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## **COMMUNIQUE**

### **THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMISSION CONDEMNS THE SEIZURE OF POWER BY FORCE IN NIGER**

The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU), Mr. Jean Ping, is following with concern the prevailing situation in Niamey, Niger. He is in direct contact with the President of the ECOWAS Commission, as well as with other concerned international actors. The developments in the country have led to the seizure of power by armed force in the context of the constitutional and political crisis facing Niger.

The Chairperson of the Commission stresses that the relevant AU instruments systematically condemn any unconstitutional change and, accordingly, he condemns the seizure of power by force that took place in Niger. He calls for the speedy return to constitutional order and affirms the readiness of the AU, in close collaboration with ECOWAS, to facilitate such a process.

The Chairperson of the Commission recalls that the AU was actively involved in the negotiations among the parties in Niger and strongly supported the efforts of ECOWAS, particularly through the mediation led by General Abdulsalami Abubakar, to facilitate an early solution to the crisis in Niger and the democratic functioning of the institutions of the country, with the participation and support of all the political forces. At its 207<sup>th</sup> meeting held in Abuja on 29 October 2009, the Peace and Security Council endorsed the decisions on the situation in Niger as adopted by the Extraordinary Summit of ECOWAS, held in Abuja on 17 October 2009. The 14<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union, held in Addis Ababa from 31 January to 2 February 2010, urged the parties in Niger to pursue dialogue to resolve the crisis in their country.

The Chairperson of the Commission would like to highlight, in the current context, the importance and relevance of the decision adopted by the 14<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union on the Prevention of Unconstitutional Changes of Government and Strengthening of the Capacity of the AU to Manage such Situations, which is based on zero tolerance for coups d'Etat, as well as for the violations of democratic norms, the persistence and recurrence of which could result in unconstitutional changes.

**Addis Ababa, 19 February 2010**