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UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, P.O. Box: 3243 Tel.: (+251-11) 5513 822 Fax: (+251-11) 5519 321
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PRESS RELEASE

The African Union welcomes the convening of the Second Ordinary Meeting of the Joint Political And Security Mechanism between the Republic Of Sudan and the Republic Of South Sudan, and looks forward to the Convening of Direct Negotiations on the Two Areas

Addis Ababa, 10 November 2012: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, welcomes the convening of the second ordinary meeting of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism (JPSM), which was held in Juba, from 6 to 7 November 2012. The JPSM, which is co-chaired by the Ministers of Defense of the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan, is a critical tool in the efforts to promote good neighborly relations between Sudan and South Sudan.

At the same time, the Chairperson notes that the meeting could not reach agreement on practical steps to implement security arrangements contained in the Agreements signed at the Summit of the President of the Republic of Sudan and the President of the Republic of South Sudan, President Omar Hassan al Bashir and President Salva Kiir Mayardit, in Addis Ababa, on 27 September 2012. It is to be recalled that these Agreements were ratified by the Parliaments of South Sudan and Sudan on 16 and 17 September 2012, respectively. The Chairperson of the Commission stresses the need for the full and timely implementation of the security arrangements, to enhance confidence between the two States along their common border, and to facilitate the full implementation of all the other Agreements reached.

The Chairperson also wishes to recall the communiqué issued by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) at its 339th meeting held at ministerial level in Addis Ababa on 24 October 2012. This communiqué called on the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement- North (SPLM-North) to convene direct negotiations, under the auspices of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan and South Sudan (AUHIP), by 10 November 2012, towards a peaceful resolution to the conflict in the two Sudanese states of Blue Nile and Southern Kordofan. To this end, the AUHIP has had consultations with both Parties. However, due to unforeseen logistical reasons, it will not be possible to convene direct negotiations by 10 November, as provided for by the PSC communiqué. Consultations are ongoing for direct talks to be convened as early as possible. The AUHIP, through the AU Commission, will soon announce a date for direct talks.