



PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION WELCOMES THE LAUNCH OF THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE INTER-MALIAN PEACE TALKS

Addis Ababa, 17 July 2014: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, welcomes the launch, yesterday, in Algiers, of the first phase of the Inter-Malian Inclusive Dialogue, which should continue until 26 July 2014. The UA was represented at the ceremony by a delegation headed by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, and comprising particularly former President Pierre Buyoya, High Representative for Mali and the Sahel.

The Chairperson of the Commission urges the Malian stakeholders to seize the opportunity afforded by the Algiers Talks to embark on a frank and open dialogue with a view to finding a negotiated and consensual solution to the current crisis, within the framework of the respect of the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Mali. She stressed the need for the stakeholders to build on the significant achievements that are the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement, concluded on 18 June 2013, under the auspices of Presidents Blaise Compaore and Goodluck Jonathan, Mediator and Associated Mediator of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as on the Algiers Declaration and Platform, signed by the Malian armed movements, on 9 and 14 June 2014 respectively.

The Chairperson of the Commission notes with satisfaction the renewed commitment of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and of his Government to work for a peaceful and sustainable solution, as well as the commitment expressed by the armed movements to respect the unity and territorial integrity of Mali. She welcomes the release, on the eve of the Algiers Talks, of prisoners held by both sides, stressing that the latter constitutes a confidence-building measure and a boost for the chances of success of the ongoing dialogue.

The Chairperson of the Commission expresses the full support of the AU to the efforts made by the Algerian Government, under the authority of the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, in order to help the Malian stakeholders to take up the challenges faced by their countries. She welcomes the commitment of the other countries in the region participating in the High Level Consultation meetings on the Inter-Malian Dialogue (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania and Niger) and that of ECOWAS, as well as the mobilisation of international partners, in support of the ongoing process.

The AU, which contributes, alongside ECOWAS, the United Nations, the European Union and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, to the facilitation led by Algeria, will continue to provide its support to the negotiations through its High Representative for Mali and the Sahel and the experts who assist him.