

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 355th meeting, held on 13 February 2013, received a briefing by the AU Panel of the Wise and the Committee of Elders of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) on the outcome of their joint pre-election assessment mission to Kenya, undertaken from 16 to 23 January 2013 ahead of the 4 March, 2013 General Elections.

Council took note of the statements made by the representatives of the AU Panel of the Wise, Dr. Brigalia Bam, of South Africa, and of the COMESA Committee of Elders, Ambassador Simbi Mubako, of Zimbabwe. Council also listened to a statement made by the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the AU.

Council highly commended the Government of Kenya for the efforts undertaken since the 2007-2008 post-elections violence and the structures that have been put in place to ensure transparent, free, fair, peaceful and credible elections are held. In this respect, Council recognized the promulgation of the new constitution, the establishment of an Independent Elections and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), the reform of the judiciary with the appointment of a new Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the commencement of police reforms, with the appointment of an Inspector General of Police.

Council recognized that, despite the many challenges faced, the people and political actors of Kenya have demonstrated their resolve and commitment to prevent a repeat of the electoral crisis of 2007, as illustrated by the recent party primaries which took place in a relatively peaceful manner, and the political debate series carried out in very candid and peaceful manner.

Council welcomed the appointment of President Joaquim Chissano, as Team Leader of the AU Election Observation Mission to Kenya, and urged him to establish contacts with key national and international stakeholders in Kenya to urge them: (i) to respect the results at the elections; (ii) to commit to advocating peace and non-violence during the elections; and (iii) to commit to addressing grievances through the newly reformed judicial system/ Supreme court, taking into account the competence and readiness of the judiciary to expedite judgments.

Council called upon political actors in Kenya to continue to place the supreme interests of their nation above any factional or party interests.

Council paid tribute to the former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan and his team for their efforts of service as AU Mediator for the post-electoral conflict of 2007-2008 in Kenya.

Council encouraged the Panel of the Wise and similar regional mechanisms to pursue systematically their ongoing preventive actions linked to election-related disputes, to continue to share with concerned parties lessons learned from their consultations, and to brief the PSC on the outcome of its elections-related missions.

Council further requested the relevant departments of the Commission to look more closely at the issue of media in vernacular languages their role before, during and after elections, so as to ensure that local/community-based radio stations can be utilized as voices of peace and not peace spoilers.

Council noted with satisfaction the effective implementation of the report of the Panel of the Wise, entitled “Election-Related Disputes and Political Violence: Strengthening the Role of the AU in Preventing, Managing and Resolving Conflict”, adopted at the Assembly in Sirte, in July 2009. In this regard, Council welcomed the close cooperation between the AU Panel of the Wise and similar regional mechanisms, in pursuance of the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the area of peace and security signed in 2008 between the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), in particular through the establishment of the Pan African Network of the Wise (PANWISE).

Council urged all AU Member States to extend their support and collaboration to the AU Panel of the Wise and similar regional mechanisms in their efforts to implement the mandate given to them in the area of conflict prevention, especially to implement the 2009 Sirte Decision on election-related disputes.