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MEDIA RELEASE:

AU-RECs/RMs Conference on AMANI Africa II Field Training Exercise in Harare

Harare, 4 May 2015: The African Union Commission (AU) is conducting a consultative meeting between the Continental Planning Element of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs)/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention Management and Resolution (RMs) on the operationalization of the African Stand by Force (ASF) and, in particular, the upcoming AMANI Africa II Field Training Exercise (FTX), from 4 to 5 May 2015, in Harare, Zimbabwe. The aim of this important gathering with the RECs/RMs is to update them on the ongoing implementation of activities leading up to the planned AMANI Africa II FTX and enlist their participation and contribution.

Speaking during the opening of the conference, Real Admiral Patrick Duze, who chairs the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Task force on AMANI Africa II FTX, said the current fragile political and security situations in some parts of Africa amplifies the need for the full operationalization of the ASF. *“It is incumbent upon us to move deftly to ensure a capable, well-resourced and dynamic African Standby Force becomes a reality, so that we can effectively address any future threats to peace and security in our continent”*, he said.

On his part, the AMANI Africa II Exercise Director, General Samaila Iliya, emphasized the need for all actors involved, particularly the RECs/RMs, to increase their support towards the finalization of the ASF process. He added, the two-day conference provided an opportunity for them to build on the momentum achieved within the ASF process and integrate the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC), which is another critical tool in the AU’s peace and security apparatus.

The conference brings together officials from the AU Commission, the SADC Task Force on AMANI Africa II FTX, South Africa as the host Nation, representatives from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Eastern Africa Standby Force (EASF), as well as several International Partners.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

It should be recalled that the AMANI Africa Exercise is one of the main tools deployed in support of the development of the ASF. It aims at evaluating the state of readiness towards the achievement of full operational capability of the ASF by December 2015. Once the ASF is operationalized, it will consist of standby arrangements within Africa's five regions composed of multi-dimensional capabilities, including military, police and civilian, anchored in their countries of origin and ready for rapid deployment in the event of a crisis. The responsibility of mandating Peace Support Operations (PSOs) at the continental level will be with the African Union, which calls for a coherent and coordinated response to any potential crisis. The final Field Training Exercise will be hosted by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in South Africa from 19 October to 7 November 2015.

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