The Africa Platform on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts (AP-CAAC) denounces the mass abduction of pupils and teachers in Kaduna State, Northern Nigeria

Addis Ababa, 9 March 2024 - The Africa Platform on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts (AP-CAAC) joins the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, to strongly denounce the mass abduction of more than 280 pupils and teachers of the Government Secondary School and LEA Primary School at Kuriga, Kaduna State, Nigeria, on Thursday, 7 March 2024.

The abduction of children and attacks on educational facilities constitute part of the six (6) grave violations against children endorsed by the UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/51/77 and thereafter by the AU Peace and Security Council.

The Platform renews the universal call embedded in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, that every boy and girl has the right to an education without fear of violence or attack, and every school should be a protected space for students to learn and fulfil their potential. This is particularly more important given the annual AU theme of the year, 2024, dedicated expressly to "Educating the African for the 21st Century". Thus, no child should have to choose between their education and their life.

Equally, the Co-Chairs of the Platform recall the Safe Schools Declaration (2015) which is endorsed by the Government of Nigeria, and underscore that attacks on education expose students and education personnel to harm, deny many children and students their right to education, and deprive communities of the foundations for greater prosperity.

The Africa Platform on CAAC calls for the immediate release of innocent children and all those kidnapped, as it stands in solid solidarity with the abducted children and their families, the Government and the People of Nigeria during this difficult period.

The Platform supports the untiring efforts of the Nigerian authorities to safely rescue the abducted students and teachers.

The Platform further encourages all AU Member States to continue taking concrete measures to deter attacks against education and educational facilities in adherence to applicable continental and international human rights law and humanitarian law.

Issued this day of 9 March 2024

AP-CAAC Co-Chairs
H.E Ambassador Jainaba Jagne, The Permanent Representative of the Republic of The Gambia to the AU; and

H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security