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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL
385TH MEETING
19 JULY 2013
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/BR.(CCCLXXXV)

PRESS STATEMENT

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The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 385th meeting held on 19 July 2013, was briefed by the Department of Political Affairs of the AU Commission on the preparations for upcoming elections in Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Mali, Togo and Guinea Bissau.

Council takes note of the briefing made by the Commissioner for Political Affairs on upcoming elections in Africa and the statements made by the Representatives of Zimbabwe, Mali and Togo.

Council welcomes the on-going deployment of AU election observers to elections to be held in Togo, Mali and Zimbabwe on 25, 28 and 31 July 2013, respectively and lauded the efforts of the Department of Political Affairs in deploying observation missions in the respective countries, in particular the deployment of Long Term Observers to Mali and Zimbabwe.

Council recalls the press statement adopted at its 319th meeting held in Addis Ababa on 26 April 2013, calling on all political stakeholders in countries heading for elections to take the necessary steps to conduct peaceful, credible and timely elections in order to reduce political tensions on the continent.

Council takes further note of the efforts of the Transitional Government and institutions in Mali to hold credible elections on 28 July 2013, despite security and logistic challenges. Council calls on all Malian stakeholders to work together to ensure a smooth and peaceful election process leading to the restoration of constitutional order and the strengthening of governance institutions and structures in the country.

Council commends the political stakeholders in Togo for their efforts towards the conduct of legislative elections on 25 July 2013, particularly the dialogue between the different political parties and urges all stakeholders in the political process to work together to ensure that all outstanding issues, including the composition of the Electoral Commission, are amicably resolved to avoid further delay in the holding of elections.

Council welcomes the generally peaceful and calm political atmosphere in Zimbabwe in the run-up to elections scheduled for 31 July 2013 and commends the efforts of the Government of National Unity to this effect. Council commends Zimbabwe on a successful referendum and the coming into force of a new Constitution. Council further welcomes the expressed commitment to peaceful elections by all the stakeholders in the country and urges all of them to positively contribute to holding of free, fair and transparent elections on 31 July 2013.

Council was informed of the continuing political stalemate in Madagascar and the recent interactions between the AUC-led International Contact Group on Madagascar and the political stakeholders and urged the Malagasy political actors to quickly resolve their differences and lack of consensus blocking the electoral process. Council endorses the conclusions of the meeting of the International Contact Group on Madagascar held on 26 June 2013 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and supports its unanimous call on the three presidential candidates – Andry Rajoelina, Mrs. Lalao Ravalomanana and former President Didier Rastiraka – to withdraw their candidatures from the pending presidential elections to pave the way for the completion of the transition process.

Council remains firm on this decision and urges the withdrawal of the three candidates by 31 July 2013 at the latest.

Council notes the positive progress made in the political process in Guinea Bissau, including the fixing of 24 November 2013 for the holding of the presidential elections.

Council recalls its press statement adopted at its 319th meeting held in Addis Ababa on 26 April 2013 and further commended the decision of the Commission to deploy Long Term Observation Missions to Mali and Zimbabwe. Council extends its full support to these efforts on the continent and encourages the Commission to continue the use of Long Term Observation methodology to as many countries as possible that hold elections on the continent.

Council looks forward to the successful conduct of free, fair and transparent elections in these countries and enjoins the Commission to remain engaged throughout the process and deploy observers in crucial upcoming elections.

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