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DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

**Press Release N°094/2017**

**AU mourns with Botswana following death of former President Masire**

**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia – 23 June 2017:** The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E Moussa Faki Mahamat, wishes to extend sincere condolences to the Masire family, the Government and the people of the Republic of Botswana on the passing of Dr. Quett Ketumile Joni Masire on 22 June 2017. The late President Masire was born on 23 July 1925 and was the second President of Botswana from 1980 to 1998. The Chairperson notes with great appreciation that the late Dr Masire played a critical role in facilitating Botswana independence, through the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) and voluntarily stepped down from the Presidency in 1998.

“A true Pan-Africanist, Dr Masire made invaluable contributions in seeking peaceful solutions to challenges in African countries such as in South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Ethiopia, Somalia, Lesotho the DRC, to name but a few,” noted Chairperson Faki.

Furthermore, the Chairperson notes with great appreciation the efforts of the late President Masire when he served as Chairman of the International Panel of Eminent Personalities Investigating the Circumstances Surrounding the 1994 Rwanda Genocide from 1998 to 2000.

Following the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement, the late President Masire served as the facilitator for the Inter-Congolese National Dialogue, an assignment which he undertook with great responsibility and dedication.

In May 2005, he led the Commonwealth Electoral Observer mission to the Ethiopian elections and returned in May 2010 to lead an African Union Election Observer Mission to the Ethiopia Legislative Elections. Subsequently in October 2010, he co-led National Democratic Institute pre-election assessment mission in Nigeria.

A selfless man and true patriot, in 2007, Sir Ketumile Masire set up the Sir Ketumile Masire Foundation, aimed at promoting social and economic well-being of Botswana.

Sir Ketumile was also a founding Member of the Global Leadership Foundation which works to support democratic leadership, prevent and resolve conflict through mediation and promote good governance in the form of democratic institutions, open markets, human rights and the rule of law.

The Chairperson of the AU Commission wishes to express his profound appreciation and gratitude to the late Masire for his contributions to the search for peace, security and development on the African continent.

May His Soul Rest in Peace and his family along with the people of Botswana be comforted in this time of sadness.

**For further information contact**

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