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P.O. Box: 3243, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Tel.: (251-11) 551 38 22 Fax: (251-11) 551 93 21
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
338TH MEETING
18 OCTOBER 2012
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR.(CCCXXXVIII)

PRESS STATEMENT

**PRESS STATEMENT OF THE 338TH MEETING
OF THE PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL**

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 338th meeting held on 18 October 2012, was briefed by Mr. Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), on its activities and challenges related to peace and security in Africa from the perspective of delivering humanitarian assistance in situations of crisis and conflict.

Council welcomed ICRC's commitment to the partnership and cooperation with the AU, as well as regular consultations between the AU and the ICRC, within the framework of Article 17 of the Protocol Establishing the AU Peace and Security Council as well as the activities undertaken by the ICRC towards the promotion and respect of International Humanitarian Law in situations of armed conflict in Africa and those of the AU aiming at preventing conflicts, promoting peaceful settlement of disputes and eliminating the causes of tensions and crises.

Council noted with concern the worsening humanitarian situation in countries in conflict, particularly in northern Mali and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. In this respect, Council commended the ICRC for its humanitarian efforts and protection of civilian populations affected by armed conflicts and other situations of violence, and especially women, children and other vulnerable groups that continue to be the primary victims of these situations.

Council re-affirmed AU's commitment to human rights and International Humanitarian Law, as well as to the sanctity of human life, as enshrined in Article 4 (o and m) of the AU Constitutive Act and Article 4 (c) of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

Council stressed the need for the AU Commission, in line with the AU Convention on Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, to work closely with the ICRC and other concerned partners in the mobilization of resources towards the protection of civilian populations affected by armed conflicts and other situations of violence and the promotion of peace, security and stability in the Continent.

Council appealed to all Member States to continue to cooperate and facilitate the work of the ICRC in its provision of support and assistance to those in conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as other situations of violence and need in Africa.

Council further appealed to parties in conflict to facilitate access for humanitarian assistance to affected populations and provide security to humanitarian aid workers.

Council recognized that by providing assistance to victims, humanitarian action aims at ameliorating the effects of conflicts and duress and cannot be a solution to conflicts nor can it substitute for political solutions. In this regard, Council stressed the need to take all preventive measures to avoid conflicts and alleviate human suffering.

Council noted that every intervention action has consequence and in this regard, urged actors in any crisis situation to take measures with the least humanitarian costs or negative consequences.

Council urged ICRC to expand and sustain its capacity building activities in Africa in order to contribute and promote the bolstering of an African humanitarian response capability, particularly at the national level.

Council called upon Member States that have signed the Convention for the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, to ratify the Convention for its early entry into force. In this regard, Council urged Member States that have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the Protocol, and to comply scrupulously with all relevant AU instruments governing the promotion of International Humanitarian Law.