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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 1034TH MEETING

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA 23 SEPTEMBER 2021

PSC/PR/COMM.1034(2021)

COMMUNIQUE

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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1034th meeting held on 23 September 2021, to consider the Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on Elections in Africa held during the period from January to June 2021.

The Peace and Security Council,

Recalling all its previous decisions on elections in Africa, particularly Communiques [PSC/PR/COMM. (CMLXXXII)] adopted at its 982nd meeting held on 25 February 2021, [PSC/PR/COMM. (CMLXXVI)] adopted at its 976th meeting held on 29 January 2021 and [PSC/PR/COMM. (CMXXXV)] adopted at its 935th meeting held on 9 July 2020;

Acknowledging the significant contribution of credible elections to conflict prevention, peacebuilding, as well as in promoting, deepening and consolidating democracy in Africa, within the overall context of achieving the aspirations of Agenda 2063 and the AU Master Roadmap of Practical Steps for Silencing the Guns in Africa by 2030, as well as the AU Theme of the Year 2021 'Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want';

Also acknowledging the efforts and commitments by Member States to continue holding elections in spite of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic;

Mindful of the determination of the AU to promote and protect human and people's rights, consolidate democratic institutions and culture, and ensure good governance and the rule of law, as highlighted in the preamble of the AU Constitutive Act, as well as Articles 3 and 4 of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance;

Noting the opening remarks made by H.E. Ambassador Mahamat Ali Hassan, the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Chad to the AU and Chairperson of the PSC for September 2021, and the briefing by H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security; as well as the remarks by the Member States that held elections from January to June 2021.

Acting under Article 7 of its Protocol, the Peace and Security Council:

1. **Congratulates** the eleven (11) Member States which have successfully conducted peaceful presidential, general and legislative elections from January to June 2021, namely, Algeria, Benin, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Niger and Uganda, and their commitment towards strengthening the democratic culture; and **commends** the AU Commission for consistently providing technical capacity support to the national election management bodies of the Member States towards the successful organization of democratic elections throughout Africa;
2. **Also commends** Member States which have peacefully effected the transfer of power to the recently

elected presidents, which is a testament to the growing maturity of democracy, thus contributing to the political deepening and strengthening of the democratic culture and political governance in the Continent;

3. **Further commends** all Member States, which fully funded their elections and **encourages** others to emulate this good example with a view to preventing external interferences in elections and promoting African solutions to African problems;

4. **While welcoming** the progress and successes recorded in elections during the reporting period, **notes with grave concern** the upsurge of unconstitutional changes of Government in the Continent through military takeovers, which destabilizes the affected Member States and regions;

5. **To this effect, re-emphasizes** the compelling need for Member States to continue to build the capacity of and strengthen national institutions, towards adopting viable early warning and timely response mechanisms that will support the promotion of strict adherence to the tenets of constitutionalism and thus, prevent election-related violence, the manipulation of national electoral processes and constitutions and the unconstitutional change of government;

6. **Accordingly, requests** the AU Commission to enhance its early warning mechanisms, particularly relating to the Member States undertaking elections and in political transition, **while urging the** swift deployment of the AU Panel of the Wise, PanWise and FemWise, to effect preventive diplomacy and mediation of disputes arising from elections and prevent associated political violence;

7. **Underlines** that elections remain fundamental to conflict prevention, peace-building and political stability, as well as to promoting and deepening democracy in Africa and **therefore, calls on** the AU Commission to devote greater attention to building synergies in the implementation of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), in collaboration with the relevant AU Organs, APRM and the RECs/RMs, as well as stakeholders and development partners;

8. **In this regard, encourages** all Member States to continue to create the conducive environment for free, fair, credible and transparent elections and to adhere to their national electoral calendars, with a view to building trust and confidence among the citizens, **while reiterating the appeal** for the conscious promotion of the inclusion and full participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities in national political governance and democratic processes, including through the implementation of national legally prescribed quota, where they exist;

9. **Reaffirms the call on** Member States to explore concerted efforts to promote inclusive nomination processes of candidates, build voters confidence and strengthen state institutions, to ensure that citizens participate fully in electoral processes and accept the outcomes of elections, including the conclusions of national judicial systems;

10. **Applauds the** efforts by the AU Commission to improve election observation methodology to make it more relevant to the needs of the Member States and the continuous endeavour to deploy election observers and technical assistance in spite of the challenges posed by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic;

11. **Stresses** the importance for Member States to favourably consider adequate funding to the AU Commission to enable it to effectively discharge its mandate of promoting transparent and peaceful elections, as well as consolidating democracy and good governance as enshrined in the African Charter on Democracy, Election and Governance;
12. **Mandates** the AU Commission, closely coordinating with Member States, to convene an appraisal symposium to consider appropriate actions to address political conditions that lead to unconstitutional changes of government in the Continent, including the viability of creating a platform for Member States to regularly share experiences, lessons and best practices on elections, democracy and good governance;
13. **Requests** the AU Commission to continue to observe and monitor elections in Africa, in collaboration with the concerned Member State(s), and provide regular briefings to Council, and to expedite the development of guidelines for elections during COVID-19 and other public health emergencies and humanitarian disasters;
14. **Commends, once again,** Member States which have already signed, ratified and domesticated the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, and **encourages** all those Member States which have not yet done so, to consider to do so;
15. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.