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PRESS RELEASE

"Africa helping Africa"

African Union launches the African Solidarity Initiative to support Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa

Addis Ababa, July 14 2012: Ministers of Foreign Affairs/External Relations of the African Union (AU), together with the Commission, on 13 July 2012, launched the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI), with a call to encourage, motivate, and empower African countries to assist post-conflict countries in their reconstruction and development efforts.

The launching took place at the African Union headquarters in Addis Ababa, and was attended, in addition to the AU Member States, by the UN Agencies, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), AU Regional Offices/Specialized Institutions and Liaison Offices, and other invited guests.

Speaking during the launching ceremony, the Chairperson of the AU Commission (AUC), Dr Jean Ping, said the integration of Africa, which is at the heart of the objectives of the African Union, cannot be achieved without solidarity. The expression of this solidarity can take many forms beyond financial contributions, focusing on various in-kind contributions by African countries, such as experience sharing, best practices, provision of expertise and capacity building. The Chairperson further stated that the AU is fully committed to the pursuit of peace, dealing with the consequences of conflicts, including through the implementation of the AU policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD).

Mr Abdoulaye Jannet, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), welcomed the ASI which he described as an authentic African initiative in the search for African solutions to Africa's problems. *"It is remarkable that we have seen a growing and bold step by the African Union and the regional economic communities to take the lead and ownership in promoting peace and security in Africa and also facilitating post-*



conflict reconstruction.” The Executive Secretary further assured the Forum that “the entire UN system stands ready to support the initiative and make it a resounding success.”

On his part, the President of the African Development Bank, Mr Donald Kaberuka, lauded the uniqueness of the ASI as vehicle for mobilising support for reconstruction and development that is needed for countries emerging from conflict, and pledged the support of the AfDB to this African-led Initiative. The ASI will very well complement the Bank’s Fragile States Facility created since 2007, with a budget of \$ 600 million, which has provided reconstruction funds to beneficiary countries, including Liberia, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Burundi, Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea Bissau and South Sudan. He labelled the ASI as *“let no one be left behind”*, indicating that the aspects of peer learning, sharing best practices in pots-conflict reconstruction that the Initiative promotes, constitute the one of the pillars of the Bank’s Fragile State Facility.

Highlighting the importance of the ASI, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, Commissioner for Peace and Security, stated that: *“This Initiative is important because it seeks to provide an opportunity for Africa to generate additional ‘out-of-the-box’ ideas for addressing post-conflict reconstruction and development challenges and contribute towards a renewed sense of urgency in promoting intra-African solutions to the complex challenges of post-conflict reconstruction and development”*.

The concerned Member States emerging from conflict -Burundi, Central African Republic, Cote d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and South Sudan- outlined their priority need areas and efforts in post-conflict reconstruction and development. In response, other Member States pledged their total support to the ASI.

The event ended with the adoption of a “Declaration on the Launch of the African Solidarity Initiative for the Mobilization of Support for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa.”

