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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL  
256<sup>TH</sup> MEETING  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA  
10 JANUARY 2011

PSC/PR/COMM.2(CCLVI)

**PRESS STATEMENT**

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 256<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 10 January 2011, was briefed by the Commissioner for Peace and Security on the self-determination referendum in Southern Sudan, which started on 9 January 2011, as part of the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Council also followed the statement by the representative of Sudan.

Council stressed the importance for Sudan and for Africa as a whole of the self-determination referendum in Southern Sudan, as a key step towards the full implementation of the CPA. In this regard, Council commended the leadership of President Omar Hassan Al Bashir and First Vice-President Salva Kiir Mayardit and the Parties to the CPA, as well as the Southern Sudan Referendum Commission and the Southern Sudan Referendum Bureau, whose commitment and efforts made it possible to organize the referendum on time, in a peaceful manner. Council emphasized that the holding of the referendum was a further testimony to the capacity of the Sudanese Parties, with genuine international support, to address the challenges facing their country.

Council commended the AU High-Level Implementation Panel on Sudan (AUHIP) for its continued and sustained efforts towards the full implementation of the CPA and creation of conditions conducive to the successful conclusion of the referendum exercise. Council also expressed its profound appreciation to the United Nations Mission in Sudan and the United Nations Panel on the Referenda in Sudan, as well as to the larger international community, for their invaluable support.

Council noted with appreciation the deployment of a sizeable team of electoral observers by the AU and its Member States, and called on all the observer missions to effectively monitor the proceedings.

Council urged all Parties and all Sudanese to continue to demonstrate the same commitment towards the successful conclusion of the referendum process and other outstanding issues in the implementation of the CPA, as well as the post-referendum arrangements. In this respect, Council encouraged the Parties to continue to extend the necessary cooperation to the AUHIP.

Council expressed appreciation to the Parties for their commitment to respect the outcome of the referendum and the will of the Sudanese people.

Council reiterated AU's commitment, as one of the CPA Guarantors, to fully respect the result of the Referendum, whatever the outcome, and to accompany the Parties and the Sudanese people, in general, in the journey that they have embarked upon towards sustainable peace, economic development and democratic transformation.

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