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PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION APPOINTS A NEW SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE IN GUINEA-BISSAU, HEAD OF THE AU LIAISON OFFICE IN THAT COUNTRY

Addis Ababa, 8 May 2012: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Jean Ping, has appointed Mr. Ovidio Manuel Barbosa Pequeno, former Foreign Minister of Sao Tome and Principe, as Special Representative and Head of the AU Liaison Office in Guinea Bissau.

A graduate in journalism and communications, Mr. Ovidio has served as his country's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Communities from April 2004 to March 2006, as well as Ambassador of Sao Tome and Principe in several countries, including the United States of America, where he served before being called to this new mission by the Chairperson of the AU Commission. With long standing diplomatic experience and avast knowledge of African issues in general and Lusophone Africa in particular, he chaired the Council of Ministers of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries and headed the delegation of that institution in the mediation efforts to resolve the conflict that shook Guinea-Bissau between 2004 and 2006.

As part of his mission, Mr. Ovidiowill interact with the Bissau-Guinean authorities and parties, as well as with regionaland international organizations, in particular ECOWAS, with a view to coordinating and harmonizing efforts to resolve the crisison the basis of the restoration of constitutional order and the AU policyon this matter. He will also assistin promoting coherence at the national, continental and international levels in support ofpeace, security, democracy and development in Guinea-Bissau.

