VISIT OF THE AFRICAN UNION HIGH LEVEL
DELEGATION TO BURUNDI

BUJUMBURA, BURUNDI,
25-26 FEBRUARY 2016

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1. Within the framework of the efforts to find a lasting solution to the crisis in Burundi, the 26th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, meeting in Addis Ababa, on 30 and 31 January 2016, decided to send a High Level Delegation to Bujumbura to hold consultations with all the stakeholders in the crisis. At the initiative of His Excellency Idriss Deby Itno, Current Chairman of the AU and in consultation with the Heads of State and the Commission, the High Level Delegation, coordinated by H.E Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, comprised also, Their Excellencies Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania; Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal; Ali Bongo Ondimba, President of the Gabonese Republic; Hailemariam Dessalegn, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The meeting was also attended by Ambassador Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security, Honourable Mr. Crystus Kiyonga- special envoy of President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, facilitator of the Inter-Burundian Dialogue, and Professor Ibrahima Fall, AU Special representative for the Great Lakes region.

2. The High Level Delegation travelled to Burundi from 25 to 26 February 2016 and held consultations with H.E Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi, the representatives of political parties, the religious leaders, the representatives of the Civil Society Organizations and one former Head of State representing other former Heads of State of the Republic of Burundi. A delegation of the National Commission on the Inter-Burundian Dialogue led by its President also attended the consultations.

3. The visit enabled the High Level Delegation to assess the evolution of the situation in Burundi since the last Summit of the continental organization held in Addis Ababa, as well as find ways and means for the AU to support Burundi to put an end to the spiraling violence in which it was engulfed since April 2015.

4. The High Level Delegation deplored the continuing violations of human rights, the acts of violence against civilians and public security forces as well as the deterioration of the already alarming humanitarian situation. In this regard, it requested the government and the armed groups to put an end to the acts of violence. The High Level Delegation stressed the need to dismantle and disarm all militias operating on the territory of Burundi. It called upon on all the armed groups and armed militias to lay down their arms and all the stakeholders of the Burundi crisis to return to the negotiating table.

5. The High Level Delegation encouraged the governments of the countries of the region to promote the spirit of good neighbourliness in conformity with the provisions of the relevant AU instruments. It encouraged the peoples of the region to refrain from statements and actions that may heighten, maintain or worsen the tension.

6. The High Level Delegation welcomed the commitment of the Government and that of all the other actors in the Burundian crisis, present in Burundi, to participate in the Inclusive Dialogue, under the facilitation of H.E. Yoweri Museveni, President of the Republic
of Uganda, on behalf of the East African Community. It called upon all the stakeholders in the crisis in Burundi to participate in this Dialogue without prior conditions and in strict compliance with the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation.

7. The High Level Delegation reaffirmed its strong support for President Yoweri Museveni, as the appointed Facilitator in the Burundian crisis, encouraged him to continue his consultations with all the stakeholders in the crisis and to announce, in the beginning of March 2016, a date for the immediate resumption of the Inter-Burundian Dialogue. Within this framework, the High Level Delegation decided that the African Union should provide an active support to the Facilitator of the Burundian Dialogue.

8. The High Level Delegation welcomed the decision of the withdrawal of the international arrest warrants issued against some Burundian citizens, the reopening of a private radio station and radio-television broadcasting station as well as the announcement of the imminent release of detainees. The High Level Delegation encouraged the government to extend such measures to other persons who were still detained and to other media which were still closed.

9. The High Level Delegation commended the work done by the AU Human Rights Observers and Military Experts deployed in Burundi. The High Level Delegation and the Government agreed to increase the number of this personnel to 100 Human Rights Observers and 100 Military Experts.

10. The High Level Delegation called upon the international community to envisage, in case the security and humanitarian situation improves, to restore the international aid to Burundi in order to encourage the authorities and people of Burundi to remain engaged in the inclusive dialogue.

11. Within the purview of the follow up of its mission, the High Level Delegation decided to meet with the stakeholders in the Burundian crisis who were outside the country. It also requested its Coordinator, H.E. Jacob Zuma, to report to President Idriss Deby Itno, President of the Republic of Chad and Current Chairman of the African Union, on the outcome of the mission to Burundi.

12. The High Level Delegation expressed its sincere gratitude to H.E Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi, the Government and the people of Burundi for the warm welcome accorded to it, for their preparedness and cooperation and for the excellent arrangements made for the smooth conduct of their mission. It also thanked all the participants in the consultations.