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AU AND UN OBSERVE INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPERS DAY

Addis Ababa, 29 May 2012: Today the African Union and the United Nations jointly commemorated the International Day of UN Peacekeepers at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa. Members of the UN, UN agencies and International Organizations, the Regional Economic Communities (RECS) and International NGOs represented in Addis Ababa attended the ceremony.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in a statement that was read on his behalf by Amb. Zachary Muita the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) to the African Union, said: *“Today we honour the memory of the more than 2,900 peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the line of duty over the years, and we pledge to carry on their work to bring stability to war-ravaged countries.”*

“I am deeply grateful for every contribution of troops and police, as well as for the financial and material resources that make peacekeeping possible. I also thank all countries that provide political support and leadership,” he said.

Speaking during the commemoration, the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Dr. Jean Ping paid glowing tribute to the women and men, across the world, who have displayed great courage and commitment to ensure that peace prevails. Dr. Ping made particular mention of the African Union’s Green Helmets in their respective theatres of operation, ranging from Burundi to the Comoros and from Darfur to Somalia. *“Through their tireless effort and sacrifice, they are writing the history of African Peace Operations, alongside the struggle for liberation of the continent,”* he said.

The ceremony, which was marked under the theme **“Peacekeeping as a Global Partnership,”** celebrated the longstanding collaboration between the UN and the AU in the area of peacekeeping. *“This year’s theme vividly captures the essence of the cooperation and the shared strategic vision, which has enabled the two organizations to benefit from their respective comparative advantages,”* said Dr. Ping.

He gave examples of the flagship AU-UN mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and hailed them as a model of true partnership, highlighting the political and professional creativity, which led to their creation, and further called for the enhancement of this partnership and common actions in view of the many challenges that need to be addressed.



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The ceremony was marked by a colourful parade, by UN Peacekeepers and the Ethiopian Military outside the New African Union Complex. The climax of the ceremony was the laying of a wreath by Dr. Ping and Amb. Muita, in honor of those peacekeepers who have fallen in the line of duty, in the pursuit of peace, security and civilian protection.

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