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**PRESS RELEASE ON THE 2ND REGIONAL MINISTERIAL
MEETING ON THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY (LRA)**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

6-8 June 2011

THE REGIONAL COOPERATION INITIATIVE AGAINST THE LRA IS MATERIALIZING

Addis Ababa, June 8, 2011: The second meeting of Ministers of Defense and Security of countries affected by the atrocities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) was held at the African Union (AU) Conference Center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 8 June 2011. The meeting was chaired by the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra. The meeting was attended by the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Uganda, Crispus Kiyonga, the Deputy Minister at the Presidency of the Central African Republic (CAR) in charge of National Defense, Veterans, War Victims and the Restructuring of Army, Jean-Francis Bozizé, the Minister of National Defense and Veterans of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Charles Mwando Nsimba and the Minister of Interior of the Government of Southern Sudan, Lt General Gier Chuang Aluong. Also attending were Representatives of the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of Chad. The meeting was preceded by a meeting of the Defense Chiefs of Staff of the affected countries, which was also preceded by a meeting of experts from those countries.

Bilateral and multilateral strategic partners of the African Union attended the opening of this second meeting. They were informed of the outcome of the meeting during an interactive session at which representatives of multilateral partners, including the United Nations and the European Union, as well as bilateral partners, such as the United States of America, reiterated their support, in principle, for this important initiative of strengthening regional cooperation for the elimination of the LRA.

The Ministers considered the report of the Defense Chiefs of Staff on the modalities for

the establishment of a Regional Task Force (RTF), especially the political and mandating process of the mission, its strategic objectives and the establishment of a Joint Coordination Mechanism (JCM), the distribution of key positions within the Headquarter of the RTF, support for the Mission and the timetable for implementation.

With regard to the political process, the Ministers agreed that each delegation should submit the results of the meeting to its Head of State and Head of Government for adoption, while the AU Commission should submit the same document to the AU Summit of Heads of State and Government to be held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. The meeting affirmed that the RTF is the security element of an overall strategy formulated by the States affected by the atrocities of the LRA, in collaboration with the AU, the United Nations (UN) and other partners. It should be a "Mission authorized by the AU" with the support of the international community.

The meeting decided to set up a Joint Coordination Mechanism (JCM) which is an Ad-hoc structure, at the strategic level and must coordinate the efforts of the AU, the countries concerned as well as the support of partners. It is composed of the Defense Ministers of the countries concerned and chaired by the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the AU.

Regarding the support of the Mission, the meeting decided that:

1. The African Union will work to mobilize voluntary contributions to fund the JCM, the Headquarters of the RTF and the Joint Operations Center (JOC). The AU should also mobilize financial resources, logistics and any other forms of support needed for the benefit of other components of the RTF, including the operational units of each sector headquarters.
2. All other needs of the mission will be the responsibility of contributing countries;
3. Partner's support should be coordinated by the AU Commission, but this should not be prejudicial to any existing bilateral arrangements between the countries concerned and partners.

The meeting also provided an opportunity for the Ministers to launch an urgent appeal to the international community to support the Mission and to express their gratitude to strategic partners for their continued support for peace efforts on the African continent.