Statement of H.E Ambassador Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security, at the Opening of the Africa Logistics Forum 2017

AU HQ, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia,

25 April 2017
- General Thomas D. Waldhauser, Commander United States Africa Command,
- Ambassador Leonard, Head of the United States Mission to the African Union,
- Senior Officers,
- Distinguished participants,
- Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of H.E Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and on my own behalf, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of the United States of America for its continuous support to hold the Africa Logistics Forum 2017 in line with the Memorandum of Understanding between the African Union and the Government of the United States of America.

This logistics Forum is going at a time of important evolution in the strategic partnership between the AU and key international partners, including the United States, especially in the area of peace and security. Last week, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary General of the United Nations signed the historic Joint Framework on Peace and Security as a vehicle for an institutionalized partnership between both organizations. Through the African Logistics Forum, we are also developing a strong cooperation with the United States especially as we develop a set of capabilities for the effective logistical support of the peculiar nature of AU peace support operations including through direct support to Member States.

- Distinguished Delegates
- Ladies and Gentlemen

The African Union and its Member States have repeatedly demonstrated political will and resolve to respond to emerging threats, crisis and insecurity on the continent. This is Africa’s most profound comparative advantage.
However, converting political will and resolve into responsive and effective interventions requires a sound logistics foundation. Whether preventing the outbreak of violence, providing humanitarian assistance or carrying out peace support operations, African countries and regional organizations need to have effective logistics arrangements in place to support these activities. Although there has been recent progress in logistics capacity development, the need persists for continued improvement in strengthening institutions and refining procedures, policies and practices at the national, regional and multinational level.

I want to seize this opportunity to commend the work done by the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms for the operational readiness of their respective standby forces and the efforts made to strengthen their respective logistical capabilities in a context of budget constraints and limited resources.

Let me also commend your collective and individual contributions to past and current African led peace support operations, especially in Mali, Central African Republic and Somalia as well as the ongoing operations against Boko Haram. These sacrifices are all geared towards an Africa that is peaceful and prosperous, which could aspire to being an equal economic partner with the rest of the world.

As you are aware this Forum is a major milestone as we are implementing the African standby force Maputo strategic Five year work plan 2016-2020 for the post full operational capability of the African standby Force to strengthen the operational readiness of the ASF.

The main objective of the Maputo plan are to ensure:
(i) That all ASF civilian, police and military components have the requisite skills and capabilities that will facilitate their deployment in high-intensity operations as well as in traditional multidimensional peace support operations.

(ii) That critical logistics and other support systems and mechanisms for strategic lift and movement of personnel and assets, effective Communication and information capabilities, as well as robust financial, administrative and logistics policies and processes for deployment and management of operations are functional.

I am pleased to note that the thematic area for the Africa Logistics Forum 2017 is in line with the Maputo plan. This is to review the relationship between the AU Continental Logistics Base and the Regional Logistics depots for effective harmonization. It will require that the Forum contributes to the ongoing efforts to define the roles and responsibilities of the AU, Member States and RECs/RMs in providing effective and efficient administrative and logistics support to African led peace support operations. I am pleased to inform you that the Government of Cameroun in support of the African Union, has taken concrete steps in the initial setting up of the Continental Logistics base in Douala, Cameroon and we are hopeful to inaugurate the facility in May 2017.

I am also pleased to note that the Africa Logistics Forum 2017 is focused on the relationship between the Continental Logistics Base and the Regional Logistics Depots. We expect therefore concrete recommendations and actions to enhance our logistics capabilities necessary for mission startup and sustainment.
I encourage that you recommend innovative ways to bridge the current logistics gaps and adapt logistics capabilities to the African Union needs for rapid deployment and high intensity operations.

I also wish to encourage this action oriented approach and look forward to your recommendations which should result in concrete actions and impetus towards the attainment of our common objective to enhance African led peace support operations.

- **Ladies and gentlemen**
- **Distinguished participants,**

We would like to seize this opportunity to honor all African peacekeepers that lost their lives in the line of duty. We further express our sincere wish to all injured peacekeepers for prompt recovery and return to their respective countries and families.

Finally, let me once again thank you for being here and contributing to our common objective to effectively address conflict prevention and resolution in the continent.

- **General Waldhauser and Ambassador Leonard,**
Please join me to declare the ALF 2017 open and to wish to the participants, fruitful deliberations.

I thank you.