



PRESS RELEASE:

Main Planning Conference of the AMANI AFRICA II Field Training Exercise Opens in Gaborone

Gaborone, 9 October 2013; The African Union (AU) High Representative for the Operationalization of the African Standby Force (ASF), General Sékouba Konaté, today, in Gaborone, opened the Main Planning Conference of the AMANI AFRICA II Field Training Exercise.

The three-day Main Planning Conference brings together planners from the AU Commission, the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), the European Union (EU), the United Nations and other partners to strategize on the rollout of the remaining activities under the AMANI AFRICA cycle. The overall objective of the Exercise is to validate the capacity of the AU to mandate and employ a Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC) of the African Standby Force (ASF), as a start-up operation, and to run a full multidimensional peace support operation.

In line with the implementation of the ASF Roadmap III, the final field training exercise is slated for October 2014 in Lesotho. This exercise is one of the main tools to support the development of the ASF, and will serve to evaluate the state of readiness towards the achievement of Full Operational Capability in 2015.

“By opting to equip the AU with the ASF, African leaders made a landmark decision, considering the violent and resurgent conflicts that undermine our development efforts, while taking a heavy toll on human lives,” said General Konaté during his opening remarks. He further called on AU Member States to demonstrate greater ownership of the ASF by increasing their funding towards its operationalization.

Speaking during the event, the AMANI AFRICA II Exercise Director, General Samaila Iliya, thanked the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for accepting to host the exercise and Lesotho for its commitment to ensuring its success. SADC Executive Secretary, Stergomena L. Tax, assured the AU of the region’s continued support towards the effective completion of the Exercise Cycle and, consequently, the operationalization ASF. She made these remarks during a courtesy call paid to her office by General Konaté ahead of the Main Planning conference.

Among the key speakers at the Conference was the EU representative, who hailed the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and its Action Plan in the area of peace and security. He expressed his firm conviction that the synergy between the respective AU and EU efforts would achieve greater results on the road towards the full operationalization of ASF.