PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION STRESSES THE NEED FOR RENEWED ACTION TO MORE EFFECTIVELY COMBAT THE BOKO HARAM TERRORIST GROUP

Addis Ababa, 20 January 2015: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, continues to closely follow the situation in the countries affected by the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group. She reiterates AU's strong condemnation of the cowardly and dastardly attacks carried out by Boko Haram, as well as Africa's solidarity with the affected populations and countries.

The Chairperson of the Commission welcomes the decision of President Idriss Deby Itno of Chad, at the request of Cameroon, to deploy troops in that country, to contribute to the ongoing operations against the Boko Haram terrorist group. She pays tribute to the Chadian leaders for this remarkable gesture of solidarity and for their continued commitment to the promotion of peace, security and stability in the region and on the continent as a whole, as demonstrated, among others, by the role played by Chadian troops in the liberation of northern Mali from the terrorist and criminal groups.

The Chairperson of the Commission further welcomes the convening, today, in Niamey, Niger, of a meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and those of Defense of the member countries of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and Benin, which was attended by the AU, represented by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smail Chergui, as well as by the relevant bilateral and multilateral partners. She notes with appreciation the conclusions adopted on that occasion, which outline a number of practical steps aimed at fully
operationalizing the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) established within the framework of the LCBC.

The Chairperson of the Commission stresses that, as part of AU's support to the countries of the region and within the framework of the communiqué adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) on 25 November 2014, the Commission is taking the necessary steps to assist, in cooperation with the relevant international partners, in the early finalization of the concept of operations for the MNJTF and other related documents, on the basis of the work already done by the LCBC member countries. In so doing, the objective is to facilitate the mobilization of the necessary international support, including the adoption by the UN Security Council of a resolution authorizing the MNJTF and the establishment of a trust fund, as requested by the LCBC ministerial meeting held in Abuja, Nigeria, in October 2014. In addition, the Chairperson of the Commission intends to seize the opportunity of the PSC meeting scheduled to take place at the level of the Heads of State and Government at the end of January 2015, in Addis Ababa, on the margins of the forthcoming AU Summit, to urge for enhanced international support to the efforts of the LCBC member countries and Benin.

The Chairperson of the Commission underlines, once again, that Boko Haram is a threat not only to Nigeria and the region, but also to the continent as a whole and, as such, the situation calls for renewed collective African efforts. She appeals to all the AU member states to extend full support to the efforts of the LCBC member countries and Benin, in keeping with the principles of African solidarity and indivisibility of peace and security on the continent, as provided for in the relevant AU instruments, including the Common African Defense and Security Policy.