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STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION ON THE REVITALIZATION PROCESS OF THE SOUTH SUDAN PEACE AGREEMENT

Addis Ababa, 21 December 2017: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Moussa Faki Mahamat, welcomes the signing by the South Sudanese parties of an Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access, as part of the IGAD-led Revitalization Forum that opened in Addis Ababa on 17 December 2017.

Today's Agreement marks a critical first step in the efforts to end the senseless conflict and carnage that has been unfolding in South Sudan since December 2013. While welcoming this first step, the Chairperson of the Commission stresses that the true test of the genuineness of the parties' professed commitments lies in the full and effective implementation of their pledge to end violence and uphold the most basic tenets of international humanitarian law.

The people of South Sudan, who have endured so much pain and suffering, are investing great expectation in the faithful implementation of this Agreement. They desperately need and deserve respite from war, especially as they enter this festive Christmas season, and look with rekindled hope towards the New Year.

The Chairperson of the Commission therefore urges the South Sudanese stakeholders to deliver on the commitments made. They should build on this important achievement and continue to make the necessary compromises without which the revitalization process cannot succeed.

The Chairperson of the Commission seizes this opportunity to reiterate the African Union appreciation to IGAD and the Heads of State and Government of the region, for their commitment and steadfastness. Their continued leadership is critical to take forward the peace process. The Chairperson also commends IGAD Special Envoy Ismail Wais, as well as former Foreign Ministers Georges Chicoti of Angola, Hanna Tetteh of Ghana and Ramtane Lamamra of Algeria, who served as Facilitators.