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Twelfth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1603 (2005), by which the Council requested me to keep it regularly informed of developments in Côte d'Ivoire and in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). The report covers developments since my report of 4 December 2006 (S/2006/939).

II. Political developments

2. During the period under review, the political stalemate in the Ivorian peace process remained unresolved with no significant progress towards implementing Security Council resolution 1721 (2006). An initiative announced by President Laurent Gbagbo on 19 December 2006, by which he offered to open direct dialogue with the Forces nouvelles, opened up a fresh opportunity to resolve the protracted political impasse. As indicated in paragraphs 7 to 18 below, the dialogue culminated in the signing of a new peace agreement by President Gbagbo and the Secretary-General of the Forces nouvelles, Guillaume Soro, in Ouagadougou on 4 March 2007, under the facilitation of the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré.

3. Prior to the dialogue and until the signing of the new peace agreement, the Prime Minister, Charles Konan Banny, made efforts to reinvigorate the peace process by implementing the schedule proposed by the International Working Group at its ministerial meeting of 1 December 2006. The schedule, presented in the Working Group's communiqué, which the Security Council endorsed in its presidential statement of 21 December (S/PRST/2006/58), proposed specific timelines for implementing the main tasks set out in Council resolution 1721 (2006). However, the efforts to implement those key tasks achieved limited results.

4. One of the main steps taken by the Prime Minister was the establishment of a working group on security sector reform on 12 December, as called for by the Council in resolution 1721 (2006). In addition, UNOCI, Licorne and the National Programme for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration continued to work on the technical preparations for the implementation of the disarmament programme, including development of modalities for the deployment of joint verification teams (Ivorian defence and security forces, Forces nouvelles, United



Nations and Licorne) to all pre-cantonment areas, and arrangements for the provision of security. However, as indicated in my previous report, the Programme continues to face a shortfall of approximately \$10 million for the rehabilitation of cantonment sites.

5. With regard to the identification of the population, the International Working Group proposed the deadline of 5 December 2006 for establishing a working group on identification called for in resolution 1721 (2006). The Prime Minister established the working group on 5 December 2006. In addition, on 30 January 2007, the Government selected a technical operator for the registration of the population. The Prime Minister also pressed ahead with the gradual resumption of the public hearings for the identification process in functioning court jurisdictions, setting a target of 25 sites by the first week of February 2007. Operations started on 19 January in two courts located in the Adjamé and Attécoubé districts of Abidjan. On 16 February, mobile courts were deployed to conduct the hearings at four additional sites in the Government-controlled area; as at 20 February, the courts had issued 1,094 birth certificates out of 1,186 applications submitted.

6. With regard to preparations for the elections, the International Working Group had proposed 15 December 2006 as the deadline for the nomination of political party representatives on the local structures of the Independent Electoral Commission, to be followed immediately by the opening of the local structures and the announcement of an electoral timetable by the Independent Electoral Commission. However, on 18 January, President Gbagbo wrote a letter to the Chairman of the Commission asking him to suspend all technical preparations for the elections and to await the outcome of the dialogue with the Forces nouvelles. Although the Commission did not announce a timetable for the electoral process, on 19 January, it informed President Gbagbo of its intention to deploy 24 regional electoral commissions. Subsequently, the first regional electoral commission was opened in Abidjan on 22 February, and four others were established at Abengourou, Bondoukou, Bouaflé and Koumassi on 27 February.

Dialogue between President Gbagbo and the Forces nouvelles

7. In a radio address on 19 December 2006, President Gbagbo announced a new initiative, offering to open direct dialogue with the Forces nouvelles under the auspices of the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré. President Gbagbo also called for the removal of the zone of confidence that divides the country; proposed the enactment of a new amnesty law; indicated his intention to launch a national civilian service for young people and an assistance programme for resettling displaced persons; and suggested that elections be held by July 2007. The President explained that his initiative was aimed at finding a “home-grown” solution to the Ivorian crisis, as none of the solutions proposed by the international community had brought peace to the country.

8. On 1 January 2007, the Secretary-General of the Forces nouvelles, Guillaume Soro, welcomed President Gbagbo’s proposal to open dialogue with his group, but stressed that such dialogue should lead to the implementation of Security Council resolution 1721 (2006). Mr. Soro also urged the coalition of Ivorian opposition political parties, the Group of Seven, to urgently work towards reaching a unified position on President Gbagbo’s proposals. Subsequently, Mr. Soro met with the leaders of the Group of Seven in Abidjan on 18 January 2007. After intensive

consultations, the Group issued a communiqué accepting President Gbagbo's offer to open dialogue with the Forces nouvelles. The communiqué, among other things, stressed that the dialogue should seek to accelerate the peace process within the framework of resolution 1721 (2006).

9. On 12 January 2007, Mr. Soro participated in the twelfth ministerial level meeting of the International Working Group, together with Prime Minister Banny, and informed the Working Group of his intention to accept President Gbagbo's proposal for direct dialogue. In a communiqué issued after the meeting, the Working Group reaffirmed its support for sustained consultations among the Ivorian parties. It also stressed that the direct dialogue proposed by President Gbagbo should focus on achieving concrete and precise solutions to the issues concerning identification, the disarmament process, the restructuring of the armed forces and the holding of credible elections throughout the national territory. On the same day, during a meeting with the co-chairs of the International Working Group, in Abidjan, President Gbagbo explained that the first stage of the dialogue would address military issues and therefore participation would be limited to the Forces nouvelles only, while the other political leaders would be involved at a later stage.

10. The Heads of State of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) expressed their support for the dialogue between President Gbagbo and the Forces nouvelles during their thirty-first summit, held in Ouagadougou on 19 January. They also entrusted President Compaoré, the incoming Chairman of ECOWAS, with facilitating the dialogue. In a communiqué issued at the summit, the Heads of State invited all Ivorian parties to cooperate in implementing resolution 1721 (2006). Furthermore, the Heads of State proposed that the Security Council consider sending a special mission to Côte d'Ivoire to assist in giving fresh impetus to the peace process. They also undertook to dispatch a high-level ECOWAS mission to Côte d'Ivoire to prevail on the Ivorian leaders to embrace and implement resolution 1721 (2006) in good faith, and to send a similar mission to the capitals of the five permanent members of the Council.

11. On 25 January, Mr. Soro invited members of the day-to-day mediation group to the Forces nouvelles headquarters in Bouaké to brief them on the outcome of the various meetings he had had with President Compaoré regarding the planned talks. At the briefing, Mr. Soro expressed the view that the international community should closely monitor and witness the dialogue in order to ensure that it was transparent and inclusive and that it remained within the framework of resolution 1721 (2006). Mr. Soro travelled to Burkina Faso on 23 January to discuss the final preparations for the dialogue with President Compaoré. President Compaoré and President Gbagbo held a similar meeting on 24 January.

12. On 17 January, I wrote to President Sassou-Nguesso and President Compaoré, in their respective capacities as Chairpersons of the African Union and ECOWAS, welcoming their efforts to help the Ivorian parties to resolve the prolonged impasse in the peace process and assuring them of the continued engagement of the United Nations in cooperative efforts to find a lasting solution to the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. I conveyed to them my view that only an inclusive dialogue could secure a comprehensive political settlement that would address the underlying concerns of all parties and chart a clear and unambiguous path for disarmament, identification and the elections.

13. I also met President Gbagbo during the African Union summit held in Addis Ababa from 28 to 30 January. I urged President Gbagbo to harmonize his initiative with resolution 1721 (2006). I also assured him of the continued support of the United Nations for the peace process in his country. President Gbagbo assured me that the dialogue would eventually include all the political forces in Côte d'Ivoire and that his plan for the resolution of the Ivorian crisis was not an "enemy" of resolution 1721 (2006), but rather complementary to it.

14. Representatives of President Gbagbo and the Forces nouvelles began discussions with the facilitator, President Compaoré, in Ouagadougou, on 5 February. The two delegations, led by President Gbagbo's spokesman, Désiré Tagro, and the Deputy Secretary-General of the Forces nouvelles, Louis Dakoury-Tabley, developed a draft comprehensive agreement for consideration by the two leaders. Alassane Ouattara, leader of the Rassemblement des républicains (RDR), and Alphonse Djédje Mady, Secretary-General of the Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) led by Henri Konan Bédié, travelled to Ouagadougou on 21 February for consultations with the facilitator on issues arising from the working-level discussions. Prime Minister Banny's representatives also were present at the talks.

15. President Compaoré invited both the High Representative for the elections, Gérard Stoudmann, and the Officer-in-Charge of UNOCI, Abou Moussa, to Ouagadougou on several occasions, to seek their views on a number of electoral, political and military issues arising from the talks. The UNOCI Force Commander and the Licorne Deputy Force Commander participated in the consultations held on 20 February, to provide advice on military issues.

16. On 14 February, I sent another letter to President Compaoré, in which I conveyed the appreciation of the United Nations for his facilitation role and informed him of my readiness to assist, as appropriate, with technical advice on issues relating to the dialogue. I also thanked the President for the contacts he has maintained with UNOCI and the High Representative for the elections during the talks, and stressed the need to establish channels of communication, in the light of the key role that UNOCI will be expected to play in supporting the implementation of the expected agreement.

17. On 4 March, President Gbagbo and Mr. Soro signed the new agreement in Ouagadougou, under the facilitation of President Compaoré. The agreement builds upon Security Council resolution 1721 (2006) and previous peace agreements. It addresses key issues that had blocked the implementation of the identification of the population, the disarmament process, the restructuring of the armed forces, the restoration of State authority throughout the country and the preparation of the voters list. The agreement also envisages new institutional arrangements, which are expected to be agreed upon within a month. An annex to the agreement sets out an implementation schedule, which envisages the completion of the key process within a period of 10 months. The parties requested the facilitator to submit the agreement to the Security Council, through the African Union, for endorsement.

18. The role of the United Nations in supporting the implementation of the agreement will need further clarification, especially with regard to the deployment of United Nations troops in the zone of confidence, as will the support of the Organization for the implementation of the disarmament process and the provision of security for the various key processes, including the elections. The role of the

United Nations in the follow-up mechanisms and that of the High Representative for the elections will also need to be clarified, while urgent discussions should be undertaken with the facilitator and the parties on the implementation of the proposal to deploy more African troops in UNOCI.

III. Security situation

19. During the period under review, the overall security situation in Côte d'Ivoire remained relatively calm but unpredictable and often tense owing to the political and social difficulties deriving from the prolonged crisis. Frequent strikes by public servants from the health and education sectors, as well as protests in 22 prisons in the south of the country, created disturbances, which gradually subsided following assurances that the Government would look into the grievances. The strikes were in protest at the poor conditions of service. Crime in the economic capital is rife.

20. In the zone of confidence, several cases of murder and attacks against the civilian population were reported. In the absence of law enforcement agencies and the judiciary, the rule of law continued to be violated, in spite of enhanced patrolling by UNOCI and Licorne. Ethnic tensions also remain a serious concern. On 16 January, heavily armed elements of the defence and security forces escorting the wife of the President on a visit to Yetrobi village, in the eastern part of the country, deliberately entered the zone of confidence, despite strict measures taken by UNOCI to ensure the safety of Mrs. Gbagbo during her visit. UNOCI sent a letter of protest to the Chief of the Defence Staff of Côte d'Ivoire, General Philippe Mangou. On 19 January, the Young Patriots organized a demonstration in Duékoué, demanding the immediate removal of the zone of confidence to enable the Ivorian armed forces to take over security responsibility from the impartial forces.

21. In the western part of the country, the security situation remained volatile, with several reports of clashes between members of the Guéré ethnic group and Burkinabé immigrants, which claimed the lives of several people. Criminal activities were also reported in several villages and along the road between Duékoué and Bangolo. The eastern part of the country remained calm, except for an armed attack perpetrated by unidentified elements in Noé, on the border between Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, on 12 January. The attack left five persons dead, including two gendarmes and one customs officer. The motive of the attack remains unclear.

22. In the northern part of the country, the lack of functioning law enforcement agencies engenders volatility and Forces nouvelles elements sometimes allegedly contribute to crime. The lack of security continues to affect negatively the living conditions of most of the population.

23. In response to the deterioration of the situation in neighbouring Guinea in February, UNOCI increased its patrols along the border to closely monitor any displacement of civilians and prevent the movement of armed groups. As at 26 February, no significant cross-border movement had been reported.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

Military component

24. As at 21 February 2007, the military strength of UNOCI stood at 8,052 personnel, comprising 7,760 troops, 198 military observers and 94 staff officers, against an authorized ceiling of 8,115. The force comprises 11 battalions, 9 of which are deployed in the two sectors (East and West), and 2 in Abidjan for urban security and contingency tasks. One aviation unit, three engineering companies, one transport company and one special force company are providing enabling capacity and an operational reserve to the force. A total of 14 light infantry companies and three mechanized companies are deployed in Sector West, the most challenging; 10 light infantry companies, one armoured company and the aviation unit, are deployed in Sector East.

25. During the reporting period, the UNOCI military component continued to conduct regular operations to demonstrate its state of preparedness. It also conducted highly visible rehearsals of contingency plans and reinforced joint patrols with Licorne units. Initially limited to Abidjan, these joint operations have been extended to all areas in which ONUCI forces are deployed. The operations complement activities aimed at dominating the areas of responsibility through the establishment of random checkpoints and temporary camps in hot spots and the conduct of special patrols. UNOCI has also significantly increased its patrols within the zone of confidence in order to curb the escalation of armed attacks and roadside robberies in this area.

26. UNOCI military units also continued to initiate and participate in regular confidence-building meetings with local communities and ethnic groups to facilitate the peaceful settlement of disputes, in particular in the west. In addition, UNOCI maintains close cooperation and liaison with the Licorne force, both at the headquarters level and in theatre, particularly inside the zone of confidence. All UNOCI units conduct regular exercises with the Licorne force, which also serves as the quick reaction force for UNOCI. The exercises are repeated after each rotation of contingents.

27. In addition, UNOCI military units continued to conduct regular patrols along the Liberia border to monitor the situation and to prevent movements of weapons or armed groups. Joint operations between UNOCI and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) along the common border resumed after the completion of the rotation of the Pakistani battalion stationed in that area in October 2006. In keeping with Security Council resolution 1721 (2006), contingency plans are regularly updated to enhance cooperation between the two missions, including possible mutual reinforcements in the event of serious deterioration of the security situation, as envisaged by resolution 1609 (2006).

28. The Ouagadougou agreement signed envisages adjustments in the role, deployment and composition of UNOCI troops. Urgent consultations with the parties and the mediator will therefore be required.

Police component

29. The role of the UNOCI police component under the new peace agreement will also need to be discussed with the parties and the mediator. As at 21 February, the strength of the police component stood at 1,150, comprising 400 police officers and 750 personnel in six formed police units, against an authorized ceiling of 1,200. The shortfall is due to continuing difficulties in identifying qualified francophone police officers capable of providing technical advice to the local authorities in the area of policing and security, and of interacting with the local population.

30. The arrival in Côte d'Ivoire of a sixth formed police unit on 20 February 2007 completed the deployment of all authorized formed police units to the country. Formed police units are now operational in Abidjan, Bouaké, Daloa, Guiglo and Yamoussoukro. The primary tasks of the formed police units focus on providing security to United Nations personnel, facilities and equipment, as well as to United Nations police officers in the zone of confidence. They also continue to conduct regular crowd control exercises in collaboration with UNOCI military contingents and the Licorne force. Formed police unit personnel also provided specialized training courses on crowd control and civil unrest management to 600 ONUC military personnel in five different units.

31. The rest of the UNOCI police personnel are deployed at 20 sites throughout the country, where they perform monitoring and mentoring tasks to enhance the professional conduct of the Ivorian national police and gendarmerie personnel. However, joint activities are often hampered by the limited human and logistic resources at the disposal of the Ivorian security forces.

32. In anticipation of the start of the disarmament process, 535 security auxiliaries, trained by UNOCI in 2005 and 2006 in the northern part of the country, will be deployed to 54 police stations in that area to maintain law and order as Forces nouvelles elements are cantoned. The police stations to which the auxiliaries will be deployed were refurbished with funds provided by the European Commission. An official graduation ceremony was organized for the auxiliaries in Bouaké on 15 December 2006. Prime Minister Banny and several Ministers attended the ceremony. United Nations police officers will be deployed alongside the security auxiliaries to provide continuous technical support, mentoring and monitoring of day-to-day activities in the field. Mentoring has commenced as a pilot project in Bouaké, and will continue with the expected deployment of 54 auxiliaries to Man.

33. United Nations police officers continued to participate actively in inter-mission cooperation, in particular in the joint patrolling of Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire border areas with military units. A dedicated liaison office has also been established in both UNOCI and UNMIL to facilitate the exchange of information between the police components of the two missions.

V. Humanitarian situation

34. The humanitarian situation in Côte d'Ivoire remains primarily a protection crisis. In the west, militias from the south and armed groups from the north, including traditional hunters (*dozos*), continued to attack both local and foreign civilian populations in the zone of confidence. The atmosphere of insecurity and fear led to the displacement of thousands of persons to Duékoué and undermined

efforts of the humanitarian community to assist vulnerable populations and to facilitate the return of more than 10,000 displaced persons in Duékoué, as well as the 6,000 displaced who had found refuge in Bangolo since June 2006.

35. To address the serious humanitarian issues in the west and questions relating to the return of internally displaced persons, the United Nations country team and representatives of the donor community undertook a mission to Duékoué, Guiglo, the Zou area and Man from 14 to 16 December 2006. The mission recommended the reinforcement of protection activities by local authorities and United Nations troops, the increase of coordination activities among all actors and the need for an in-depth evaluation of humanitarian, security and development issues, in particular with a view to facilitating the return of internally displaced persons. The situation has deteriorated in recent weeks, as increased banditry and militia activities have severely hampered humanitarian operations in the western part of the country. Since 26 February, militia elements of the Front de libération du grand-ouest have erected barricades on the Guiglo-Bloléquin axis and prevented vehicular traffic in the area. This obstruction to freedom of movement disrupted the repatriation of Liberian refugees from Toulepleu, which the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had scheduled for 27 February. On the same day, the International Organization for Migration was forced to suspend the return of some 900 internally displaced persons from Toulepleu to 14 villages around Péhé. These incidents were brought to the attention of the Minister for Territorial Administration and to that of the local administrative authorities in Guiglo.

36. On 23 January 2007, a mission was undertaken to Bouaké to assess the humanitarian situation in the north, focusing on security, child protection, access to basic social services and the return of internally displaced persons. The Forces nouvelles leaders, including Mr. Soro and the head of their armed forces, General Bakayoko, requested the assistance of the humanitarian partners, in particular in support of the young.

37. In January and February, a total of 31 people and an undetermined number of cattle and poultry died as a result of the outbreak of a mysterious disease in the village of Diobala in the centre-west of the country. As at 28 February, the World Health Organization and the Ministry of Health had dispatched investigation teams to the area to investigate the illness, which remains unidentified.

38. During the period under review, there was a setback in the education sector. Several teachers' strikes paralysed primary school activities in December 2006, affecting 1,668,623 children throughout the country. After the Government promised the payment of accommodation fees for teachers, the strike was suspended on 4 January 2007 for three months.

39. The Consolidated Appeal Process was launched nationally on 31 January 2007 in Abidjan. The Process highlighted the increases in poverty and vulnerability in Côte d'Ivoire, showing that 50 per cent of the rural population in the north and west do not have regular access to clean drinking water and 60 per cent of basic medical services are not delivered. A total of \$56.3 million is sought to assist more than 4 million vulnerable persons.

VI. Economic impact of the political crisis

40. The uncertainty relating to the peace process continued to have a negative impact on the economic situation. The sector most damaged is the processing industry, which has lost nearly half of its manufacturing potential and workforce in the past five years. Since the outbreak of the crisis, productive investments, from both domestic and foreign investors, have virtually dried up. The production sector continued to be burdened with hidden costs because of racketeering and extra transport and insurance costs. Without immediate measures on taxation, support to the better-performing sectors, vocational training for the workforce and a greater effort in the fight against smuggling, there is a risk that the industry will lose its competitiveness to a level at which recovery will be lengthy and difficult.

41. Without progress in the peace process, the country is unable to capitalize on its natural resources and considerable human capital to realize its vision of economic growth and integration into the global economy. Consequently, the country is unable to generate enough employment for its active population, in particular for the young. Efforts to promote youth employment have not been systematic and would benefit from an overall national economic plan that has yet to be formulated.

VII. Human rights situation

42. Although no widespread human rights violations were observed during the reporting period, the general human rights situation continues to raise concern. Routine cases of intimidation, arbitrary arrest, detention, racketeering at checkpoints and frequent inter-ethnic conflicts in the west continue to be monitored by UNOCI nationwide.

43. In the Government-controlled areas, cases of widespread violence on university campuses and schools perpetrated or instigated by members of the Fédération étudiante et scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire were reported. On 25 January, during a wave of strikes and demonstrations organized by the union throughout the country to demand public funding of school fees, union militants attacked, ransacked and destroyed private property belonging to local traders and sympathizers of opposition political parties. To address the widespread violence on campuses and schools, the Ligue ivoirienne des droits de l'homme launched a 10-month pilot project to sensitize students on human rights at the University of Cocody in Abidjan.

44. In the western region of the country, cases of ethnically motivated attacks, sometimes resulting in killings, were reported in Daloa, Duékoué and Guiglo, and the zone of confidence. The insecurity in the zone of confidence, which is due to the absence of any law enforcement authority, continues to have a negative impact on the overall human rights situation. The cases of abuse witnessed in the zone range from banditry to ethnically motivated, targeted killings and attacks. In addition, freedom of movement continues to be affected by frequent attacks by bandits in the western part of Côte d'Ivoire and by the activities of *dozos* and pro-government militias (*cocotailles*).

45. In the area controlled by the Forces nouvelles, there have been increasing reports of Forces nouvelles elements offering their services to settle private disputes, resorting sometimes to punishment and ill-treatment against the parties

concerned. The Forces nouvelles also continue to detain several people in Bouaké and Korhogo, including some who were arrested as long ago as 2005, after being accused of supporting President Gbagbo or spying for the Young Patriots.

46. With funding from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNOCI conducted awareness-raising campaigns on various human rights issues in Abidjan, Bouaké, Daloa, Korhogo, Odienné and Yamoussoukro. To strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations, ONUCI launched, on 18 January, the Cercle des ONG des droits de l'homme, a forum for regular exchanges among non-governmental human rights organizations. In this context, UNOCI and the Coalition for the International Criminal Court defined a common strategy for advocacy in favour of the ratification by Côte d'Ivoire of the Rome Statute; on 25 January, ONUCI and the Association pour le développement du droit launched a campaign to harmonize the legislation of Côte d'Ivoire with international human rights instruments.

47. The inauguration of the National Human Rights Commission by Prime Minister Banny on 11 January 2007 was a positive development. The Commission, the creation of which was called for in the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, is expected to play a key role in promoting long-term national reconciliation and respect for human rights.

48. ONUCI continued to discuss the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2006/835) with the leaders of the Forces nouvelles and pro-Government militia groups, bringing to their attention the many concerns expressed by the Secretary-General, as well as his appreciation for their commitment to the implementation of the action plans to end the use of child soldiers. While UNOCI has no evidence of any ongoing active recruitment of children by militia groups or the Forces nouvelles, the continuing association of children with fighting forces is generally acknowledged by those groups. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) continued to support a prevention, demobilization and reintegration programme for children associated with armed groups and children at risk of being recruited, benefiting a total of 2,208 children.

49. Cases of human trafficking were reported in the northern cities of Korhogo and Odienné and in the area of Aboisso in the south. Despite the efforts of ONUCI and other organizations, well-organized networks continue to be used to bring young girls from neighbouring countries into Côte d'Ivoire to work as prostitutes. UNOCI investigated, in particular, cases of trafficking of children from Mali and Burkina Faso, smuggled through the Ouagadougou-Bouaké-Dimbroko-Abidjan railway line, to work in Côte d'Ivoire as domestic servants or plantation labourers. On 21 December 2006, 27 children of Malian nationality were repatriated from Bouaké to Mali by local authorities and UNICEF.

VIII. Media monitoring

50. In order to better promote the peace process and expand its outreach, UNOCI set up four new sub-offices in Man, San Pedro, Yamoussoukro and Bondoukou and is seeking to establish a presence in four other regions. Moreover, a series of forums and a peace caravan were organized in various parts of the country. In Yamoussoukro, a plan of action was developed with the Convention de la société civile to enhance the participation of civil society actors, such as women, youth, the

media and the economic sector, in the peace process. Similarly, a children's forum brought together some 500 vulnerable children as a precursor to the children's caravan that will be visiting schools in all communes of Abidjan before touring the country.

51. UNOCI also continued to advocate for the creation of an improved media environment. In this regard, the mission provided support to the Ministry of Communication for the establishment of an early-warning unit on hate media that would include representatives of the Government, media regulatory bodies, the national journalists' association and UNOCI. The mission also strengthened its collaboration with media regulatory bodies such as the National Press Council, the National Council on Audio-visual Media and the Observatoire pour la liberté de presse, de l'éthique et de la déontologie. It should be noted, however, that the effectiveness of the first two bodies is severely hampered by the fact that their governing councils have still not been established. In accordance with resolution 1721 (2006), UNOCI also provided the Government with samples of codes of conduct from different countries to assist in the formulation of an Ivorian code of conduct for the media. The code, which was due to be published by 15 December 2006 according to the schedule proposed by the International Working Group, has yet to be finalized.

52. In collaboration with the National Council on Audio-visual Media and the Embassy of Canada in Côte d'Ivoire, UNOCI has initiated a partnership with a network of local radios with a view to helping them promote peace. The partnership will entail joint productions, supplying the stations with ONUCI FM programmes that they can rebroadcast, and training. The mission has developed a code of ethics to which each participating radio station will be required to adhere.

IX. HIV/AIDS

53. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1308 (2000), UNOCI continues to mainstream HIV/AIDS awareness in the mission's activities through the promotion of HIV risk-free behaviour. Since October 2006, 1,501 United Nations personnel have participated in HIV/AIDS-awareness workshops and 62 peer educators have been trained in two training sessions. In that time, voluntary counselling and testing services were reinforced and 488 personnel presented themselves for voluntary HIV-testing.

54. In addition, in collaboration with Vidri Canal, a local organization, UNOCI conducted a trainers' workshop on HIV/AIDS, gender and human rights for 25 women members of various local associations from Abidjan. During the commemoration of the nineteenth World AIDS Day, a psychosocial centre for the care of people infected or affected by HIV/AIDS, financed by UNOCI quick-impact project funds, was opened in the northern part of the country.

X. Gender issues

55. In the pursuit of gender mainstreaming, UNOCI conducted gender awareness and training programmes for 523 new staff members and 146 soldiers during the period under review. The mission also trained 15 regional electoral officers on

gender- and elections-related issues. UNOCI also contributed, in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), to the training of 25 members of the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs on gender issues and development, as well as 60 women leaders of local non-governmental organizations and 15 representatives from various ministries on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) as an advocacy tool to address gender issues affecting women during and after the conflict.

56. The mission and the country team continued to receive reports of sexual violence in the northern and western parts of the country, as well as reports of alleged systematic harassment of women and young girls in rural areas and at checkpoints. UNICEF, in collaboration with UNFPA, has undertaken a study to assess the scope of the problem in order to provide a coherent response. In the meantime, a large part of the UNICEF protection programme is committed to providing assistance to the victims of sexual violence.

XI. Conduct and discipline of United Nations personnel

57. During the period under review, two allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations personnel were reported and are under investigation. UNOCI continues to work closely with all mission components and the United Nations country team to strengthen training initiatives and prevention measures for all peacekeepers, as well as monitoring and reporting mechanisms. As at 31 December 2006, 4,242 personnel had undergone mandatory training on sexual exploitation and abuse. Over 45 per cent of UNOCI senior managers have received additional targeted training on their obligation and responsibility to prevent acts of sexual exploitation and abuse by personnel under their supervision. UNOCI also continues to encourage external partners, including national and international non-governmental organizations, to share information on allegations of abuse by United Nations personnel through the established mechanisms in the mission.

XII. Observations

58. I welcome the successful conclusion of the dialogue on the Ivorian peace process and the signing of a peace agreement between President Gbagbo and Mr. Soro on 4 March. This is an important achievement, for which I commend the two leaders. I also congratulate President Compaoré for his effective and even-handed facilitation role, and I assure him and the Ivorian political leaders of the commitment and readiness of the United Nations to assist in the implementation of the agreement. I also wish to assure him that Côte d'Ivoire will remain among my top priorities this year.

59. The Ouagadougou agreement promises to resolve the current impasse and pave the way for a lasting political settlement in Côte d'Ivoire, particularly because it builds upon previous peace agreements and Security Council resolutions and addresses many of the key issues that have impeded progress. However, the agreement will be judged by the political will of the parties to implement it. The agreement also carries special significance, because it was drawn up by the Ivorian leaders themselves, which places on them a special responsibility to implement it in full. I therefore urge the parties to begin the implementation process immediately. In the meantime, I will initiate discussions with the facilitator and the parties on the

role UNOCI and the High Representative for the elections are expected to play in supporting the implementation of the agreement, including in the follow-up mechanisms.

60. In its resolution 1721 (2006), the Security Council stressed that the current extension of the transition period was final. The new agreement reaffirms the commitment of the parties to all relevant Council resolutions, and declares that its objective is to facilitate the implementation of resolution 1721 (2006). It also sets out an ambitious agenda and a tight implementation schedule in an effort to meet the deadline set in the resolution. Despite a number of technical and other issues that may require further elaboration, the effort made to build upon Council resolutions and previous peace agreements is commendable. It may therefore be timely for the Council to consider favourably the recommendation by the ECOWAS leaders to visit Côte d'Ivoire. Such a visit would provide an opportunity to reach a common understanding with the parties and the facilitator not only on the role of the United Nations in the implementation process, but also on a pragmatic implementation process that is consistent with both the agreement and Council resolutions and recognizes the mutual concerns of the parties and the international community.

61. Prior to the conclusion of the dialogue, it was necessary to continue the efforts to move forward with the technical preparations for the eventual implementation of disarmament, identification and security sector reform, and the electoral process. I commend the determination shown by the Prime Minister to press ahead with these tasks. The initial progress made during 2006, albeit very limited, provides a good basis on which to build further progress that would ensure timely and full implementation of the Ouagadougou agreement. The international community should be prepared to provide the assistance necessary for the implementation of key processes, in particular disarmament, security sector reform and the preparation of the elections. The United Nations stands ready, and continues to prepare and assist the Ivorian parties in implementing rapidly and in a comprehensive manner the many key tasks related to those processes. In the meantime, I look forward to continuing to work with the Chairmen of ECOWAS and the African Union in assisting the Ivorian political leaders to secure a lasting political settlement.

62. The support of the international community for the political process should be complemented by commensurate efforts to address the humanitarian situation in the country. While recognizing the significant contribution of a number of key partners, such as the European Union, I urge donors to contribute generously to the Consolidated Appeal Process for Côte d'Ivoire in 2007.

63. I wish to extend my deep appreciation to Pierre Schori, who completed his assignment as my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire on 15 February 2007. He made a significant contribution to the efforts to move the peace process forward during his two-year tour of duty. I also wish to commend the current Officer-in-Charge of UNOCI, the High Representative for the elections, as well as the military and civilian personnel of UNOCI and members of the United Nations country team for their continued commitment to the peace process. I also express my gratitude to the humanitarian and development organizations, bilateral and multilateral donors and the countries that are contributing military and police personnel to UNOCI for their invaluable contribution to peace in Côte d'Ivoire.

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Annex**United Nations Operation in the Congo: military and civilian police strength as at 21 February 2007**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Military observers</i>	<i>Staff officers</i>	<i>Troops</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Formed police units</i>	<i>Civilian police</i>
Argentina						4
Bangladesh	11	10	2 725	2 746	250	9
Benin	7	7	421	435		28
Bolivia	3			3		
Brazil	4	3		7		
Cameroon						62
Canada						3
Central African Republic						7
Chad	3			3		5
China	7			7		
Croatia	3			3		
Djibouti						39
Dominican Republic	4			4		
Ecuador	2			2		
El Salvador	3			3		1
Ethiopia	2			2		
France	3	12	173	188		10
Guatemala	5			5		
Ghana	6	7	531	544		1
Gambia	3			3		
Guinea	3			3		
India	8			8		11
Ireland	2			2		
Jordan	7	12	1 048	1 067	375	4
Kenya	5	4		9		
Madagascar						6
Moldova	3			3		
Morocco	1	3	733	737		
Namibia	3			3		
Nepal	3			3		
Niger	6	3	379	388		71
Nigeria	8			8		17
Pakistan	8	9	1 114	1 131	125	2
Paraguay	9	2		11		
Peru	3			3		

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<i>Country</i>	<i>Military observers</i>	<i>Staff officers</i>	<i>Troops</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Formed police units</i>	<i>Civilian police</i>
Poland	2			2		
Philippines	4	3		7		11
Romania	7			7		
Russian Federation	12			12		
Rwanda						15
Senegal	7	8	321	336		58
Serbia	3			3		
Switzerland						2
Togo	6	4	315	325		1
Tunisia	5	2		7		
Turkey						21
United Republic of Tanzania	1	2		3		
Uruguay	2	1		3		6
Uganda	5	2		7		
Vanuatu						4
Yemen	5			5		2
Zambia	2			2		
Zimbabwe	2			2		
Total	198	94	7 760	8 052	750	400

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