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PRESS RELEASE

RELATIONS BETWEEN SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN: LAUNCH, BY THE AFRICAN UNION AND IGAD, OF THE AD HOC INVESTIGATIVE MECHANISM

Addis Ababa, 22 July 2013: Today saw the launching, by the Commission of the African Union and Ethiopia in its capacity of Chair of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), of the Ad Hoc Investigative Mechanism (AIM) into allegations by the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan, of continued support to and harbouring of armed groups operating against the other state. The launch was presided over by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tedros Adhanom, representing the Chair of IGAD, and the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ramtane Lamamra, representing the Commission of the African Union.

The AIM is comprised of three senior military officers, namely Brigadier-General Luis Inacio Muxito, Defense and Security Advisor to the Chair of the Commission, as Chair of the Mechanism, Major-General (Retired) Julius Olakunle Sunday Oshanupin, and Brigadier-General Jean Baptiste Tine. It is expected to complete its work in 6 weeks.

The AIM was established in response to a proposal made by the Chair of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan and South Sudan, former President Thabo Mbeki, to address persistent allegations made by Sudan and South Sudan, that the other state was supporting and harbouring armed rebel movements which aimed either to overthrow the Government, or to cause mayhem and destruction, with untold humanitarian consequences for the civilian population. The mistrust caused by such allegations has jeopardized the implementation of the Addis Ababa Agreements signed on 27 September 2013, as well as the normalization of relations between the two states. The Commission of the African Union and the Chair of IGAD call on both states to cooperate fully and unconditionally with the Mechanism as it carries out its work to ascertain the facts of these allegations.

Today also marks the launch of another mechanism proposed by President Mbeki to address security relations between Sudan and South Sudan, namely the AU Border Programme's determination of the centerline for the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ) between Sudan and South Sudan, to facilitate the full operationalization of the SDBZ.

The launch of these Mechanisms underscores the seriousness with which the African Union and IGAD regard relations between Sudan and South Sudan. Since 2010, Africa has been working tirelessly to promote two mutually viable states, and these current allegations threaten this objective, and in fact pose a threat to regional peace and security. The Commission and the Chair of IGAD call on both states to meet their international obligations and to promote mutual cooperation for the benefit of their citizens.

Together, these two mechanisms will facilitate the full implementation of the Addis Ababa Agreements, leading to the normalization of relations between these two neighbouring states. The Commission and the Chair of IGAD call on both states to refrain from any unilateral action, while these two processes are underway, that may jeopardize the successful completion of their work. Furthermore, it is expected that the investigation team into the murder of the Paramount Chief of the DinkaNgok community, as well as a peacekeeper from the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), will be fully constituted, and will be deployed on the ground soon to commence its investigation as defined by the AU Peace and Security Council.

The AU and IGAD urge South Sudan to respect all aspects of the Security Agreement and to ensure that all its forces are redeployed out of the SDBZ. The AU and IGAD further strongly urge that Sudan refrain from any action to shut down the oil pipeline used to transport South Sudanese oil to Port Sudan, bearing in mind that any decision to do so threatens to cause irreparable damage to the integrity of the pipeline and adversely affect the economies of both states.