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PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION WELCOMES THE OUTCOMES OF THE VISIT OF THE AU HIGH-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION PANEL TO SUDAN

Addis Ababa, 7 November 2014: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, welcomes the outcomes of the visit of the AU High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP) to Sudan, undertaken from 4 to 6 November 2014. During its visit, the AUHIP met with a cross section of the Sudanese stakeholders, including Senior Government officials, the National Dialogue 7+7 Steering Committee, the National Consensus Forum, women civil society groups, as well as other opposition groups. The AUHIP was received in audience by President Omar Hassan Al Bashir.

The AUHIP was informed that, on 2 November 2014, the first General Assembly of the National Dialogue was convened, with the participation of various Sudanese political parties. In this regard, the Chairperson of the Commission commends the General Assembly for adopting the Addis Ababa Agreement of 5 September 2014 between the 7+7 Steering Committee and the Paris Declaration Group. She also commends the General Assembly for endorsing the proposal to convene the 7+7 Steering Committee with the armed movements at the AU Commission, in Addis Ababa, during the month of November 2014. The AUHIP was informed that this meeting would brief the armed movements on the National Dialogue process, including presenting them with all documents submitted to and endorsed by the General Assembly hitherto, the procedure of calling the National Dialogue and the various structures of the National Dialogue. This is intended to create an enabling environment and building trust between the parties involved. Most of all, this meeting is designed to achieve the strategic principle of inclusivity that should facilitate ownership of the process by all Sudanese.

The Chairperson of the Commission notes with satisfaction that the AUHIP also shared the concerns of the opposition parties and civil society groups with the 7+7 Steering Committee. In this regard, the 7+7 Steering Committee agreed to develop a methodology that ensures timely sharing of critical information with the Sudanese nation, including through regular interactions with all Sudanese stakeholders. The Chairperson of the Commission acknowledges that such steps are in line with the understanding that this is a national process that should be conducted in a transparent, inclusive and fair manner such that it could be owned by the people of Sudan.

The Chairperson of the Commission welcomes the commitment expressed by the Government of Sudan that negotiations on cessation of hostilities, immediately leading to a comprehensive security arrangements agreement, shall resume on 12 and 22 November, in Addis Ababa, with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement – North (SPLM/N) and the Darfur movements, respectively. These shall be conducted under the auspices of the AUHIP and in collaboration with the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and the Joint Special Representative for the AU-United Nations Hybrid Operation (UNAMID), respectively.

In light of the communiqué of the 456th meeting of the Peace and Security Council and the 7+7 Roadmap, the Chairperson of the Commission wishes to underscore that all the Sudanese stakeholders should immediately establish a conducive environment for the holding of the National Dialogue. She encourages the Government to expedite its efforts towards implementing the agreed confidence-building measures, including the release of all political detainees and prisoners, as well as the adoption and implementation of all necessary steps to ensure political freedoms.

The AU, through the AUHIP, remains committed to working with the Sudanese people in the search for a lasting solution to the various challenges facing them.