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INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE HIGH-LEVEL PANEL OF THE AFRICAN UNION ON COTE D'IVOIRE

Addis Ababa, 31 January 2011: The High-Level Panel for the Resolution of the Crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, established by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 259th meeting held in Addis Ababa, on 28 January 2011, at the level of Heads of State and Government, met today, 31st January 2011, under the chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, to determine its program of work.

The Panel decided to constitute, within three days, the Team of Experts as provided for by the PSC communiqué. The Team will meet in Addis Ababa immediately thereafter to commence the preparatory work, before undertaking a visit to Côte d'Ivoire in the same objective. The Team of Experts will submit its findings to the members of the High-Level Panel at a meeting to be held in Nouakchott. The Panel will, thereafter, travel to Côte d'Ivoire to meet with the parties and submit to them proposals for a way out of the crisis.

In the meantime, the Panel reiterates AU's call to all the Ivorian parties to exercise maximum restraint, work towards promoting calm and extend full cooperation to the Panel to facilitate the speedy resolution of the crisis facing their country.

It should be recalled that the High-Level Panel is composed of the Heads of State of Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Chad, South Africa and Tanzania, as well as the Chairperson of the AU Commission and the President of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The Panel is to conclude its mission within one month, in conformity with the PSC decision.