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PRESS RELEASE

African Union mourns the death of Aretha Franklin

Washington, August 16, 2018- The African Union Permanent Representative to the United States of America, Dr Arikana Chihombori-Quao, has expressed profound sadness at the death of global music icon Aretha Franklin, who passed away today at her home in Detroit, USA.

Ms Franklin had battled Pancreatic Cancer for a long time and was visited by dozens of luminaries in the last few days of her life. She was surrounded by family and close friends at the time of her death.

“On behalf of the fifty-five African Heads of State, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission Mr Moussa Faki Mahamat and Aretha Franklin’s 1.2 billion brothers and sisters on the African continent and the Diaspora, I offer my profound condolences to her family. To quote the late Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah who said: You are not African because you were born in Africa, but rather you are African because Africa is born in you, Aretha Franklin was a true child of Africa who had Africa truly born in her. We will miss her dearly,” said Ambassador Chihombori-Quao.

The Au Ambassador said that Aretha Franklin’s inner strength was felt by many adding: *As a black woman I speak on behalf of my fellow sisters. We have lost a sister, a mother, a grandmother, a champion for women and a role model. We will always remember the Queen of Soul, who gave us the soundtracks of our lives that serenaded us through this journey of life.*

Aretha Franklin was born March 25, 1942, in Memphis, Tennessee. She sold more than 75 million records during her life making her one of the best-selling artists of all time.

Her father, the Reverend C.L. Franklin, was a famous preacher and friend of the late Martin Luther King. His political activism inspired Aretha who played a role in the civil rights movement, which was extended to Africa, including her strong support for the fight against Apartheid in South Africa.

May her soul rest in peace

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Note to Editors

The African Union Mission to the United States of America is situated in Washington DC. Our mission is to Africa here in the United States; build, sustain, and nurture the bilateral relationship between the United States and the African Union; educate and inform Americans about important African issues of mutual interest through engagement.