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## DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

### Press Release

## African and Arab countries challenged to resolve Palestinian and Western Sahara outstanding issues



**Malabo, Equatorial Guinea – 23 November 2016:** The Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, has challenged members of both African and Arab Member States to jointly work together toward solving the outstanding issues of Palestine and Western Sahara, in line with the principle of self-determination.

The Chairperson of the AU Commission was addressing the Fourth Africa-Arab Summit, on Wednesday 23 November 2016, at the SIPOPO Conference Center, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. The 4<sup>th</sup> Summit, was holding under the theme “Together for Sustainable Development and Economic Cooperation.”

Dr. Dlamini Zuma said that this Summit was holding at a time when Africa is demonstrating strong commitments to transform its economy and improve its social conditions through the implementation of Agenda 2063.

“In our engagements, our priority lies in working together with our partners to ensure the joint implementation of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals, which are pivotal to our regions’ transformation”, Dr. Dlamini Zuma said, noting that since the Africa-Arab partnership has advanced and complemented the programmes and activities of our various regions over the last four decades, it is projected that it

would further enhance the aspirations for growth and development of the two regions.

The Africa-Arab partnership, which will celebrate its 40 Anniversary next year, 2017. In their fourth summit, the African and Arab leaders reviewed progress made in the three years since the 3<sup>rd</sup> Africa-Arab Summit held in Kuwait, in Nov 2013. They deliberated on how to strengthen their cooperation in ways that would live up to their expectations in socio-cultural and economic development, based on the principles of equality, mutual interest and respect. They talked openly about ways in which they could leverage each other's strengths to their mutual benefit.

The leaders who attended the summit also deliberated on the challenges facing their two regions, including terrorism, which the summit roundly condemned and resolved to continue to work together against. Other challenges included conflict and violence, youth unemployment, the food gap and food insecurity.



At the end of summit, the leaders adopted the Malabo Declaration which sets out areas of future cooperation, taking into account successes and challenges, and Declaration on Palestine, as well as the Africa-Arab Cooperation Action Plan 2017-2021.

The leaders agreed to hold the next 5<sup>th</sup> Africa- Arab Summit in 2019, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Summit was attended by leaders from Africa and Arab countries including host President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea; H.H Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republics of Mauritania, H.E. President Idriss Déby Itno, President of the Republic of Chad, H.E. Mr. Ahmed Aboul Gheit, Secretary General of the League of Arab States, H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission among others.

The Summit witnessed the handing over of the Co-Chairmanship of the Summit by the Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait and Co-Chair of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Africa-Arab Summit, to H.E. President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republics of Mauritania; for the Arab side. On the African side, President Idriss Déby Itno, of Chad took over from Ethiopia's Prime Minister, Hailemariam Dessalegn, as Co-chairperson of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Africa-Arab Summit.

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Note to Editors:

The Africa Arab partnership is one of the partnerships that the AU Commission is coordinating on behalf of the African Union. Other partnerships at continental level include Africa USA; Africa China;

Africa Europe; Africa India; Africa Turkey; Africa Japan (TICAD), Africa South America; Africa-US (AGOA; Africa-Korea. The African Union, through its Commission, also has partnerships or relationships with institutions and bodies similar to the African Union. These include: the League of Arab States (LAS); the Organization of American States (OAS); the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; the Commonwealth; and La Francophonie.

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