



16th January, 2013

PRESS RELEASE

AU and COMESA High Level Officials on Pre-Elections Assessment Mission and the launch of AU Long-term Elections Observation Mission to Kenya

The Panel of the Wise of the African Union (AU), the Committee of Elders of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), working with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, embark on a pre-assessment mission to Kenya, from 16 to 23 January 2013 ahead of the March 4, 2013 General Elections. This is in line with a decision of the AU Assembly mandating the Panel of the Wise and its regional counterparts to undertake systematic and routine missions in all Member States of the Union, with a view to identifying accompanying measures and good practices for the benefit of the Union and its member states.

The mission is in Kenya to express the AU and COMESA's continued support to the efforts of the government of Kenya, all political actors and civil society, in working to create a conducive environment for the holding of free, transparent, credible and peaceful elections. The visit will avail the delegation the opportunity to express the continent's support for the continuation of Kenya's democratic process.

During the visit, the delegation will hold a wide range of consultations with Senior Government officials, the electoral commission, presidential candidates, political parties, civil society, the private sector, development partners, the media and all stakeholders to understand the challenges, the efforts already made and what remains to be done to ensure successful general elections come March 4th, 2013.

In parallel, this visit will launch the AU Long-term Elections Observation Mission in line with the AU Peace and Security Council call for more in-depth, thorough and comprehensive Long Terms Observation Mission on the Continent. First of its kind by AU, the Long-term AU-EOM is in line with key democracy and elections instruments such as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance. It will inform early political developments in countries holding elections for the Commission to take necessary preventive measures to ensure political stability.

The delegation includes two members of the AU Panel of the Wise, **Dr. Brigalia Bam and Mme Marie-Madeleine Kalala-Ngoy**; three members of the Committee of Elders of COMESA, **Ambassador Simbi Mubako, Ambassador Soad Shalaby and Ambassador Priyay Newoor, and H.E. Ambassador Aisha Abdullahi**, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs. They bring a wide range of experiences on electoral matters from various countries.