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PRESS RELEASE

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THE AFRICAN UNION WARNS AGAINST ANY ATTEMPT TO SEIZE POWER BY FORCE IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Addis Ababa, 31 December 2012: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, welcomes the reaffirmation by President François Bozizé of the Central African Republic (CAR), on the occasion of the visit to Bangui by the AU Chairperson, Dr. Thomas Yayi Boni, of his commitment to work towards a negotiated solution to the current crisis in his country and to take the necessary steps to this end. In this context, she reiterates the unanimous demand by the international community for the CAR armed groups to put an immediate end to their military offensive and to commit themselves, in good faith, to a dialogue that would include all political stakeholders in the country, with the view to finding a lasting solution to the recurring instability experienced by the CAR.

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates the total rejection by the AU of any attempt to seize power by force, as well as the recourse to armed rebellion to further political claims, whose spread poses a serious threat to peace and security in Africa, while at the same time undermining the ongoing democratic processes and socio-economic development efforts on the continent. She warns the CAR armed groups against any seizure of power through illegal means, which, if it were to occur, would, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Constitutive Act and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, lead to the automatic suspension of the participation of CAR in AU's activities, as well as to the adoption of sanctions and other measures against the perpetrators of such an unconstitutional change of Government and their total isolation.

The Chairperson of the Commission expresses her deep appreciation to President Yayi Boni for his sustained efforts to expedite the search for a political solution to the crisis in CAR and his unwavering commitment to peace on the continent. She reiterates AU's support to the decisions taken by the Extraordinary Summit of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), held in N'Djamena, on 21 December 2012, which provide a viable framework for a speedy way out from the crisis. In view of the relevance of the principles at stake in CAR for Africa as a whole and AU's responsibilities within the framework of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), she reaffirms the readiness of the Union, in agreement with the Government of CAR and in consultation with ECCAS and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), to mobilize, from within the continent, any additional support that would be required to facilitate the success of the regional efforts.