



## PRESS RELEASE

### CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE AFRICAN UNION AND SPAIN ON PEACE AND SECURITY ISSUES

#### **The AU Peace and Security Commissioner undertakes a two-day visit to Madrid**

**Addis Ababa, 18 February 2015:** At the invitation of the Government of Spain, the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union (AU), H.E. Ambassador Smail Chergui, undertook, on 15 and 16 February 2016, a working visit to Madrid to discuss peace and security issues of mutual concern and options to enhance cooperation between Spain and the African Union.

During his visit, Commissioner Chergui met with H.E. the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo, H.E. the Minister of Defense, Pedro Morenes Eulate, and other senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Commissioner Chergui expressed the African Union's appreciation for Spain's important support to African peace missions and emphasized the role of Spain, in its capacity as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC), in promoting a better understanding of African positions on peace and security issues concerning Africa in the UNSC.

The discussions focused on several issues of common interest and concern, including the AU efforts in support of peace and reconciliation in Somalia, Mali, Libya, Burundi and South Sudan, as well as in searching for a lasting and durable solution to the conflict in Western Sahara. The Spanish officials expressed Spain's support for the African-led efforts aiming at promoting peace, security and stability in those countries.

The regional and international efforts to counter-terrorism and transnational organized crime were also highlighted during the meetings. In this respect, the Commissioner informed his interlocutors on the state of operationalization of the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to counter the threat of the Boko Haram terrorist group and other efforts being undertaken by the AU to strengthen collaboration and coordination between Member States in combating terrorism and transnational threats, in particular through Nouakchott process and Djibouti Process. In this regard, the two parties agreed to scale up their cooperation in the areas of counter-terrorism and de-radicalization.

Finally, the two sides commended the exemplary relations existing between the AU and Spain in the area of peace and security and reiterated their commitment to further strengthen their partnership.

Furthermore, Commissioner Chergui exchanged views with some Spanish think-tanks and research groups working on African issues on the efforts and achievements of the African Union in the area of peace and security.

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