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**THE AU TO CONVENE THE SECOND CONTINENTAL CONFERENCE OF
AFRICAN EXPERTS ON LANDMINES**

From 15 to 17 September 2004, the African Union will convene, at its headquarters, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the second Continental Conference of African Experts on Landmines. The Conference, which aims to elaborate a Common African Position, based on the relevant decisions of the OAU/AU, in particular the Kempton Park Plan of Action of May 1997 and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (the Ottawa Convention), will bring together Experts from the AU Member States dealing with various aspects of the landmines issue, along with observer states and organizations.

The Conference follows the 5th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the AU, held in Addis Ababa, from 30 June to 3 July 2004, which adopted a decision, requesting the AU Commission to convene a meeting of Experts in September 2004, in Addis Ababa, to elaborate a Common African Position on Landmines. The Conference will also assess the challenges that remain in clearing mined areas and assisting victims in Africa with a view to feeding this information in to the Nairobi Summit on a Mine -Free World, which is to be held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 29 November 2004 to 3 December 2004.

The report of the Experts meeting will be considered by an AU ministerial meeting to be held on the margins of the UN General Assembly session on 24 September 2004. The African Common Position will subsequently be submitted to the Nairobi Summit on a Mine -Free World, which is the name given to the Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention.

At this Nairobi Summit, world leaders will renew commitments to end the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines and adopt an action plan to ensure the effective application of the Ottawa Convention between 2005 and 2009.

To date 143 states, including 48 African states have joined the Ottawa Convention.

Addis Ababa, 14 September 2004