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First Africa-China Media Cooperation Forum: AUC Chairperson Dr. Jean Ping acknowledges the important role of media and press freedom in changing the socio-political landscape in Africa

Beijing, China, 23 August 2012 – The Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Dr. Jean Ping, addressed some African Ministers in charge of information high level media representatives from radio and TV channels at the First Africa-China Media Cooperation Forum holding on 23 August 2012 in Beijing, China, under the theme "exchange, cooperation and development." Dr. Ping underlined the important role of the Media in influencing several socio-political changes in Africa. He pointed out the struggle for democracy and governance that led to the popular uprisings in the Maghreb region leading to what was later considered as the Arab spring in most parts the continent in 2011.

Addressing the ministers of information in the presence of Mr. Cai Fuchao, Minister of the SARF, State Administration of Radio, Film and Television and Mr. Zhai Jun, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chairperson Ping indicated that media independence and freedom of expression are in line with the urge for Africa to focus on the development of the media sector in order to make its voice heard beyond the continental level. "Africa should have the technical and political means to be able to tell its story by informing the world on events happening on the continent", he underscored.

Dr. Ping highlighted the Pan-African Media Network (PAMNET) and the Pan African Media Portal, which are projects currently being implemented by the African Union Commission in a bid to strengthen and render the media sector in Africa more efficient. He said these projects are platforms to share and exchange experiences through dialogue and open debate on issues related to the Media in Africa. It will also improve the understanding of the media landscape in Africa while facilitating decision-making on media related issues.

Chairperson Ping further indicated that, the AUC has actively supported the launch of the Journalists Network for Peace and Security in Africa dubbed (NetPeace), in a bid to

enhance the culture of peace through a credible and independent media (See the complete speech of the AUC Chairperson on the African Union website: www.au.int).

Worth recalling that, the Sino-Africa Media Forum is part of the implementation of the Beijing 2007-2009 Plan of Action adopted on 5 November 2006 that spells out the cooperation ties between Africa and China and their commitment to encourage "their respective media play a determining role in deepening mutual understanding and friendship between both parties. Following the partnership, China has resolved to assist African countries to train the radio and television staff to improve their skills. This will be done through exchange programs where the journalists will benefit from some professional training in China.