



PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION LOOKS FORWARD TO A POSITIVE OUTCOME TO THE FORTHCOMING MEETING BETWEEN THE PRESIDENTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF SUDAN AND THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH SUDAN

Addis Ababa, 26 March 2012: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Jean Ping, has sent letters to Presidents Omar Hassan Al-Bashir and Salva Kiir Mayardit of the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan, to congratulate them on the initialing of the *'Framework Agreement on the Status of Nationals of the Other State'* and the *'Agreement on the Demarcation of the Boundary,'* on 13 March 2012, in Addis Ababa.

In these letters, the Chairperson stressed that the progress made was a clear illustration of the willingness of the two Governments to build a mutually-beneficial relationship, based on co-operation, the needs of their peoples and the fundamental principle of two viable States. He added that the Framework Agreement testified to the fact that both Governments had heeded the call for reassurance that was sought by their peoples.

The Chairperson of the Commission also expressed the hope that the planned Summit between the two Presidents, scheduled to take place in Juba, in early April 2012, would result in a positive outcome that will pave the way for the resolution of all outstanding issues between the two countries, on the basis of the agreed principle of 'two viable States'.

The Chairperson of the Commission once again reiterates the critical importance of the principle of 'two viable States', which has been the basis for all the work of the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) in facilitating post-secession relations between the two countries, and which both Governments have recently reaffirmed.

The AU, through the AUHIP, remains committed to assisting both States successfully conclude the negotiations on all outstanding issues in their post-secession relations.