PRESS RELEASE

The African Union Hosts a Ministerial Meeting on the Neutral International Force and the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism for the Eastern DRC

Addis Ababa, 8 January 2013: As a follow-up to the recommendations of the consultative meeting on the operationalization of the security arrangements agreed to in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), held in Addis Ababa, on 27 and 28 December 2012, a ministerial meeting of the countries of the region and international partners took place at the African Union (AU) Headquarters, in Addis Ababa, today, 8 January 2013.

The meeting, which was chaired by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, was attended by several Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense from the Great Lakes Region, representatives of the concerned regional organizations, namely, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), as well as the United Nations (UN), bilateral and multilateral partners.

Participants were briefed by General Babacar Gaye, the Military Adviser to the UN Secretary-General, on the UN action related to the implementation of Security Council Resolution 2076 (2012) regarding the future mandate of MONUSCO, in the light of the African-led request with regard to the operationalization of the envisaged Neutral International Force (NIF).

The Executive Secretary of the ICGLR briefed participants on the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM) for the Eastern DRC and its activities on the ground since 20 November 2012. The European Union (EU) representative renewed the EU’s commitment to support the activities of the EJVM through the African Peace Facility (APF).

The Minister of Defense of the Republic of Uganda, Dr. Crispus Kiyonga, in his capacity as the representative of the current Chair of the ICGLR, briefed participants on the ongoing dialogue between the Government of the DRC and a delegation of the M23, facilitated by Uganda.

The Chairperson of the Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, availed herself of the opportunity of the holding of the meeting to interact with Ministers and Heads of Delegations.