AFRICAN UNION STRESSES ITS DETERMINATION TO HELP BRING LASTING PEACE TO SOMALIA, AS AMISOM MARKS FIFTH YEAR OF DEPLOYMENT IN THE COUNTRY

Addis Ababa, 6 March 2012: Today marks five years since the first Ugandan troops in the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), mandated to help stabilize Somalia, were deployed to Mogadishu. Since its deployment, AMISOM now composed of troops from Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya and Uganda, working together with the Somali National Army and allied forces, as well as with Ethiopia, has recorded tremendous achievements on the ground.

“Five years ago, the first batch of African Union troops deployed in what was then one of the world’s most dangerous war zones. Back then, there was considerable skepticism about the ability of our troops. Now, no one can be in any doubt that the dedication and sacrifice of AMISOM has brought tremendous success for Somalia and for Somalis, as they strive to promote lasting peace in their country. A city, once deserted, is now back on its feet. Businesses are thriving, Somalis now have the opportunity to lead an ordinary way of life in the capital, roads and houses are being repaired and rebuilt, public markets are once again packed with merchants and buyers”, said the Chairperson of the Commission.

The Chairperson of the Commission thanks the Troop Contributing Countries, the IGAD countries and leaders and other African countries, as well as the United Nations and its Security Council, the European Union and its member States, the US and all the other partners who have supported AMISOM during the past five years. He also pays a special tribute to those soldiers who have fallen and to those who sustained injuries. “Their sacrifices will never be forgotten. We continue to honor their memories and commiserate with their loved ones left behind”, he said.

Following the approval by the AU Peace and Security Council, on 5 January 2012, of the new strategic concept for AMISOM future operations and the adoption by the UN Security Council of resolution 2036 (2012), on 22 February 2012, the Commission is working towards the deployment of the newly AMISOM authorized level of 17,731 in the Mission’s different operational sectors across Somalia.

The AU, building on the progress made on the ground and the current international momentum, in particular following the successful London Conference of 23 February 2012, will spare no efforts in helping the Somali people open a new chapter in their troubled history and fulfill their aspirations for peace, security and reconciliation.