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PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION DISPATCHES A HIGH-LEVEL EMISSARY TO THE COMOROS

Addis Ababa, 4 December 2015: At the request of the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, and as part of the AU's support to the stabilization process of the Comoros, former President Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania undertook a one day visit to Moroni on 30 November 2015. The mission took place against the backdrop of the elections scheduled to take place in February and April 2016, for the Governors of the Autonomous Islands and for the rotating presidency of the Union of the Comoros. The successful holding of these elections will go a long way to consolidating the remarkable gains recorded by the Comoros over the past decade, following the protracted separatist and institutional crisis that was resolved thanks to the efforts led by the AU with the support of the larger international community.

The objective of the visit was to impress upon the Comorian stakeholders the imperative of demonstrating a high sense of responsibility and contributing to the holding of peaceful, regular and transparent elections in 2016, in line with the relevant provisions of the Comorian Constitution, including those relating to the rotating presidency of the Union of the Comoros. In this respect, it is worth recalling that, at its 545th meeting held on 21 September 2015, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) stressed the importance of the smooth holding of the February and April 2016 elections, as a crucial step in the process for deepening reconciliation and strengthening the Comorian institutions. The PSC expressed concern about the attempts of some Comorian political stakeholders to call into question the principle of the rotating presidency, as enshrined in the Comorian Constitution. It warned against these attempts and against any other action likely to raise tension and jeopardize the gains made in the reconciliation and stabilization process of the Comoros.

During his visit, former President Kikwete met with Vice-President Bourhane Nouridine, acting President in the absence of President Ikililou Dhoinine, who was on official mission outside the country; the Vice-President in charge of the Ministry of Finance, Economy and Investment's Budget, Foreign Trade and Privatization, Mohammed Ali Soilihi; Acting Foreign Minister Mohamed El-had Abbas; the Minister of Interior, Information, Decentralization, in charge of Relations with the Institutions, and Spokesperson of the Government, Houmed M'Saidie; the Director of the Office of the President in charge of Defence, Hamada Madi Bolero; and the Speaker of the National Assembly, Abdou Ousseine. He also met with former Presidents Azali Assoumani and Ahmed Abdallah Mohamed Sambi, as well as with other political stakeholders, namely the leader of the Party for the Comorian Agreement (PEC), Fahmi Saïd Ibrahim, and the Secretary-General of the JUWA Party, Ibrahim Mohamed Soule. Former President Kikwete was supported on the ground by the AU Liaison Office in the Comoros and the Tanzanian Embassy.

In all his meetings, the Envoy of the Chairperson of the Commission reiterated the commitment of the AU to continue supporting the reconciliation and stabilization process in the Comoros. He underlined the primary responsibility of the Comorian stakeholders to ensure that the gains made by their country over the past decade are not reversed. In this respect, he echoed the call made by the PSC for all Comorian Parties to work towards the establishment of the necessary environment for the organization of the 2016 elections, under the required conditions of peace, transparency and regularity, and to comply with the relevant provisions of their country's Constitution.

Former President Kikwete was encouraged by the expressed commitment of all his interlocutors to ensure that the gains made by the Comoros are not reversed. In particular, he noted with satisfaction their determination to spare no efforts in ensuring the successful holding of the forthcoming elections.

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