:

The Commission holds that Eritrea violated article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations by resorting to armed force to attack and occupy Badme, then under peaceful administration by Ethiopia, as well as other territory in the Tahtay Adiabo and Laelay Adiabo weredas of Ethiopia, in an attack that began on May 12, 1998, and is liable to compensate Ethiopia, for the damages caused by that violation of international law.

**Mr. President,**

I don't wish to belabor the point; nor is it my wish to invite the Sanction Committee to spend time on secondary issues because for now even that aggression is a secondary issue. But, no doubt, lessons should be drawn from that so that the current challenges of Eritrean-sponsored terror could be addressed effectively. Nobody knows why sane people would do what the Eritrean leadership did in May 1998. But the aggression happened. It is not clear why sane people would do what the Eritrean leadership did last January in engaging in state-sponsored terror. But it happened. Because it happened and since people who were engaged in that effort from the Eritrean side continue to be active in Somalia, Djibouti,

Sudan, Uganda and Kenya, the entire region is facing a major challenge.

What took place in January in Addis Ababa cannot be swept under the rug. That is why we felt that those who were involved in the investigation of the failed plot brief the Sanction Committee. On their behalf and on behalf of IGAD, I would like to thank you again; and now I would like to hand over the responsibility of briefing the Committee to our experts.

**I thank you.**