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MEDIA RELEASE

LANDMARK AMANI AFRICA II FIELD TRAINING EXERCISE CONCLUDES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Lohatla, South Africa, 9 November 2015: The landmark AMANI AFRICA II Field Training Exercise concluded yesterday with a remarkable display of solidarity among the standby brigades that constitute the African Standby Force (ASF). The Exercise, which officially opened on 19 October 2015, culminated in the closing ceremony held at the South African Army Combat Training Centre, in Lohatla.

Presiding over the Distinguished Visitors Day and Closing Ceremony of the Exercise, President Jacob Zuma of South Africa stressed that the Exercise was a turning point in Africa's collective quest for peace and security. *"Today is a historic day in the quest for peace and security in Africa. It demonstrates the positive relationships between African military, police and civilians and, more importantly, the collaboration between the respective home countries of these forces. Today marks an important step towards improved relations between the African regional blocks and the African Union at continental level,"* said President Zuma.

Speaking at the same function, the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, thanked the host nation, South Africa, and the regional standby brigades for availing their capacities and resources for the Exercise. *"Over 6,000 military, police and civilian officers from across all five standby brigades participated in the Exercise at both the strategic headquarters, in Addis Ababa, and here in South Africa,"* he added.

In his remarks, the Chair of the Southern African Development Community Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, Mozambique's Defence Minister Atanásio M'tumuke, said the Exercise would go a long way towards enhancing the



understanding and practice of multidimensional and multinational peace support operation and improving interoperability among the regional brigades of the ASF.

The closing ceremony witnessed a spectacular array of demonstrations, including a march out parade, displays by police and civilian components, a simulated air strike and artillery bombardment, as well as a simulated attack by the ASF and parachute jumps.

The ASF successfully tested its Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC) as a start up operation and its capacity to transition into a full multidimensional peace support operation. The Exercise further tested the ASF's level of readiness for Full Operational Capability (FOC) based on the African Union training doctrine and objectives.

This was the first ever Field Exercise undertaken by the African Union Commission at continental level. It was designed to address gaps identified during the AMANI AFRICA Command Post-Exercise (CPX), conducted in October 2010 in Addis Ababa.

The Exercise brought together planners from the AU, SADC, Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC), mentors, experts, evaluators and partners from the European Union, the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

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