

Joint Communiqué Establishing the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC)

Geneva, 15 November 2002

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY-GENERAL KOFI ANNAN FOLLOWING HIS GENEVA MEETING

WITH PRESIDENTS OF CAMEROON, NIGERIA

The following is the text of a communiqué which was read by the Secretary-General following his meetings in Geneva with President Paul Biya of Cameroon and President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, on the 10 October 2002 ruling of the International Court of Justice:

"At the invitation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, President Paul Biya of Cameroon and President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria met today in Geneva in the Secretary-General's presence, to follow up on the ruling of 10 October of the International Court of Justice (ICJ). In this connection, the two Presidents acknowledged the importance for their countries of respecting their obligations under the United Nations Charter.

"The Secretary-General welcomed President Biya's and President Obasanjo's renewed commitment, as Heads of State of law-abiding countries, to renounce the use of force in their bilateral relations and pursue peaceful ways for the settlement of their boundary differences, as well as the constructive spirit which prevailed throughout the various meetings held during the day.

"In the course of these meetings, both parties agreed to identify a number of confidence-building measures which would pave the way to resolving many of the issues which are the subject of the ICJ ruling. These include measures considered by the two Heads of State in Paris on 5 September and those agreed upon at the ministerial meeting of the Joint Commission in Abuja on 30 September 2002, as well as additional relevant measures.

"In addition, the two Presidents agreed on the need for a meeting between the two sides at Summit level at the earliest possible opportunity, to discuss defence and security issues of common concern.

"The two Presidents further agreed to ask me to establish a mixed commission of the two sides, to be chaired by my Special Envoy, Ahmedou Ould-Aballah, to consider ways of following up the ICJ ruling and moving the process forward. The mixed commission will meet in Abuja and Yaoundé on an alternating basis. The first meeting will be held in Yaoundé on 1 December 2002.

"The mixed commission will consider all the implications of the decision, including the need to protect the rights of the affected populations in both countries. The commission shall, inter alia, be entrusted with the task of demarcating the land boundary between the two countries. It will also make recommendations on additional confidence-building measures such as the holding, on a regular basis, of meetings between local authorities, Government officials and Heads of State; developing projects to promote joint economic ventures and cross-border cooperation; the avoidance of inflammatory

statements or declarations on Bakassi by either side; troop withdrawal from relevant areas along the land boundary; eventual demilitarization of the Bakassi Peninsula with the possibility of international personnel to observe withdrawal; and reactivation of the Lake Chad Basin Commission.

"The two Presidents agreed to consider what further assistance their countries would need from the United Nations, and to meet again in due course under my auspices to review the progress achieved.

"I reaffirm my personal commitment and that of the United Nations to continuing to assist Cameroon and Nigeria in their efforts to settle their differences peacefully."