



18th January, 2013

Press Statement

As already made public, 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), have been in Nairobi since a number of days on a routine mission to Kenya, as one of the Member States, to express its solidarity with the Kenyan people, as they go through this very important period of its democratic transition: the elections.

So far, we have been encouraged by the steps taken by all Kenyans, especially in the last five years. We followed very closely, and noted the engaging discussions and heated debates that led to the drawing, and adoption of the new constitution. The referendum that crowned that process reflected a progressive consolidation of the critical pillars of democracy and peace in any society.

In its consultations and exchanges so far held with the stakeholders, notably, the political party candidates, the Chief Justice, and the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, the Panel is appreciating the level of preparedness for the elections. The nominations which peaked yesterday, and are currently being completed provide an opportunity to gauge and test the readiness of the parties, their contestants and the voters.

Those we met so far have expressed their commitment to peaceful elections and a credible process. It will be critical for the appropriate institutions to continue placing close attention around issues of security, equitable access to the media, civic and voter education, amongst others.

We hope that all the key stakeholders: the political parties, the media will continue to inform and educate the citizens, and also adhere to the Code of Conduct. As the country gradually goes towards the March elections, the Panel feels that it will be important for the media and political parties to affirm their responsibilities toward ensuring that they are credible and violence-free, before and after the polls.

Our mission will continue to meet with other Presidential candidates and all Kenyan institutions and authorities who are responsible to ensure that the elections at both the County and national levels are free, fair, credible, transparent and peaceful.