STATEMENT ON THE SUSPENSION OF THE SUDAN 'TWO AREAS' NEGOTIATIONS

Addis Ababa, 2 March, 2014: Yesterday, the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan and South Sudan adjourned negotiations between the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) on the conflict in the "Two Areas" of Blue Nile and South Kordofan.

The adjournment was occasioned by a deadlock between the Parties over a proposal made by the Panel in line with previous directives of the African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) and the United Nations Security Council.

As is its right, the SPLM-N presented a fundamentally different proposal, which rendered an agreement unattainable. The Panel is of the view that as matters stand, it is impossible to bridge the chasm between the Parties and will therefore refer the matter back to its mandating principal, the AUPSC, for further guidance.

Nevertheless, the Panel called on the two Parties to continue to negotiate between themselves to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

A peace agreement is in the best interest of the people of the Two Areas, Sudan and the wider neighbourhood. In this respect, the Panel notes and welcomes discussions amongst political and other players currently taking place in Sudan with the object of convening an inclusive national dialogue to agree on a new political dispensation for the country. This underscores the need urgently to find a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the Two Areas, the better to integrate the Two Areas into the national dialogue.

The Panel believes that all political and other players in Sudan have a moral and political responsibility to contribute to ending the conflict in the Two Areas and to ensure the success of the national dialogue.

END