



Joint Press release

Chairperson Ping officially inaugurates the Satellite Receiving Station of the AU- African monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable development (AU-AMESD)

Addis Ababa, 29 April 2009- The Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) Dr. Jean Ping, today, Wednesday 29 April 2009 inaugurated the Satellite Receiving Station of the AU- African monitoring of the Environment for Sustainable development (AU-AMESD).

The event also included a presentation of the activities of the AU-AMESD Project and of the European Organization for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellite (EUMETSAT) which has been providing technical support to the AMESD program.

AMESD Programme is funded through the European Development Fund for 21 millions euros. It is aimed at promoting the use of Earth Observation monitoring technologies in support of the development of policies in the management of the African environment and for sustainable development of natural resources. The Programme would facilitate better dissemination of environment information for improved decision-making processes, development of coherent and sound policies across a wide spectrum in the field of environment – such as water and food security. The project is a first concrete action in the field of environment within the framework of the Africa – European Union strategic partnership. It is contributing to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets, as well as African Water Vision 2025 and the targets of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

During the inauguration ceremony AUC Chairperson, Dr Jean Ping, commended the European Union for supporting the AMESD Programme as well as the five participating Regional Economic Communities and regional organizations – ECOWAS, CEMAC, IGAD, IOC, SADC and ACP Secretariat for the confidence placed on the AU Commission by designating the AU Commission as the Delegated Regional Authorizing Officer (DRAO) of the AMESD Programme. “Furthermore, I want to convey our thanks to EUMETSAT for allowing the free downloading of meteorological satellite data for environmental applications” Mr. Ping explained.

The launching ceremony at the headquarters of the African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, took place in the presence of Mrs. Rhoda Peace Tumusiime,

Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture of the African Union , Dr. Elham Mahmoud Ahmed Ibrahim, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy of the African Union , Mr Basher Abdullahi Ayadarus, Ethiopian Minister of Agriculture, Dr Lars Prahm , Director General of the European organization and Mr Christophe Kamp, acting representative of the European Union delegation to the African Union

AMSED programme would contribute to improving the lives and prospects of over 350 millions people in 46 African countries currently enduring poverty and hardship, and whose livelihoods depend heavily on their environment.

All the statements addressed during the inauguration ceremony are available on the joint EU-AU web site and the African union web site: www.Africa-union.org