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PRESS RELEASE

African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security received in Juba by President Salva Kiir Mayardit.

Addis Ababa, 11 October 2016 – The African Union (AU) Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, undertook an official visit to Juba, South Sudan, on 10 October 2016, during which he was received by the President of the Republic of South Sudan, H.E. Salva Kiir Mayardit. The President and the Commissioner held extensive discussions on the situation in South Sudan, including on the reinvigoration of the implementation of the peace process, the healing, reconciliation and accountability processes, the deployment of the regional protection, the fate of the SPLM-IO soldiers stranded in the DRC, and the humanitarian situation, among others.

On the reinvigoration of the implementation of the peace process, they agreed on the necessity to be creative with the view to making it as inclusive as possible so as to have an appeased transition that stands the potential to lead to peaceful general elections. In that regard, the Commissioner restated the AU's position against the use of military force to solve any political problem, reaffirmed that the AU would soon engage Dr. Riack Machar on this and called on the Government of South Sudan not to take the initiative.

Regarding the deployment of the regional protection force, the Commissioner received the assurances of the President of South Sudan that his Government had no objection to the principle of the force and both agreed that it was urgent to arrive, with the UN, at a consensus on its composition as well as on other related technical details. The Commissioner appealed to the Government to accept the package presented by the United Nations.

As regards, the Healing, Reconciliation and Accountability processes, the two agreed that it was important to make progress. They concurred that, as a first step, the South Sudanese should talk to one another. The Commission expressed the AU's readiness to assist in that regard. They concurred that it was important to implement all the aspects of the agreement, and the Commissioner appealed to the Government to quickly put in place the necessary legislation.

Concerning the humanitarian situation, the Commissioner discussed with the President, as well as with other stakeholders, on the dire and sensitive environment in which the IDPs, including those living in the PoCs. They agreed that it was necessary to develop innovative ideas on how to deal creatively with this situation as soon as possible.

On the margins of this high level meeting, the Commissioner held a series of meetings with other government Officials including Chief of General Staff, the Leadership of the JMEC and the UN Special Representative in South Sudan.

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