



PRESS RELEASE

THE AU WELCOMES THE PROGRESS MADE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

Addis Ababa, 14 March 2012: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Mr. Jean Ping, welcomes the agreement reached by the Government of the Republic of Sudan and the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, on the 'Framework Agreement on the Status of Nationals of the other State' and the Agreement on the Demarcation of the Boundary and Related Issues', in Addis Ababa on 12 March 2012, under the auspices of the African Union High level Implementation Panel (AUHIP).

The 'Agreement on the Demarcation of the Boundary and Related Issues' establishes institutional mechanisms responsible for overseeing and carrying out the demarcation process of Africa's longest land border.

The 'Framework Agreement on the Status of Nationals of the other State' sets up a Joint High Level Committee, which shall oversee the adoption and implementation of joint measures relating to nationals of the other State. The Agreement also accords nationals of each state the freedom of residence, freedom of movement, freedom to undertake economic activity, and the freedom to acquire and dispose of property.

Both these Agreements were initialed by the leaders of the teams negotiating the arrangements on post-secession issues between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan. They will be signed by President Omar Hassan el Bashir and President Salva Kiir Mayardit, at a Summit to be held in Juba in the coming weeks.

The Chairperson of the Commission is especially pleased to note the new spirit of compromise and cooperation expressed by the two Parties, and their reaffirmation of the principle of mutual viability, which has permeated this round of negotiations. The AU, through the AU High Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP), has been insisting on this principle of mutual viability as the underlying principle for the negotiations between the two States. The Chairperson of the Commission welcomes the acceptance by the Parties of the need to approach the negotiations as partners, not as adversaries, and to seek win-win solutions to their relations. The two states are bound by history and geography to seek solutions that recognize their common interests, and this new spirit of cooperation will allow them to speed up their search for a comprehensive settlement to all aspects of their relations, in the interests of the peoples of both states.

The Chairperson of the Commission recognizes that the acceptance of the principle of mutual viability marks only the first step in “rebooting” relations between the two neighbouring states. The challenge now is to ensure that this new attitude is sustained, and is translated into practical improvements in their relations. This would require that the two States address the security issues that currently continue to pose a major threat to peace in the region, and to address the issue of oil and related matters, including the resumption of oil production in South Sudan, to prevent any further damage to the economies of both states. The AU is committed to supporting the Parties as they address their challenges in this regard, and calls on the international community to extend its support to the Parties.

The Chairperson of the Commission expresses his continued appreciation and gratitude to the AUHIP, which is chaired by former President Thabo Mbeki and includes former Presidents Abdulsalami Abubakar and Pierre Buyoya, for their tireless work in bringing about this change in the Parties attitude to the negotiations. The Agreements signed yesterday mark a turning point in the negotiations, and will enable the Parties to speed up their negotiations on all outstanding matters in their relations. He also extends appreciation to the team that has been working in support of the AUHIP, for their invaluable contribution to the search for a peaceful solution that would allow the two states to live in peace. The Chairperson reiterates his commitment to sparing no effort in support of the AUHIP and the Parties in their search for a comprehensive solution to all matters.