



PRESS STATEMENT

THE AFRICAN UNION WELCOMES THE CONTINUED PROGRESS IN THE SITUATION BETWEEN THE SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN

Addis Ababa, 20 March 2013: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, welcomes the successful convening of an extraordinary meeting of the Joint Political Security Mechanism (JPSM) between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan, held in Addis Ababa from 16 to 19 March 2013. The meeting was co-chaired by the two Ministers of Defence, General John Kong Nyuon from South Sudan, and 1st Lieutenant General Abdel Raheem Mohammed Hussein, and facilitated by H.E. Abdusalami Abubakar, member of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel for Sudan and South Sudan (AUHIP).

During the meeting, the United Nations Interim Security Force in Abyei (UNISFA) Force Commander, General Yohannes Tesfamariam, provided a progress report on the implementation of the security agreements. Both Parties have met their obligations with regard to withdrawal to their side of the border, and their national monitors are in the process of being airlifted to the Joint Border Verification Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM) Headquarters in Kadugli. Both Parties have also given assurances that the monitors from the other State will be able to operate in their respective territories without hindrance. The UNISFA Force Commander also expressed his conviction that further progress will be made in the coming days.

The Chairperson of the Commission commends the Parties for the exceptional efforts they have exerted, to meet the very tight timelines for operationalisation of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ). She commends UNISFA for its continued work in support of Sudan and South Sudan, which has been instrumental in ensuring the success of the Parties to date.

The Chairperson of the Commission calls on the United Nations Security Council to extend its full support to the process. In particular, she urges the members of the Security Council to authorise the additional 1,126 personnel, including support elements, as requested by UNISFA, to facilitate force protection for the monitors of the JBVMM.

The Chairperson of the Commission welcomes the positive and cooperative spirit demonstrated by the two Parties and is pleased to note the tangible progress they have made in the implementation of the agreements to operationalize the SDBZ. The Chairperson believes that these actions constitute important steps in building the necessary confidence between them, leading towards the full normalisation of their relationship, based on their commitment to build two viable States. The Chairperson is confident that the same spirit and commitment will continue to be exerted by the Parties in their ongoing efforts to meet their obligations.