5TH MINISTERIAL MEETING OF THE JOINT
COORDINATION MECHANISM OF THE REGIONAL
COOPERATION INITIATIVE FOR THE ELIMINATION
OF THE LORD’S RESISTANCE ARMY

ADDIS ABABA, 20 MAY 2016

OPENING STATEMENT OF THE ACTING DIRECTOR FOR PEACE AND SECURITY,
DR. ADMORE KAMBUDZI, TO THE MEETING OF THE CHIEFS OF DEFENCE STAFF
I cordially welcome you to the 5th Ministerial Meeting of the Joint Coordination Mechanism (JCM) of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord’s Resistance Army (RCI-LRA). As per the program laid before you, you are expected to consider the report of the Experts and make recommendations for adoption by the meeting of the Defence Ministers as the Conclusions of the 5th ministerial meeting of the Joint Coordination Mechanism (JCM).

Allow me to raise a few salient points on which you need to undertake open and frank discussions in your meeting. As you all know, the RCI-LRA has achieved significant successes against the LRA. However, the LRA has not been eliminated due to some serious challenges that impeded the effectiveness of our diplomatic and political efforts, as well as the counter-LRA operations of the RTF. These challenges that beckon our attention include the lack of interoperable communication systems required to link the RTF Headquarters with the Headquarters of the various contingents of the RTF. Besides, the RTF has inadequate number of troops operating in a large swathe of territory. In fact, the RTF is operating at 50% of this authorized strength of 5,000 troops. Furthermore, the question of funding remains unresolved. In fact, this has been a thorny issue since the inception of the Initiative, so much so that the member countries of the Initiative were left to bear the cost of their own respective contingents, while the AU with the support of international partners committed to facilitating only the RTF Headquarters.

Distinguished Chiefs of Defence Staff, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I must underline that, despite the above challenges, the RCI-LRA has continued to receive support in various forms from the European Union, the United States of America and the United Nations. It is due to the support of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) that today’s meeting has been possible. I want to express appreciation to UNOCA for this support.

This 5th JCM is very critical as it will redefine the future of the RCI-LRA. You have been invited here to make an indispensable contribution to the future of the RCI-LRA. I therefore call upon you to engage in frank and fruitful deliberations.

I thank you.