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**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra,
Commissioner for Peace and Security,
at the opening of the 7th meeting of the Chiefs of Defence
and Heads of Security Services**

Addis Ababa, 25 October 2011

**Distinguished Chiefs of Defence Staff,
Ambassadors,
Generals and Senior Officers,
Distinguished guests,
Distinguished experts,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would first and foremost like to thank you for responding to our invitation in spite of your heavy schedules. This clearly shows the importance you attach not only to the meeting's particularly rich agenda but further still to the peace and security challenges and opportunities in the continent. I therefore welcome you to this annual gathering at the Headquarters of the African Union Commission as a privileged moment in the development towards a continent free from conflicts where African solutions are implemented with resources and means provided through Africa's will to take its destiny into its own hands.

Your presence today at this meeting is therefore yet another precious occasion to move forward Africa's agenda through enhanced cooperation and effective collective action.

Distinguished Chiefs of Defence Staff and Heads of Security Services,

This meeting is a milestone in the implementation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in general and the African Standby Force in particular. As you are aware, various activities have been conducted in this regard at the continental and regional levels to achieve the objectives of the Policy Framework, including the development of policy documents on Doctrine, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Logistics, Training and Evaluation, Command, Control, Communication and Information Systems (C³IS). Additional work was also undertaken to

develop the ASF Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC) and to study the modalities for the establishment of a Continental Logistics Base (CLB).

I am pleased to report that these major milestones are being implemented with the view to achieving results for the benefit of our continent and its people. As we consolidate the progress attained to date, we put more emphasis on result based actions in the domain of peace and security, as well as developing the ASF's capacity to meet contemporary challenges faced by peace support operations (PSOs).

Distinguished Chiefs of Defence Staff and Heads of Security Services,

This meeting highlights our commitment to implement the APSA action plan which spelled out clear milestones in the peace and security domain for the next 5 years, including the enhancement of the decision making process for PSOs, continental and regional level-capability development of all components of the APSA and the need for coordination between the AUC and the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms on one hand, the RECs/RMs and their Member States on the other.

In order to evaluate progress already made, allow me to recall the successful conduct and completion of the Continental Command Post Exercise code named AMANI AFRICA. Following the AMANI AFRICA evaluation report, the Commission drafted the Road map III submitted to this meeting and which will guide our actions for the next five (5) years, once discussed, improved and endorsed by your meeting and that of the Defense Ministers.

In this vein, it is to be noted that in the priorities of the next Roadmap which should extend up to 2015, the Commission has recommended, among others, the effective establishment of an AUC Strategic Headquarters

within the framework of the Common African Defence and Security Policy to enhance the Commission's capacity to direct and plan AU peace support operations, the operationalization of the Rapid Deployment Capability by 2014 through a Field training exercise code named AMANI AFRICA II, the implementation of an action-oriented capability for maritime safety and security in the continent. This is to continue to assume pioneering responsibilities in the Prevention and Resolution of conflict in our continent.

Distinguished Chiefs of Defence Staff and Heads of Security Services,

The African Union mission in Somalia (AMISOM) deployed since 2007 has made tremendous gains to stabilize the security situation in Somalia, with the support of AU Member States, as well as the United Nations and other partners providing logistics support to the mission. In this regard, at its 293rd meeting held on 13 September 2011, the PSC endorsed a revised Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for AMISOM, which was elaborated by the Commission on the basis of the conclusions of the technical consultative workshop it convened in Addis Ababa last August. The revised CONOPS was prepared in the context of the major developments brought about by the signing of the Kampala Accord and the emerging challenges to consolidate the control over Mogadishu by the TFG Forces and AMISOM and expand it beyond. The current military developments in Somalia, including the military action undertaken by Kenya, and their prospects are likely to add value to the successes already recorded in terms of nature and scope.

Obviously, much still remains to be done in a bid to find just and lasting solutions to some conflict situations with which our continent is still confronted. But our determination to continue to advance, consolidate the significant successes already made and allow reason and the spirit of

responsibility to prevail for conflicts which have not yet been completely resolved remains strong. We must and we can do much more for the continent in persevering at the threefold level of action, formulation of doctrine and availability of equipment.

It goes without saying that the completion of the establishment of the various components of the African Peace and Security Architecture will considerably strengthen our capacity to address peace and security challenges with the management of a wide range of activities from prevention to post-conflict reconstruction, while tackling conflict resolution.

You may also recall that last year, I informed this meeting on the nomination of General SEKOUBA KONATE as the High Representative of the African Union for the operationalization of the ASF. General KONATE assumed duty on the 25 April 2011 and since then he has been implementing his plan of action, and he met with African leaders and AU strategic partners to seek their continuous support for the operationalisation of the ASF with a particular emphasis on the mobilization of resources. We all heard him with interest talk, a while ago, about the prospects for such an ambitious task.

Distinguished Chiefs of Defence Staff and Heads of Security Services,

The significant progress made has brought the challenges as well as the weaknesses to the fore. In fact, it is still necessary to coordinate the establishment of Regional Forces while taking into account experiences learnt from past missions and the exercise AMANI AFRICA.

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 of support operations managed by the AU. Indeed, it is a decisive

challenge which concerns us all in a bid to avoid that the deployment of the African Standby Force continue to depend on the sole «generosity» of our partners, with the resulting political consequences in terms of constraints, conditionalities and even efficiency.

Distinguished Chiefs of Defence Staff and Heads of Security Services,

I cannot conclude my statement without reiterating the conviction which the Chairperson of the Commission, Dr Jean Ping, and I share on the historic value of the undertaking of operationalizing the African Peace and Security Architecture. Indeed, it is our conviction that it is much more than a question of a tool for the promotion of peace and security throughout the continent. It is a significant benchmark and a powerful accelerator for the integration of our continent so as to enhance Africa's posture in the global affairs as an important actor and a rightful beneficiary of a new world order in the making.

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