Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton on the agreement between Sudan and South Sudan on a timetable for implementing the Addis Agreements

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission issued the following statement today:

"I welcome the comprehensive implementation matrix signed by Sudan and South Sudan which sets out a detailed timetable and modalities for implementing the nine agreements concluded in Addis on 27 September 2012. I congratulate both Governments on reaching this agreement.

It is important that all nine agreements will now be implemented in accordance with the matrix, leading to the rapid establishment of a Safe Demilitarised Border Zone, deployment of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, resumption of oil exports from South Sudan, reopening of cross-border trade and clarification of the status of nationals of the other state. The matrix also sets clear timelines for the establishment of temporary administrative and security institutions in the Abyei Area and for the process of settling the status of the five disputed areas and claimed border areas.

The European Union wants to see Sudan and South Sudan living together peacefully as two viable states and strongly believes that, if fully implemented, these agreements will bring substantial benefits to the people of both countries.

I commend the tireless efforts of the AU High Level Implementation Panel led by former President Mbeki and urge the Parties to continue their positive engagement to resolve all outstanding issues. The European Union stands ready to support the implementation process.

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Given the dire humanitarian and security situation in Sudan's Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states, I also call on the Government of Sudan and SPLM/North to begin talks as soon as possible to address the urgent need for a cessation of hostilities, humanitarian access and a longer term political solution to the conflict, as stipulated in UNSCR 2046."