PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION URGES THE ARMED GROUPS IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC TO CEASE ANY MILITARY OFFENSIVE AND EMBARK UPON THE PATH OF DIALOGUE

Addis Ababa, 24 December 2012: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, continues to follow closely the evolution of the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR). In particular, she is deeply concerned by the fact that the armed groups are pressing ahead with their military offensive, as demonstrated by the occupation of the town of Bambari, in total defiance of the calls made by the AU and the United Nations, through the Security Council, as well as of the relevant decisions adopted by the Extraordinary Summit of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), held in N'Djamena, on 21 December 2012.

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates AU's demand to the armed groups concerned to immediately end their offensive and unconditionally withdraw from the locations they have occupied. She urges them to engage resolutely on the path of dialogue, as decided by the ECCAS Summit, by taking part in good faith in the negotiations scheduled to take place in Libreville, under the aegis of the Follow-up Committee chaired by the Republic of Congo. She underlines AU’s determination, in accordance with the relevant decisions of the Peace and Security Council (PSC), to impose sanctions against all spoilers and to isolate them, as well as to seek to this end the support of the international community, including the UN Security Council.

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates AU's appreciation to Chad for the timely measures taken to avert further deterioration of the security situation in CAR. She expresses AU’s full support to the decisions of the ECCAS Summit and its commitment to contribute to their implementation, including by providing support for the negotiations to be held in Libreville among the CAR stakeholders. She calls on the international community to support the efforts of ECCAS, including through financial and logistical assistance to the urgent deployment of an inter-position MICOPAX force, as agreed at the Ndjamena Summit.