PRESS RELEASE

CONTINUATION OF THE PLANNING ACTIVITIES TOWARDS THE DEPLOYMENT OF THE AFRICAN-LED INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT MISSION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Addis Ababa, 30 August 2013: The Commission of the African Union (AU) is pursuing its efforts towards the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (AFISM-CAR). In this context, a team of military and civilian experts from the AU Commission, which was joined by representatives of AU partners, visited Libreville from 21 to 22 August 2013, for consultations with the General Secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) on the modalities and calendar of the transition from the ECCAS Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the CAR (MICOPAX) to AFISM-CAR. Consultations will continue with the ECCAS Secretariat to quickly finalize this process.

Since 19 August 2013, another AU team, which also includes experts from the United Nations, the European Union (EU), the United States, France and the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF), is in Bangui, to assess the logistical and other resources needed by AFISM-CAR, in light of the situation on the ground and the capabilities already available at the level of MICOPAX. The team is also working on the establishment of AFISM-CAR Mission Headquarters. It held working sessions with MICOPAX officials, and inspected the troops on the ground.

The technical team has also initiated a series of consultations with the CAR authorities. On 27 August 2013, it was received by the Head of State of the Transition Michel Djotodia and, on 28 August 2013, by Prime Minister Nicolas Tiangaye who reaffirmed their desire to see AFISM-CAR deployed urgently and pledged to extend full cooperation to the Mission. Consultations are also underway with other members of the Transition Government of National Unity. The technical team met with representatives of the international community based in Bangui.

Furthermore, the Commission has initiated sensitization work with international partners to facilitate the mobilization of the financial and logistical resources needed for the early deployment of AFISM-CAR and the effective conduct of its operations. In this respect, the Commission welcomes the decision of the French authorities to continue to support the troops currently serving under MICOPAX, as part of the transition to AFISM-CAR, as well as
their commitment to provide additional support. The Commission further welcomes the readiness of the EU to financially assist AFISM-CAR through the African Peace Facility. The Commission notes with satisfaction the adoption by the United Nations Security Council, on 14 August 2013, of a press statement on the deployment of AFISM-CAR, following the letter addressed by the AU to the United Nations, on 26 July 2013. The Commission looks forward to the early adoption of a resolution that would endorse the deployment of AFISM-CAR and provide for UN support to the Mission, within the framework of the AU-UN partnership. Similarly, the Commission has engaged the MICOPAX troops and police contributing countries to determine the additional capacity needed to ensure the effective implementation of the AFISM-CAR mandate and to identify, on this basis, best means and ways of their mobilization.

It should be recalled that the deployment of AFISM-CAR was authorized by the Peace Security Council (PSC) on 19 July 2013, for an initial period of six months. The AFISM-CAR will have a total force strength of 3 652 personnel, the nucleus of which will be constituted by the contingents currently serving in MICOPAX, which will be augmented as needed by other contingents. The transition process from MICOPAX to AFISM-CAR began on 1 August 2013.

The efforts being deployed by the AU, together with ECCAS, fall within the framework of its long-standing commitment to mobilize sustained international support to help the CAR address the multifaceted crisis facing it for several years. It is in this spirit that, in March 2013, the AU formally seized the Security Council to draw the attention of its members on the seriousness of the situation in the CAR and to seek their support for regional and continental efforts. To facilitate international mobilization, the AU, together with ECCAS, established the International Contact Group on CAR (ICG- RCA), co-chaired by the AU and the Republic of Congo, which has already met twice: in Brazzaville, on 3 May 2013, and in Addis Ababa, on 8 July 2013.