This paper provides an update and commentary on the progress that has been made during the last three years on the establishment of the African Standby Force. After providing an overview of the concept, subsequent sections deal with the command and control relationships between the African Union, the United Nations and sub-regional organisations. The paper finds that progress at regional level has been steady, if uneven and largely limited to southern, western and eastern Africa. While Africa has seen good progress with regard to training, development of doctrine, Standard Operating Procedures, command and control concepts and the like, the issue of logistics remains hugely problematic, as does the requirement for greater capacity and leadership at the level of the AU Commission.

Such Force shall be composed of standby multidisciplinary contingents, with civilian and military components in their countries of origin and ready for rapid deployment on appropriate notice. (PSC protocol art13.1). For that purpose, the Member States shall take steps to establish standby contingents for participation in peace support missions decided on by the Peace and Security Council or intervention authorized by the Assembly.

Update on Africa. St. Petersburg, July 16, 2006. Our commitments. Since the late 1990s, G8 Summits have given Africa a high priority. Progress made. Peace and Stability: We have increased our support for African efforts to build a peaceful and stable Africa, including support for setting up the African Standby Force and technical, logistical and financial assistance on policy development to strengthen the overall capacity of African organisations to deal with conflicts on the continent. We have provided funding, hardware, personnel and technical assistance to the African Union (AU) mission in Darfur, and stand ready to support a UN force to take over from the AU there.