



**PRESS STATEMENT OF THE 106TH MEETING OF THE PEACE
AND SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE SITUATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)**

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 106th meeting held on 19 January 2008, was briefed on the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), since its 97th meeting, which took place on 25 October 2007.

Council welcomed the ongoing efforts towards the stabilization of the political situation and the strengthening of the democratic process in the DRC.

At the same time, Council expressed its deep concern at the persisting violence in the North and South Kivus, which has resulted in numerous losses of lives and massive displacement of civilian populations, as well as at the gross violations of human rights committed on the ground.

Council welcomed the signing of the Agreement between the Governments of the DRC and Rwanda, in Nairobi, on 9 November 2007, and the steps taken towards its implementation. In this respect, Council recalled the decision on the forceful disarmament and neutralization of the ex-FAR/Interahamwe and other armed groups in Eastern DRC, adopted at its 23rd meeting held in Libreville on 10 January 2005.

Council also welcomed the convening by the Congolese Government of the Conference on Peace, Security and Development in Goma, which has been ongoing since 6 January 2008, and expressed the hope that this Conference will reach conclusions that will contribute to the early restoration of peace and security in the Kivu provinces.

Council recalled the decision adopted at its meeting of 25 October 2007, requesting the Commission to dispatch a fact-finding mission to the DRC on the security problems along the borders with the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Sudan, linked, among other aspects, to movements of populations. Council took note of the steps taken by the Commission as a follow-up to that decision, notably the visits undertaken to the DRC and CAR, and encouraged the Commission to complete the fact-finding mission as soon as possible, including the envisaged visits to the Sudan, Cameroon and Chad, and to submit to it recommendations on the way forward.

Addis Ababa, 19 January 2008