PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION STRONGLY CONDEMNS THE ARMED OFFENSIVE LAUNCHED BY THE M23 IN THE PROVINCE OF NORTH KIVU, IN THE EASTERN PART OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Addis Ababa, 19 November 2012: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, is following with concern the serious deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). She strongly condemns the military offensive by the M23 in the Goma area, and demands that the group immediately and unconditionally put an end to its offensive. She also strongly condemns the violence targeted against the civilian population, and urges that every effort be made to ensure unimpeded humanitarian access.

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates the need for all stakeholders to extend unconditional cooperation to the ongoing efforts within the framework of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), undertaken with the full support of the AU. In this context, she has requested her Special Representative, Ambassador Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra, immediately to visit the region and to undertake all necessary consultations, with the view to contributing to an early solution.