PRESS RELEASE

Important action-oriented decisions adopted by the 2nd Ministerial Meeting of the Joint Coordination Mechanism of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord’s Resistance Army

Addis Ababa, 16 January 2013: The 2nd ministerial meeting of the Joint Coordination Mechanism (JCM) of the African Union (AU)-led Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord’s Resistance Army (RCI-LRA) took place, yesterday, 15 January 2013, in Addis Ababa, at the AU Headquarters, under the chairmanship of Peace and Security Commissioner Ramtane Lamamra. The JCM was attended by the Ministers of Defense and Chiefs of Defense Staff of the member countries of the RCI-LRA, namely the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Uganda. Also in attendance, as observers, were representatives from Chad, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the United Nations.

Building on the outcome of the meeting of Chiefs of Defense Staff of the member countries of the RCI-LRA, which took place in Bangui, on 20 December 2012, the meeting adopted the mission documents of the RCI-LRA, namely the Strategic Directives, the Concept of Operations (CONOPS), the Rules of Engagement (RoE) and the Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs). The JCM was preceded by a meeting of Chiefs of Defense Staff and experts, also in Addis Ababa, on 14 January 2013.

Since its launching, in November 2011, the RCI-LRA has registered commendable progress towards eliminating the LRA. There are currently 2,850 troops, provided by CAR, South Sudan and Uganda, operating under the authority of the Regional Task Force (RTF), the operational arm of the RCI-LRA. South Sudan pledged to make an additional contribution of 500 troops, while the DRC is planning to hand over its initial contribution of 500 troops to the RCI-LRA by the end of January 2013.

The AU is planning to convene, in early April 2013, in Addis Ababa, a meeting of the RCI-LRA Support Forum to mobilize further resources for the successful implementation of the Initiative both from Member States and partners. In the meantime, the Ministers of Defense will meet again in mid-March 2013, in Juba, South Sudan, to evaluate the progress made and chart the way forward for the elimination of the LRA.