

Pursuant to an invitation by the Independent Electoral Commission of Kenya, a 20 member COMESA election observer delegation arrives in Nairobi, Kenya on Sunday 24 February 2013. The delegation, which is under the overall leadership of Ambassador Simbi Veke Mubako from Zimbabwe, includes senior government officials, representatives of civil society, parliamentarians and academia from the following COMESA Member States: Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Rwanda, Seychelles, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The delegation will be in the country until 08 March, during which time it will observe pre-election activities, voting, vote counting and declaration of election results, and the immediate post-election period in selected districts. As part of its mission, the delegation will consult electoral stakeholders including political parties, candidates, citizens, civil society and faith based organizations, and the media. The delegation will also exchange views with the diplomatic community as well as with other election observers. The COMESA Observer Team will observe the Kenya elections jointly with the East African Community (EAC).

Earlier in January, a joint high-level delegation of the African Union Panel of the Wise and the COMESA Committee of Elders conducted a week-long pre-election assessment mission to Kenya ahead of its March 4, General Elections. The main goal of the mission to Kenya that ran from January 16 – 22, 2013, was to express the AU and COMESA solidarity with the Kenyan people, as well as these institutions' continued support to the efforts of the Government of Kenya, and all political actors and civil society working to create a conducive environment for the holding of free, transparent, credible and peaceful elections.

The observation process will be guided primarily by the constitution and legal framework of the Republic of Kenya as read with relevant international and regional instruments. The COMESA Electoral Observation Mission welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the democratic process in Kenya and looks forward to the cooperation of all Kenyans.

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Ends.