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COMMUNIQUÉ

THE AFRICAN UNION LOOKS FORWARD TO A POSITIVE OUTCOME FROM THE TALKS BETWEEN THE SOUTH SUDANESE LEADERS TOMORROW IN ADDIS ABABA

Addis Ababa, 8 May 2014: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, looks forward to the planned meeting between President Salva Kiir Mayardit and former Vice-President Dr. Riek Machar, in Addis Ababa, on 9 May 2014, under the auspices of Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn of Ethiopia, Chair of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). She notes that the meeting, the first of its kind since the outbreak of the crisis, will take place against the backdrop of a deteriorating situation on the ground, marked by widespread abuses against civilians and other violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.

The Chairperson of the Commission urges the two leaders to seize the opportunity of their meeting to agree on concrete steps to honor their commitments under the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement of 23 January 2014 and move the political process forward. The people of South Sudan, the region, Africa and the larger international community, who are distressed by the appalling situation on the ground, cannot expect less from them. The urgency of finding a lasting solution to the crisis cannot be over emphasized. Every single additional day lost brings more suffering to the people of South Sudan, further tearing apart the social fabric of the country and threatening its very existence, while also seriously affecting regional security and stability.

The Chairperson of the Commission notes that the summit meeting is taking place on the heels of the signing by the Parties in Addis Ababa on 5 May 2014 of a *“Recommitment on Humanitarian Matters in the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement between the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and SPLM/A (In Opposition)”*, which provides for a month of tranquility starting from 7 May 2014. It is imperative that the commitments made are fully implemented to enable the unhindered, unrestricted and safe delivery of humanitarian assistance to all those in need.

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates the AU’s full support to the IGAD-led mediation. She commends Prime Minister Hailemariam Dessalegn and the other leaders of the region, as well as the team of Special Envoys, for their continued engagement. She once again expresses gratitude to the international partners for their support in the ongoing efforts to resolve the crisis in South Sudan.