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Remarks by the

**Chairperson of the African Union Commission
H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma**

to the
**Ministerial Meeting of the Peace and Security Council
on the Situation in Libya**

September 23nd, 2014

New York, USA

Your Excellency, Moussa Faki Mahamat, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chad, Chairperson of the PSC,

Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the member countries of the Peace and Security Council,

Commissioner for Peace and Security, Sergui Smail and other AU Commissioners

Ambassadors,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the AU Commission, I would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to the Republic of Chad, chair of the Peace and Security Council for September, for the initiative to convene this important meeting. We are grateful to the other members of Council for their support to the holding of this meeting.

We are convening this meeting on Libya at a time of growing concern in Africa and internationally for the rapidly deteriorating situation in that country. It has been three years since the popular uprising that overthrew the Qaddafi regime, but the Libyan people have yet to fully achieve their aspirations to peace, security, democracy and socio-economic wellbeing.

We find ourselves today in a situation of weakened state authority, the division of the country into distinct areas controlled by rival armed groups, the growth of violent extremism, the proliferation of arms, the prevalence of organized crime groups and the worsening of the trafficking of human beings across the Sahara to Europe.

The humanitarian situation is of utmost concern, especially the situation of women and children. We condemn in the strongest terms the violence directed against civilians and civilian institutions.

This dire situation poses a threat to the very existence of the country and its national cohesion. But it also poses a serious threat to regional peace, security and stability.

Libya is an important member of the African Union. Our meeting here today is therefore aimed at working with our Libyan brothers and sisters to find a solution to the challenges facing them. It is important for the Peace and Security Council to issue a strong appeal to the Libyan stakeholders to put an immediate end to the spiral of violence and to work to achieve the peace, security, democracy and prosperity for which so many have already sacrificed their lives.

Excellencies

At the same time, the Peace and Security Council should reiterate the AU's continued support to Libya's legitimate institutions, in particular the House of Representatives as the sole legislative authority in the country. Let me seize this opportunity to welcome the endorsement of a new Cabinet by the House of Representatives yesterday.

I would like to reiterate that there is no military solution to the crisis in Libya. The Libyan stakeholders must therefore do all in their powers to conclude a cessation of hostilities and begin meaningful negotiations toward an inclusive dialogue

based on respect for the democratic process, and the unequivocal rejection of terrorism and violent extremism.

It is imperative that all Libyan stakeholders come together, in the interests of the continued survival of Libya as a united state. This includes giving Libyan women the opportunity to participate in the negotiations on the future of their country.

The African Union, as always, stands ready to participate in all processes aimed at addressing the crisis. History has taught us that a failure to place the continent at the centre of efforts is likely to hamper the chances of success.

I think we should ensure that the continent is at the centre of finding a lasting solution.

Libya is an African country and is a founding country of the African Union. We therefore pledge our continued solidarity to Libya and its people in their time of need. A stable, democratic and prosperous Libya will be an asset for the continent as a whole.

In concluding, I would like to express the AU's appreciation to the countries of the region for their continued commitment and support to the Libyan people. As we move forward, I have no doubt that we can continue to rely on their engagement and deep knowledge of the situation to facilitate a lasting solution to the crisis.

I thank you.