18 February 2013
AU DDR Capacity Program Donors Conference

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank Commissioner Lamamra for that opening speech and thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address this forum.

The UN views its partnership with the AU on DDR as important step forward in building the growing strategic partnership between two organizations. Not only do programs such as the AU DDR Capacity Program provide a modality for cooperation and coordination but it also strengthens the AU leadership and creates another instrument to identify and address gap areas that impact on the peace and security on the continent.

While the UN, particularly DPKO and UNDP, continue to play an important role in DDR, the AU’s leadership and contributions to DDR efforts on the continent is certain to grow. The AU’s continental remit and its mandate to promote peace and security on the continent through the African Peace and Security Architecture give the AU both legitimacy and the infrastructure to engage effectively with its member states as well as to address cross-border issues. Also, the increasing role of AU Peace Support Operations is placing the AU in a position where its own forces are receiving and managing combatants in the theatre of operation. These attributes and dynamics make the AU and UN relationship in DDR both strategic and necessary and the DDRCP is the latest manifestation of how that relationship can work.

DPKO and UNOAU have engaged with the preliminary preparations for the AU DDRCP since 2011, providing technical input, including best practices, and linkages with UN DDR initiatives and training. In July 2012, UNOAU hired a DDR Officer who is now working on a daily basis with the AU DDR Core Team at the AU Peace and Security Department. This daily interaction ensures that the UN is directly linked to AU efforts and enables more effective coordination with other UN efforts.

I would also like to highlight that the DDRCP is being implemented simultaneously with the AU-UN-EU Security Sector Reform program where again both the UNOAU and DPKO are play a direct partnership role. The complex interplay between the DDR and SSR in many conflict and post-conflict situations requires these two programs to work closely together in a coordinated and complementary manner.

The AU has been clear that it wants the DDRCP to be a program that provides timely and practical value-added to DDR initiatives on the continent. This methodology ensures that the AU can demonstrate value added to its member states and ensures that future AU DDR policies are developed through practice.
The need for such a project is already evidenced by the growing list of requests for assistance being received by the AU from its member states and regional missions. Whether it is from the Central African Republic, South Sudan, the Comoros or from AMISOM, the AU has already begun to demonstrate its capacity to provide support. As this support grows, the number of requests and AU engagement with DDR initiatives on the continent will also continue to expand. The DDRCP methodology, combined with the strategic relationship with the UN and the World Bank, ensure that the DDRCP will become a growing feature in the African security architecture.

In conclusion, I would like, on behalf of UN family, to extend my appreciation for the work done by the AU and to restate the commitment of the UN to support the AU in its efforts to develop its DDR capacities.