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PRESS RELEASE

LAUNCH OF THE TRANSITION FROM MICOPAX TO THE AFRICAN-LED INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT MISSION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Addis Ababa, 1st August 2013: In pursuance of the communiqué of the 385th meeting of the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC), held in Addis Ababa on 19 July 2013, the transition process from the Mission of the Economic Community of Central African States for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX) to the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (AFISM-CAR) shall begin from today. This process, which will run for some weeks, will be conducted in close consultation with ECCAS. In this context, a team from the Commission will visit Libreville shortly to continue consultations with ECCAS on the various aspects of the transition. A group of officers and other staff will also be deployed to Bangui to set up the AFISM-CAR Headquarters, under the authority of the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission and Head of the AU Liaison Office in Bangui, Hawa Ahmed Yusuf.

It should be noted that the establishment of AFISM-CAR was decided by the AU PSC at its aforementioned meeting of 19 July 2013. The Mission, which will be deployed for an initial period of six (6) months, is mandated to contribute to: (i) the protection of civilians and the restoration of security and public order, through the implementation of appropriate measures; (ii) the stabilization of the country and the restoration of the authority of the central Government; (iii) the reform and restructuring of the defense and security sector; and (iv) the creation of conditions conducive for the provision of humanitarian assistance to population in need. It will have a total strength of 3 652, including 3 500 uniformed personnel (2,475 for the military component and 1,025 for the police component) and 152 civilians.

The Chairperson of the Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, pays tribute to the different MICOPAX contingents for their outstanding work on the ground, in the face of significant challenges, as well as to the countries of the region for their continued commitment to peace, security and stability in the CAR. The MICOPAX contingents constitute the nucleus of AFISM-CAR and will be gradually strengthened.

The Chairperson of the Commission takes this opportunity to appeal to all AU Member States and partners urgently to provide the required financial, logistical and technical support for the operationalization of AFISM-CAR and the effective conduct of its operations. She looks forward to an increased and multifaceted involvement of the United Nations for the establishment and the strengthening of AFISM-CAR in the interest of international peace and security.