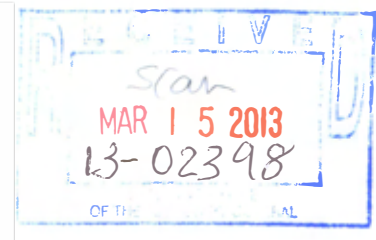


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## Note to the Deputy Secretary-General

### Mission to Brussels

Please find attached a note to the Secretary-General on my recent visit to Brussels.

I would appreciate if you could kindly submit this to the Secretary-General.

Valerie Amos  
15 March 2013

Hum/04/001



## Note to the Secretary-General

### MISSION TO BRUSSELS

14-15 February 2013

1. I visited Brussels on 14-15 February as part of my annual visit to European donors to discuss issues of common concern with the European Union, NATO and the Belgian Government. OCHA's relationship with our key partners has strengthened overtime and OCHA is now one of the key partners in humanitarian affairs for the Brussels based organisations.

2. On Mali, my discussions focused on the on-going humanitarian response and the situation in the North of the country. On the EU Training Mission, I stressed the importance of including a significant human rights and humanitarian component in the training in view of reported reprisal attacks against the Tuareg community by the military forces. All my interlocutors expressed their support for the political roadmap and efforts supporting national reconciliation. Elections were also seen as a key component of the political process although doubts were expressed about the ability to conduct credible elections in the timeframe proposed. However postponing them was seen as sending the wrong signal to all the involved parties. Mr. Piebalgs, EU Commissioner for Development, noted that the EU would gradually resume its development aid to Mali while Ms Georgieva, EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid, encouraged a stronger OCHA civil-military presence in the northern part of the country. At NATO, during discussion of the proposed UN peacekeeping mission, Mr. Evans, NATO Assistant Secretary General for Operations, expressed willingness to provide technical and logistical assistance to UN efforts, if requested. The importance of continuing efforts to support the governments in the Sahel region to build the resilience of communities and respond to 'shocks' such as a rise in food prices or deeper drought was emphasised by the EU Development and Humanitarian Commissioners. We agreed that early action by governments, donors and humanitarian partners prevented the food and nutrition crisis becoming worse but efforts to ensure sustainability must be maintained.

3. On Syria, I briefed on increasing engagement with opposition groups and plans to strengthen operational hubs outside Damascus. There was some discussion of the serious situation facing Syrians on the Syrian side of the border with Turkey and the best way to meet their needs. I also expressed concerns about the regional impact of the crisis particularly on the fragile situations in Jordan and Lebanon. In my briefing to the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC), I stressed that the lack of a political solution to the on-going crisis increased the pressure on the humanitarian community and highlighted the need to keep discussion of humanitarian issues separate from broader political considerations. During discussions with the PSC concerns were raised with respect to access, funding, the increasingly sectarian nature of the violence and the need to work more closely with the opposition. Ambassador de Kerchove, Chef de Cabinet of Foreign Minister Reynders, briefed me on the Belgian initiative to strengthen access to and protection of medical facilities. He noted that the initiative had gained significant support from a wide group of Member States and it had moved from being a Belgian initiative to a multinational one. Ambassador Vershbow, NATO Deputy Secretary-General confirmed that NATO was not planning any military intervention in Syria, underlining that the deployment of patriot missiles to Turkey was strictly defensive.

4. On Somalia, I briefed on the recommendations of your report and discussed the future structure of the UN mission while noting the differences of view among EU Member States with respect to the issue of an integrated UN mission. Commissioner Georgieva lobbied for a prudent and phased approach by the humanitarian community, highlighting the need to separate the humanitarian response from the political agenda given on going conflict in some parts of Somalia. She also stressed the importance of supporting the Government's push for an integrated and strategic approach to the issues in Somalia.

5. On Sudan and South Sudan, I met Ambassador Marsden, EU Special Representative (EUSR), who shared her views on the current situation. She expressed concern that the SPLM North shows little interest in negotiations on cross-border humanitarian operations to South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. She underlined that international advocacy needed to focus on the poor conditions of refugees and displaced persons and she lobbied for regular UN Security Council briefings. I informed the Ambassador that Security Council members could request such briefings and proposed that she raise her concerns with EU members of the Security Council.

6. On <sup>eastern</sup> DRC, the Belgians underlined the need for continued engagement on the security sector reform, suggesting the need for stronger involvement by MONUSCO and the EU delegation. On eastern DRC, they underlined the need for continued dialogue and a 'fair deal' between DRC, Rwanda and Uganda, as a precondition for stabilisation. I briefed on your "Framework for Peace and Security in the DRC and Great Lakes Region" and the possible deployment of a UN Special Envoy. Both initiatives were welcomed by Belgium.

7. On Afghanistan, I noted that any rise in humanitarian needs could potentially be sidelined by the focus on the broader development and transition of Afghanistan. NATO DSG Vershbow noted that the reduced post-2014 new NATO mission would focus primarily on training.

8. My mission to Brussels was extremely timely as it provided the opportunity to explore in depth the complexities of the crises in Syria and Mali, focusing not only on humanitarian concerns but also on the broader political context within which we are seeking to conduct humanitarian operations.

*Valerie Amos*

Valerie Amos  
15 March 2013

cc: Mr. Eliasson  
Mr. Chan  
Ms. Clark  
Ms. Cousin  
Mr. Feltman  
Mr. Ladsous  
Mr. Lake  
Ms. Malcorra