



**Press Release by the African Union on the first edition of the Africa Day on
Decentralization and local Development**

Addis-Ababa, 10 August 2012 – Today, 10 August 2012, the **African Union** (AU) is celebrating the first edition of the Africa Day on Decentralization and Local Development. Adopted during the January 2012 Summit, the Day aims not only to remind all Africans living on the continent and in the Diaspora of the importance of decentralization in the edification of Africa, but also of the important contribution of local governments in the development of African Union Member States and the territories therein. In celebrating it every year, the Day should afford State and non-State stakeholders the opportunity to focus special attention on the challenges engendered and the opportunities afforded by decentralization and local governance.

This first ever edition of the Africa Day on Decentralization and Local Development is being celebrated under the theme: *“financing decentralization, public services delivery and local development”*. On this occasion, Madam Julia Dolly Joiner, Commissioner for Political Affairs of the African Union has, in a message thereon urged *“all member States of the African Union to honor their commitments with respect to transfer of resources to local governments as well as enhance the financial capacities of the latter”*. She is also reminding them of the need to *“strengthen mechanisms for transparency and accountability in the management of the resources transferred to local governments”* in light of the three legal instruments of the African Union relevant to governance, to wit the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (2003), the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007) and the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration (2011). The aim is effectively to *“prevent corruption that generally results in illicit enrichment and huge loss of resources intended for public services delivery and the development of our territories”*.

In her message, Madam Joiner is also urging all Member States of the African Union to celebrate the Day with *“enthusiasm, fervor and real commitment”* either by organizing brainstorming sessions on the chosen theme or by sharing decentralization and local development success stories and rewarding good practices thereon. Indeed, it is by identifying and rewarding (...) the best practices and by carrying out critical reflection thereon with the intent to promote and disseminate pioneering practices that it will be possible for them to learn from each other and forge ahead together towards States that are better governed at all levels to satisfy the needs of the population and meet development demands. (The full message is available at the AU website: www.au.int).

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