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PRESS RELEASE

THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION PARTICIPATES IN THE INAUGURATION CEREMONY OF THE NEW SOMALI PRESIDENT

Addis Ababa, 17 September 2012: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Jean Ping, yesterday, participated in the inauguration of the new President of the Federal Republic of Somalia, Mr. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, at a ceremony organized in Mogadishu, in the presence of regional leaders, as well as other foreign dignitaries.

Speaking during the inauguration, the Chairperson said that this happy day had been made possible because the people of Somalia *"willed it, hungered for it, fought for it, united for it. They eventually won it because they deserve it."*

Chairperson Ping applauded the outgoing President of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), Sheikh Sharif Ahmed, for the role he played in the country's political process and for his humility in accepting the outcome of the election.

The Chairperson of the Commission called on the Somali people and stakeholders to stay the course and forge ahead with their objective of achieving lasting peace and security, national healing and reconciliation, service delivery and development. He assured them of AU's continued commitment to do its utmost to support them in their efforts, *"driven as it is by the burning desire to see Somalia rise up again and be the proud nation it should be, at peace with itself and its neighbors and occupying its rightful place in the comity of nations".*