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**PRESS RELEASE**

**AU Commission Initiative against Trafficking (AU.COMMIT) Campaign**

Libreville, 03 December 2012 – His Excellency Dr. Mustapha Sidiki Kaloko, Commissioner for Social Affairs of the African Union Commission (AUC) on 03 December 2012 presided at the official opening ceremony of the Regional Consultative Workshop for the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and North African Member States on the operationalisation of the Ouagadougou Action Plan in Libreville, Gabon.

The three-day workshop, hosted by the Africa Union Commission, in collaboration with ECCAS, the Gabonese Ministry of Family Affairs and Social Welfare and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), will bring together participants from all ECCAS Member States, North African AU Member States, the African Union Commission, and international partners.

The consultative workshop will foster effective ways of networking, coordination and cooperation among Member States and partners to address trafficking in persons in a more strategic and programmatic manner. It is aimed to sensitise Member States on the operationalisation of the Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, and on the regional launching of the AU. COMMIT campaign, which endeavours to raise awareness of the AU’s continued commitment towards addressing the problem of trafficking in human beings throughout the continent. The AU. COMMIT campaign is aimed at galvanising activities undertaken by the AU Commission, including global, regional and national initiatives towards more synergised and coordinated actions to combat trafficking in persons in Africa.

The Workshop will further discuss the development of policy indicators, setting of benchmarks, follow-up and monitoring mechanisms, and identification and dissemination of best practices in support of the implementation of the Ouagadougou Action Plan and the AU.COMMIT Campaign.

Trafficking in persons is one of the fastest growing criminal activities in the world, which results in serious challenges and breaches to humanity. In order to address it seriously, better cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination is required for which regional and sub-regional mechanisms play a key role in providing a response that is both multilateral and sufficiently close to countries’ realities and specificities within regions.

It is expected that the workshop will formulate a clear way forward on the translation of the Ouagadougou Action Plan into measures and common standards for preventing trafficking, prosecuting traffickers and providing assistance to victims of trafficking.

Some guiding principles for a common vision that participants will take home are the importance of supporting ownership and implementation, collaboration at all levels and linking efforts together, making sure that all programmes and initiatives are empirically-based, ensuring that programmes have the technical support needed for interventions to meet international standards, moving initiatives forward at a pace that allows tangible results, the importance of quality and precision and measurable impact.

Most importantly, this workshop serves as reminder that Africa must strive to always serve those in need – those who are vulnerable and/or those who have been trafficked.

**Journalists are invited to cover the opening ceremony on Monday, 03 December 2012 (09:00 to 10:00) after which there will be a press briefing. The meeting will be convened at the Heliconia Hotel Agondje 2, Tel: +241 6212955/6656568**

**Interview requests should be directed to Mr. Phillip Jusu, AUC, Tel: +251 115 517 700 x 2501, E-mail: jusup@africa-union.org.**

**For more information please consult our website: www.au.int.**