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PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION OPERATIONALIZES THE TREATY OF PELINDABA

Addis Ababa, 5 November 2010: The First Conference of States Parties to the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba) took place at the AU Headquarters, in Addis Ababa, on 4 November 2010. The Conference was held in accordance with Article 12 and 14 of the Pelindaba Treaty. In particular, Article 14 stipulates that a Conference of all Parties to the Treaty shall be convened by the Depositary (the AU Commission) as soon as possible after the entry into force of the Treaty to, *inter alia*, elect the members of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (ACNE) and determine its headquarters. The Conference was attended by AU Member States Parties to the Treaty and other AU Members as observers, as well as by international partners.

The convening of the Conference marked a new step in the overall AU efforts to further the implementation of the objectives of the Pelindaba Treaty. The Treaty, which was signed in Cairo in 1996 and entered into force in July 2009, aims at strengthening the non-proliferation regime, promoting cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, promoting general and complete disarmament, and enhancing regional and international peace and security.

The Conference called upon the AU Member States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty of Pelindaba without further delay. It also appealed to the concerned non-African states to speedily sign and ratify the relevant Protocols to the Treaty of Pelindaba, to comply with all the commitments contained therein and to refrain from any action that could undermine their objectives.

The Conference had in-depth discussions on the following issues: the promotion of safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear energy; nuclear security and combating of illicit trafficking; and the prohibition of testing of nuclear explosive devices.

Finally, the Conference elected the following countries as members of the ACNE: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Mauritius, Senegal, South Africa, Togo and Tunisia. The Conference endorsed the decision to establish the headquarters of ACNE in South Africa. It was also agreed that the next Conference of State Parties shall be held within six months to take the required decisions on the structure and budget of ACNE, as well as on its programme of activities.