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PRESS RELEASE

CONVENING OF A CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON THE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THE EASTERN PART OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Addis Ababa, 26 December 2012: As part of the efforts towards the early resolution of the crisis in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and stabilization of that region, the Commission of the African Union (AU) will convene in Addis Ababa, on 27 and 28 December 2012, a consultative meeting on the establishment and deployment of the envisaged Neutral International Force (NIF) and the enhancement of the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM). In addition to the AU, participants to the meeting will include the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), countries of the region, relevant African regional organizations (the Economic Community of Central African States – ECCAS and the Southern African Development Community – SADC), as well as the United Nations, the European Union and a number of bilateral partners, including the permanent members of the UN Security Council.

The meeting is being convened in pursuance of the communiqué on the situation in the eastern part of the DRC adopted by the 346th meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC), held in Addis Ababa, on 10 December 2012. In that communiqué, the PSC requested the Commission to take the necessary steps to facilitate the holding, under AU's auspices, of consultations to facilitate the mobilization of the required support towards the establishment and deployment of the NIF and the full operationalization of the EJVM, in the light of the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) developed by the ICGLR; the decision taken by SADC, at its Dar-es-Salaam Summit of 8 December 2012, to deploy its standby brigade in the eastern part of the DRC; and the necessary linkage and synergy between the envisaged regional security arrangements and the UN Mission for the Stabilization of the Congo (MONUSCO).