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PRESS RELEASE

THE AU REITERATES ITS POSITION ON THE NEED FOR THE RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER IN MALI

Addis Ababa, March 29, 2012: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU) Jean Ping, continues to closely monitor the evolving situation in Mali.

The Chairperson of the Commission welcomes the swift reaction of the leaders of the region to the situation in Mali and the important decisions taken by the Extraordinary Summit of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), held in Abidjan, on Tuesday, 27 March 2012. In particular, he welcomes the decision of the ECOWAS Summit to dispatch to Bamako, under the leadership of President Alassane Ouattara of Côte d'Ivoire, current Chairman of ECOWAS, a high-level delegation which also includes the Chairman of the AU, President Thomas Yayi Boni of Benin, and other Heads of State in the region, in order to facilitate the return to constitutional order and contribute to the preservation of the national unity and territorial integrity of Mali, in accordance with the relevant AU and ECOWAS decisions.

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates the urgent appeal of the AU to the authors of the coup d'Etat in Mali to respond without further delay to the requests made by the AU and ECOWAS for the return to constitutional order and to extend the necessary cooperation to the ECOWAS delegation in order to find a rapid solution to the crisis.

The Chairperson of the Commission stresses that the AU, in close coordination with ECOWAS and the UN, will continue to mobilize the international community in support of the efforts to resolve the crisis in Mali, including through the speedy holding of a meeting of the Follow-up and Support Group, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the 314th and 315th meetings of the Peace and Security Council (PSC), held on 20 and 23 March 2012, respectively.