STATEMENT BY THE COMMISSIONER OF PEACE AND SECURITY AT THE 9TH AFRICAN PEACE FACILITY (APF) JOINT COORDINATION COMMITTEE (JCC) MEETING

Addis Ababa, 3 June 2014

Mr. Nick Westcott, Managing Director of European Eternal Action Service,
Amb. Gary Quince, Head of the EU Delegation to the African Union,
Representatives of the Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms,
Representatives from the various EU Delegations in Africa,
Partners from the European Union and its Member States,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the African Union Commission for the 9th meeting of the African Peace Facility (APF) Joint Coordination Committee (JCC). This meeting is of particular importance to both the AU and the EU, considering that it is taking place shortly after the 4th Africa-EU Summit that was held in Brussels in April 2014, and the recently concluded meeting between the European Union (EU) Political and Security Committee and the AU Peace and Security Council.

As you are aware, the Africa-EU Summit provided an opportunity for Africa and EU to review the progress made in our partnership, which is guided by the shared principles of equal partnership and joint ownership, taking into consideration the high degree of interdependence between our two continents. Most importantly, the Summit re-affirmed support for peace and security in
Africa, which remains a key priority area as agreed upon in the Lisbon Joint Africa-EU Strategy adopted in 2007. Indeed, the Implementation Roadmap (2014 – 2017) adopted at the Summit underlined that the full operationalization of all the APSA components, particularly the African Standby Force (ASF) and the Continental Early warning System (CEWS), and continued support to African Peace Support Operations, are still the key priorities for the Partnership.

Additionally, our partnership agreed to address cross-cutting peace and security issues such as transnational organized crime and terrorism, among other peace and security issues. As you know, the scourge of terrorism is currently a cause for great concern in Africa, ranging from Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al Shabaab in the Horn of Africa and Al-Qaida in the Arab Maghreb (AQIM) in Northern Africa among other terrorist threats.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

From the very outset, I would like to express the appreciation of the AU to the EU for their unwavering support to our peace and security efforts, particularly at this time when conflict and crisis continue to affect some of our Member States. The current crisis in South Sudan, Mali and CAR are of particular concern to the African Union and the RECs, and require concerted efforts by all stakeholders. We also acknowledge the EU’s continued support through the APF to our mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the African-led International Support Mission to Central Africa Republic (MISCA), as well as support to our efforts against the LRA. These initiatives are a true testimony of the depth and strength of our partnership in the area of peace and security. Although great gains have been realized in the past two years, there is still need for these efforts to be consolidated.

It is gratifying to note that at our JCC meeting today, which is the highest decision-making level for the APF, we shall brief each other on the outcome of
the recently concluded Summit among other key strategic issues. We welcome the new Three-Year Action Programme (2014 – 2016) of the APF, which will see the EU commit a total of 750 million Euro drawn from the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) to support Africa’s Peace Support Operations (PSOs), enhanced political dialogue and the operationalization of APSA among other key initiatives. We are happy to note that the support to PSOs under this Program will continue to be reinforced with capacity building activities supported within the framework of the APSA Support Program, as well as actions undertaken under the Early Response Mechanism.

However, I wish to emphasize the commitment of the AU and the RECs/RMs to come up with results oriented actions in programming for this new facility, that will enable us realize greater impact on the African peace and security landscape. As a matter of fact, a fully operational APSA will create more opportunities for conflict prevention and resolution on the continent and build greater synergies for strategic convergence of initiatives at the regional and continental level.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me seize this opportunity to underline the importance of the APSA Support programme which has contributed immensely to the development and implementation of the various components of APSA at the continental and regional levels, as well as building closer synergies between the AU and the RECs/RMs. The Program has supported the operationalization of the ASF and its operational readiness through the Exercise AMANI Africa II, and the Training Centres Programme. It has also supported the establishment of AU Liaison Offices within the RECs/RMs and the running of RECs/RMs Liaison Offices to the AU, which has enhanced coordination and collaboration between the AU and the respective RECs/RMs.
Most importantly, the APSA Program and its predecessor – the capacity building program funded through the APF, have seen the AU play a crucial leadership role in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities agreed upon. Indeed, the Program presents a unique approach that ensures that the AU and the RECs/RMs work closely. As we consider the future orientation and state of play of APF support beyond 2015, it is important to re-enforce and strengthen the leadership role of the African Union in building, capacitation and coordinating the peace and security architecture of the African continent.

The Early Response Mechanism (ERM) established in 2009 is also one key initiative that has proved to be effective in providing timely support in conflict situations in Africa. Through the ERM, the AU and the RECs have been able to undertake mediation activities on short notice, notably in Guinea (Conakry) and Guinea Bissau, Egypt, Madagascar, Somalia, Sudan/South Sudan through support to the work of the AUHIP, and current support to IGAD mediation efforts in South Sudan among others. The AU and the RECs/RMs could benefit more from this resource if we work more closely to increase access to the Fund, through enhanced coordination, timing and communication.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As the AU and the RECs/RMs prepare to launch the 2014 APSA assessment as a follow-up to the initial study that was conducted in 2010, it is imperative that the outcome of the assessment contributes to the programming of projects and action plans to be implemented under the new Facility (2014-2016). New Action Plans should be developed, building on lessons learned and experiences gained in the implementation of the APSA Roadmap (2011-2013).

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the fact that the EU has been, and will continue to be one of the AU’s main partners in the implementation of the
African peace and security agenda. However, as we consider the future of APF support, we have to bear in mind the issue of sustainability and burden sharing. Hence, we have to continue reflection on possible alternatives to APF funding as we move forward with the implementation of APF actions and programs.

I would like to thank all of you for honouring our invitation to attend this important meeting.

I wish you fruitful deliberations.

Thank you.