



PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION SADDENED BY THE DEATH OF PRIME MINISTER MELES ZENAWI OF ETHIOPIA

Addis Ababa, 21 August 2012: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Jean Ping, has received with great shock and sadness the untimely passing away of Ato Meles Zenawi, the Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

The Commission will remember late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi for his exceptional contribution to the advancement of the objectives of the AU and the promotion of Africa's interests in global fora. In particular, Prime Minister Meles played a critical role in furthering the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), whose Implementation Committee he was chairing. He also presided over with competence and utmost commitment the Committee of African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC).

The Commission also salutes Ethiopia's contribution, under Prime Minister Meles's leadership, to the promotion of peace and security in Africa, both within the framework of the AU and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). In this respect, mention should notably be made of the deployment of Ethiopian peacekeepers to Burundi, Liberia and Abyei, as part of AU or United Nations Missions, as well as the support extended to the Somali authorities and AMISOM in their efforts to defeat terrorism and extremism in Somalia and pave the way for lasting peace and reconciliation in that country. Prime Minister Meles tirelessly deployed efforts in support of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), in order to facilitate the completion of the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the negotiations on the post-secession issues between Sudan and South Sudan.

Prime Minister Meles Zenawi has also overseen the dramatic transformation of his country, which is today one of the top economic performers on the continent. In so doing, he has played an important role in pioneering a new era of hope and growth in Africa, driven as he was by the vision of Ethiopia and Africa's Renaissance.

The death of Prime Minister Meles has robbed Africa of one of its greatest sons. On behalf of the Commission, the Chairperson wishes to extend to the Government and people of Ethiopia, as well as to the bereaved family, his deepest condolences, and to convey to them AU's sympathy at this trying moment.

May his soul rest in eternal peace!