PRESS RELEASE

THE MEETING ON THE SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS TO BE ESTABLISHED IN THE EASTERN PART OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO ENDS IN ADDIS ABABA

Addis Ababa, 28 December 2012: The consultative meeting on the security arrangements to be established in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which started yesterday, 27 December 2012, ended today under the chairmanship of Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, Commissioner for Peace and Security, with the adoption of a set of recommendations on how best to ensure the early operationalization of the envisaged Neutral International Force (NIF) and the enhancement of the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM), as agreed to by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and supported by the African Union (AU).

In particular, the meeting reviewed options on the operationalization of the NIF, which could either be deployed as a separate force from the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) or integrated within MONUSCO, while retaining its identity and ability to discharge its mandate as envisioned in the relevant ICGLR decisions. Discussions also focused on options for enhancing the EJVM. This important Mechanism could be retained as it is, with the provision of additional financial and logistical support, or, alternatively, it could be transformed into a full-fledged AU structure directly mandated by the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC). The meeting also stressed the need to adjust the Concept of Operation (CONOPS) to take into account the developments on the ground.

The participants to the meeting requested the AU Commission to convene another meeting of all stakeholders at ministerial level, in Addis Ababa, on 8 January 2013, to further consider the available options and make a concrete decision on the way forward. The envisaged meeting will benefit from the ongoing consultations between the UN and the countries of the region on the matters under consideration.
The participants to the meeting were briefed by the Minister of Defense of Uganda, Dr. Kiyonga, on the dialogue between the Government of the DRC and leaders of M23 that he has been facilitating in Kampala pursuant to the 24 November 2012 ICGLR Summit’s decisions. Participants expressed their support to this process and to its early conclusion.

The meeting was attended by countries of the region and other AU Member States, relevant African regional organizations, including the ICGLR, ECCAS and SADC, as well as by AU bilateral and multilateral partners. It was convened as a follow up to the communiqué of the 346th meeting of the PSC on the situation in eastern DRC, held on 10 December 2012. It is part of AU’s overall efforts in support of the ICGLR in the quest for a lasting solution to the crisis in eastern DRC and the promotion of peace, security and stability in the region as a whole.