



### *Press Communiqué*

#### **The Chairperson of the African Union Commission begins a week-long series of consultations and activities on the margins of the 65<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly Meeting in New York**

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr. Jean Ping is in New York where he will participate in a series of consultations and activities on the margins of the 65<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly Meeting which opened on 14 September 2010 and runs till the end of the month. High on the Chairperson's agenda is the launch on Tuesday, 21 September 2010 of the Africa Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report.

Jointly produced by the African Union Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the report assesses the progress made by Africa towards meeting the UN Millennium Development Goals and recommends actions needed to enable Africa meet the MDGs by the target date of 2015. The report and its accompanying African Common Position on the MDGs were endorsed by African Leaders at the 15th Assembly of African Heads of State and Government in Kampala, Uganda, last July.

The report launch falls within the framework of the United Nations High Level Plenary Meeting (UNHLP) on the MDGs, scheduled to take place on 20-22 September 2010 at UN Headquarters in New York. The launch will also be attended by Heads of State and Government, Ministers and Ambassadors of African countries, the African Development Bank, UN Agencies, the World Bank, and the European Union as well as representatives of Civil Society Organizations and the media.

The Chairperson notes that the Africa MDGs Report launch coincides with activities marking the culmination of the Year of Peace and Security in Africa. In that regard, the Chairperson reiterates the commitment of African Heads of State and Government made during the AU Special Session on the Consideration and Resolution of Conflicts in Africa, held in Tripoli on August 31, 2009, to bring peace to the continent.

While recognizing that peace cannot be achieved in a day, the Chairperson hereby emphasizes that 21 September 2010 affords Africans the opportunity to celebrate notable successes in peace-building and to put peace in practice through a collective, cooperative moment of unity.

"Addressing the scourge of conflict is critical to the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), for if we cannot bring conflict to an end, we will not eliminate poverty. Peace sustains development. Development sustains peace." Dr. Ping observes, ahead of the twin events.

During his stay in New York, the Chairperson will also participate on 22 September 2010, in the 16th session of the Standing Committee for Afro-Arab Cooperation, ahead of the second Afro-Arab Summit scheduled for Sirte, Libya on 10 October 2010.

Dr. Ping's schedule also includes high-level consultations with key stakeholders on Sudan, convened by the UN Secretary-General to mobilize and coordinate regional and international efforts on the challenges facing Sudan, notably the 2011 self-determination referenda in South Sudan and Abyei, as well as the Darfur Political Process.

Somalia will feature prominently in the Chairperson's discussions with regional leaders, international partners and the United Nations. In this context, the Chairperson will attend a high level meeting on Somalia convened in the margins of the UN General Assembly's session.

Other important meetings involving the Chairperson's delegation in New York include: the International Contact Group on Guinea Bissau, the International Contact Group on Guinea, the Africa-South America Cooperation Forum (ASACOF) - the Foreign Ministerial-level meeting is expected to adopt a Merged Implementation Plan aimed at boosting cooperation between both regions; the second round of political consultations between China and Africa, aimed at exploring ways and means of strengthening international cooperation, between them advancing the implementation of the MDGs and promoting peace and security in Africa.

The newly established AU-UN Joint Task Force between the UN Secretariat and the AU Commission will hold its first meeting to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the maintenance of peace and security in Africa.

The Chairperson is accompanied to New York by a high-level delegation that includes the African Union Commissioners in charge of Political Affairs, Economic Affairs, Peace and Security, and Infrastructure and Energy, as well as the AU Permanent Observer to the United Nations and the Chairperson's Chief of Staff.

***New York, 19 September 2010***

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