**PRESS RELEASE**

**TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY FROM MICOPAX TO MISCA**

**Bangui, 19 December 2013:** The African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) held today the ceremony of transfer of authority from the ECCAS Peace Consolidation Mission in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX) to the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA).

The ceremony, which was chaired by the Prime Minister of the Transitional Government of National Unity, Mr. Nicolas Tiangaye, was attended by a number of high-level political, military and police officials. The transfer of authority is the culmination of a long process of consultation and coordination between the AU and ECCAS, with the support of international partners.

At its 385th meeting, held on 19 July 2013, the AU Peace and Security Council authorized the deployment of MISCA. This decision was endorsed by the UN Security Council in its resolution 2127 (2013), of 5 December 2013, authorizing the deployment of MISCA for a period of 12 months.

The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission and Head of MISCA, General Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko, officially assumed duty as the Head of the new Mission. In his statement, he thanked all those who have contributed to the success of this process and paid tribute to the soldiers who lost their lives, as well as to those who were injured during the recent operations. He also highlighted the challenges and the magnitude of the task ahead. "With the transformation of MICOPAX into MISCA, in a context marked by the tragic events of the recent days, I measure the immensity of the task ahead and the challenges to be overcome to help the CAR to break the cycle of political instability and armed violence," he said.

The Prime Minister of the Transitional Government took the opportunity to thank all the sisterly countries that have decided to assist CAR in its hour of need, in order to restore security. He expressed his conviction that, through collaboration and cooperation among all stakeholders, a sustainable solution to the crisis in the CAR will be achieved.