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PRESS RELEASE

THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION OF THE AFRICAN UNION APPOINTS NEW SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVES FOR SOMALIA AND THE GREAT LAKES REGION

Addis Ababa, 1 November 2012: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, has appointed a new Special Representative for Somalia and Head of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), in the person of Mr. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, from Chad. He will replace Ambassador Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra, from Mali, who has been nominated as Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region.

Mr. Annadif has an extensive diplomatic experience. Before this appointment, Mr. Annadif held several ministerial portfolios in his country, including Foreign Affairs. He also served as the Head of the AU Permanent Delegation in Brussels. Mr. Annadif will shortly take over his new assignment in Mogadishu.

Mr. Annadif is taking over the leadership of AMISOM against the background of tremendous progress in the Somalia peace and reconciliation process. Working together with the Somali authorities, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the United Nations and other stakeholders, he will assist in consolidating the achievements made, in line with the priorities outlined by the Somali authorities. He will also focus on the review of AMISOM and its mandate, which will be launched shortly with a view to taking stock of the work done to date and making concrete recommendations on how best the Mission can continue to support the Somali authorities and stakeholders, in light of the gains made and the positive changes that occurred on the ground.

The Chairperson of the Commission has also appointed the outgoing SRCC for Somalia and Head of AMISOM, Ambassador Boubacar Gaoussou Diarra, as the AU Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region and Head of the AU Office in Bujumbura. In this new assignment, Ambassador Diarra will work closely with the Burundian authorities in support of their efforts towards peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. It should be recalled that the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the predecessor of the AU, has been present in Burundi since 1994, in pursuit of peace and reconciliation. In addition to its contribution to the negotiations that led to the signature of the Arusha Agreement of 2000, the AU deployed a



peace support operation to Burundi from 2002 to 2003, to assist in the implementation of the peace and reconciliation process. This Mission paved the way for the subsequent deployment of a United Nations peace-keeping operation in Burundi.

Ambassador Diarra will also work closely with the other countries of the Region and the Secretariat of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region, in support of the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development. He will also devote particular attention to the ongoing efforts by the Region to address the situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo, in close coordination with all stakeholders.

The Chairperson of the Commission pays tribute to Ambassador Diarra for his relentless efforts and contribution to the tremendous achievements recorded in Somalia.