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PRESS RELEASE

THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AU COMMISSION LOOKS FORWARD TO WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE NEW AU PANEL OF THE WISE

Addis Ababa, 9 July 2014: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, looks forward to working closely with the new members of the AU Panel of the Wise. At their 23rd Ordinary Summit, held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, on 26 and 27 June 2014, the Heads of State and Government endorsed the proposals she made for the appointment of the five new members of the Panel, who are:

- Dr Lakhdar Brahimi, from Algeria, for North Africa;
- Mr Edem Kodjo, from Togo, for West Africa;
- Dr Albina Faria de Assis Pereira Africano, from Angola, for Central Africa;
- Dr Luisa Diogo, from Mozambique, for Southern Africa; and
- Dr Specioza Naigaga Wandira Kazibwe, from Uganda, for East Africa.

The new members of the Panel are due to assume office in September 2014, at a ceremony to be held at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa. They will seize that opportunity to review and adopt their programme of work. The Chairperson of the Commission is confident that the new members of the Panel will give additional momentum to the AU's efforts in conflict prevention, building on the work carried out so far. In line with relevant provisions of the Protocol that established the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the AU policy making organs have, over the past few years, repeatedly emphasized the need for renewed efforts towards conflict prevention in Africa.

The Chairperson of the Commission seizes this opportunity to pay tribute to the outgoing members of the Panel of the Wise, which was chaired by late President Ahmed Ben Bella. Former President Kenneth Kaunda, Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, Madame Marie Madeleine Kalala-Ngoy, and Dr Mary Chinery Hesse will now become Friends of the Panel.

NOTE TO THE EDITORS

About the establishment and mandate of the Panel of the Wise: The AU Panel of the Wise is one of the components of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), as provided for in the 2002 Peace and Security Council (PSC) Protocol. The Panel, which was launched in Addis Ababa, in December 2007, is composed of five highly respected African personalities who have made outstanding contribution to the cause of peace, security and development on the continent. They are selected by the Chairperson of the Commission after consultation with the Member States concerned, and appointed by the Assembly of the Union to serve for a period of three years.

The Panel is mandated to support the efforts of the PSC and those of the Chairperson of the Commission, particularly in the area of conflict prevention. The Panel may advise the PSC and the Chairperson of the Commission on all matters within their respective competences; carry out fact-finding missions as an instrument of conflict prevention; encourage parties, where appropriate, to engage in political dialogue; and promote confidence-building measures. The Panel may also pronounce itself on any issue relating to the promotion and maintenance of peace, security and stability in Africa.

About the work of the Panel of the Wise: Since its inception, the Panel of the Wise has undertaken a number of thematic reflections on issues relevant to conflict prevention and peace-building, namely:

- election-related disputes and conflicts;
- impunity, justice and national reconciliation;
- women and children in armed conflicts; and
- democratization and governance.

The thematic reflection on election-related conflicts and violence was initiated following the post-election crisis in Kenya in December 2007. The report of the Panel on this issue and its recommendations were adopted in July 2009 by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

The decision of the Panel to reflect on fighting impunity, along with its relationship to truth, justice and reconciliation in Africa, was taken in November 2008, following renewed debate on this topic.

The choice of the topic of women and children in armed conflicts was informed by the empirical evidence, accumulated over decades, confirming that women and children suffer most wherever and whenever there is a breakdown of social order, rule of law and ascendance of violence. The report of the Panel will be submitted in due course to the relevant AU organs.

The decision to devote a thematic reflection to the implications of the popular uprisings in North Africa for the democratization processes in Africa is in response to the request made by the 275th meeting of the PSC, held in Addis Ababa, on 26 April

2011, for the Panel to undertake a comprehensive review of the existing mechanisms relating to democratization and governance in Africa, and make recommendations to it.

In addition to its thematic reflections, the Panel of the Wise has undertaken a number of field missions in support of democratization and transition processes on the continent.

The Panel of the Wise works closely with the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). It has undertaken joint activities with the Committee of Elders of COMESA, the Council of the Wise of ECOWAS, as well as the Secretariats of IGAD, SADC and the ICGLR. In May 2013, the AU Assembly decided to establish an umbrella mechanism called the Pan African Network of the Wise (PANWISE). PANWISE brings together mediation institutions and actors across the continent, with a view to building synergies among all concerned.

About the new members of the Panel of the Wise: The new members of the Panel of the Wise were elected by the AU Summit held in Malabo, on 26 and 27 June 2014. These are:

- a) for North Africa, Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi from Algeria – Mr. Brahimi held senior positions in his country, notably as Ambassador to several countries, from 1963 to 1979, and Foreign Minister, from 1991 to 1993. He also held senior positions in the League of Arab States and the United Nations, including as Special Envoy;
- b) for West Africa, Mr. Edem Kodjo from Togo. Mr. Kodjo has been Finance and Foreign Minister from 1976 to 1978, as well as Prime Minister, from 1994 to 1996. He also served as Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, from 1978 to 1983;
- c) for Central Africa, Dr. Albina Faria Assis Pereira Africano from Angola. Dr. Africano has been Minister of Petroleum from 1992 to 1999 and Minister of Industry from 1999 to 2000. She also held the position of Special Advisor to the President for Regional Affairs;
- d) for East Africa, Dr. Spesiosa Wandira from Uganda. Dr. Wandira has been Minister of Gender and Community Development from 1991 to 1994, Member of Parliament and, from 1994 to 2003, Vice-President of Uganda. She also chaired the African Women Committee on Peace and Development; and
- e) for Southern Africa, Dr. Luisa Diogo from Mozambique. Dr. Diogo held several ministerial portfolios. She was Deputy Minister of Finance, then Planning and Finance Minister. From 2004 to 2010, she was Prime Minister.