



THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

4 December 2008

Excellency,

I am writing to follow up on my telephone conversation yesterday with Mr. Louis Michel regarding the possible deployment by the European Union (EU) or some of its Member States of a multinational force (MNF) to support the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in light of the persistent crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

MONUC has undertaken a reconfiguration of its forces to increase the presence of MONUC in Goma and other key cities in North Kivu, and secure the main axes in the province, in line with its mandate. As you are aware, on 20 November 2008, the Security Council authorized the deployment of additional capabilities to MONUC, by its resolution 1843 (2008), including two infantry battalions, two companies of Special Forces, one Engineer Unit, 200 training advisors and two formed police units. We are actively pursuing consultations with troop and police contributing countries to secure the rapid deployment of these additional capabilities, and have received several indications of interest from EU Member States in this regard. Our estimation is that, despite these efforts, it will take up to four months to deploy additional capabilities to eastern DRC.

In view of the near total disintegration of the Congolese national armed forces (FARDC) in North Kivu, MONUC has become the only organized force in the region, and has been compelled to step in to substitute for the role of FARDC. In this light, and further to the request of President Kabila to the diplomatic community in Kinshasa at the end of October 2008 for the deployment of a MNF, as well as the requests expressed by United Nations officials at Security Council meetings on several occasions, I believe that the immediate deployment of a

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MNF, led by the EU or EU Member States, would, at this stage, provide the necessary complement to the efforts of MONUC and provide an essential bridging arrangement pending the arrival of the additional capabilities. Such a bridging arrangement would also create space for the political and diplomatic initiatives which are beginning to yield progress under the joint facilitation of my Special Envoy on the Great Lakes Region, former President Obasanjo and former President Mkapa of Tanzania as Co-Facilitators.

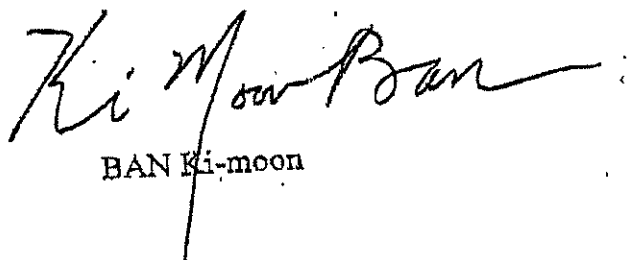
The envisaged MNF could focus on the dual objectives of securing the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian assistance in North Kivu to some 250,000 people displaced by the conflict since the end of August 2008, and protecting civilians under threat in the province. This would allow us to stabilize the fragile security environment and avert a humanitarian catastrophe. The parameters and timeline of such a force would be limited and focused on achieving specific objectives in this regard, acting under Chapter 7 and constituting, *de facto*, a mobile reserve to reinforce MONUC when necessary.

In my view, a deployment based on the previous ARTEMIS/EUFOR model, for an initial period of four months and under EU command, would provide a critical complement to the ongoing efforts of MONUC. In addition, the deployment of such a force would allow MONUC to free some of its own assets to perform other complementary tasks. The specific tasks of the MNF would include protecting the airport in Goma and other strategic Government and communications installations in the city, secure other major population centers in North Kivu, and secure key axes and supply routes in the areas around Goma. This interim MNF should possess its own air mobility assets and intelligence capacity, and have the capability to intervene simultaneously in several locations to oversee actions of a defensive and principally humanitarian nature.

We would invite the EU to engage in further detailed consultations with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations regarding the specific size of the proposed MNF, the types of capabilities that may be required, command and control, and arrangements for cooperation with MONUC, as soon as practicable. Further consultations with the Government of the DRC regarding the scope and responsibilities of such a MNF would of course be necessary.

In addition to the likely immediate impact on the lives of vulnerable Congolese people, the rapid deployment of such a force would constitute a powerful political message to both the parties to the conflict and the people of the DRC that the entire international community is determined not to allow a further deterioration of the situation in eastern Congo.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



BAN Ki-moon