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UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia P. O. Box 3243 Telephone: +251 11 551 7700 / +251 11 518 25 58/ Ext 2558

website: www.au.int

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

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AU Commission Chairperson concludes Burundi visit with cautious optimism

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – 27 March 2015: The Chairperson of the African Union Commission Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, concluded on Friday 27 March 2015, a two-day official visit to Burundi.

During her visit, the Chairperson held consultations with various Burundian stakeholders, including the Head of State President Pierre Nkurunziza, the minister of interior, leaders of political parties, representatives of women, youth and civil society organizations, religious communities, the Elders known as Bashingantahe, as well as the President of the National Independent Electoral Commission. The Chairperson also met with the African diplomatic corps, as well as the Ambassadors of Belgium, China, France, Russia, the United States, and the representative of the European Union. The Chairperson also visited the UNDP-run the Data Processing Center to acquaint herself with the status of preparations of the voter registers.

In her meetings and address to the media, the Chairperson insisted that “Burundi remains at the heart of AU because it is a country that has gone through a lot of challenges. Therefore, everything should be done to ensure that there is peace before, during and after the elections.”

The Chairperson also urged all Burundian stakeholders to respect the laws of the country and adhere to the constitution, the Arusha Peace Agreement, and the electoral code as they prepare to go to the polls.

The Chairperson also called on all the parties to engage in dialogue as the only way to deal peacefully with all contentious issues, including insecurity in the country, the

credibility of the electoral process, and the tension over a possible third term for the incumbent Head of State. She appealed to political parties to increase women's representations in all the branches of government and assured the people of Burundi that the AU will continue to stand by them as it had done in the past.