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## PRESS RELEASE

### *The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union appoints Mr. Jerry John Rawlings as the AU High Representative for Somalia*

**Addis Ababa, 8 October 2010:** The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Jean Ping, has, today, appointed Mr. Jerry John Rawlings, as the AU High Representative for Somalia.

The appointment of Mr. Rawlings is a follow-up to the decision on the Report of the Peace and Security Council of the AU on its Activities and the State of Peace and Security in Africa, adopted by the Assembly of the Union at its 15<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session held in Kampala, Uganda, from 25 to 27 July 2010. In that decision, the Assembly of the Union, having endorsed the communiqué of the 15<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), held in Addis Ababa on 5 July 2010, requested the Chairperson of the Commission to appoint a high-level personality to mobilize increased support for efforts to promote peace and reconciliation in Somalia and generate greater attention from the international community.

This appointment comes as the situation in Somalia continues to be of particular concern. In this context, the appointment of Mr. Rawlings bears testimony to the renewed commitment of the AU, in close coordination with IGAD, to work towards the successful conclusion of the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia, including through strengthening the AU Mission in that country (AMISOM), broadening the political base of the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs) and enhancing their legitimacy, the acceleration of the implementation of the pending transitional tasks, and building the capacity of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) to enable it to assume their responsibilities, including the provision of basic services to the civilian population.

As the AU High Representative, Mr. Rawlings will undertake advocacy work to further

mobilize the continent and the rest of the international community to fully assume its responsibilities and contribute more actively to the quest for peace, security and reconciliation in Somalia. In this regard, he will work in close coordination with the countries of the region, the United Nations, including the Security Council and its members, the European Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Conference and other bilateral and multilateral partners.

Mr. Rawlings served in the Ghanaian military for more than a decade, and presided over the affairs of Ghana in 1979 and from 1981 to 2001. He was twice elected President of the Republic, following multiparty presidential elections in 1992 and 1996. Mr. Rawlings left office in 2001, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana that limits the number of terms for the office of the President to a maximum of two.

The Chairperson of the Commission urges the Somali parties to extend their full cooperation to Mr. Rawlings, and appeals to the AU partners to lend their full support to him in the accomplishment of his mission.

The Chairperson of the Commission takes this opportunity to, once again, urge the UN Security Council to play a role commensurate with the gravity of the situation in Somalia and the threat it poses to regional peace and stability, as well as to international security. In this respect, he recalls that, nowhere else in the world, has the urgency to translate into reality the responsibility to protect presented itself more acutely than in Somalia.