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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL

355<sup>TH</sup> MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

13 FEBRUARY 2013

PSC/PR/BR.2(CCCLV)

**PRESS STATEMENT**



## PRESS STATEMENT

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 355<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2013, was briefed by the Department of Political Affairs of the African Union Commission on its activities relating to past and upcoming elections in 2012 and 2013 on the continent and on the implementation of the recommendations of the Panel of the Wise as contained in its report on election-related conflicts and violence, adopted by the Assembly of the African Union at its 13<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session held in Sirte, Libya from 1 to 3 July 2009.

Council congratulated the people and political leaders in Libya, Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Congo, Egypt, Lesotho, The Gambia, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Senegal on the successful organization of elections in these countries. Council noted that the peaceful conclusion of these elections is a clear demonstration of Member States' commitment to upholding the principles of the African Union as encapsulated in the African Charter on Democracy, Election and Governance. Council further noted the contentious nature of some of these elections and called on all political stakeholders to use legal avenues to seek redress in cases of electoral disputes, to reduce the incidence of post-election violence.

Council expressed concern about of the unconstitutional changes of Government in Mali and Guinea-Bissau, in 2012, that prevented the conduct of expected elections, as well as the delay in conducting of elections in some other countries. Council called on all political stakeholders in these countries to take the necessary steps to conduct elections on time in order to reduce political tensions.

Council welcomed the steps taken by the Commission to shift to Long-Term Observation methodology in accordance with AU elections and democracy instruments and the recommendations by the AU Panel of the Wise Report (2010), that all stages of the electoral cycle should be observed. The obvious outcome of such a shift will be an improvement in the quality and credibility of AU election observer missions and will afford early engagement in the assessment of electoral processes in Member States. Council, therefore, called on Member States to provide the necessary resources for the conduct of long term electoral observation missions.

Council further welcomed the steps taken by the Commission to dispatch election observer missions to Djibouti and Kenya on the occasion of their elections scheduled to take place on 22 February 2013 and 4 March 2013, respectively. Council called on stakeholders in these two countries to refrain from any action that may fuel conflict and violence and undermine the peaceful conduct of elections and to seek legal redress in case of electoral disputes.

Council reiterated the need for Member States that have not ratified the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which entered into force on 15 February 2012, to take necessary steps to do so, and to comply scrupulously with all relevant AU instruments governing democratic elections on the continent.

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