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PRESS RELEASE

THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF MALI VISITS THE AFRICAN UNION

The AU and Mali underline the importance of the Algiers preparatory meeting

Addis Ababa, 26 May 2014: The African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smaïl Chergui, today received, at the AU Headquarters, Mr. Abdoulaye Diop, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali. The meeting focused on the evolution of the situation in northern Mali and the efforts being deployed towards the re-launching of dialogue with the northern armed movements.

In the course of the meeting, the Malian Minister, having provided an account of the recent incidents in Kidal, reiterated his country's commitment to dialogue in order to find a lasting solution to the situation, based on respect for the unity and territorial integrity of Mali.

The Minister and the Commissioner concurred on the importance of respecting the 23 May 2014 Agreement concluded under the auspices of the AU Chairman, President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz of Mauritania. They also stressed the importance of the preparatory meeting to the inclusive talks provided for by the 2013 Ouagadougou Interim Agreement, scheduled to take place in Algiers, on 5 June 2014, and the need to spare no efforts to ensure its success. In addition, the Minister and the Commissioner underscored the need to enhance the United Nations Integrated Multidimensional Mission for Stabilization in Mali (MINUSMA), including reaching its authorized strength, to enable it discharge its mandate effectively.

With regard to the situation in the Sahel, Minister Diop and Commissioner Chergui discussed the next steps of the Nouakchott Process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and the Operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in the Sahelo-Saharan Region. They highlighted the forthcoming Bamako meeting of the Chiefs of Defense Staff and Ministers of Defense of the countries of the region, to discuss generic concepts of operations on joint border patrols and the establishment of mixed units. They also exchanged views on the efforts to coordinate the different Sahel strategies, within the framework of the Ministerial Platform established to this end and which held its second meeting in Bamako, on 16 May 2014.