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COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 12 December, 2017: The African Union Commission participated in the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people, which was hosted today by the UNECA. The Event was organized jointly by the Embassy of the State of Palestine, UNECA, the African Union Commission, and the League of Arab States. The event marks the 40th Anniversary of the Commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people.

In 1977, the UN General Assembly called for the annual observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (*resolution 32/40 B*). On that day, in 1947, the Assembly adopted the resolution on the partition of Palestine (*resolution 181 (II)*).

Also, in Resolution 60/37 of 1 December 2005, the Assembly requested the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Division for Palestinian Rights, as part of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November, to continue to organize an annual exhibit on Palestinian rights or a cultural event in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the UN.

In his keynote address, Amb. Nasri Abujaish, the Ambassador of the State of Palestine to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the AU expressed gratitude to all well-wishers who joined the Palestine community to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian people. Amb. Nasri extended words of

appreciation to the UN in Ethiopia, the AU and LAS for their unlimited cooperation and support to the Palestinian cause. Ambassador Nasri condiment the decision of Mr. Donald Trump, the President of the United States of America (USA) to recognize Jerusalem as the Capital city of Israel. The Amb. further added that the USA had effectively abdicated its role as a mediator in the region by deciding to move its Embassy to Jerusalem.

A statement by H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission was delivered on his behalf by Mr. Olabisi Dare, Officer-in-Charge of the Department of Political Affairs. The Chairperson indicated that “the African Union Commission has consistently expressed concern at the consequences of the unilateral policies and actions and provocations, including the illegal construction of settlements and the blockade and isolation of the Gaza Strip from the rest of the Palestinian Territories. These practices represent a real threat to international peace and security in the region and undermine the spirit of the Arab Peace Initiative.”

The statement also indicated that the African Union is deeply concerned by the United States’ decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel. As stressed by the Chairperson of the Commission, this decision can only heighten tension in the region and beyond. Today more than ever before, there is need for urgent and renewed efforts to find a just and lasting solution to the conflict, “based on the existence of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace and security, within the framework of relevant African Union and United Nations pronouncements.”

Also speaking during the event was Amb. Salah Sahboon, Ambassador of Arab League to Ethiopia and the AU who emphasized the need to embody firm historical commitment of Africa for the liberation of Palestine underlining the importance of collective responsibility in order to protect and promote the Palestinian Peoples’ full rights. He strongly condemned the American decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem.

Mr. Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onochie, UN Resident Coordinator, delivered a statement on behalf of the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in which he indicated that “the US President Donald Trump’s decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital might hinder the US drive for an Israeli-Palestinian peace accord.” The statement further added that “From day one as Secretary-General of the United Nations, I have consistently spoken out against any unilateral measures that would jeopardize the prospect of peace for Israelis and Palestinians,” Guterres said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Suleiman Dedefo, Director, Middle East Affairs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia stressed that a cooperative and long lasting peace can be achieved through peaceful negotiation, peace talks and affirmed that, the government of Ethiopia will continue working with international organizations to achieve a lasting peace for the Palestinian people.

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