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PRESS RELEASE

THE AFRICAN UNION RELEASES THE REPORT OF THE AU COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON SOUTH SUDAN

Addis Ababa, 27 October 2015: The Commission of the African Union (AU) has today released, for public information, the report of the AU Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan (AUCISS) and the Separate Opinion submitted by one member of the AUCISS. Both documents have been posted on the AU general website – www.au.int – and the website of the Peace and Security Department of the Commission – www.peaceau.org.

The Chairperson of the Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, reiterates the AU's appreciation to the members of the AUCISS and to the team of experts that supported them, for their hard work and commitment in the discharge of their mandate. She echoes the call made by the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) at its 547th meeting held in New York on 26 September 2015, on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly, for the South Sudanese leaders to study the report in detail, as part of the necessary introspection and critical assessment of their deeds and failures, in order to lay the ground for political and social renewal and legitimacy.

The decision to release the AUCISS report and the Separate Opinion was made by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) at its 547th meeting.

NOTE TO THE EDITORS

About the mandate and composition of the AUCISS

At its 411th meeting held in Banjul, The Gambia, on 30 December 2013, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) requested the Chairperson of the Commission, in consultation with the Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and other relevant AU structures, to establish urgently a Commission to investigate the human rights violations and other abuses committed during the armed conflict in South Sudan and to make recommendations on the best ways and means to ensure accountability, reconciliation and healing among all South Sudanese communities.

In pursuance of that communiqué, the Chairperson of the Commission appointed the members of the AUCISS as follows: former President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria (Chair), Honorable Sophia Akuffo of Ghana, Ms. Bineta Diop of Senegal, Professor Mahmood Mamdani of Uganda, and Professor Pacifique Manirakiza of Burundi. The members of the AUCISS were sworn in on 12 March 2014, in Addis Ababa.

About the activities of the AUCISS

In the implementation of its mandate, the AUCISS undertook extensive consultations with the South Sudanese stakeholders, including the Government, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement In Opposition (SPLM/IO), political parties, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), civil society organizations, and other South Sudanese parties. The AUCISS also consulted with IGAD, the countries of the region, the United Nations (UN) and other international stakeholders.

The AUCISS submitted its interim report to the 23rd Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, from 26 to 27 June 2014, which took note of it.

The AUCISS submitted its final report to the Chairperson of the Commission on 15 October 2014. A Separate Opinion was also submitted by one member of the AUCISS. The findings and recommendations contained therein relate to human rights violations and other abuses during the conflict, including accountability (violations of human rights and other abuses, healing and reconciliation and sequencing of peace and justice) and to institutional reforms (building a strong state, systems of governance, devolution of power, comprehensive security sector reform, financial management and strategic resources, national and state legislative, judiciary and justice delivery system, political parties, civil society and media).

About the relevant PSC decisions

At its 442nd meeting held on 17 June 2014, the PSC decided to extend the mandate of the AUCISS by an additional period of three months, to enable it to complete its work.

At its 484th meeting held on 29 January 2015, the PSC decided to defer consideration of the report of the Commission of Inquiry to a later date, and to take appropriate decisions in line with the objectives set out in its Banjul communiqué.

At its 515th meeting, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 13 June 2015, the PSC decided to convene a ministerial-level meeting by mid-July 2015, to consider the report of the AUCISS.

The 526th meeting of the PSC held at ministerial level in Addis Ababa, on 24 July 2015, officially received the report of the AUCISS and the Separate Opinion. In the communiqué adopted on that occasion, the PSC agreed on a number of practical steps to expedite the in-depth consideration of the recommendations contained therein and their subsequent implementation, including the establishment of an *ad hoc* sub-Committee, comprised of Algeria, Chad, Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda, to consider the report of the AUCISS and the Separate Opinion and to make recommendations on the way forward, and the convening of a meeting of the PSC at the level of Heads of State and Government to consider the recommendations of the *ad hoc* sub-Committee and take the required decisions.

The PSC Summit took place in New York on 26 September 2015. It agreed on a number of steps relating to political and other reforms, accountability, healing and reconciliation.