PRESS RELEASE

APPOINTMENT OF FORMER PRESIDENT PIERRE BUYOYA AS THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION, HEAD OF THE AFRICAN-LED INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT MISSION IN MALI

Addis Ababa, 30 January 2013: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, today appointed the AU High Representative for Mali and Sahel, former President Pierre Buyoya of Burundi, as her Special Representative and Head of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA). This decision is in pursuance of the relevant provisions of the Communiqué of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) meeting, held at the level of Heads of State and Government, in Addis Ababa, on 25 January 2013, and of the Solemn Declaration on the situation in Mali adopted by the 20th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, held in Addis Ababa, from 27 to 28 January 2013, as well as subsequent consultations with the President of the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and other stakeholders.

The appointment of former President Buyoya is part of the efforts by the AU and ECOWAS to put in place, with the support of the United Nations, the required command and control arrangements that would facilitate the effective deployment and operations of AFISMA. The two Commissions work together, with the UN and other stakeholders, within the framework of the Mali Integrated Task Force (MITF), to provide the required strategic guidance for AFISMA and establish the appropriate structures for its effective management, including the Mission Headquarters.

Former President Buyoya, who has extensive political, diplomatic and military experience, will greatly assist in ensuring the effectiveness of AFISMA and mobilize the much-needed African and international support for the success of the African efforts in Mali. He will be based in Bamako.