PRESS STATEMENT

**African Union Commission concludes mid-term monitoring of its Technical Support to The Gambia**

**Addis Ababa, 11 July 2019:** A delegation of the African Union Commission conducted a mid-term monitoring of the African Union Technical Support to The Gambia from 1-5 July 2019. The overarching goal of the mission was to determine the extent to which the project was meeting the expected outcomes in order to identify possible areas that need strengthening. The AU has been providing technical support to The Gambia, at the request of the Government of The Gambia, since September 2018, in the areas of Security Sector Reform (SSR) with particular focus on defence reform, reorganization of the Gambia Armed Forces, reform of the Rule of Law sector; and Transitional Justice process.

The AU delegation held consultations with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, National Security Advisor, Chief of Defence Staff – Gambia Armed Forces, the Inspector-General of Police, Chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission, Special Representative of ECOWAS in The Gambia, Head of the German Liaison Office in The Gambia, UNDP Resident Representative, Office of UN Resident Coordinator, and members of the International Advisors Group on SSR.

The various government officials provided positive feedback on the work of the AU Technical Support Team to the Gambia (AUTSTG), citing the concrete achievements by the AUTSTG as a basis for the Government’s request to the AU to extend the deployment of the Team for an additional year. They expressed their gratitude to the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the AU Commission for accepting the Government’s request for the extension. The delegation also noted areas that require scaling up, notably the perceived slow pace of the SSR process, the challenge of sequencing the various reforms processes, and the need for better coordination among external stakeholders in The Gambia.

The team conveyed the compliments of the AU Commission and re-affirmed the AU’s solidarity with the Government and the people of The Gambia. The team also congratulated the Government on the encouraging progress it is making on institutional reforms. The delegation reiterated the gratitude of the Commission to the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany for its financial support to the AUTSTG. On their part, the Representatives of ECOWAS, UNDP and other international partners expressed their commitment to deepen partnership with the AUTSTG in their collective support to the Government’s reform agenda.