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MISSION INTERNATIONALE DE SOUTIEN A LA CENTRAFRIQUE SOUS CONDUITE AFRICAINE (MISCA)

Tél : + 236 70 96 84 84 // 21 61 54 95 // 21 61 54 96 Fax : + 236 21 61 54 91

3129 Avenue B. Boganda – Bakongo, BP 902 Bangui – République Centrafricaine

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **MISCA EMPOWERS CAR WOMEN TO PROMOTE SOCIAL COHESION, CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND A CULTURE OF PEACE**

**Bangui, 17 March 2014:** As the security situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) continues to improve, the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) have launched an initiative to empower CAR women to promote social cohesion, conflict resolution and a culture of peace. As part of the initiative, MISCA's Human Rights Protection and Gender Unit, under the auspices of CAR's Minister of Health, Social Affairs, Gender and Humanitarian Action, Dr. Marguerite Samba, co-organized with UNFPA a workshop for 50 leaders from 26 CAR women's groups. The workshop, which took place at the Bangui Faculty of Evangelical Theology, from 12 to 14 March 2014, aimed to build the capacity of CAR women and empower them to lead the post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction efforts in the country.

The MISCA Human Rights Officer for Gender explained to the women the fundamental tenets and principles of UN Resolution 1325 and related African Union instruments, such as the relevant provisions of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, the economic and sociopolitical dynamics of conflicts in Africa, AU efforts to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts, and progress and challenges of peacekeeping in Africa as informed by the experience of Liberian women. Participants expressed appreciation for the AU's ongoing efforts to resolve the CAR crises and stressed the need for MISCA to continue supporting CAR women in the difficult post-conflict process of rebuilding their livelihoods and communities. The women leaders also emphasized the need to create and support opportunities for more women to participate in the governance of the country, adding that the history of the CAR might have been different had women been in charge.

MISCA's mandate includes a human rights component and the Mission currently has two Human Rights Officers for Gender. The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission to the CAR and Head of MISCA, Gen. Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko, on the occasion of International Women's Day, on 8 March 2014, commended CAR women for their resilience, and paid tribute to their important contribution to international efforts to resolve the country's current crises.