



**PRESS RELEASE N° 004/2012**

**AFRICAN UNION AND USAID IN DISCUSSIONS TO SECURE FOOD IN AFRICA  
AND TO ENABLE AFRICA TO TELL ITS OWN STORY**

**Addis Ababa, 1 February 2012-** AU Commission's Deputy Chairperson, Mr Erastus Mwencha and the Deputy Assistant Administrator of the US Agency for International Development (USAID), Ms Raja Jandhyala, today, discussed the upcoming conference on the Horn of Africa, scheduled for March this year. Ms Raja Jandhyala was accompanied by Ambassador Michael Battle, US Ambassador to the African Union.

The meeting discussed the Grow Africa initiative, the African Risk Capacity (ARC) and strengthening of the African Mission to Somalia (AMISOM). The African Union's desire in discussing these issues was to place them on the G8 agenda, which would significantly assist in efforts to secure enough funding for the programmes.

Grow Africa initiative is an African owned public- private sector partnership which aims to mobilize investment to support African food security through the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Programme (CAADP). Its success is critical, especially in light of the desire by member states of the African Union to reduce their dependency on aid, decreasing aid budgets, and the existence of a youthful population that demands development.

The USAID administrator informed the Deputy Chairperson that there is an appetite to invest in Africa; both from internal African sources and external ones and that the challenge is how to channel those resources.

The Africa Risk Capacity on the other hand, aims to improve emergency response to food insecure populations, which is an aim of CAADP.

Strengthening AMISOM was discussed in the sense of peace being an important component in development i.e. there can be no development without peace.

The meeting also discussed the need for Africa to be able to tell its story. It put forward a number of ideas on how Africa can be assisted and equipped to tell its own narrative and to profile the continent correctly.

Ambassador Battle underscored that today's discussions were in line with President Barack Obama's belief that assistance given to Africa can only succeed if Africa outlines its own priorities and proposes the necessary actions, which can then be supported by partners.

WZM/HMC