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Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Téléphone : 5517 700 Fax : 5511299
website : www.africa-union.org

DIRECTORATE OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION

PRESS RELEASE N..../2011

**Fifth Conference of African Ministers in Charge of
Integration (COMAI V) tips regional communities to spur Africa's growth**

Nairobi, 8 September, 2011- The Fifth Conference of African Ministers in Charge of Integration (COMAI V) kicked off today 8 September ,2011 and was opened by H.E. Honourable Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, vice President of Kenya and Minister of Home Affairs on behalf of his President H.E. Honourable Mwai Kibaki, who acknowledged Africa's good economic performance over the past decade, largely explained by regional integration efforts as well as pragmatic policies and hard work.

The vice president of Kenya encouraged Member States to take concrete steps to enhance the integration agenda as a means of attaining growth and development, adding that this would require the adoption and implementation of practical recommendations that take into account socio-economic and political realities in the continent.

Mr. Musyoka underscored the importance of variable geometry in the integration process, highlighting the different stages attained by different RECs, singling out the success of the EAC, COMESA and SADC Tripartite Arrangement which is a major boost to the continental integration agenda.

The vice president concluded his remarks by encouraging Member States to take the necessary steps to accede to the relevant instruments and implement existing decisions, protocols and treaties.

H.E. Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson for the African Union Commission, in his opening remarks, noted that issues of sovereignty and financing in the African context required urgent solutions, if the continent's integration agenda was to be accelerated.

The Deputy Chairperson stated that despite the initial optimism that the global financial system would have few spillover effects on the continent, Africa's economies had been adversely affected by the global recession due to the slow recovery from the economic and financial crises.

Mr. Mwencha concluded exuding confidence the conference would make a major contribution and encourage learning of key lessons to address pertinent issues surrounding sovereignty and financial self-sufficiency as they relate to integration goals.

For his part, H.E. Abdoulaye Janneh UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ECA of United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) stated that regional integration is a necessity for Africa due to the benefits of a larger and more coherent

economic space and noted that progress is being made to fast-track regional integration in Africa.

Observing that there is an inverse relationship between integration and national sovereignty and that the ultimate objective of regional integration is to enable African countries to benefit from economies of scale and reduce transaction ,the ECA Executive Secretary concluded that integration would require greater trans-boundary cooperation, joint programmes and projects.

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