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**PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
157th MEETING
14 NOVEMBER 2008
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

PSC/PR/Comm(CLVII)

PRESS STATEMENT

**PRESS STATEMENT OF THE 157TH MEETING OF THE
PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL**

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 157th meeting held in Addis Ababa on 14 November 2008, was briefed by Mr. Djibrill Yipene Bassole, AU-UN Joint Chief Mediator for Darfur, on the political process in Darfur, including on consultations underway with the various stakeholders, as well as by the Representatives of the Government of Sudan.

Council expressed its support to the AU-UN Joint Chief Mediator and urged all Sudanese parties to fully cooperate with him in order to facilitate the early resumption of the political dialogue and the conclusion of a comprehensive peace agreement that builds on the Darfur Peace Agreement signed in Abuja on 5 May 2006, and to address all the issues at hand, including those relating to the combating of impunity and the promotion of reconciliation and healing in Darfur.

Council expressed its support to the African-Arab Initiative led by the State of Qatar, whose objective is to facilitate the resolution of the Darfur crisis and to support the efforts of the AU-UN mediation.

Council welcomed the outcome of the recently concluded Sudan People's Forum, which constitutes a positive step towards political dialogue and reconciliation. In particular, Council welcomed the decision made by President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir for a unilateral ceasefire and disarmament of armed militias in Darfur and looks forward to an early and effective implementation of this decision. Council urged all parties to the conflict to respond positively to the call made by President Bashir for an immediate cessation of all forms of hostilities. Council encouraged the Government of Sudan to continue its efforts for national dialogue.

Council recalled the hybrid nature of the ongoing process in Darfur and encouraged the Commission, as well as the Joint Chief Mediator, to take all necessary steps to ensure that the AU plays its role in the conduct of the mediation.

Addis Ababa, 14 November 2008