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**REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE (PRC) SUB-COMMITTEE ON HUMAN
RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE (HRDG)**

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Permanent Representatives' Committee (PRC) Sub-Committee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance adopted its work-plan for the year 2020. It subsequently implemented a set of activities based on the work-plan. These activities include the following:

- a. Finalized the TORs and 2020 Work Plan of the Sub-Committee;
- b. Held deliberations on Silencing the Guns and Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic in Africa held;
- c. Briefings from African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC);
- d. Participation of the Sub Committee on the 9th High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance and its Pre-Events on Youth and Gender; and
- e. Briefing from the Department of Political Affairs on the AU Guidelines on Elections during COVID-19 and other public health emergencies.

2. This report gives an account of the implementation of the activities of the PRC Sub-Committee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance covering the period, **January-December 2020**.

II. FINALIZING THE TOR AND WORK PLAN OF THE SUB COMMITTEE

3. On 25 February 2020, the PRC Sub-Committee held its first meeting of the year in Small Conference room 3 of African Union Commission (AUC). The main agenda items were the draft TOR and 2020 Work Plan. Members of the Sub-Committee deliberated on both items. It was decided that both the TOR and Work plan be circulated among all the 55 Member States for reflection and input. This was done on **14 Feb 2020**. Based on the contributions of all Member States both the TOR and 2020 Work plan of the Sub-Committee were reviewed and finalized and subsequently adopted through silent procedure by members and the Sub-Committee.

III. DISCUSSIONS ON THE THEME OF THE YEAR AND COVID-19 PANDEMIC

4. Upon a presentation of a concept paper titled Silencing the Guns through strengthening Democratic Governance by the Director of Political Affairs, Dr Khabele Matlosa, members of the Sub-Committee engaged in a robust discussion on the African Union theme of the year - Silencing the Guns: Creating Conducive Conditions for Africa's Development. Comments and contributions of Members of the Sub-Committee were taken into account for further refinement of the concept paper.

5. In addition, Members of the Sub-Committee also deliberated and exchanged ideas on the impact of COVID-19 Pandemic in Africa. The Commissioner for Political Affairs, H.E. Amb. Minata Samate Cessouma, provided a short brief on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa from the governance lens indicating the main challenges like excessive use of force by security forces in light of national curfews and States of

emergency; postponement of elections; challenges related to delivery of services; and the plight of forcibly displaced persons including refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees and Internally Displaced Persons.

6. Further to their discussion, the Chair and Members of the Sub-Committee called on all governments to work on limiting the adverse politico-economic and social repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, they implored political leaders to ensure national dialogue, inclusivity and broad participation on decisions regarding national matters such as elections; the administration of emergency funds or even the State of emergency itself.

IV. AGA PLATFORM BRIEFING – APRM AND AUABC

7. The CEO of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) - Prof. Eddy Maloka briefed the Members of the Sub-Committee on the role the Sub-Committee can play on improving governance in the continent. He further explained the mandate of APRM towards strengthening democratic and participatory governance in Africa and expressed APRM's commitment to address the challenges posed by COVID-19. Additionally, briefed the Sub-Committee on progress towards the development of the second edition of the African Governance Report. He expressed the readiness of the APRM to support the Sub-Committee and all Member States in addressing governance challenges on the continent given that governance is central for development and a driving factor for Agenda 2063 and the 2030 global agenda on sustainable development.

8. The African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC)'s Chair Hon. Begoto Miarom provided a briefing to the Sub-Committee. He provided information on the state of ratification and implementation of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption. He highlighted the outcomes of the 4th African Anti-Corruption day. He also briefed the Sub-Committee on the Common African Position on Asset Recovery. Noting the link between corruption and COVID-19 pandemic, he observed that as a result of emergency procurement for the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), the door for massive corruption had been wide open in many Member States with dire consequences for governance, development and political stability. Finally, he expressed the AUABC's readiness to the Sub-Committee in its noble endeavours.

9. Based on the presentations by APRM and AUABC, the members of the Sub-Committee engaged in constructive deliberations. Members of the Sub-Committee reaffirmed the strategic significance of APRM and AUABC as part and parcel of the African Governance Architecture (AGA). The Sub-Committee encouraged those Member States that have not yet done so to sign, ratify, domesticate and implement the Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (CPC); African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) and accede to the APRM.

V. 9th HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE ON DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS & GOVERNANCE AND ITS PRE-EVENTS

10. As per the 2020 work plan of the PRC Sub-committee the 9th High Level Dialogue on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance was held virtually on **10-11 December**

2020 under the theme *“Silencing the Guns through building resilient Democracies and Accountable Governance in Africa”*. All members of the PRC Sub Committee and the main PRC were invited to attend the dialogue along with its pre-events. Members of the Sub-Committee expressed the importance of dialogue in addressing topical and pertinent thematic issues often linked to the AU theme of each year.

11. The 9th HLD was preceded by the two pre-events namely:

- a. Gender Pre-Forum on the theme – *Magnifying Women’s Role in Conflict Prevention and Silencing the Guns*, held virtually on 19-20 November 2020.
- b. Continental Youth Consultation on the theme – *Rethinking Democratic Governance – The Role of youth in Silencing the Guns*, held virtually on 26-27 November 2020.

12. The Members of the Sub-Committee noted that the outcomes of pre-events contributed immensely to the deliberations and outcome of the main High-Level Dialogue. The HLD was recognised as a major contribution to the implementation of the AU themes of each year from a governance lens.

VI. BRIEFING ON THE DRAFT AU GUIDELINES ON ELECTIONS DURING COVID-19 AND OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES

13. On 15 December 2020, the PRC Sub-Committee Members convened a meeting in which a briefing on the Draft AU Guidelines on Elections during COVID-19 and Other Public Health Emergencies was delivered. Following the opening remarks by the Chairperson of the Sub-Committee, the Amb. of Senegal, H.E. Moctar Diop, the H.E Minata Samate Cessouma, the Commissioner for Political Affairs introduced the subject. This was followed by a detailed presentation of the draft Guidelines by the Director of the Department of Political Affairs, Dr. Khabele Matlosa. Members of the Sub-Committee then engaged in a general discussion of the document. It was decided that the Commission should revise and refine the document further taking into account all the inputs. Upon its revisions, the document was circulated to all members of the Sub-Committee for adoption by silent procedure. It was agreed that the document will also be presented to both the PSC and the main PRC in January 2021 for adoption.

DRAFT
**DECISION ON THE REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE (PRC) SUB-COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS,
DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE (HRDG)**

The Executive Council,

1. **TAKES NOTE** of the Report of the Activities of the PRC Sub-Committee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance (HRDG) for the period, January-December 2020;
2. **COMMENDS** the Sub-Committee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance for adopting its TORs and Work Plan for 2020, and for presenting its Annual Report to the 41st Ordinary Session of the PRC;
3. **REQUESTS** the Sub-Committee to continue its engagement with the AU Organs and Institutions with Human Rights and Governance mandate with a view to enhancing coordination and collaboration, especially in enhancing the synergy between the African Governance Architecture and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA);
4. **URGES** the Commission, working in collaboration with the Sub-Committee, to submit the AU Guidelines on Elections During COVID-19 and Other Public Health Emergencies for consideration and adoption.
5. **DECIDES** that the Report of the Activities of the PRC Sub-Committee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance (HRDG) shall be incorporated into the Report of the 41st Ordinary Session of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC).

2021-02-03

Report of the Activities of the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) Sub-Committee on Human Rights, Democracy and Governance (HRDG)

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