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## COMMUNIQUÉ ON THE VISIT OF THE CHAIRPERSON TO GABON AND THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

**Addis Ababa, 20 September 2018:** The Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, concluded a two-day working visit to Gabon and the Central African Republic (CAR), on 17 and 18 September 2018, respectively. This is part of his regular consultations with Heads of States and Government of member states, to advance the African Union agenda.

On 17 September 2018, the Chairperson held discussions with President Ali Bongo Ondimba of the Republic Gabonese, who also chairs the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

The Chairperson and President Bongo Ondimba reviewed the state of peace and security in the Central African region. In this respect, they exchanged views on how best to support the Congolese Government and stakeholders towards the conduct of peaceful, transparent and credible elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They also exchanged views on the political situation in the CAR, reaffirming their commitment to the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR as the most viable framework for establishing meaningful dialogue towards national reconciliation, peace and stability in the country.

The Chairperson of the Commission seized the opportunity to also brief President Bongo Ondimba on the recently-held retreat of the Executive Council on the AU institutional reform and its subsequent meeting, enlarged to other relevant Ministers, on the post-Cotonou negotiations.

On 18 September 2018, the Chairperson travelled to Bangui, where he met with President Faustin Archange Touadera. President Touadera hailed the efforts being made in the context of the African Initiative, stressing that it is the only viable political process that can facilitate the achievement of lasting peace, security and reconciliation in his country. President Touadera further confirmed that his Government will soon present its proposals in response to the report of the Facilitation Panel of the Initiative.

For his part, the Chairperson welcomed President Touadera's commitment to the African Initiative. He stressed the need to accelerate the pace of implementation of the ongoing process, as part of the efforts to silence the guns on the continent. He further reiterated the solidarity of the AU with the CAR Government and people, as well as its determination to continue extending the required support to their quest for peace and development, in cooperation with other concerned international stakeholders, including the United Nations.

The Chairperson also meet with the Speaker of the National Assembly, as well as with members of the international community, including the African Group of Ambassadors, to exchange views on the implementation of the African Initiative.