



PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION WELCOMES THE LAUNCH OF THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE INTER-MALIAN PEACE TALKS

Addis Ababa, 17 July 2014: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, welcomes the launch, yesterday, in Algiers, of the first phase of the Inter-Malian Inclusive Dialogue, which will continue until 26 July 2014. The AU was represented at the ceremony by a delegation led by the Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, and comprising notably former President Pierre Buyoya, High Representative for Mali and the Sahel.

The Chairperson of the Commission urges the Malian stakeholders to seize the opportunity afforded by the Algiers Talks to embark on a frank and open dialogue with a view to finding a negotiated and consensual solution to the current crisis, within the framework of the respect of the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Mali. She stresses the need for the Malian stakeholders to build on the significant achievements made to date within the context of the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement, concluded on 18 June 2013 under the auspices of Presidents Blaise Compaore and Goodluck Jonathan, Mediator and Associated Mediator of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), as well as on the Algiers Declaration and Platform, signed by the Malian armed movements, on 9 and 14 June 2014, respectively.

The Chairperson of the Commission notes with satisfaction the renewed commitment of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita and of his Government to a peaceful and sustainable solution, as well as the expressed commitment of the armed movements to respect the unity and territorial integrity of Mali. She welcomes the release, on the eve of the Algiers Talks, of prisoners held by both sides, stressing that the latter will enhance confidence and increase the chances of success of the ongoing dialogue.

The Chairperson of the Commission expresses the full support of the AU to the efforts being made by the Algerian Government, under the authority of the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, in order to help the Malian stakeholders to address the challenges facing their country. She welcomes the commitment of the other countries of the region participating in the High-Level Consultation meetings on the Inter-Malian Dialogue (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania and Niger) and that of ECOWAS, as well as the engagement of international partners, in support of the ongoing process.

The AU, which contributes, alongside ECOWAS, the United Nations, the European Union and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, to the facilitation led by Algeria, will continue to support the negotiations through its High Representative for Mali and the Sahel and the team of experts assisting him.