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PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION WELCOMES THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON BLUE NILE AND SOUTHERN KORDOFAN

Addis Ababa, 28 June 2011: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Jean Ping, welcomes the Framework Agreement on Political Partnership and Political and Security Arrangements in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan, signed today, in Addis Ababa, by the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (North). This significant development represents a decisive step towards consolidating peace, security and democracy in the Republic of Sudan.

Today's Agreement is all the more symbolic as it comes on the eve of the 17th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU, which will convene in Malabo on 30 June and 1st July 2011 to assess, among others, the progress made in the promotion of peace and security on the continent. The Agreement will also go a long way in contributing to the creation of auspicious conditions for the forthcoming celebration of South Sudan independence on 9 July.

The Chairperson congratulates the parties on their commitment to the peaceful resolution of their differences and calls upon them immediately to cease hostilities, permit humanitarian access, and allow the return of displaced persons to their homes.

The Chairperson thanks the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) and its members, former Presidents Thabo Mbeki, Abdulsalami Abubakar and Pierre Buyoya, as well as the entire team supporting their work, for their facilitation of this Agreement and for their continued commitment to supporting the Sudanese Parties to address the various challenges that they face.

The Chairperson of the Commission seizes this opportunity to also welcome the adoption, on 27 June 2011, by the Security Council of resolution 1990(2011), authorizing the deployment of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), to facilitate the implementation of the Agreement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of Abyei Area, signed in Addis Ababa, on 20 June 2011, under the facilitation of the AUHIP. The adoption of this resolution is an eloquent illustration of how best the AU and the UN can judiciously combine their respective comparative advantages to address peace and security challenges in Africa.