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Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, P.O. Box: 3243 Tel.: (251-11) 5513 822 Fax: (251-11) 5519 321

Email: [situationroom@africa-union.org](mailto:situationroom@africa-union.org)

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **The African Union welcomes the signing of agreements to end hostilities in South Sudan**

**Addis Ababa, 23 January 2014:** The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, welcomes the signing, today, in Addis Ababa, by the Government of the Republic of South Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army – SPLM/A (in opposition) of Agreements on Cessation of Hostilities and the Status of Detainees, under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Peace and Security Commissioner Smaïl Chergui witnessed the ceremony on behalf of the AU.

The Chairperson of the Commission commends the parties for the spirit of compromise and mutual accommodation they demonstrated in the course of the negotiations. She expresses AU's deep appreciation of the commitment and leadership of the IGAD Chair, Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn of Ethiopia, and the other Heads of State and Government of the region. She hails the perseverance and untiring efforts of the IGAD Mediation Team chaired by Ambassador Seyoum Mesfin and comprising General Lazaro Sumbeiywo and General Mohamed Ahmed M. El Dabi. She thanks the international partners for their continued support to the IGAD-led efforts.

Today's signing marks a first and significant step towards the search for a lasting solution to the conflict in South Sudan. The Chairperson of the Commission calls on the parties to faithfully and fully implement the commitments they have made, so as to rapidly improve the humanitarian situation on the ground. In this respect, she stresses the importance of the early establishment and operationalization of the monitoring and verification mechanism provided for in the Agreement, and calls on the parties to extend full cooperation to IGAD.

Recalling the IGAD and the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) communiqués of 27 and 30 December 2013, respectively, the Chairperson of the Commission urges the parties to engage in the envisaged all-inclusive political dialogue with the required commitment and leadership, in order to address the underlying causes of the conflict, and to recommit themselves to rebuilding their young nation. She reiterates AU's commitment to continue supporting the IGAD-led efforts and to actively follow up on the relevant AU PSC decisions, notably through the early operationalization of the Commission of

Inquiry to look into human rights violations committed in the course of the conflict, with the view to ensuring accountability and promoting reconciliation and healing.