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COMMISSIONER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY BRIEFS PARTNERS ON FEMWISE-AFRICA AND AU MEDIATION SUPPORT UNIT

Addis Ababa, 14 May 2018: The Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, convened a meeting with international partners to brief them on future plans of the Peace and Security Department in the areas of conflict prevention and mediation efforts on the continent. The African Union (AU) Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, Mme Bineta Diop, also attended the meeting.

The meeting focused on progress related to the operationalization of FemWise-Africa (Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation) and on the operationalization of the AU-Mediation Support Unit (AU-MSU) and planned activities.

The Commissioner for Peace and Security recalled that within the framework of FemWise-Africa, the AU plans to recruit and train 100 Women Mediators across the continent by the end of 2018 to support Africa's ongoing mediation efforts in Mali, South Sudan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Central African Republic (CAR). He noted that the Department had already received many applications and that the steering committee of FemWise to review the applications will convene on 29 May 2018.

While recalling the determination of the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, to promote gender parity and the empowerment of women in Africa, he noted that since its inception, the AU Commission which is composed of five women and five men has sought to increase the recruitment of women. He further underlined that out of the seven advisors of the AU Chairperson of the Commission, five were women.

The Commissioner for Peace and Security also informed the partners about Gender and Peace and Security in the Department. He acknowledged the efforts of the Department to mainstream gender in all activities, and further noted that the ratio of male to female employees in the AU Peace and Security Department shows a net progression towards gender parity. He highlighted that the recruitment process is being conducted by an independent panel, free from any interference. Female applicants/candidates are given priority over their male counterparts in the recruitment scoring system in an affirmative and assertive endeavor to improve gender balance among our staff.

The Commissioner for Peace and Security noted that efforts to promote and support women in peace and security are not limited to departmental staff. In Washington, New York, Libya, Côte

d'Ivoire, Chad, Madagascar and Gabon, the African Union is represented by highly qualified African women just to name a few.

On the AU Mediation Support Unit, he indicated that it was established in response to the growing demands for sustainable mediation efforts on the continent. The MSU will provide systematic and sustained support to all AU-led and AU-supported mediation processes. The priority for this year will be: i) finalization of the AU mediation training manual and validation exercise with the participation of RECs/RMs, UN, CSOs; ii) the conduct of the first AU mediation training for AUC, RECs/RMs staff; and iii) the establishment of a roster of mediation experts and consultations with the heads of the AU Liaison Offices in the field to reflect on their mediation support needs.