



PRESS RELEASE NO. 03/ 18th AU SUMMIT

CHAIRPERSON PING SAYS WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE COMMISSION AND THE PRC HAS BEEN BASED ON CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE



Addis Ababa, 23 January 2012 – “Let me seize this precious opportunity to thank, on behalf of the Commission and on my own behalf, the PRC for the work we have accomplished together ...Today we can say that, the PRC and the Commission have a good working relationship, based on constructive dialogue”. Mr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, was speaking while addressing participants today, 23rd January 2012, during the

opening ceremony of the 23rd Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), at the headquarters of the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The PRC meeting is the first level of deliberations marking the start of the 18th Summit of the African Union (AU), holding from 23 to 30 January 2012 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, under the theme: **“Boosting Intra-African Trade”**.



The official opening of the PRC today was chaired by Prof. Joseph Nsengimana, Ambassador of the Republic of Rwanda, Vice Chair of the PRC, in the presence of the Deputy Chairperson of the AUC, Mr. Erastus Mwencha, the Commissioners of the AU, the diplomatic corps, representatives of the international community and invited guests who attended as observers.

In his address, Chairperson Ping began by calling on a minute of silence for the victims of the Arab spring and death of the Commissioner of Trade and Industry of the AUC, Mrs. Elizabeth Tankeu, alongside other

officials and staff of the AUC who passed away during 2011. He welcomed South Sudan as the 54th Member State of the Union, officially participating for the first time in the AU Summit.



Mr. Ping expressed satisfaction at the good working relationship between the Commission and the PRC over the past four years “based on constructive dialogue, trust and mutual understanding for the “interest of the continent”. He added that the excellent cooperation between the two parties has been consolidated and strengthened over the years as this Commission comes to the end of its mandate.

The Chairperson also expressed satisfaction at the efforts and achievements of the AU Commission in the democratization process of the continent as well as the consolidation of peace and post conflict reconstruction. Mr. Ping recalled the famine crisis in the horn of Africa that led to great mobilization of humanitarian assistance and fund raising. He lauded the active participation of all Africans who responded positively to the call for a pledging conference organised for the first time by the AU Commission to raise money to mitigate the famine in the Horn of Africa. (See speech of Chairperson Ping posted on the AU website: www.au.int).

According to the PRC agenda for the 18th AU Summit, the Ambassadors will for two days (23 and 24 January 2012) exchange views on specific reports including the reports of the sub-committees on structures; multilateral cooperation; contributions; economic and trade matters; the report on NEPAD as well as that of the Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought and Famine in Africa (SEAF). They will consider the working documents and draft decisions in preparation for the 20th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council.

For more information, consult the African Union website: www.au.int and visit the 18th Summit web page of the AU at the following link: <http://au.int/en/summit/18thsummit>

Journalists are invited to cover the official closing ceremonies of the 23rd Ordinary Session of the PRC on 24 January 2012.

Journalists wishing to interview the leadership of the AU Commission during the Summit should submit their requests to Mrs Esther Azaa Tankou E-mail: YambouE@africa-union.org / esthertankou@yahoo.com