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African Union Mission for Somalia  
P.O. Box 20182- 00200; Tel: +254(20)7216710, Fax: +254(20)7216775, Nairobi, Kenya  
au-amisomhom@africa-union.org

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## PRESS RELEASE

### *An African Union Commission Delegation visits Mogadishu*

**Mogadishu, 28 May 2011** – An African Union (AU) Commission delegation comprising Mr. El Ghassim Wane, Director of the AU Peace and Security Department, and Ambassador Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra, Special Representative of the AU Commission Chairperson for Somalia, undertook a one-day visit to Mogadishu, on 27 May 2011.

During the visit, the members of the delegation had the opportunity to acquaint themselves with recent developments on the ground and achievements made by the forces of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and those of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). AMISOM Force Commander, Major General Nathan Mugisha, briefed the delegation about the current security situation and the ongoing operations, which have yielded satisfactory results. In this respect, he indicated that AMISOM troops had just liberated the *African Village* in Mogadishu from the insurgents. This represents both an important military victory, expanding the areas under TFG and AMISOM control, but also a powerful symbol, as the *African Village* hosted the then Organization of African Unity Summit in Mogadishu, in 1975 – significantly, this achievement was made two days after the celebration of Africa Day. The Deputy Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission, Hon. W.A. Wafula, provided an update on the political situation and the interaction between the Somali stakeholders and the AMISOM civilian component, which relocated recently to Mogadishu.

The delegation also met with President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Hassan. It reiterated AU's continued support to the people and institutions of Somalia, as they strive to further peace and reconciliation and bring to an end the violence that has plagued Somalia for two decades. Referring to the outcome on Somalia of the just-concluded AU Extraordinary Summit on the State of Peace and Security in Africa, the delegation stressed the need for the Somali stakeholders to spare no efforts in ensuring progress at political level, particularly overcoming the divisions within the Transitional Federal institutions (TFIs), in order to consolidate the gains made on the ground by TFG and AMISOM forces. In this respect, the delegation highlighted the critical importance of the upcoming national dialogue conference due in June 2011, in Mogadishu.

*"I appreciate AU's support and the sacrifices made by AMISOM soldiers. I want to reassure them that the blood they are shedding is not in vain. I am confident that the Somali people will emerge from the ruins of many years of war. At the end, the international community will know that African countries are capable of resolving their own issues,"* President Sheikh Sharif said. President Sheikh Sharif reiterated his commitment to deepen reconciliation and ensure that the recent military and security gains are matched by similar achievements at political level.

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**For more information, please contact;**

PIU, Tel:+254(20)7216710, Fax:+254(20)7216775, Email:amisommediacentre@gmail.com

