PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTES TO THE EFFORTS FOR THE RESOLUTION OF THE CRISIS IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Addis Ababa, 28 December 2012: Deeply concerned by the continuing deterioration of the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR), the African Union (AU) Commission is pursuing and intensifying its efforts towards the speedy resolution of the crisis. In this context, the Chairperson of the Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, has dispatched an Emissary to Libreville, Gabon, in the person of her Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, Ambassador Boubacar Diarra Gaoussou. The AU Emissary will also visit other countries in the region. In Libreville, he will meet with the Gabonese authorities, as well as with officials from the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

Through this mission, the Commission wishes to convey to the countries of the region AU’s support to the efforts they are exerting, notably within the framework of ECCAS, and to agree with them on additional and coordinated actions needed to bring to an end the fighting in the CAR and to facilitate a political solution. In this regard, the Special Representative will hold consultations with the representatives of the countries of the region, who will be meeting in Libreville this Friday, as part of the follow up to the decisions taken by the Extraordinary Summit of ECCAS held in Ndjamen, on 21 December 2012.

The Chairperson of the Commission also had telephone contacts with a number of interlocutors on the crisis in CAR. In addition, both the Chairperson of the Commission and the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, intensified their consultations with the countries of the region and with other African countries, as well as with international partners, to facilitate a coordinated international support to the efforts of ECCAS. In this context, Commissioner Lamamra held, today, a consultative meeting with the representatives of the countries of the region in Addis Ababa (Cameroon, Republic of Congo and Chad), ECCAS and the Chairperson of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) for the month of December 2012, the Ambassador of the Republic of Guinea to Ethiopia. This was followed by a meeting with the representatives of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and AU Member States sitting in the UNSC.

During that meeting, the Commissioner for Peace and Security called on the members of the Security Council to extend sustained support to the efforts of ECCAS and the continent,
including by strongly condemning any attempt to seize power by force and the recourse to armed rebellion to further political claims. He also urged the Security Council to support the sanctions that the AU may end up imposing on the leaders of the armed groups involved in the current attacks in the CAR and who stubbornly continue to use force at a time when the promising path of dialogue is supported by the entire international community.

Within CAR itself, the AU Special Representative in that country, Mrs. Hawa Ahmed Youssouf, is actively involved in the efforts aimed at achieving a speedy and peaceful solution to the crisis. In this regard, she is maintaining close contact with the highest authorities in the CAR and is contributing, jointly with the United Nations Integrated Office in CAR (BINUCA), to the preparations for the talks among the CAR stakeholders that ECCAS plans to launch shortly in Libreville. Against this background, the AU Liaison Office, ECCAS and BINUCA are expected to meet with the representatives of the rebel group, Seleka, inside the country.

The African Union will spare no effort in mobilizing continental solidarity for the CAR, including, if necessary, in the area of security, to help prevent a further deterioration of the situation on the ground. To this effect, consultations are underway, should the circumstances so require, to provide such assistance, in close coordination with the CAR authorities, ECCAS, through its chairmanship, and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). Africa as a whole must respond decisively to the growing threat of recourse to armed rebellions to assert political claims, as witnessed in Mali and in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The AU reiterates its demand for an immediate cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of the armed groups to their previous positions, as well as the need to urgently launch the peace talks scheduled to take place in Libreville. In this context, the AU, while reaffirming its support to ECCAS, stresses the relevance of the decisions adopted in Ndjamen on 21 December 2012, and appeals to the international community as a whole to actively support their implementation.