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PRESS RELEASE

AU AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC CONCLUDE A JOINTLY CONVENED DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION AND REINTEGRATION (DDR) AND SECURITY SECTOR REFORM (SSR) SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP IN BANGUI



H.E. President Touadera (centre), and Professor Hacem Lebatt, Head of MISAC (far right), at the opening of the DDR/ SSR workshop

Bangui, 18 August 2016: The Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) and Security Sector Reform (SSR) sensitization workshop for senior officials from the Government of the Central African Republic (CAR) which was jointly convened by the African Union (AU) and the Government of the Central African Republic ended in Bangui on the 18th of August 2016. The workshop was conducted following a request from the Government of the Central African Republic, in line with the pledge made by the African Union to assist the CAR in these critical areas.

The purpose of the workshop was to sensitise central African senior officials and stakeholders on DDR and SSR to support the government in building the capacities of the Central African Republic as they prepare to start the country's new national DDR and SSR processes. The workshop which presented a platform for the sharing of African experiences from the DDR/SSR commissions of other African countries, will contribute to the stabilization efforts being undertaken by the AU and the international community in CAR towards the establishment of long lasting peace and security in the country.

The workshop was officially opened by the President of CAR, H.E. Professor Faustin Archange Touadera, and it was attended by more than 200 participants including the Speaker of the National Assembly, Honourable Karim Mekessoua, several government ministers and heads of republican

institutions, senior officials, representatives of the diplomatic community including the African group, the United States of America, France and China, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the United Nations (MINUSCA), the European Union, the African Development Bank, the World Bank and other important stakeholders.

In his opening remarks, the President of CAR highlighted the importance of completing the DDR and SSR processes to complement the implementation of the country's socio-economic, poverty reduction, human rights and good governance reform processes. The President said that all these national programs including DDR and SSR cannot succeed without the assistance of the international community.

Also speaking at the workshop, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission (SRCC) and Head of the AU Mission for CAR and Central Africa (MISAC), Professor Mohamed El Hacen Lebatt, reiterated the commitment of the African Union to supporting the DDR and SSR activities of CAR, and highlighted the important role played by the neighbouring countries, the regional body ECCAS, and by MINUSCA, to provide a secure environment for the implementation of national development activities. He stressed in particular, the necessity to respect the free choice of the democratic institutions established in CAR, and the full right of ownership by CAR, of the national DDR and SSR processes.

As a way forward, the ideas generated at the workshop will assist the government of CAR in mapping priority activities on DDR and SSR, as the country prepares to engage with the International Contact Group on CAR on 25 August 2016, and with the donor community in Brussels in November. The African Union Commission will continue to mobilise African support for all peace - building activities in CAR, and to work with the international community to support DDR and SSR, as key components for peace - building and sustainable socio-economic development in the country. The AU Commission will also work with MISAC to strengthen their capacity, particularly as they engage with the strategic committee that is leading the development and implementation of the DDR and SSR national strategic framework.

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Peace and Security

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