

**PRESS RELEASE N°090/2011****THE AU ADDS A 54th STAR TO ITS FLAG**

Addis Ababa, 15th August 2011 – “This is a historic day for South Sudan and for the African Continent as well.” It is with these words that Dr. Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, warmly welcomed General Sallva Kiir Mayardit, President of the Republic of South Sudan, at the headquarters of the African Union in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia.

Before the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of foreign Affairs of Ethiopia, Ministers, AU Commissioners, the Deputy Executive Secretary of the UN-ECA, Ambassadors, and an enthusiastic South Sudanese Delegation, Dr. Jean Ping celebrated the official admission celebration of South Sudan to the African Union. He announced that the African Union Member States had promptly accepted the Republic of South Sudan as the 54th Member State of the African Union. Inviting the South Sudanese delegation to take place among its peers, Dr Ping encouraged South Sudan to play a significant in the activities of the Union and to share its experience by bring “fresh ideas, new blood, experience and skills in diplomacy and peacemaking”. However, he expressed his wish to see the leaderships of South Sudan and Sudan working “towards ensuring lasting peace and stability”. Speaking of a “crucial moment” for the Republic of South Sudan, Mr Ping mentioned the pending organization of an African Solidarity Conference by the AU Ministerial Committee on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development for Sudan “with the view to mobilizing support for the new nation, from within and outside Africa”.

In his statement General Salva Kiir Mayardit, President of the Republic of South Sudan, declared that his country had already drawn the conclusion of the “longest civil war in Africa” and chosen “freedom, justice and equality” as key words for the future. He also asserted that South Sudanese people are aware of the enormous challenge the country is already facing and promised to “do everything possible to realize a smooth and successful transition”, living in peace with the “brothers and sisters” of the Republic of Sudan, and to take the Declaration of Independence of South Sudan “as the beginning of a new struggle”.

As a joyful conclusion, a Sudanese fanfare played the national anthem during the Flag-Raising ceremony.