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DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

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### Experts Meet to Review Africa's Maritime Opportunities and Challenges

**Addis Ababa, 20 December 2011** – The African Union Commission held today, Tuesday 20 December 2011, expert's workshop to review and finalize the draft 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy. Within the framework of "towards the 2050 Africa Integrated Maritime Strategy" the workshop is being held from 20 to 22 December 2011 at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The aim of the workshop is to provide an opportunity to review Africa's maritime Prospects and challenges. In this respect and in the context of relevant national legislations and international conventions and instruments ,emphasis is dully placed on issues relating to illegal fishing, arms and drags trafficking ,human trafficking, oil bunkering ,piracy and armed robbery ,environmental crimes to include illegal dumping of toxic wastes on African costs.

The discussions are also expected to focus on the agreed crucial need for development of Africa's Integrated Maritime (AIM) Strategy; articulating an overarching and multilayered African driven long term vision to address Africa's maritime challenges and opportunities; as well as wealth creation from sustainable governance of Africa's seas and oceans, among other issues.

During the opening ceremony of the workshop at the AUC today, it was mentioned that Africa's oceans and seas are under pressure. In the past decades, direct aggregate losses of revenue from illegal activities in Africa's maritime domain amount hundreds of billions US dollars, not mention the loss of lives.

Mr. Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission said that " the efforts all undertaking ,to advance shared cross-cutting maritime safety and security ,are essential to efficiently and effectively addressing some of the most important issues face in Africa, in the context of this inter-reliant complex world. He stressed that "in our interconnected world, the human family can not enjoy security without development and cannot enjoy development without security". (the complete speech of the Deputy Chairperson is available on [www.africa-union.org](http://www.africa-union.org) ).

Reading the statement, on behalf of Mrs. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime, Commissioner in charge of Rural Economy and Agriculture at the AUC, Dr. Yemi Akinbamiyo, Head of Food and Security Division, AUC stated that the Commission is actively engaged in the climate talks to ensure that the African negotiators abide by the established strategy and common position in order to ensure that the interests of Africa (including the reduction of emissions) are considered at the just concluded COP. Furthermore, she expressed the plan to put in place an additional program that focuses on management of costal and marine resources that will strengthen collaboration with the Maritime Security and the Life and Earth Science Unit.

Worth recalling the decision adopted by the 15<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly held from 25-27 July 2010 in Kampala, Uganda, "lent its support to the efforts being undertaken by the Commission including the elaboration of this continental integrated strategy for the management of

the continent's maritime domain". The African maritime transport charter was also adopted during this session.

Participants at the workshop includes African maritime experts, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Mechanisms (RMs), Sea Power Africa Symposium, NGOs, international institutions and other stakeholders.

*Further information on the Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy is available on [www.au.int/maritime](http://www.au.int/maritime).*