



## COMMUNIQUÉ

### THE AFRICAN UNION APPOINTS A SPECIAL ENVOY ON THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY (LRA) ISSUE

**Addis Ababa, 23 November 2011:** The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Jean Ping, today, appointed Mr. Francisco Caetano José Madeira, Special Representative in charge of Counter-Terrorism Cooperation and Director of the Algiers-based African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), as his Special Envoy on the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) Issue. Mr. Madeira will assume this responsibility concurrently with his current functions.

Today's decision is part of the implementation of the AU-led Regional Cooperation Initiative against the LRA (RCI-LRA). This Initiative was launched with the aim of bringing to an end the destabilizing activities and atrocities committed by the LRA. In recent years, this group has extended its activities, moving from Uganda, where it originally started its attacks, to South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Central African Republic (CAR). The LRA has continued to carry out atrocities against innocent civilians, in particular children and women, including abduction, murder, mutilation, burning and looting of villages, and wanton destruction of livelihoods, resulting in massive displacements and an acute humanitarian crisis.

At its meeting held on 22 November 2011, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the AU authorized the implementation of the RCI-LRA, including the establishment of the key components of the Initiative, namely: the Joint Coordination Mechanism (JCM), comprising the Ministers of Defense of the affected countries and chaired by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, to be based in Bangui, CAR; the Regional Task Force (RTF), made up of units provided by the affected countries; and the Joint Operations Centre (JOC), which is part of the RTF Headquarters in Yambio, South Sudan. The PSC, which stressed that the protection of civilians will be mainstreamed into all the planned operations, also declared the LRA a terrorist group, in accordance with the relevant AU instruments.

In his capacity as Special Envoy, Mr. Madeira will, in consultation with the affected countries, provide overall political and strategic coordination of the operation against the LRA. He will also assist in mobilizing assistance for the victims of the LRA atrocities, the rebuilding of shattered communities and the rehabilitation of the affected areas. He will interact with all AU bilateral and multilateral partners contributing to the efforts aimed at bringing to an end the atrocities of the LRA.

Mr. Madeira, who hails from Mozambique, has served as Ambassador in several African countries, as well as a Presidential Diplomatic Advisor and Minister in the President's Office. He has also assisted former President Joaquim Chissano, then UN Special Envoy for the LRA-affected areas, in the discharge of his mandate. Mr. Madeira will bring his counter-terrorism expertise to bear on the efforts aimed at putting an end to the criminal activities of the LRA.

The appointment of Mr. Madeira is made on an interim basis, pending the conclusion of the ongoing consultations with the countries concerned regarding the appointment of the substantive Special Envoy.