



PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION URGES SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN TO CONCLUDE BORDER NEGOTIATIONS

Addis Ababa, 19 February 2012: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Jean Ping, has followed closely the negotiations between the Government of the Republic Sudan and the Government of the Republic of South Sudan on boundary demarcation, border management and related matters. The negotiations were held in Addis Ababa from 15 to 17 February 2012, under the auspices of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) and with the support of the AU Border Programme (AUBP).

In earlier rounds of negotiation, the Parties had already agreed to several key principles, including the principle of a soft border and that of integrated border management.

The Chairperson of the Commission commends the Parties for embracing the soft border principle. In this respect, he affirms the need to maintain a peaceful, safe and secure border along which economic activity and social interactions can flourish, and across which the two peoples can move and goods and services can flow easily. The Chairperson of the Commission stresses that these are values that the AU aspires to for all its member States.

Furthermore, the Chairperson of the Commission applauds the affirmation by the two States of the agreed boundary, in accordance with the physical description and delimitation and corresponding recommendations of the Technical *Ad Hoc* Border Committee, as previously acknowledged by the Presidency of the Republic of Sudan prior to the independence of South Sudan.

The Chairperson of the Commission also congratulates the Parties for previously agreeing to establish the necessary institutional mechanisms to manage and supervise the delimitation, demarcation and maintenance of their common boundary. These include a Joint Demarcation Committee, a Joint Technical Team and a Joint Border Commission.

During this round of negotiations, the two Parties discussed the timeframes and processes for the commencement and completion of the demarcation of the boundary, and have narrowed their differences on these issues.

The two States also continued to discuss the manner in which they will resolve the disputed areas along the boundary. The Chairperson of the Commission encourages them to reach agreement on this matter as it has important implications for security, economic development and social interactions along the border.

The Chairperson of the Commission urges the two States to take the necessary political decisions to conclude the outstanding matters, in particular on the demarcation process, the mechanism and procedure for resolving disputed areas and for their management once an agreement is reached.

The Chairperson of the Commission considers that all of these matters are eminently resolvable. He expresses his confidence that, with the facilitation of the AUHIP and the necessary political will, the two States can, in the next round of their discussions, reach agreement, so as to enable the peaceful demarcation and management of one of Africa's longest borders.

