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**PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
158th MEETING
19 NOVEMBER 2008
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

PSC/PR/Comm.(CLVIII)

PRESS STATEMENT

**PRESS STATEMENT OF THE 158TH MEETING OF THE
PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL**

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 158th meeting held on 19 November 2008, was briefed by the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Ambassador Rogelio Pfrter, on the status of implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the work of the OPCW since the entry into force of the Convention in 1997.

Council was informed about the activities and programmes of the OPCW, especially in Africa, in the areas of assistance and protection against chemical weapons, as well as the contribution made by African States towards achieving the goals of the CWC.

Council recalled the decision AHG/Dec. 181 (XXXVIII) on the Universality and Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in Africa, adopted by the last session of the OAU Assembly, held in Durban, South Africa, in July 2002. Council lauded the 50 African States that have become parties to the Convention, which represents Africa's strong support for the Convention and its goals, including the establishment of a world free of chemical weapons in which international cooperation in the peaceful uses of chemistry is fostered.

Council called on those Member States that have not yet acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention to do so urgently and encouraged all African States Parties to the Convention to continue to strengthen their cooperation with the OPCW in achieving the goals of the Convention in Africa. Council further encouraged the Commission and the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW to strengthen liaison and coordination of activities in the context of the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the two institutions in Khartoum, in January 2006. In this respect, Council called on the OPCW to explore the possibility of establishing a liaison office with the African Union.

Council expressed concern that there are still some challenges in meeting the final deadline for the complete destruction of all chemical weapons stockpiles, and exhorted the remaining chemical weapons possessor States to take into account the deadline of 2012.

Addis Ababa , 19 November 2008

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