PRESS RELEASE

FURTHER STEPS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL COOPERATION INITIATIVE FOR THE ELIMINATION OF THE LORD’S RESISTANCE ARMY

Addis Ababa, 24 December 2012: As part of the implementation of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA-ICR), the Commission of the African Union (AU) is planning to organize, in mid-January 2013, a ministerial meeting of the Joint Coordinating Mechanism (JCM) of the ICR-LRA, which will bring together the Defence Ministers of the member countries of the Initiative, namely the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Republic of Uganda and the Republic of South Sudan. This meeting is expected to review and approve the mission documents of the ICR-LRA.

The proposed ministerial meeting is a follow-up to the meeting of experts and Chiefs of Defence Staff held in Bangui, on 20 December 2012. During that meeting, the Chiefs of Defence Staff agreed on the mission documents of the ICR-LRA, as developed by the Commission, namely the Concept of Operations, the Strategic Directives and the Rules of Engagement. Regarding the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the treatment of individuals suspected of belonging to the LRA, the Chiefs of Defense Staff agreed to re-submit the document to the ICR-LRA Member States for further consideration by their respective technical departments.

The Bangui meeting also examined the issue of coordination with other stakeholders, including the UN Missions on the ground and the support elements deployed by the United States.

The forthcoming adoption by the Defence Ministers of the member countries of the ICR-LRA of the mission documents of the Initiative will make it possible to enhance the effectiveness of the military operations undertaken under the command of the Regional Task Force (RTF) Headquarters, based in Yambio (South Sudan). In this perspective, the representatives of the DRC at the meeting announced that the Congolese contingent earmarked for the RTF will soon be availed.