



Press Communiqué

**The Chairperson of the African Union Commission receives UNEP/FAO
Delegation and Permanent Representative of Egypt to AU**

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr Jean Ping received today, Thursday 28 October 2010 in his office at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa, the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the African Union, Ambassador Tarek Ghoneim. Both parties discussed several regional issues of mutual interest. Ambassador Ghoneim reiterated to the Chairperson the support of his country to the ongoing efforts of the AU Commission to restore peace and security in the zones of conflict in Africa. He also expressed the readiness of Egypt to further contribute to these efforts and to do everything possible to strengthen the role of the Commission at both the regional and international levels.

The Chairperson also received a United Nations delegation, led by Mr. Mohamed La min Ceesay of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), who was accompanied by Mr. Thomas Hoffer of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The delegation briefed the Chairperson on the progress of the implementation of the Fouta Djallon Highland Integrated Natural Resources Management Project which is supported by the UN Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Both parties reviewed the institutional and financial challenges faced by the project and the Chairperson emphasised the importance of sustainable natural resources management to improve the livelihoods of the people of the region. He instructed the Department of Rural Economy and Agriculture to convene a meeting with all relevant departments of the Commission, to explore long-term solutions to some of the challenges raised by the delegation, including financial and management issues.

The Fouta Djallon Highland Integrated Natural Resources Management Project is a 10-year, US\$40 million project which covers the watershed of the Fouta Djallon Mountain range in West Africa. The mountain range, which is the source of many of the rivers in the region, covers the following eight countries: The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Sierra Leone. The project is implemented by the FAO through UNEP, in collaboration with the AU-Fouta Djallon Regional Office.

Addis Ababa, 28 October 2010