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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **THE AU REITERATES THE NEED TO RESPECT THE HYBRID NATURE OF UNAMID AND ITS AGREED MANDATE**

#### **The AU emphasizes the relevance of PSC and Assembly decisions on the early launching of the Darfur Political Process**

**Addis Ababa, 23 August 2011:** The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Jean Ping, received a full report on the current situation and prospects for peace in Darfur from the Joint AU/UN Special Representative (JSR), Professor Ibrahim Gambari. The Chairperson of the Commission is also in contact with the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) on its efforts to facilitate the promotion of lasting peace, justice and reconciliation in Darfur, as well as with the Government of the Republic of Sudan regarding its concerns on some aspects of United Nations Security Council resolution 2003 (2011) of 29 July 2011.

The Commission is closely monitoring the debate on the content of resolution 2003(2011), which, *inter-alia*, renewed the mandate of the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID). This resolution followed the decision adopted by the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) on 19 July 2011, which, in addition to renewing UNAMID's mandate and requesting the Security Council to do the same, stressed the need to fully launch the Darfur Political Process (DPP), building on the positive outcome of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD), as a way of sustaining the progress made so far and ensuring that the Darfuris truly own the quest for peace, justice and reconciliation in their region.

The Commission considers the issues and interrogations that have dominated the debate as a reflection of the need for due consideration to be given to the position of the AU on the situation in Darfur, as articulated by its relevant policy organs, in particular the PSC. They also highlight the imperative, appropriateness and value of enhanced consultations and coordination within the AU-UN strategic partnership on topical and current peace and security challenges on the African continent of which the AU is continuously and actively seized.

The Commission wishes to appeal to all concerned to demonstrate continued commitment to the hybrid AU-UN nature of UNAMID and to the implementation of its well established mandate, as provided for in communiqué PSC/PR/Comm(LXXIX) of the 79<sup>th</sup> meeting of the PSC, held on 22 June 2007, and UN Security Council resolution 1769 (2007) of 31 July 2007. Full respect of the hybrid nature of UNAMID is a *sine qua non* for the successful implementation of its mandate. Today, more than ever before, it is critical to create conditions that will enable UNAMID to effectively support the stabilization process in Darfur, especially in the light of the imminent commencement of the implementation of the DDPD, the launching of the DPP and the efforts on the ground towards early recovery and development in Darfur.

In this connection, the Commission wishes to state that plans are at an advanced stage for the next meeting of the Tripartite Coordination Mechanism on UNAMID between the Government of the Republic of Sudan, the AU and the UN, to constructively address all outstanding and current challenges to the implementation of UNAMID mandate. The Commission further looks forward to its forthcoming exchange and interaction with the United Nations counterparts on all relevant issues, including the launching of the DPP under the auspices of the AUHIP and in accordance with the decisions of the PSC and the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government. In this respect, the Commission recalls the appeal by the PSC to all members of the international community to fully support the DPP, without making its launching contingent upon the fulfillment of preconditions that have the potential to provide room for spoilers to undermine the quest for peace, defeat the principle of ownership by the Sudanese stakeholders, and make it impossible to grasp opportunities to advance the cause of peace, justice and reconciliation in Darfur.

The Commission reiterates its full confidence in the impartiality, professionalism and continued commitment of the AU-UN Joint Special Representative and the UNAMID leadership, as well as of the staff of all its predominantly African civilian, military and police components to implement the Mission's mandate on behalf of the AU and the UN, with full respect for the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Sudan.