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PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION WELCOMES THE SUCCESSFUL PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN SOMALIA

Addis Ababa, 11 September 2012: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Jean Ping, welcomes the successful completion of the presidential election in Somalia, which was held in a transparent and fair manner. He congratulates Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud on his election as the new President of the Federal Republic of Somalia. He also commends the outgoing President, Sheikh Shariff Ahmed, for having gracefully conceded defeat and for his significant contribution to the peace and reconciliation process in his country.

The Chairperson of the Commission notes that yesterday's election, following the adoption of a new interim Constitution and the selection of a new Parliament, marks the conclusion of the transition. It therefore ushered in a new chapter in the history of Somalia.

While commending all the Somali stakeholders and people for the maturity and commitment they have displayed over the past few weeks to complete the transition, in difficult circumstances, he urges them to remain steadfast and to continue to be driven by the higher interests of their country, in order to overcome the many challenges that lie ahead. He calls on them to build on the significant results thus achieved and the progress that continues to be made on the ground by the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali forces to further the peace and reconciliation process.

The Chairperson of the Commission wishes to assure the Somali stakeholders and people of the AU's continued support in their efforts. In particular, the AU, through AMISOM, will continue to work towards the improvement of the security situation and the extension of State authority, the building of strong and effective Somali security forces and the reconstruction of the country. He acknowledges the critical role that the region, in particular IGAD and the East African Community, and the rest of the international community, notably the United Nations, the European Union, the League of Arab States, as well as the United States and other bilateral partners, have played in the results achieved so far. He calls on the AU member states and partners alike to remain actively engaged and to enhance their assistance to Somalia to enable it meet the even more demanding and complex tasks ahead.

