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DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

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AUC-EC COLLEGE-TO-COLLEGE MEETING TO DISCUSS CONSOLIDATING GROWTH AND DEMOCRACY

Addis Ababa – 27 May 2011 - On 31 May and 1 June the African Union Commission (AUC) and the European Commission (EC) are convening in Brussels, Belgium, for their annual College-to-College meeting, in the context of the Joint Africa-EU Partnership. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Jean Ping, accompanied by African Union Commissioners, including the Deputy Chairperson of the AUC, will be meeting in Brussels with the President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, and with the European Commissioners.

This 5th edition of the meeting of the European Commission - Africa Union Commission (C2C) is the first C2C after the third Africa-EU Summit in November 2010. The previous edition of the C2C took place in Addis Ababa in June 2010.

The meeting aims to strengthen the political and technical cooperation between the two institutions; foster closer operational links, and stimulate the joint strategic thinking and policy-setting of the two Commissions. It is also the opportunity to identify additional opportunities to define and defend common positions in the international arena.

The C2C meeting seeks furthermore to give fresh impetus to the implementation of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and its Action Plan 2011-2013, adopted by EU and African leaders during the 3rd Summit in November 2010 and provide high-level inputs for the future political agenda of Africa-EU relations. Both the EU and Africa need to address together the key transnational challenges, including crisis and conflicts, climate change, and the governance of the international system, to seize new opportunities to shape globalization in a positive manner, and to establish an effective and credible alliance that enables both sides to better make their voice heard.

It is therefore an excellent opportunity for both Commissions to define joint priorities in the follow-up of the 3rd Summit Declaration and its operational Action Plan 2011-13. It is also an excellent opportunity to influence Africa's emerging continental policy agenda,

and to build on the existing cooperation and good personal relations in the context of the demanding international agenda where both Commissions could and should do more to align EU-Africa interests and to promote the shared values.

The **Regional Economic Communities** (RECs) will join the meeting. Their presence, at the level of Secretary-General, is expected to boost the ownership of all key actors in the Joint Africa EU Strategy and engage them at the highest level to participate more actively in the implementation of the Action Plan 2011-2013. The meeting should also lead to improved coordination between the EC, the AUC, and the RECs in key areas such as peace and security, trade and regional integration.

The programme of the meeting between the two Commissions will cover two days divided between thematic cluster meetings of Commissioners, bilateral meetings and a plenary session, which will take place in the morning of 1st June. The plenary session will focus on consolidating democracy, including developments in Northern Africa, and consolidating growth.

Discussions aim at strengthening the political and technical cooperation between the two institutions. Thematic sessions will also allow for exchanges of views on political, social, environmental and economic matters.

On Tuesday 31st May, cluster meetings will cover: Political Affairs; Regional Integration, trade and infrastructure; Social Affairs; Climate Change and Environment; Economic governance and raw material. The meetings will allow for in-depth debates on common areas and offer opportunities to discuss sectoral policies, to search for constructive synergies, and to develop joint/concerted actions on the international scene.

President Jose Manuel Barroso and AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping will meet bilaterally.

On Wednesday 1st June, the plenary session will permit the overarching theme of "Consolidating Growth and Democracy" and should touch upon current political challenges.

At 12h40 on the 1st June, President Jose Manuel Barroso and AU Commission Chairperson Jean Ping will hold a joint press conference.

The bilateral and cluster meetings that will take place in the afternoon of the 1st June, will cover administrative cooperation; agriculture and food security and safety, science and space.

The two colleges will adopt a joint declaration.

JOURNALISTS ARE INVITED TO COVER THE OPENING SESSION AND TO ATTEND THE PRESS CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR 1st JUNE

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Website of the European Commission: http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm

Background information on the Partnership and its eight thematic areas can be found at: <http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/>

Background on the Joint Africa-EU Strategy

80 Heads of State and Government from Africa and Europe adopted the Africa-EU Joint Strategy in Lisbon in December 2007. Both sides agreed to pursue common interests and strategic objectives together, beyond the traditional donor-recipient focus - the two continents started cooperating as equal partners. The Joint Strategy outlines a long-term shared vision of the future of Africa-EU relations in a globalized world.

Based on this vision and on common principles, the Africa-EU Joint Strategy defines eight specific partnerships:

- Peace and security
- Democratic governance and human rights
- Trade, regional integration and infrastructure
- Millennium development goals (MDGs)
- Energy
- Climate change
- Migration, mobility and employment
- Science, information society and space

In late November 2010, African and EU leaders met again, under the overarching topic “Investment, Economic Growth and Job Creation” to take cooperation between the two continents to a new, more ambitious level. A joint Action Plan 2011-2013 was adopted, including concrete actions to be pursued or launched on the strategic areas and building on accomplishments since 2007.

The two Commissions are the main engines of the Strategy and they meet annually to provide political impetus to Africa-EU relations.

In the framework of this Joint Strategy, EC and AUC have established a **close Commission-to-Commission dialogue**, both on the working level in the 6-monthly Joint Task Force, and on a political level in the annual College-to-College meetings.

Background information on the Partnership and its eight thematic areas can be found at Africa-EU partnership website: <http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/> and

Website of the African Union Commission: <http://www.au.int/en/commission>

Website of the European Commission: http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm

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