



**Mission Report
Meeting of the Ambassadors of the African Union
Geneva, 16 January 2009**

After a long quarrel about possible dates, I had finally the opportunity to present the case of the Commission before the African Group in Geneva. The arrangement came from an initiative of the British Ambassador (the predecessor of the present one) and was finally implemented by the Legal Advisor of the UK Mission, Kate Jones. We owe her our gratitude for doing this efficiently.

A text of the presentation is annexed. It was an advantage that it was distributed in the beginning.

The meeting was very well attended, which was in large part due to the fact that the High Commissioner for Human Rights addressed the meeting after me. The discussion after the presentation had to be short, but it was very good – despite the fact that it proved once more the fact that the Commission is not known enough.

Questions related to the process of the establishment of the Commission, the reasons why it not had been used so far (answer: not enough knowledge of the Commission and difficulty to obtain an agreement), whether this proved a lack of confidence in the Commission (answer: just give us a chance), why we came to the African Group at this particular time and whether we meant to place a particular focus on Africa, which I categorically denied, knowing the African resentment about international criminal justice concentrating on Africa.

The Ambassador of Algeria raised the question of the implementation of the HRC resolution on Gaza which indeed demands an impartial inquiry. He pointed out that the head of the mission to be appointed by the President of the Human Rights Council would probably be “a big name”, but one could perhaps imagine a role for the Commission or its members in that context. I answered by referring to what I had already said in the presentation: it remains to be discussed. Unfortunately, the President of the Council, the Ambassador of Nigeria, was not there. That avenue deserves to be pursued despite the fact that Israel’s acceptance of the mission is far from being sure.

After the presentation, I briefly met the High Commissioner and got the contact necessary to arrange a meeting in February. I also had a long talk with the Legal Advisor of the Mission of Egypt. That Mission plays a very important role in the African Group in Geneva and in the Human Rights Council.

Michael Bothe