

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, P.O. Box: 3243 Tel.: (251-11) 5513 822 Fax: (251-11) 5519 321

Email: [situationroom@africa-union.org](mailto:situationroom@africa-union.org)

## PRESS RELEASE

### The African Union concerned by the Situation in the Sahel

#### MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE AU PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL IN BAMAKO

**Addis Ababa, 12 March 2012:** The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Jean Ping, continues to follow with deep concern the evolution of the situation in the Sahel region, in particular in Northern Mali. Recalling the decision adopted on the issue by the 18<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa, on 29 and 30 January 2012, and the communiqué of the ECOWAS Summit held in Abuja, on 16 et 17 February 2012, the Chairperson reiterates the support of the AU to the efforts made by the Government of Mali to restore security and stability in the affected areas.

The Chairperson of the Commission reaffirms the commitment of the AU to the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Mali. He stresses that nothing can justify the recourse to armed rebellion in Mali, a country whose democratic institutions provide an appropriate framework of expression of views, making it possible to find, through dialogue, solutions to all legitimate demands.

The Chairperson of the Commission further stresses that the attacks in the north of Mali are taking place in an already difficult humanitarian context, due particularly to the consequences of the drought which affects the entire Sahel area. He expresses the gratitude of the AU to the neighboring countries of Mali, in particular Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Niger, which are hosting Malian refugees fleeing the clashes. He thanks those countries, as well as the humanitarian agencies active on the ground, for the assistance given to the affected people. He reaffirms the full support of the AU to the efforts of the countries of the region, including the structures that they have established, to take up the challenge of peace, security and stability in the Sahel.

Considering the need to intensify efforts to address the present situation and other challenges faced by the Sahel region, the AU Commission is organising in Addis Ababa, on 14 and 15 March 2012, a meeting of experts of the countries of the region. The conclusions of this meeting will be submitted to the ministerial meeting of the Peace and Security Council, to be held in Bamako, on 20 March 2012, for consideration.

