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PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION AND BURKINA FASO LAUNCH A SPECIAL PEACE AND SECURITY AWARD FOR THE OUAGADOUGOU PAN-AFRICAN FILM AND TELEVISION FESTIVAL

Addis Ababa, 28 December 2012: The Commission of the African Union (AU) and the Government of Burkina Faso, today, signed, at the AU Headquarters, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the establishment of a Special Peace and Security Award for the Ouagadougou Pan-African Film and Television Festival (FESPACO). The MoU was signed, on behalf of the AU, by Ambassador Ramtane Lamamra, Commissioner for Peace and Security, and, on behalf of Burkina Faso, by Ambassador Minata Samate Cessouma, Permanent Representative to the AU. The AU Commissioner for Social Affairs, Dr. Mustapha Kaloko Sidiki, also attended the ceremony.

The decision to establish the Peace and Security Award is part of the 'Make Peace Happen' Campaign, launched by the AU to further mobilize all stakeholders within the continent, in order to bring to an end the conflicts and crises that are afflicting Africa. The objective is also to confer greater visibility on AU's efforts in this area.

The Award, which is worth 8 million CFA francs (about 16,000 U.S. dollars), aims at presenting a certificate, rewarding and honoring, through FESPACO, the best African cinematographic productions which promote the culture of peace and non-violence on the continent. It will be reserved to African films and awarded at every edition of the Festival by a special jury proposed by the AU.

Speaking during the signing ceremony, Commissioner Lamamra reiterated the commitment of the AU to use all available tools to further the cause of peace on the continent. In this context, he underscored the appropriateness of the FESPACO framework, as one of the most eminent Film Festivals in Africa. He added: *"The AU's decision to launch this Peace Award is also in recognition of the contribution of President Blaise Compaoré towards the promotion of peace, security and stability in West Africa, as evidenced by the successful mediation efforts he has undertaken to assist in the resolution of conflicts and crises in the region"*. On her part, Ambassador Samate Cessouma welcomed this new milestone in the cooperation between the AU and Burkina Faso towards freeing the continent from the scourge of conflicts and making peace happen. *"Since its inception, the African Union has shown a pro-activeness in conflict prevention and resolution that is unanimously acknowledged on the continent. Undoubtedly, the establishment of the Peace Award will go a long way in promoting the culture of peace, while at the same time honoring my country and its leaders"*.

NOTE TO THE EDITORS

About the Ougadougou Pan-African Film and Television Festival (FESPACO): FESPACO was created in 1969 under the name “First African Film Festival of Ougadougou”. It evolved from being an amateurish gathering in its early days to a key event in the world cultural stage, and took the name FESPACO in 1972, the year during which it was institutionalized.

Since then, FESPACO has gone through several developments linked to the political evolution of Burkina Faso. From 1991 onwards, FESPACO experienced a new dynamism, and it now includes a commercial component, with the creation of the African International Film and TV Market (MICA), which allows exchanges with television networks and the purchasing of film rights.

FESPACO has greatly contributed to the development of the film and video industry on the African continent, and is the largest festival of its kind in Africa, providing the required visibility to African films. It plays an important role in the preservation and safeguard of the African cinematographic heritage, along with the Ougadougou African *Cinémathèque*, an institution that emanated from FESPACO and which contributes to the expansion and development of African cinema.

In 2013, FESPACO will celebrate its 23rd edition, which will take place from 23 February to 2 March 2013, around a specific theme, like the previous editions. The agreed theme for 2013 is “African Cinema and Public Policies in Africa”.

During the 2013 edition, African films (short and feature films, documentaries, TV and African video productions, films from the Diaspora) will compete. The best ones will receive awards offered by diverse institutions, the most prestigious of which is the *Etalon d’or* of Yennenga, awarded to the best feature film and worth 10 million francs CFA. It should be recalled that, since 1972, the *Etalon d’or* of Yennenga has been awarded to the following countries: Niger (1972), Cameroon (1976), Morocco (1973, 2001, 2011), Mali (1979, 1983, 1995), Cote d’Ivoire (1981, 1993), Algeria (1985), Mauritania (1987, 2003), Burkina Faso (1991, 1997), Ghana (1989), DRC (1999), South Africa (2005), Nigeria (2007) and Ethiopia (2009).

About the Make Peace Happen Campaign: This Campaign was launched in 2010, which was proclaimed as the Year of Peace and Security in Africa. The objective is to inject a new momentum in the peace efforts in the continent, to ensure synergies between official initiatives geared towards the promotion of peace and those undertaken at the level of civil society, as well as to mobilize increased resources in support of AU’s efforts.

The Make Peace Happen Campaign culminates every year with the celebration, on 21st September, of the International Day of Peace. While peace cannot be achieved in one day, 21 September nonetheless provides Africans with the opportunity to celebrate notable successes in the realm of peacemaking and to put peace in practice through a collective, cooperative moment of unity.