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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **AFRICAN UNION URGES SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN TO REVERSE THEIR UNILATERAL ACTIONS**

**Addis Ababa, 23 January 2012:** The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Jean Ping, is gravely concerned by developments in South Sudan and Sudan. Unilateral steps by the two Governments have brought the relationship between the two countries to the point of breakdown, with the immediate danger of destroying the possibility of achieving the agreed goal of two viable states, friendly and mutually supportive.

The spirit that led to a peaceful referendum one year ago and the amicable separation of South Sudan is fast vanishing. Against a backdrop of the absence of an agreement between the two states, the Government of Sudan recently began diverting oil originating from South Sudan for domestic refining and for international sale. In the last few days, the Government of the Republic of South Sudan has initiated the shutdown of all oil production, in an accelerated manner that risks serious damage to the oil pipeline to the north.

These reciprocal unilateral measures threaten grave damage to the economic prospects of both countries and relations between them.

These actions have also taken place at a time when the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) on Sudan is convening negotiations on the question of oil and transitional financial arrangements. The Panel presented a draft proposal to the two parties two days ago, and is revising and finalizing this proposal in line with the detailed responses provided by the two negotiating teams. The AU is confident that the differences between the parties can be bridged. Neighboring African states and the international community, including the United Nations, the United States and China, have expressed support for the AUHIP proposal. These negotiations are continuing in Addis Ababa.

Seized by the urgency of the matter, under the chairmanship of Ethiopian Prime Minister MelesZenawi, IGAD is convening an Extraordinary Summit to support the work of the AUHIP.

The Chairperson of the Commission calls upon both Governments to halt and reverse their unilateral actions with immediate effect. He calls upon them to remain at the negotiating table and to agree on a final settlement of all issues related to oil and transitional financial arrangements. Such an agreement will be beneficial to the Governments and citizens of South Sudan and Sudan and to the region.

**NOTE TO THE EDITORS:**

The AUHIP has worked for the last two years to facilitate negotiations between the Government of Sudan/National Congress Party and the Government of the Republic of South Sudan/Sudan People's Liberation Movement. These negotiations have included security issues, the common border, economic relations (particularly oil and associated financial arrangements), and citizenship.

The AUHIP has facilitated agreements on interim security and administration for Abyei Area, the Joint Political and Security Mechanism and monitoring and verification mechanisms for the common border. It has convened several rounds of negotiation with the goal of reaching agreement on transit fees for South Sudanese oil using the pipeline to Port Sudan and transitional financial arrangements to help bridge the budgetary gap in Sudan subsequent on the secession of South Sudan. However, major issues remain unresolved, including the final status of Abyei, five disputed areas along the common border, and agreement on oil and transitional financial arrangements.