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PRESS RELEASE

THE AU CONVENES A CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON THE EMPOWERMENT OF THE SECURITY SECTOR IN SOMALIA

Addis Ababa, 30 March 2012: At the initiative of the Commission of the African Union (AU), a consultative meeting on the Empowerment of the Somalia Security Sector was convened in Addis Ababa, on 30 March 2012. The meeting was a follow up to the decision of the AU Peace and Security Council of 5 January 2012, which endorsed the African Union-United Nations Strategic Concept for future AMISOM operations in Somalia, and UN Security Council resolution 2036 (2012) of 22 February 2012. Both the Peace and Security Council and the UN Security Council called for renewed efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Somali Security forces, to enable them play a more effective role in the stabilization of Somalia.

The meeting provided an opportunity for in-depth exchanges on the support required in order to meet the administrative and operational requirements of the Somali forces, the mechanisms through which the various Somali forces could be effectively integrated into a unified command and control architecture; and their restructuring.

The meeting reached important conclusions on these different aspects. In particular, it was agreed to immediately establish a working group led by the AU and bringing together all stakeholders, to follow up on the conclusions of the meeting.

In order to address in a more sustainable manner the needs of the security sector in Somalia, the AU plans to convene regular consultations among stakeholders, to review progress made and challenges encountered, foster coordination, enhance ownership by the Somali stakeholders, mobilize further international support and ensure that it is aligned to the priorities defined by the Somali authorities.

Today's meeting was chaired by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ramtane Lamamra, and attended by a high-level delegation of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, led by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, the Chiefs of Defence Staff of the AMISOM Troop Contributing Countries and of Ethiopia, representatives of other AU Member States, as well as by senior representatives of the United Nations and other AU bilateral and multilateral partners. Former President Jerry John Rawlings, AU High Representative for Somalia, was also in attendance.