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PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION REAFFIRMS THE IMPERATIVE AND URGENCY OF DIALOGUE AND CONSENSUS IN BURUNDI

Addis Ababa, 16 May 2015: The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, continues to monitor the developments in Burundi closely. Recalling the principled rejection by the AU of any seizure of power by force, as well as her press release of 13 May 2015 and the communiqué issued by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) on 14 May 2015, she notes the return to constitutional order in Burundi following the attempted coup of 13 May 2015.

The Chairperson of the Commission reaffirms the urgent need of a renewed commitment by the Burundian Government and other stakeholders to find a consensual political solution to the grave crisis facing their country. She emphasizes that only a genuine dialogue that addresses all the challenges at hand will make it possible to preserve the important achievements made since the signing of the 2000 Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi, deepen democracy and the rule of law, and create conditions conducive to the holding of peaceful, free, fair, transparent, credible and inclusive elections. In this regard, she reiterates the calls by the AU and the East African Community (EAC) for the Burundian authorities to postpone the elections.

The Chairperson of the Commission stresses that the prevailing situation in Burundi requires the manifestation of a spirit of patriotism on the part of all the stakeholders. It is critical that they refrain from any acts likely to deepen the existing divisions, work towards national reconciliation, and place the interests of Burundi and its people above all other considerations. In other words, they need to demonstrate a high sense of responsibility, to spare their country the risk of further instability, discord and violence.

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates, once again, the imperative of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and international humanitarian law, as well as the principles of fair trial and due process, and calls on the Burundian Government to take all necessary steps in this respect. She strongly condemns all acts of violence, including retaliatory acts.

The Chairperson of the Commission reiterates the AU's commitment, in close cooperation with the EAC and the United Nations, and with the support of other international partners, to continue to do everything in its power to contribute to the promotion of lasting peace, security, democracy and stability in Burundi. She expresses her appreciation to the high-level AU mission, led by Mr. Edem Kodjo and comprising Professor Ibrahima Fall, which is currently in Bujumbura, and urges all the Burundian stakeholders to continue to extend unreserved cooperation to the mission.

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