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PRESS RELEASE

THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION RECEIVES AN EMISSARY OF PRESIDENT PIERRE NKURUNZIZA OF BURUNDI

**The AU welcomes the commitment of the Burundian authorities to continue working towards
the consolidation of peace and reconciliation in their country**

Addis Ababa, 5 May 2014: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, today received the Minister of External Relations and International Cooperation of the Republic of Burundi, Mr. Laurent Kavakuré. The Minister conveyed a message from President Pierre Nkurunziza regarding the situation in Burundi and the ongoing efforts to hold free, fair and peaceful elections next year. The President also invited the Chairperson of the Commission to officially visit Burundi.

During the meeting, the Chairperson of the Commission and the Burundian Minister had an in-depth exchange of views on the situation. The Minister briefed the Chairperson on the progress made by Burundi in recent years to consolidate peace and reconciliation, and stressed his country's determination to preserve these achievements. He highlighted the steps being taken towards the successful holding of the 2015 general elections, and invited the AU to observe these polls. He reiterated his country's support to the AU-led peace efforts in different parts of the continent, as demonstrated by Burundi's contribution of troops and police personnel to AU's peace support operations.

On her part, the Chairperson of the Commission commended the commitment of the Burundian authorities to continue working towards the consolidation of peace and reconciliation in their country. She encouraged them and all the other stakeholders to work towards that endeavor, within the framework of the August 2000 landmark Arusha Accord for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi, and to address effectively all the challenges at hand, including concerns raised recently on security issues, with a view to successfully holding the 2015 general elections. Recalling the exceptional international engagement that made it possible to break the cycle of violence in Burundi, she reiterated the AU's determination to continue accompanying the Burundian stakeholders and people in their efforts towards sustainable peace, stability and development.

The Chairperson of the Commission informed the Minister that the AU would send long- and short-term observers to monitor the electoral process, and ensure that it is conducted in line with the relevant AU instruments, including the Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. The Chairperson also informed the Minister of her acceptance of the invitation extended to her by President Pierre Nkurunziza to visit Burundi, and indicated that she would do so soon.

