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UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, P.O. Box: 3243 Tel.: (251-11) 5513 822 Fax: (251-11) 5519 321
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION STRESSES THE NEED FOR STRONGER COMMITMENT TO RESOLVE THE OUTSTANDING ISSUES IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

Addis Ababa, 11 June 2012: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Jean Ping, commends the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan for the progress made during their the recent talks under the auspices of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP). At the same time, he calls for greater commitment, in order to resolve the outstanding issues that are at the centre of the dispute between the two countries.

Noting that the future viability of Sudan and South Sudan lies in balance, as does their stability and that of the whole region, the Chairperson of the Commission calls on the leaders of both countries to rise to the challenge of assuming their responsibilities. The AU is profoundly concerned at the slow pace in implementing the obligations of the two countries under the Peace and Security Council (PSC) Roadmap of 24 April 2012 and United Nations Security Council resolution 2046(2012) of 2 May 2012.

The Sudanese and South Sudanese members of the Lead Negotiating Panel (LNP) and the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM) met in Addis Ababa between 28 May and 7 June 2012, under the facilitation of the AUHIP, in an effort to agree on the steps to implement the PSC Roadmap, which was endorsed by the Security Council, under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

The Roadmap requires Sudan and South Sudan to implement a series of steps to establish peace and security along their common border, including a cessation of hostilities, withdrawal of each country's armed forces to their side of the border, ending support to rebels fighting against the other country, the operationalization of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ), in accordance with the map proposed by the AUHIP in November 2011, the activation of the Joint Border Monitoring and Verification Mechanism (JBVMM), the formation of the *Ad Hoc* Committee under the JPSM to investigate allegations and counter-allegations from either side, and an end to hostile propaganda and inflammatory statements. These are mandatory steps to be implemented within the timelines outlined in the Roadmap.

While the Sudanese and South Sudanese Parties have made some progress towards the implementation of most of these steps, the critical question of the territorial definition of the SDBZ is outstanding and remains on the agenda for the next session of the JPSM, which will resume on 21 June 2012, in Addis Ababa. The two Parties each made proposals and

presented maps for their proposed SDBZ, and each rejected the proposal of the other. During the course of the negotiations, each side substantially revised its position, moving closer towards agreement. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan concluded the meeting by accepting the AUHIP map. The Government of Sudan concluded with the position that it had communicated its objections to the AUHIP map to the UN Security Council, based on its alleged incompatibility with maps adopted by the UN itself.

The Chairperson of the Commission calls upon the two States to implement their obligations under the Roadmap, immediately and without precondition. He welcomes the agreed steps to be taken before the next session of the JPSM, including the deployment of monitors to Assosa, Ethiopia, as part of the activation of the JBVMM, and the submission of names for the *Ad Hoc* Committee to begin its formation. He further notes that, while it is preferable for the two States to agree on the SDBZ on their common border, should they fail to do so, they still remain bound by the decisions of the PSC and by the UN Security Council acting under Chapter VII.

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates that, as made clear by the PSC, the adoption of a temporary security line for purposes of a cessation of hostilities in no way prejudices the final status of the boundary between the two countries, including the future status of disputed border areas or the demarcation of their common boundary. Objections by either State to the proposed SDBZ based on claims to sovereignty or the final status of disputed areas are irrelevant and are founded on a basic misunderstanding of the purpose of the SDBZ.

This is a critical moment for Sudan and South Sudan, when it is imperative, for the future of the two countries and the entire region, that they take decisive and immediate steps towards resolving their conflict and returning to peace and cooperation. At this moment, the Governments of the two countries must rise to the occasion and assume the mantle of leadership. When the JPSM resumes on 21 June 2012, the two States must immediately resolve this matter.

The LNP also discussed other outstanding issues, including resuming negotiations on the final status of disputed border areas, the implementation of the 20 June 2011 Agreement on the Temporary Security and Administration of Abyei Area, and a schedule for resolving the matters of oil and other related financial issues, nationality and the rights of nationals of one state resident in the other, and the final status of Abyei.

In line with the PSC Roadmap, the AUHIP and the Chairman of IGAD have also discussed with the Government of Sudan and the SPLM-North the need immediately to implement the joint African Union-United Nations-League of Arab States Tripartite Proposal for Humanitarian Access to Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan States, and the importance of resuming negotiations to achieve a peaceful political settlement of the conflict. He reiterates that the principles of the Tripartite Proposal have been accepted by the Government of Sudan and the full Proposal has been accepted by the SPLM-N.

The Chairperson of the Commission emphasizes the seriousness of the humanitarian situation in Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan, including the conditions of the refugees from these Two Areas in South Sudan. Access should be immediately granted for humanitarian agencies to assist civilian populations in dire need of essential food, medicine, shelter and sanitation.

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates AU's commitment to work with Sudan and South Sudan to agree on all outstanding issues between the two countries and to implement their joint commitments. He affirms AU's principled preference for negotiated agreements on all outstanding issues.

Almost half way through the three months stipulated in the PSC Roadmap, progress could have been more substantive than it has been. The Parties need to bear in mind that failure to agree on details such as the precise delineation of the SDBZ is not sufficient reason for failure to abide by the Roadmap and UN Security Council resolution 2046(2012), the provisions of which are mandatory under the relevant provisions of the PSC Protocol and Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

During extensive negotiations over the last two years, the Parties, with the facilitation of the AUHIP, have developed substantive proposals on all key issues. Now is the moment for the leadership of the two countries to fulfill their responsibilities to their respective peoples, by implementing their obligations. Africa expects no less.