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**CEREMONY MARKING THE TRANSFER OF  
AUTHORITY FROM MISCA TO MINUSCA**

**BANGUI, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC,  
15 SEPTEMBER 2014**

**STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION,  
DR. NKOSAZANA DLAMINI-ZUMA**

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**Madame Catherine Samba Panza, Head of State of the Transition,**  
**Honourable President of CAR National transitional Council,**  
**Prime Minister of the Transitional Government,**  
**United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations,**  
**Special Representative of the African Union and Head of MISCA,**  
**Vice-Mediators of the United Nations and the African Union,**  
**Heads of Diplomatic Missions,**  
**Invited Guests,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Today's event is a historic one. It marks a new and important step in the growing international engagement in support of the Central African Republic and its suffering people. Indeed, the transformation of the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic into a United Nations peacekeeping operation will enable the mobilization of further assistance for the CAR, at a time when the national stakeholders and their international partners alike need to redouble their efforts to extricate the country from its current predicament.

I am pleased to attend this ceremony marking the transfer of authority from MISCA to the United Nations Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic - MINUSCA. This is a powerful symbol of the ever-deepening cooperation and partnership between the African Union and the United Nations, in our collective endeavor to end conflict and sustain peace on

the African continent. We have witnessed similar transitions in Burundi, in 2003, and in Mali, in 2012. We have learned a great deal from these processes. It is important that we build on the experience gained, to further enhance complementarity between the African Union and the United Nations, as we strive to more effectively address the dynamic and complex peace and security challenges facing the continent.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

After nine months of hard work, MISCA is winding up its operations. The African Union is handing over the Mission to the United Nations with the conviction of having fulfilled the mandate entrusted to it, despite having worked in very challenging conditions.

While many challenges still lie ahead, there is no doubt that the initial stabilization phase of the situation in the Central African Republic has been successfully completed. Security has improved significantly not only in Bangui, but also elsewhere in the country, thus facilitating the delivery of the much-needed humanitarian assistance to the affected populations; the number of internally displaced persons has decreased substantially; state authority is gradually being restored; and economic and other daily activities are resuming at a faster pace.

In short, the present situation bears little resemblance with the one that prevailed before the deployment of MISCA, particularly in early December 2013, following the large-scale attack carried out by the anti-Balaka armed group in Bangui.

The results achieved have been made possible thanks to the determination and sense of duty of the MISCA military, police and civilian personnel. They have demonstrated an exemplary commitment, achieving so much with limited resources. They acted with courage, dedication and selflessness. They worked not only with their minds, but also with their hearts, driven as they were by the spirit of pan-African solidarity and the desire to assist, as effectively as they could, their sisters and brothers in the Central African Republic in their hour of need.

It is only fitting for me to pay tribute to the MISCA's leadership and personnel, mindful as I am that no amount of words can express the debt owed to them by the AU and the African continent. You have filled us with pride and, through your actions, you have illustrated the growing capability of the African Union to act timeously and effectively in response to emergency situations on the ground. Be assured of our enduring gratitude. Allow me to seize this opportunity to express appreciation to my Special Representative and Head of MISCA, General Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko, as well as to the Force Commander and Police Commissioner, General Martin Chomu Tumenta and Colonel Patrice Ostangue Bengone for their leadership.

As we gather here today, I would like to pay a special tribute to those MISCA personnel who made the ultimate sacrifice in discharging of their duties. From December 2013 to date, 31 MISCA soldiers and police officers died in the line of duty. I reiterate the African Union's heartfelt condolences to their loved ones and to their countries. I also would like to seize this opportunity to, once again, express our best wishes for speedy recovery to the 153 personnel of the Mission

who sustained injuries in the course of discharging their duties. The African Union is grateful to the troop and police contributing countries, namely Burundi, Cameroon, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Rwanda, as well as Chad. By availing the personnel that was so desperately needed to turn the tide of violence in the Central African Republic and create conditions conducive for a meaningful political process, they have demonstrated an exemplary commitment to the promotion of peace, security and stability on the continent.

The current Chairperson of the Economic Community of Central African States, President Idriss Deby Itno of Chad, the ECCAS Mediator, President Denis Sassou Nguesso of the Republic of Congo, and the other leaders of the region deserve a special mention. They never relented in their efforts to assist the Central African Republic in overcoming the daunting and complex challenges facing it, deploying peacekeepers, convening peace talks and reconciliation conferences, extending financial assistance, while also offering hospitality to refugees fleeing violence and unrest in the CAR. I have no doubt that we can continue to rely on the region's engagement.

Finally, let me put on record our gratitude for the financial and in-kind support received from a number of African Union Member States, particularly during the pledging conference for MISCA which the Commission organized in Addis Ababa, in February 2014.

The results achieved by MISCA were greatly facilitated by the multifaceted support the African Union received from the international partners. I would like to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of the other international forces deployed in the Central African Republic, namely the French Sangaris Operation

and the European Union Operation – EUFOR. Our appreciation also goes to all the partners who extended financial and logistical support to MISCA, particularly the EU and its Member States, the United States of America, Canada, Norway and Japan. I commend the United Nations for the technical support extended to MISCA.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The transformation of MISCA into a United Nations operation does not mean that the African Union is ending its presence in the Central African Republic. While the modalities of our engagement will change, we will maintain a strong presence on the ground, to accompany the CAR Government and other stakeholders in their efforts to achieve lasting peace and reconciliation in their country. It cannot be otherwise, for the problems besetting the Central African Republic are also African problems. Our continent and our Union stand to benefit from a strong, united, stable and prosperous Central African Republic.

We will continue to work closely with the ECCAS, the United Nations and other international actors. Indeed, the multidimensional challenges facing the Central African Republic require effective collaboration and coordination of efforts among all concerned members of the international community. In this respect, the critical role of the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic, co-chaired by the African Union and the Republic of Congo, hardly needs to be emphasized.

I have no doubt that the new United Nations peacekeeping operation will build on and consolidate the gains made over the past nine months. The deployment

of MINUSCA comes at an opportune time, when conditions conducive for a successful peacekeeping operation have been created. The United Nations brings with it a range of capabilities that are essential to effectively support the CAR-led efforts at state- and nation-building.

To our Central African Republic brothers and sisters, I would like to state that no amount of international assistance can substitute their efforts and leadership. Ultimately, they bear the primary responsibility for bringing about the peace, security and stability that their people are so desperately yearning for.

This is the moment for the CAR political actors to show leadership and to uphold the supreme interest of their country. I plead with all concerned to rise to the challenges at hand.

Regarding more specifically the Transitional Government, there is an urgent need to expedite the implementation of the pending transitional tasks. All efforts should be deployed to facilitate the holding of free, fair and transparent elections that will mark the restoration of constitutional order and pave the way for the reintegration of the Central African Republic in the African Union family.

I thank you for your kind attention and pledge the African Union's continued support to the Central African Republic.