

AFRICAN UNION

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**FINAL SESSION OF AFRICAN UNION ANNOUNCES
THAT TALKS ON LIBYA ARE NEAR**

Malabo, Equatorial Guinea 1 July 2011- The 17th Summit of the African Union closed today with the announcement that AU is now in a position to say that it will very soon, begin peace talks in Addis Ababa, focusing on resolving the Libyan crisis. The Assembly of the AU, comprising Heads of State and Government had worked out a proposal which they submitted to the two Libyan delegations, namely government of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and the Transitional National Council.

This was revealed by South African President Jacob Zuma to media gathered at a press conference to mark the end of the summit.

Mr Zuma's statement was in support of a decision of the Assembly on the situation in Libya, which reaffirms the AU position that only a political solution will make it possible to fulfil the aspirations of the Libyan people, a position that is recognised by the formally recognised by the UN Security Council resolution 1973. The statement also urges international partners to support the African initiative and the search for a political solution.

Since 23 June, the structures of the African Union, i.e. the Permanent Representatives Committee, the Executive Council and the Assembly have met in Malabo, to map the future of Africa and of the African Union as an effective institution for the development and integration of the continent.

A summary of the summit deliberations given by the Union's Chairperson, President Teodoro Obiang Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea highlighted the call by Africa to concentrate all her efforts on the development of the continent.

Mr Mbasogo said the leaders at the summit underlined the importance of youth to the development process, and that they would prioritise youth empowerment. The Malabo Declaration, which was adopted by the Heads of State, he said, should be the primary tool to guide policies on youth development. The summit theme was "accelerating youth empowerment for Africa's development".

The AU Chairperson said the Assembly had underscored the need to diversify cooperation with international associates. The Summit had also agreed that Africa must be fully represented in institutions of international governance such as the United Nations Security Council.

He also lamented that although many African states celebrated 50 year of

independence, the development in some countries had been interrupted by wars and conflicts. However he noted that some African economies have started to grow.

The closing ceremony of the summit also bade farewell to the President of Cape Verde, as he has come to the end of his term after the elections that took place in his country.

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