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PRESS RELEASE
(for immediate release)

AMISOM opens International Conference on International Humanitarian Law.

Kigali, July 6th, 2011; The African Union Mission for Somalia (AMISOM) today officially launched a three day consultation conference under the theme; “***Enhancing Respect for International Humanitarian Law in the implementation of its mandate.***”

The roundtable, which was formally opened by The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Rwanda H.E. Louise Mushikiwabo has attracted participation from the Somalia TFG and the diaspora, international humanitarian organizations, the United Nations, Civil Society Organizations, AMISOM Troop Contributing Countries of Uganda and Burundi, Academia and the media.

The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, Ambassador Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra, told participants to the conference that in executing its mission, AMISOM developed Rules of Engagement which help to minimize harm to civilians.

“Though authorized under Chapter VII of the UN Charter to “take all necessary measures as appropriate” to carry out its mandate, AMISOM recognizes that its military operations in Somalia are more than just about taking control of areas and ground. Our military activities are rather in support of a political goal of providing a stable environment for the people of Somalia to rebuild their country,” he said.

The meeting which ends on Friday is in line with the outcomes of the 279th Meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 18th May 2011. At that meeting, the PSC discussed the issue of the protection of civilian populations in armed conflicts on the basis of the Progress Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the Development of Guidelines for the Protection of Civilians in African Union Peace Support Operations as well as the statement made by the representatives of the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

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