



**PRESS RELEASE NO. 046/2004**

**THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AU COMMISSION WELCOMES THE  
DECISION OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL TO AUTHORIZE THE  
DEPLOYMENT OF A PEACEKEEPING OPERATION IN BURUNDI**

The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU) welcomes the unanimous adoption by the UN Security Council, on 21 May 2004, of resolution 1545 (2004), authorizing the deployment, for an initial period of six months as from 1 June 2004, of a peacekeeping operation in Burundi, entitled United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB).

This decision, which comes at a critical juncture in the peace and reconciliation process in Burundi, will facilitate and sustain the ongoing efforts to bring to a definite end the conflict that has been ravaging the country for more than a decade now.

The Chairperson of the Commission pays tribute to the UN Secretary-General and to the Security Council for their efforts and this timely resolution on Burundi.

As ONUB prepares itself to take over the peacekeeping responsibilities from the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB), the Chairperson of the Commission would like to express his profound appreciation for the excellent work done by AMIB, in spite of the very severe financial and logistical constraints the Mission was faced with. He reiterates his gratitude to the Troop Contributing Countries (South Africa, Ethiopia and Mozambique), as well as to the countries that have provided military observers to the AU (Burkina Faso, Gabon, Mali, Togo and Tunisia), for having responded to the call of the AU.

The Chairperson of the Commission wishes also to thank all AU partners that have provided financial support to AMIB.

AMIB is deployed in Burundi since 2 April 2003, to oversee the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreements pending the deployment of a UN peacekeeping Mission. AMIB's current strength stands at about 2,600 troops, including Military Observers.

The AU, which has been involved in the efforts to end the conflict in Burundi since 1994, will continue to do everything possible to support the Burundian parties as they strive to achieve lasting peace and reconciliation in their country. In this regard, the African Union will continue to maintain a strong presence in Burundi and extend its full cooperation and support to ONUB, in pursuit of the common objective of bringing about lasting peace in Burundi.

**Addis Ababa, 22 May 2004**