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REMARKS

**HIS EXCELLENCY, DR JEAN PING, CHAIRPERSON OF THE
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

ON THE OCCASION OF

**THE MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
AFRICA – SOUTH AMERICA COOPERATIVE FORUM (ASACOF)**

NEW YORK, 27 SEPTEMBER 2010

Excellencies, Ministers

Excellencies, Ambassadors

Distinguished Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to thank you, Excellencies, for finding time off your busy schedules to attend this meeting. This meeting has been organized in accordance with the Margarita Decision that the ASA Ministers of Foreign Affairs meet on the margins of the 65th session of the United Nations General Assembly in September 2010 to adopt a merged Implementation Plan prepared by the ASA Senior Officials.

As you know, the ASA Senior Officials met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 7th September 2010. The objectives of the meeting were to review progress made since the Second ASA Heads of State and Government Summit that took place in Margarita Island, Venezuela in September 2009, and to consider and finalize the Implementation Plan in order to operationalize it and produce concrete deliverables for the benefit of both sides. In the process, , Senior Officials worked to harmonize their different texts submitted at the Margarita Summit and came up with an agreed Implementation Plan, which is going to be considered and adopted by this meeting. Let me take this opportunity to express the African Union Commission's appreciation to Senior Officials from both sides for carrying out their mandate and for the excellent work accomplished. I believe that the intensive consultations that took place between the two sides will greatly facilitate the outcome of this meeting.

Allow me to indicate that the Implementation Plan that we will be adopting today is detailed and ambitious. It covers the broad spectrum of our agreed eight areas of cooperation. We suggest that the Implementation Plan should be prioritized to determine what projects and programmes can be implemented with the various time frames, in order to achieve concrete deliverables for both sides.

I wish to draw attention to the fact that, since the 2nd Africa-South America (ASA) Summit, a number of contacts have been made between

the two sides to give concrete expression to the ASA partnership. In this connection, I recall the First Working Meeting of the Strategic Presidential Committee that was held in Caracas, on 6 August 2010, as well as the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to Kampala during the African Union Summit, which was also an occasion to discuss issues related to the implementation of various aspects of the ASA partnership.

Today, our partnership is at a crossroad with the expected adoption of the ASA Implementation Plan, which symbolizes our common commitment towards building a strong and virile cooperative forum and the realization of the vision and overarching objectives of the ASA Summit.

The African Union Commission has taken note of the outcomes of the First Working Meeting of the Strategic Presidential Committee and the appointment of an Executive Secretary for ASA Secretariat as well as the establishment of the Permanent Secretariat and Strategic Presidential Committee. I, however, wish to draw attention to the Decision of the Assembly in Kampala that the Permanent Representatives Committee and the Commission should look further into the modalities for the functioning of the Strategic Presidential Committee and the Permanent Secretariat with regard to their structure, mandate, staffing, funding and financial implications, among other things, in order to ensure proper ownership of the institutions.

With respect to the Membership of the Strategic Presidential Committee, the African side proposes to limit this to five (5) Members to each side. Africa will select its five members to make it possible for each of the five regions of Africa to be represented. It is our expectation that our partner on the other side will also find an appropriate means of selecting their membership of the group to fit the same mould.

In the same vein, we emphasize the need to develop proposals to effectively manage the partnership in terms of its work programme, schedules of meetings and improved coordination mechanisms for result-oriented follow-up actions. It is our view that, once the UNASUR Secretariat is fully operational, it would greatly facilitate and enhance the

management of the ASA partnership through a closer working relation between the AU Commission and the UNASUR Secretariat.

Before I end my brief remarks, let me reiterate the African Union Commission's full commitment to the successful implementation of the Implementation Plan. The Commission is poised to do everything possible to realize the broad objectives of the Implementation of concrete projects and programmes in the short, medium and long terms for the benefits of the peoples of the two sides.

Let me also recall that the 3rd ASA Summit is to take place in Libya next year. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Kampala last July already mandated Libya as host and the AU Commission to commence preparations for the next Summit. We intend to carry out this mandate, in consultation with our South American partners.

In conclusion, I wish to once again thank You Excellencies for finding time to attend this important meeting and reiterate my gratitude to the Senior Officials whose efforts facilitated our work at this meeting.

I thank you all.

**African Union Commission
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
27 September 2010**