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AU ministers urge the role of sport for integration and socio-economic development in the continent

Abidjan, 25 July 2013- The African Union held the Ministerial Session of the Fifth Conference of African Union Ministers of Sports (CAMS5) on 25-26 July 2013 in Abidjan, Cote D'ivoire. Organized under the theme "harnessing the power of sport to contribute to the broader government development agenda", ministers adopted the CAMS5 experts report and Abidjan Declaration. The meeting reiterated the previous CAMS and Executive Council decisions on the implementation of the African Sport Architecture and decided to dissolve the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa (SCSA) after the special session of SCSA on 26 July 2013 in line with its constitution.

The opening session the CAMS5 was graced by the presence of Prime Minister of Cote D'Ivoire, H.E Daniel Kablan Duncan. It was chaired by Mr. Alain Michel Lobognon, Minister of Youth Promotion, Sport and Leisure, government of Cote d'Ivoire.

In his opening remarks H.E Dr. Mustapha Kaloko, Commissioner for Social Affairs, AU Commission, said that "in the last 50 years, Africa has used sport as a tool for decolonization and liberation of the continent, as well as a veritable weapon in the fight against apartheid. With sport we can rise up our heads and say Never! Never Again! to all forms of racial discrimination and intolerance".

The Commissioner highlighted the comprehensive contribution that sport can make to the socio-economic development and renaissance of the African continent. "Sport is increasingly being recognized as a tool for supporting development efforts throughout the world. Since sport plays an important role in society, governments and other development actors should not view it as a cost, but rather an investment", he said.

On the other hand Dr. Kaloko pointed out key aspects of the new Architecture of sports that the Commission has not been able to implement, and he underscored the decisive decisions and actions that need to be taken by CAMS5 and at the Special Session of the Assembly of the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa (SCSA) taking place on 26 July 2013 in order to start the transformation of sport in Africa. *(The complete speech of the Commissioner is available on www.au.int).*

Emphasising the significance of sport for the comprehensive development in the continent, the Prime Minister pointed out the use of sport in social cohesion. “Sport is a tool for cooperation, solidarity and unity of the continent”, said Mr. Duncan. Besides, he mentioned sport as a catalyst for national development plans as it is linked to all sectors of the development agenda.

Participants at the CAMS5 were gathered from Ministers in charge of sport and Experts from AU Member States, the AU Commission, AU Organs, International and Continental Sport Organizations, Regional Economic Communities and International Organizations.

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