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AFRICAN UNION SIGNS AGREEMENT ON AFRICA'S HIGH-SPEED RAILWAY NETWORK

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – 5 October 2016: Africa's dream to connect all its capital and major cities with an Integrated High-speed Railway Network has taken another critical step following the signing of a Five-Year Action Plan between the African Union Commission (AUC), and the Government of the Peoples Republic of China.

The signing ceremony by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, and an Envoy of the Chinese President, Minister of National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), Mr. XU Shaoshi, took place at the AU Headquarters on Wednesday, 5 October 2016.

The Integrated High Speed Train Network is a flagship project of Africa's continental Agenda 2063 and the Five-Year Action Plan is a result of numerous planning sessions and exchange working visits between the AUC and the Chinese following the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two sides in January 2015, to promote cooperation in railway, road, regional aviation networks and industrialization fields.

A number of milestones are expected to be realised in the next five years including:-

- The development and agreement on relevant laws and regulations regarding railway cooperation.
- The establishment of a Project Implementation Unit (PIU) by the AUC in the next 6 to 12 months.

- Collaboration in supporting and facilitating cooperation between African and Chinese enterprises, particularly, in local enterprise supplier development and development of advanced manufacturing across the African continent; transfer of technology, capacity-building for local manufacturing and content, as well as education and the development of prerequisite skills.

The Chinese Government will also lead the formation of a Chinese group for Sino-Africa cooperation in railway and high-speed railway, which will integrate resources of financing institutions, railway construction companies and railway operation management companies.

Appreciating this new step in the high-speed railway connectivity project, the Chairperson of the AU Commission said Africa looks forward to a focus on training in all the areas of skills required and transfer of technology.

Minister XU Shaoshi, who was also attending the inauguration of the newly constructed Addis Ababa – Djibouti railway which was built with the support of China, expressed the determination of China to deliver on commitments made by Prime Minister Li Keqiang, when he visited Africa in May 2014, and further cemented by President Xi Jinping during the Forum for China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) that was held in December 2015, in Johannesburg, South Africa.

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