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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, P.O. Box: 3243 Tel.: (251-11) 5513 822 Fax: (251-11) 5519 321  
Email: situationroom@africa-union.org

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#### **Statement by the African Union Commission on Cooperation and Assistance**

Thank you Mr. President. Since this is the first time I am taking the floor, Let me start by congratulating you for assuming presidency of this meeting, and thank you for the manner in which you are running the meeting, and assure you of the full support of my delegation.

Mr. President, the African Union continues to assist its Member States towards meeting their obligations under the convention, and it does this in cooperation and partnership with various partners.

The ICRC has been a long term partner in tackling the problem of landmines in our Member states, and so is the UNMAS. The EU is a long-term partner in the area of peace and security, and the ISU have been invaluable.

In line with the spirit of strengthening assistance, Mr. President, the AU in collaboration with the ICRC, will convene a meeting targeting the most affected African Union member states, focusing on key challenges on meeting mine clearance deadlines under the mine ban convention - and also obligations under the convention on cluster munitions early march 2013.

The African union is also holding a series of discussions with UNMAS on how best to strengthen cooperation to assist our member states in a coordinated manner.

The AU will also hold a briefing with its members today from 13:30-14:30 to exchange views on how to strengthen the role of the AU in assisting member states meet their obligations under the convention - focusing on intra-Africa cooperation.

It is our hope that continued cooperation to this end will enhance synergy in assisting contaminated member states attain the ultimate goal of becoming mine free.

I thank you Mr. President.