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**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra,
Commissioner for Peace and Security,
at the opening of the 5th meeting of the Specialized
Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security
(STCDSS)**

Addis Ababa, 26 October 2011

Distinguished Ministers of Defence
Ambassadors,
Distinguished Chiefs of Defence Staff and Heads of Security Services
Generals and Senior Officers,
Distinguished guests,
Distinguished experts,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would first and foremost like to welcome you to this annual gathering on behalf of the Chairperson of the Commission, Dr. Jean Ping, and the entire Commission. Your presence today at this meeting is yet another occasion to assess the progress made in the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture and to lay the way forward through enhanced cooperation and effective collective action. As such, your meeting is a timely opportunity to make a qualitative contribution in the promotion of African solutions to African problems.

Excellencies,

As you are aware, 2011 has been challenging in Africa' s march towards peace and security. In fact, our continent has never been so dynamic in the quest for solutions to the various conflicts and other crisis situations with which it is confronted both at the level of the institutions put in place for that purpose and that of Member States. The geopolitical landscape of Africa has also never presented so many situations of restored peace and post conflict rebuilding endeavours. This in being proven in AU's assuming pioneering responsibilities in the Somali crisis, with the continued strengthening of the African Union mission in Somalia (AMISOM) which began deploying since 2007, with the support of AU member States as well as the United Nations and other partners providing logistics support to the

mission. Indeed, AMISOM has made tremendous progress to stabilize the security situation in Somalia. I indicated yesterday to the Chiefs of Defense Staff (CDS) and Heads of Security Services (HSS), the endorsement of the revised Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for AMISOM, which was elaborated based on the political and security gains in Somalia. I also highlighted the current military developments and their prospects in terms of strategic added-value to the successes already recorded in Mogadishu.

In this regard, I wish to extend the AU Commission's appreciation to Troop and Police Contributing Countries and also to the Eastern Africa Standby Force Mechanism (EASFCOM) which has recently contributed resources to AMISOM and is yet ready to do more in the coming months. Thanks also to the political organ of this Regional Mechanism which made the decision to continue to support the AU's effort in Somalia. We still hope that this initiative will trigger many others and in various kinds to consolidate gains in Mogadishu with decisive headways in other important regions of the country, including the effects of the military action undertaken by Kenya and to which IGAD has expressed its support.

I also wish to inform this meeting that our cooperation with the United Nations is enhanced. In fact the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), through its Resolution 2010 (2011) on 30th September 2011, will continue to support the implementation of the political roadmap and to enhance the support package required for AMISOM. Other initiatives are being taken to build on the achievements in every way possible so as to extend the authority of the TFG to the entire territory of Somalia.

With regard to the AU Regional initiative against the Lord Resistance Army (LRA), the Ministers of Defense and Security Services of the affected countries met in Addis Abba in June 2011, under the auspices of the AUC,

and made pertinent recommendations to the 17th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Malabo, from 30 June to 1st July 2011. The Assembly ultimately expressed its full support to the initiatives and requested the AU Peace and Security Council to give early authorization for the envisaged operation against the LRA, in all its components. The Commission will shortly submit to the PSC the final report on the implementation modalities of the regional initiative against the LRA. We also appreciate the ongoing efforts by the affected countries to bring to an end the atrocities posed by the LRA and we hope that the AU Regional initiative will be supported by other AU Member States, the United Nations and the international community as a whole. Equally important for the overall security and stability on our continent is the common endeavor by some AU Member States in the Sahel region aiming at defeating the AQIM terrorist group by pooling together military assets under an operational Headquarters located in Tamanrasset, Algeria.

Excellencies

This meeting is not just an annual gathering. It engenders our determination to continue to advance and consolidate the significant gains made in the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture. Of course the dynamism and commitments of our Member States are vital to the development of capabilities that aim at strengthening the various components of the APSA with a view to addressing peace and security challenges with the management of a wide range of activities from prevention to post-conflict reconstruction.

In this regard, the Commission, in coordination with the Member States, is engaging all APSA components in tangible actions for the sake of peace and stability in our continent. In this regard, your support is required to

mobilize resources and assist the AUC in the development of capabilities and coordination of key domains such as maritime safety and security and Security Sector Reform.

Obviously, the coordination will not be possible without a robust planning and management capability at the strategic level. The need for an effective strategic Headquarters is constantly recommended and time has come to implement it. I would like to seize this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria which made up its offer by facilitating a meeting on the restructuring of the AUC strategic Headquarters in Abuja in July 2011.

In this regard, we will also continue to work with General SEKOUBA KONATE, the High Representative of the African Union for the operationalization of the ASF, who has already invested his effort in the development of ASF capabilities with a particular emphasis on the mobilization of resources.

As a key milestone for the implementation of the Roadmap III which will guide our actions for the next 5 years, the exercise AMANI AFRICA II is meant to be a demonstration of our commitment and resolve to test and validate all the components of APSA by 2014 through a Field Training Exercise which will involve decision-making, planning and management of an AU complex peace support operation

Excellencies,

I would also once again like to recall that it is now more pressing than ever for us to give the much-needed attention to the issue of sustainable financing for the full operationalization of APSA. In fact, it is a decisive challenge which concerns us all in a bid to avoid that our initiatives

continue to depend on the sole «generosity» of our partners, with the resulting political consequences in terms of constraints, conditionalities and even efficiency. The Commission counts on your backing and active contribution in building awareness and support to financial resources from within Africa. That is because of the historic nature and scope of this undertaking of operationalizing the African Peace and Security Architecture. Indeed, your support will remain a major factor for the integration of our continent so as to enhance Africa's march towards economic development and prosperity in a vibrant environment in which the more than one billion Africans would be free from fear and free from want.

I thank you for your kind attention and I wish you every success in your deliberations.