PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION CALLS FOR UNIFIED AND DECISIVE ACTION TO ADDRESS THE CALLING INTO QUESTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC AND THE VIOLATION OF THE LIBREVILLE AGREEMENTS

Addis Ababa, 24 March 2013: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, is deeply concerned with the negative evolution of the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) and its detrimental consequences for the country, the region and the continent. She reiterates AU’s strong condemnation of the unwarranted resumption of hostilities by the armed group Seleka, which led to the forceful entry of its armed elements into the capital, Bangui, in flagrant violation of the 11 January 2013 Libreville Agreements concluded under the auspices of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and supported by the AU and the rest of the international community, including the United Nations Security Council. The decision of the leaders of the Seleka to resort again to force constitutes a serious challenge to the individual and collective authority of the Heads of State of the region, who have been actively involved in the search for a political solution, worsens insecurity, as evidenced by the ongoing looting and other acts of violence affecting the civilian population, and further undermines the prospects for a return to peace in the CAR and the promotion of a genuine democratic governance in that country.

The Chairperson of the Commission stresses that this seizure of power by force constitutes a flagrant violation of the AU Constitutive Act, the Lomé Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, as well as of AU decisions on the total rejection of the recourse to armed rebellion to further political claims. The Chairperson of the Commission calls for collective, unified and decisive African action to address this serious challenge to the CAR constitutional order, which also undermines the gains recorded in the democratization processes across the continent. This African action should aim at ensuring the scrupulous implementation of all provisions of the Libreville Agreements, which remain valid in all circumstances. In this context, the Chairperson of the Commission recalls that the relevant AU instruments notably provides, in cases of unconstitutional change of Government, for the suspension of the participation of the country concerned in the AU’s activities, the total isolation of the perpetrators of the unconstitutional change and the adoption of sanctions against them, in order to fully restore constitutional legality.

The Chairperson of the Commission welcomes the decision of the AU Peace and Security Council to convene a meeting, on the morning of Monday 25 March 2013, to review the situation and take the necessary measures, in accordance with the relevant instruments of the Union that give it the primary responsibility for promoting peace, security and stability in Africa in the context of the African Peace and Security Architecture. She urges AU’s international partners, including the UN Security Council, to demonstrate the necessary firmness and to take appropriate measures to show their determination to reject the fait accompli and to hold the perpetrators accountable for their action, including the looting, as well as the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law resulting from the entrance of the armed rebels into Bangui.