



## ***Press Release***

### **THE CHAIRPERSON EXPRESSES CONDOLENCE ON THE PASSING AWAY OF NOBEL LAUREATE, PROF. WANGARI MAATHAI**



***Addis Ababa, 26 September 2011-***

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr Jean Ping, has received with deep regrets, the passing away of Nobel Laureate, Professor Wangari Maathai on 25 September 2011. In this regard, he wishes to extend his condolence to her immediate family, the Government and People of Kenya and the wider community of the African Union.

Professor Wangari Matthai's life was exemplary. Her Nobel Prize was an African achievement while her efforts to ensure conservation of our natural heritage and create a "green belt movement" remain a unique contribution to the cause of humanity and mankind as a whole. Interestingly also, she was not content to relax and enjoy her well deserved recognition and accolades but chose to become involved in the "rough and tumble" politics in Kenya in order to promote the greater well being of her people and advance the cause of good governance, democracy and justice.

Her commitment in this regard went far beyond Kenya. Indeed within the African Union her record as the first Presiding Officer of the Interim Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union was outstanding, as she played a key role in the development of the people-centered African Union as contained in its Constitutive Act.

Professor Maathai successfully organized the continent- wide elections that ushered in the first civil society parliament of its kind in the annals of international organizations. She also managed the evolution and development of ECOSOCC, in a manner that fostered the progressive development of state-society relations on the continent. Within ECOSOCC, she promoted purposeful, peaceful and productive interactions that

enabled the Organ to contribute meaningfully to the integration and development agenda of the continent.

The Commission of the African Union collaborated with her in the enterprise and in the process learnt to adore and respect her humility, simplicity, maturity, candor, honesty and integrity of action and purpose. She remains steadfast in our memory as one of the true inspirational leaders of the African Union community and family.

May her soul rest in peace.

**END**