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PRESS RELEASE

CHILDREN PLAY SPECIAL 'FOOTBALL MATCH FOR PEACE', AHEAD OF THE 2013 ORANGE AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS

18 January 2013, Johannesburg: A select team of 22 boys and girls from Alexandra township played yesterday a 'Football Match for Peace', ahead of the 2013 Orange Africa Cup of Nations in South Africa.

The children, who are part of the Alexandra Football Association and who come from previously disadvantaged backgrounds in the Alexandra township, Gauteng Province, have been selected to participate in the Make Peace Happen parade during the opening ceremony of the Orange Africa Cup of Nations on 19 January 2013.

Since 2010, the AU Commission, under its Make Peace Happen campaign, has used the universal appeal of football and adapted the positive qualities of the game, such as teamwork, skills development and competitiveness, to heal the bitter wounds of conflict, promote reconciliation and collaboration among communities and rally the continent around one goal, to end all forms of conflicts.

The AU Commission, under the ongoing partnership with CAF, is using the platform of the 2013 Orange Africa Cup of Nations to refocus Africa's attention on peace. The event was attended by prominent personalities, including AU's Peace Ambassador, Oscar Pistorius, popularly known as the blade runner, who will deliver the peace torch that will be used to light the Flame of Peace during the tournament's opening ceremony. Other key guests included the Secretary-General of CAF, Hicham El Amrani, AU Commissioner for Social Affairs, Dr. Mustapha Kaloko, and Ibrahim Mayaki, the CEO of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). CAF donated 22 Official Africa Cup of Nations match balls to the Alexandra Football Association and other gifts to the children during the event.

This year's Africa Cup of Nations coincides with the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the OAU and offers an opportunity for the AU, together with its partners, to reflect on the achievements and the challenges of the past half-century and chart a better way forward towards a peaceful, prosperous and common future for Africa.

The event was organised with support from, NEPAD, OXFAM International and the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD).