

PRESS RELEASE

Addis Ababa, 24 August 2012: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Dr Jean Ping, welcomes the recent encouraging developments in Somalia. In particular, the Chairperson lauded the grassroots approach to participatory democracy leading to the ongoing selection of members of Parliament through the exemplary and coordinated efforts of the Traditional Elders, the Technical Selection Committee and the International Observers.

Twenty one years after the country fell into conflict, the National Constituent Assembly (NCA) chosen by 135 Traditional Leaders adopted, on 1 August, a new Constitution and on 20 August, a new Federal Parliament was inaugurated, thereby paving the way for ending the Transition, and for opening the first legislature to be formed inside Somalia since 1991. These developments constitute a significant milestone for the people of Somalia.

The security situation across south central Somalia has notably continued to improve, thanks to the multi-pronged operations being carried out by the Somalia National Security Forces (NSF) and their allies, with the support of AMISOM and the Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF).

As Somalia continues on this path of progress, further work needs to be done. The Traditional Elders and the Technical Selection Committee must complete the important and urgent task of vetting and appointing the remaining members of Parliament.

The Chairperson, noting the impending election of the Speaker of Parliament and the Deputies, scheduled for Sunday, 26th August 2012, encouraged Parliament to stand by the timetable and put in place all procedures and committees necessary for a speedy, fair and transparent election culminating in the election of the President of the country.

The African Union remains concerned that the process to end the Transition continues to be jeopardized by individuals determined to maintain Somalia in a state of chaos. As we approach the very last milestones of the roadmap, any attempt to derail this process will be unacceptable. Recalling the joint statements of 1 May 2012 and 9 August 2012 of the AU, IGAD and the UN, issuing a last warning to those undermining the process, the Chairperson underlined the readiness of the African Union, working closely with its partners, to take measures against spoilers.

The Chairperson takes this opportunity to reaffirm the African Union’s commitment to continue supporting the country’s peace and reconciliation process. To this end, the African Union will continue to work closely with IGAD, the UN and other international partners. Equally, the African Union will stand shoulder to shoulder with the Somali people in this last phase of ending the Transition and as they open a new chapter in their long struggle for greater stability.