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**Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (4MSP)
9-13 September 2013
Lusaka, Zambia**

**Statement by the African Union
delivered by
Dr. Tarek A. Sharif
Head of the Defense and Security Division
Peace and Security Department**

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,

On behalf of the African Union, I would like to congratulate you on your election as Chairperson of the Fourth Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. I am confident that you will steer the work of the Conference to a successful conclusion, and assure you of the AU's full support.

I also, at the outset, want to thank the government of the Republic of Zambia for hosting this meeting. This should not come as a surprise because of the active role Zambia continues to play in the advancement of the Convention, which dates far back to the negotiations that led to its signing.

In the course of this meeting, States Parties to the convention are expected to give updates on their experiences in implementing the treaty obligations. They will also take key decisions to support the universalization and implementation of the Convention. It is also expected that States that have not yet joined the Convention will give updates on steps they are taking towards joining the Convention.

The inclusion of a high level segment in the meeting in which Ministers of Foreign Affairs and External Relations are expected to participate is a

welcome innovation by the host and it is my hope that it will contribute to the universalization efforts for the treaty.

Mr. Chairperson,

The African Union continues to support its Member States towards meeting their obligations under the Treaty. This is not only because support to multilateral instruments that the African Union is committed to supporting, but also because at least 11 of its Member States are affected by Cluster Munitions.

The Livingstone Conference on cluster munitions, held from 31 March to 1 April 2008 in Livingstone, Zambia resulted into the “Livingstone Declaration” in which States noted that cluster munitions cause unacceptable harm to innocent civilians and must therefore be subject to a legally binding international convention that prohibits their production, stockpiling, transfer and use. Since the entry into force of the Convention on 1st August 2010, 13 AU Member States have joined it, and the AU will continue to encourage those Member States that have not, to accede to the convention. Indeed, the entry into force of the Convention is a major achievement.

It can also be recalled that the Republic of Togo hosted the “Lomé Regional Seminar on the Universalization of the CCM”, in cooperation with the governments of the Republic of Ghana and Republic of Zambia, that took place in May 2013 in Lomé, Togo, for which the AU wishes to express its

thanks. In this meeting, participants reaffirmed their support and commitment to the goal of attaining a cluster munitions free Africa through universal adherence to the CCM.

Similarly, the AU thanks the government of the Republic of Ghana for hosting the “Accra Regional Conference on the Universalization of the CCM that was held in May 2012 in Accra, Ghana. The meeting, among others, considered the challenges faced by African States on the ratification of the CCM, or accession to it, and how best to assist African States Parties in fulfilling their obligations under the Convention.

AU Member States are significantly affected by cluster munitions, in spite of the fact that only a handful of them produce or stockpile them. I therefore wish to commend the organisers of this meeting, a testimony to the commitment that AU Member States have to ensuring that one day, not only Africa, but the world at large, will be free of Cluster Munitions.

Mr. President,

The African Union has taken several steps towards ensuring that the issue of weapons contamination within AU Member States is taken seriously and given the required attention. Towards this, the African Union in close collaboration with UNMAS and the ICRC is working at providing vital support to Member States. Indeed, the Commission has been able to convene a weapons contamination workshop in collaboration with the ICRC in March 2013, undertake an assessment mission with UNMAS of the Benin

De-mining institute in June 2013 in-order to determine how best the Centre can be strengthened with technical support and last but not least, the Commission will be organising it's first ever De-mining training in December 2013 to be offered to the most affected Member States. The Commission is also in the process of developing a Mine Action Project document that will see the Commission role out activities in support of Member States Mine action programs for the years 2014-2016.

The African Union is further working towards supporting Member States that are outside of International Conventions but are still ravaged by landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war. The Commission remains committed to encouraged these Member States to sign and ratify these conventions.

Mr President,

As the saying goes, **UNIVERSALIZATION IS SHARED COMMITMENT**. On behalf of the AU, I would like to encourage not only AU Member States, especially States Parties to the convention, but the world at large, including civil society, to continue to promote the CCM in Africa and the world over so that those countries that have not ratified it do so and accede to the Convention. In conclusion and on behalf of the African Union, I wish the conference fruitful deliberations.

I thank you.