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Opening Address for Exercise NJIWA

By

**Ambassador Lamamra, Commissioner for Peace and
Security of the African Union**

Addis Ababa, 31 October 2012

EW/rt



Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you, once again, to the African Union (AU) Commission, for the opening ceremony of Exercise NJIWA.

On behalf of the new Commission, including its Chairperson, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, I wish to extend a special welcome to our esteemed partners and friends joining us on this important occasion.

I note with great appreciation the presence of representatives of our Members States, and those of you from the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, as well as from our Partners.

Exercise NJIWA forms a fundamental component of AMANI AFRICA II and the operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF). With it, we take an important step together to bring greater peace and stability to Africa by steadily making headway towards putting together the tools and skills that we need to apply for the promotion of African solutions to Africa's problems.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The violent and often destructive events that we have witnessed in Africa do have tragic consequences not only within the countries directly affected, but also in the neighbouring countries. They also resonate far beyond.

Sustainable peace is critical to the future of Africa. We know that condemnation of violence alone is not enough. Rather, it is the demonstrated commitment of African leadership in addressing conflict in Africa and the collective actions we take that will bring peace and stability to our continent. That commitment to collective action is clearly demonstrated in the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). As a crucial element of the APSA, an effective and flexible ASF that has the ability to act quickly is vital in addressing such conflict situations.

To ensure the ASF attains full operational capability by 2015, as planned, it is imperative that its three components, namely the military, the police, and the

civilian components - are well prepared for rapid deployment into Peace Support Operations should they be called upon to do so. The ability to undertake such an important task comes through diligent and often complex preparedness training.

Significant strides were made during AMANI AFRICA in October 2010, which brought together over 200 participants from the regional components of the APSA. It provided a key opportunity to evaluate the multi-dimensional character of the ASF at the strategic and operational levels, drawing in the Peace and Security Council, the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms, Member States, the African Union Commission, civil society, including several NGOs, and AU Partners.

That event, which was held here in Addis Ababa, was a success. Like any entity, we, as the AU, recognized that evaluating such an event and acting on that evaluation and pertinent lessons learned was critical to our continued success. The evaluation highlighted the need for further work to enhance the interoperability and multi-dimensionality of the ASF at the regional and continental levels.

In October 2011, AMANI AFRICA II Exercise was launched and is to be conducted in 2014. AMANI AFRICA II provides us with a valuable opportunity to continue to enhance our capabilities and preparedness, as key to the success of the African Standby Force.

As part of AMANI AFRICA II planning, the African Union drew upon key lessons learned to address specific capacity building opportunities in the police and civilian components to ensure that both components are better prepared for AMANI AFRICA II and beyond for multi-dimensional peace support operations. It is this training exercise, Exercise NJIWA, that I am honoured to open today.

Over the course of the next two weeks, over 100 participants from every region across Africa will be engaged in a complex, multi-faceted, practical police and civilian exercise, encompassing a variety of scenarios, including mission management, protection of civilians, and rule of law. Through this specialized exercise, participants will enhance their skills, which will contribute significantly to AMANI AFRICA II in the coming year and, most importantly, to the ASF.

NJIWA, which means dove in Swahili, the dove being the universal symbol of peace, reflects the very *raison d'être* of the APSA, in general, and the ASF, in particular, in our collective pursuit of sustainable peace in Africa.

At this point, I wish to highlight that we would not have been able to undertake this important initiative without the tremendous support from our Partners. I, therefore, take this opportunity to thank the Government of Canada and the Pearson Centre in Canada, for availing their expertise, working closely with the African Union over the past year in the development of the exercise materials, as well as for providing financial support. I would also like to extend my appreciation to the EASBRIG Headquarters for their warm welcome and generous readiness in hosting the exercise at their facilities in Addis Ababa. I also must congratulate the staff of the Commission, in particular the AMANI Team and partners, who worked tirelessly under the very capable leadership of General Ilya, to coordinate all aspects of Exercise NJIWA. In particular, I would like to use this opportunity to thank the United Nations Office to the African Union for its invaluable support within the coordination team.

Let me extend my gratitude to the Host Nation, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, for its continued support to the AU activities.

Turning to the participants in Exercise NJIWA, I wish you success as you engage in what, I am sure, will be an extremely interesting, beneficial and fruitful training exercise.

I now have the honour to officially launch Exercise NJIWA as a contribution to sustained peace and security in Africa and beyond, as well as a new step towards endowing Africa with the highly professional assets and frameworks needed to protect our continent against existing and emerging threats.

I wish you every success.

I thank you.