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Note to the Secretary-General

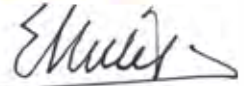
UNAMID: update on missing aviation capabilities for UNAMID

1. As part of our ongoing and intensive efforts to identify outstanding critical aviation capabilities for UNAMID, I met with Ambassador Konstantin Dolgov, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations on 21 December.
2. During the meeting, Ambassador Dolgov put forward two options to address the current shortfalls. The first would be to explore the possibility of the Russian Federation indirectly providing helicopters to UNAMID by first selling them to an African TCC, which would then provide them to the Mission. Under this option, the Russian Federation would not provide pilots, pilot training, servicing, or other inputs required for the helicopters to function. The United Nations would have to make provisions for these resources and in this context we have initiated discussions with the Department of Field Support (DFS) regarding the feasibility of identifying personnel and providing servicing and training ourselves. One of the challenges regarding this option would be the availability of African TCCs capable of providing trained and available pilots for these helicopters. Ambassador Dolgov and I agreed that both the United Nations and the Russian Federation would make initial contact with African TCCs to ascertain the availability of qualified pilots.
3. The second proposal was for the Russian Federation and the United Nations to enter into a "dry lease" arrangement for the helicopters. This would amount to the United Nations paying for the helicopters (as opposed to their being bought by an African TCC). Under this proposal, we would still have to make arrangements for the identification and training of pilots and servicing of these aircraft. We are in discussions with the Department of Field Support concerning this option also.
4. We believe the proposals put forward by the Russian Federation could provide a resolution to UNAMID's aviation crisis. However, we will have to conduct a thorough assessment of our capacity to provide the servicing for the helicopters as well as the availability of qualified pilots.
5. In addition to the offer by the Russian Federation, we held discussions with military representatives from Ukraine last week regarding the possibility of utilizing Ukrainian pilots on military helicopters for UNAMID. While we are seriously considering this possibility, it should be noted that there are strong indications that the Government of Sudan currently employs Ukrainian pilots to fly its own military helicopters. We will therefore assess the political and other challenges associated with the Ukrainian offer as we move forward.



6. Today I will be chairing a meeting of troop and police contributing countries for a comprehensive discussion on UNAMID. During the meeting we will also discuss shortfalls in UNAMID's force composition and any creative solutions which Member States have for addressing them.

7. We will continue to update you on our ongoing efforts to address UNAMID's force composition shortfalls.



Edmond Mulet
27 December 2007

cc: Ms. Lute, Maj. Gen. Five