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PRESS RELEASE

(For Immediate Release)

AU Peace and Security Council in historic visit to Mogadishu

Mogadishu - 25nd, October 2013: The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (SRCC) for Somalia, Ambassador Mahamat Saleh Annadif today hosted African Union's Peace and Security Council (PSC) on a historic first field visit to Mogadishu.

The PSC is the AU's standing decision-making body responsible for the maintenance of continental peace and security. It has 15 members, elected by the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government.

The delegation was led by Djibouti's Ambassador to Ethiopia, who is also the Permanent Representative to the AU and Chair of the PSC for the month of October, H.E. Mohamed Idriss Farah.

On arrival at the Aden Adde International Airport, the delegation was met by Ambassador Annadif as well as Somali government officials. They then proceeded to Villa Somalia where they were received in audience by Somali President, H.E. Hassan Sheikh Mohamoud.

During the meeting, they discussed the progress that Somalia has made in recovering from decades of anarchy. Ambassador Farah expressed the AU's full support for the efforts of the Somali government in pursuing peace and reconciliation and thanked AMISOM for the sacrifices the mission has made for the sake of peace in Somalia.

On his part, President Mohamoud also expressed his government's appreciation for the support the country had received from the AU, saying that the Somali problem was an African problem to be dealt with by all Africans.

"Somalia is hugely indebted to AU for helping us emerge from war and for the relative stability the country is experiencing," he said. He also welcomed the PSC's recent endorsement of the recommendations of a joint AU-UN assessment mission, key among them being increased support to the Somali National Security Forces and a reinforcement of AMISOM to aid in the fight against extremism in Somalia.

Specifically, the PSC has called for the provision of logistical support to the SNSF including food, petrol and medical evacuation. It also called for an extra 6300 troops and police for AMISOM as well as enhanced engineering capabilities and much needed equipment including military utility helicopters and armoured personnel carriers.

Ambassador Annadif said the visit was a demonstration of the commitment of the AU to the peace process in Somalia. "It is a sign of the importance the continent attaches to the fight against extremism and to supporting the efforts of the people of Somalia to re-establish security, stability and the rule of law," he said.

He also urged the UN Security Council to quickly act on the PSC's requests, saying that the window of opportunity for cementing the gains in Somalia must not be missed. "AMISOM is continuing to train and build up

the capacities of the Somali forces to eventually take over responsibility for securing the nation. The support of the international community is crucial in this effort and in denying Al Qaeda affiliated terrorist group to plan and plot attacks on innocent civilians in Somalia and beyond," he added.

The PSC delegation also toured the AMISOM Hospital located at the Halane base in the southern part of Mogadishu.