

PRESS RELEASE N.07/ 20th AU SUMMIT**Strategic partnerships: “Africa chooses its partners and all should know it” says AUC Chief of Staff**

Addis Ababa, 22 January 2013 – Ambassador Jean-Baptiste Natama, Chief of Staff of the African Union (AU) Commission, held on, 22 January 2013, at the headquarters of the AU, a briefing on the strategic partnerships of the organisation. The gathering with the media took place on the margins of the 20th AU Summit themed “*Panafricanism and African Renaissance*”.

In his introductory remarks, Ambassador Natama stressed on the fact that relations and partnerships between Africa and the rest of the world should be based on a mutual understanding, allowing Africa to respond to its needs and benefit from those partnerships. He cited Afro-Arab, TICAD, Africa-South America, Africa-EU, Africa-China, Africa-Turkey and Africa-India as partnerships based on mutual will and which should evolve in a beneficial manner. He further clarified that Africa should be aware of its interests and the benefits the continent should be foreseeing with the partnerships concluded. However they are sometimes perceived as unbalanced due to the historical background. In his capacity as the coordinator of partnerships, he informed that the role of the African Union is to make sure Africa’s interests are taken into account.



On the relations between Africa and China and replying to a question on that matter, Ambassador Natama explained that there is no monopoly on Africa. “Africa chooses its partners and all should know it” he added. However, he informed that the AU is concerned about unbalanced partnerships. This is the reason the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, intends to request a moratorium from Member States on partnerships in order to review their

efficiency and benefit for Africa.

He explained that 30% of natural resources and one third of energy sources are located in Africa. Rather than exporting raw materials and importing manufactured products, the continent should put in place processing infrastructure. Combined with better

governance, a stable and secure environment, Africa should get rid of the impoverishment generated by the sole exportation of its raw materials. Though entrepreneurship implies taking risks, compliance with the rule of law reduces risks and attracts investors, Ambassador Natama further indicated. “Development should be from within and initiated first by Africa and for Africans”.

The main challenge is now to process those resources for the benefit of the people of Africa and share it equally to avoid frustrations. Governance is a major challenge and Africa should adopt mechanisms leading to an environment conducive to growth. In addition, stability and security are also core elements to create growth. Africa exports its raw resources and imports manufactured products. This cycle impoverishes Africa. “We need to transform our resources, adopt good economic governance, share equally among the population,” the Chief of Staff said.