



PRESS RELEASE

THE AU DETERMINED TO BUILD ON RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS IN MOGADISHU TO FURTHER PEACE AND SECURITY IN SOMALIA

A technical workshop on the challenges ahead and support to AMISOM to be held in Addis Ababa on 17 and 18 August 2011

Addis Ababa, 10 August 2011 – The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Jean Ping, has been closely following the recent developments in Mogadishu, in particular the withdrawal from the capital city by the Al-Shabab elements.

This development marks a significant step in the efforts being deployed to secure Mogadishu, extend the authority of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), and create conditions conducive for the pursuit and deepening of the national reconciliation process. It will also create further space for the delivery of the much-needed humanitarian assistance to the populations affected by the current drought and famine. Over the past weeks, dozens of thousands of Somalis have been fleeing to Mogadishu to take advantage of the relative security prevailing in the city and to get access to relief supplies.

The Chairperson of the Commission pays tribute to the AMISOM and TFG forces for their commitment and courage in dealing with Al-Shabab and, ultimately, forcing it to pull out of Mogadishu. He encourages them to pursue and intensify their efforts and, in so doing, to ensure that the sacrifices made by AMISOM soldiers who fell in the line of duty are not in vain. He calls on the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) to fully exploit this opportunity to strengthen the reconciliation and outreach efforts, improve service delivery and accelerate the implementation of the transitional tasks, in line with the Kampala Accord of 9 June 2011.

The successes achieved since the offensive launched by AMISOM and TFG forces last February are a clear demonstration that defeating the extremist elements holding the Somali people at ransom is within reach.

At a time when the Somali people are experiencing the worst drought in recent memory, with famine further compounding their suffering, the international community ought urgently to take the required steps to build on this achievement in order to help bring about the peace and stability which have eluded the Somalis for over two decades. The AU, notably through AMISOM, will remain steadfast in its determination and will continue to provide all the support it can to the TFG in its efforts to extend its authority, defeat the extremists and further national reconciliation.

Against this background, the Chairperson of the Commission, while expressing appreciation for the support received so far, calls on AU partners, in particular the United Nations, to take further steps to expand the support package being rendered to AMISOM, in line with the requests contained in the Communiqué of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of 15 October 2010. Such an expansion will go a long way in enhancing the effectiveness of the Mission and enabling it to fully implement its mandate.

On 17 and 18 August 2011, the AU Commission will be convening a workshop that will bring together the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) to AMISOM, both actual and potential, IGAD, the United Nations, the European Union and relevant bilateral partners, to look at the achievements of the Mission to date and the challenges ahead. The meeting is expected to identify the concrete steps that need to be taken in the coming months in order to avail AMISOM a support commensurate with the challenges at hand.

Subsequently, the Commission intends to submit a report to the PSC on the way forward. Both the report and the PSC decision will then be forwarded to the Security Council, ahead of its review of the situation in Somalia, in the context of resolution 1964(2010), which authorized the AU to maintain the deployment of AMISOM until 30 September 2011.