



PRESS RELEASE

AFRICAN UNION SATISFIED BY THE OUTCOMES OF THE LONDON CONFERENCE ON SOMALIA

Addis Ababa, 24 February 2012: On 23 February 2012, the African Union (AU) participated in the London Conference on Somalia, held at Lancaster House and that was convened by Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom. The AU delegation to the Conference, which was led by the Chairperson of the Commission, Jean Ping, included Peace and Security Commissioner Ramtane Lamamra, AU High Representative for Somalia, former President Jerry John Rawlings, and AU Special Representative for Somalia, Head of AMISOM, Boubacar Diarra. Mr. Boni Arifari, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Benin, represented the Chairperson of the Union, President Thomas Yayi Boni.

In his address to the Conference, the Chairperson of the Commission noted that the London meeting was taking place at a critical time in the history of Somalia, with an unprecedented opportunity to further peace, security and reconciliation in that country. The Conference, he added, should build on the current momentum, by facilitating the promotion of a holistic and coordinated approach to the challenges at hand, spurring further support for the efforts being made on the ground by the Somalis and AMISOM, and helping the people of Somalia open a new chapter in their troubled history.

Welcoming the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 2036 (2012), which significantly enhances UN support to AMISOM, the Chairperson of the Commission reiterated the commitment of the AU, working in concert with IGAD, the UN and other partners, to ensure that AMISOM operations create more political space to facilitate the necessary outreach and reconciliation among the Somali stakeholders. He called on the Somali stakeholders to sustain the current momentum in the peace and reconciliation process. He also paid tribute to the TFG and Ethiopian forces for having liberated the strategic city of Baidoa.

On his part, Minister Arifari called for increased support to Somalia and continued mobilization of the international community towards the realization of peace and reconciliation in the country. He also called on the Somali political leadership to honour fully the commitments made to complete the transition on time and put in place a more representative and inclusive political dispensation.

Both the Chairperson and the Minister expressed the AU's appreciation to the UK Government, particularly Prime Minister David Cameron, for UK's continued support to the AU's efforts in Somalia and, more generally, to its peace and security agenda. They noted that the London Conference would go a long way in furthering peace and reconciliation in Somalia, as well as greater stability and security for the region and beyond.

On the margins of the Conference, the Chairperson of the Commission and his delegation held bilateral consultations with a number of heads of delegations and other senior officials.

At the end of the Conference, Chairperson Ping participated in a press conference alongside the Prime Minister David Cameron, TFG Prime Minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, and United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. All four speakers expressed their satisfaction at the outcomes of the London Conference and looked forward to sustained international mobilization in support of Somalia.