STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR SMAIL CHERGUI,
COMMISSIONER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY,
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

AT THE DISTINGUISHED VISITORS CLOSING CEREMONY
OF THE AMANI II FIELD TRAINING EXERCISE,

LOHATLA, SOUTH AFRICA

8 NOVEMBER 2015
Your Excellency President Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa; The Representative of the Distinguished Chairperson of the African Union;
Honorable Ministers of Defense;
Distinguished Deputy Foreign Minister of the Republic of Angola;
Distinguished Chiefs of Defense Staff and Ambassadors;
Distinguished Representative from the Southern Africa Development Community as the Host of the Exercise;
Distinguished Representatives from EASF, ECCAS, ECOWAS and NARC,
Distinguished Partners;
Generals, Commanders and fellow soldiers;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

1. Allow me on the name of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, and on my own behalf, pay tribute to H.E President Jacob Zuma, the Government and People of the Republic of South Africa as host country of AMANI II Field Training Exercise for the warm hospitality that we have received throughout this Exercise and for the sacrifices and very important resources put at the disposal of this continental event. I would also like to commend the resources that have been provided by SADC as the host of this Exercise, other Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs), AU Member States as well as the dedicated support of partners
especially, the European Union and UN. The African Union (AU) Commission is immeasurably thankful for your various contributions toward the successful conduct of AMANI II Exercise.

2. I would also like to pay tribute to Sergeant Modisane and Motaung, who paid the ultimate sacrifice during this Exercise. Our thoughts go out to their beloved families.

Distinguished Visitors
Ladies and Gentlemen

3. In my remarks during the opening ceremony of the AMANI II FTX, I noted that through this Exercise we are realizing the collective aspiration of the Mothers and Fathers of the African Union, to promote peace, security and stability on the continent. Today marks a milestone in this ambition and I am pleased to be part of this historic occasion.

4. In the past two weeks, the AU together with the RECs/RMs and Volunteering Member States have deployed more than 6,000 uniformed and civilian personnel in both Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and here in Lohatla, South Africa – as Strategic and Mission Headquarters respectively - to validate the capacity of Africa to plan, launch, manage and liquidate peace support operations through this Exercise. It is my pleasure to report to the
Distinguished Visitors that the preliminary findings from the evaluation of this Exercise indicates that it has been successful in the deployment of a Rapid Deployment Capability, as well as in transitioning to a multidimensional peace support operation. As the first ever Exercise of this nature, I laud this significant achievement and encourage all stakeholders to sustain the momentum in order to attain Full Operational Capability of the African Standby Force.

Distinguished Visitors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. The progress that has been attained through this Exercise is only the beginning of the requisite steps that must be taken to consolidate the ASF. In this regard, the AU Commission will be working with the RECs/RMs and other Member States in the coming weeks, to undertake a comprehensive ‘After Action Review’ (AAR) of the AMANI II FTX. The outcome of this AAR will further map out what is required to further consolidate the gains already made in the operationalization of the ASF.

6. In addition, the AU Commission will submit a Report to the Specialized Technical Committee on Defence, Safety and Security (STCDSS) on the Status of the ASF not later than early January 2016, for consideration of all Member States. This Report will
clearly articulate the progress that we have made and propose recommendations on the readiness of the ASF, for consideration by AU Member States ahead of the 26\textsuperscript{th} Ordinary AU Summit of Heads of State and Government in January 2016.

7. The AU Commission shall also be working with the RECs/RMs and Member States in the next few months to work out clear modalities including the requisite legal arrangements for continued cooperation for the enhanced readiness for the future deployment of the ASF-RDC, in real-life crisis situation, when necessary.

\textbf{Distinguished Visitors,}
\textbf{Ladies and Gentlemen}

8. I would like to re-iterate the need for improved decision-making by AU Member States and the RECs/RMs in the timely deployment of the ASF-RDC. Time and time again, we have seen how delayed responses to the continent’s crisis have sometimes justified and led to, external interventions with mixed results. The employment of the ASF will remain contingent on political consensus and rapid decision-making process by AU Member States. This is the Pan-African vision that we seek and, this is why the ASF has been established.
9. We also require the support of AU Member States in the establishment of appropriate infrastructures for the ASF. In this respect, you would recall that the AU Commission recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of the Republic of Cameroon on the establishment of the Continental Logistics Base (CLB) in Douala. I would like to urge the support by AU Member States as well as other stakeholders to support the realization of a fully manned and equipped CLB with specialized Strategic Deployment Stocks that is able to support future peace operations.

10. The perennial challenge of predictable, sustainable and flexible funding will also continue to inform if and when the ASF is deployed. Enhanced assessed and voluntary contributions from AU Member States will lead to the actualization of African solutions to African problems, with mainly African resources. This is the future that we desire and we look forward to the cooperation of Member States in the implementation of the AU Summit decision on the increase of assessment contributions of AU Members States from January 2016.

Distinguished Visitors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
11. This Exercise has reinforced the huge potentials of AU Member States to generate peace operations capabilities primarily from within the continent. Beyond the laudable pre-commitments of resources made and fulfilled by the host country, RECs/RMs and AU Member States for this Exercise, I would like to bring to your attention the financial contribution provided by Kenya towards the Exercise as well as the commendable provision of Air Lift capacity by Algeria, Angola and Nigeria, within a short-term frame of when the AU Commission made the requests. This is an evidence of the remarkable progress that we can achieve as a continental body, to address our challenges. The Commission will be building on this through the establishment of a Continental Movement Control Centre (CMCC) with close cooperation with the regions and Member States to strengthen Africa’s capacity for the generation of strategic lifts in future peace support operations.

12. To conclude, I would like to express our gratitude to all Member States, partners and the wider international community for your various contributions toward the successful completion of this Exercise. This Exercise reinforced my belief in the fact that we all do better when we work together. Even though our
differences do matter, but our common vision for peace and security in Africa matters more.

13. We wish you a safe journey to your respective destinations and we look forward to our continued engagement in the quest for sustainable peace and security on the continent.

Thank You.