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PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL 1062ND MEETING 31 JANUARY 2022 ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

PSC/PR/COMM.3/1062(2022)

COMMUNIQUE

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Adopted by the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU) at its 1062nd meeting held on 31 January 2022, on the Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on Elections held in Africa during the period from July 2021 to December 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; and [PSC/PR/COMM. (CMLXXVI)], adopted at its 976th meeting held on 29 January 2021;

Noting the opening remarks made by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ghana to the AU as the PSC Chairperson for January 2022, H.E. Ambassador Amma Adomaa Twum-Amoah, and the presentation by the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye on the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Elections held in Africa during the period from July to December 2021;

Also noting the statements made by the representatives of the following AU Member States which organized elections during the period from July to December 2021, namely: Central African Republic, Ethiopia, The Gambia, the Kingdom of Morocco and Somalia;

Reaffirming the determination of the AU to promote, deepen and consolidate democracy, good governance and the rule of law throughout the African Continent, in line with the Preamble and Articles 3 and 4 of the AU Constitutive Act, as well as the importance of ensuring that Member States continue to fully adhere to the provisions of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance;

Mindful of the significant contribution of credible, transparent, free and fair elections to conflict prevention, peacebuilding and political stability, as well as in promoting, deepening and consolidating democracy in Member States; and

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

1. **Endorses** the Report of the Chairperson of the AU Commission on the Elections held in Africa from July to December 2021, namely in: Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Morocco, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia and Zambia; and **congratulates** these Member States for having successfully conducted their elections during challenging public health circumstances caused by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic;
2. **Commends, in particular**, those Member States which managed to organize elections using domestically mobilized financial resources and **encourages** Member States planning to organize elections to redouble efforts in domestic resource mobilization, with a view to ensuring full national ownership of their electoral processes in order to reduce external dependence and the attendant vulnerabilities;
3. **Notes with satisfaction** the evolving culture of peaceful and democratic elections across Africa as evidenced by the regularity of national elections, as well as the growing trend of peaceful transfer of power in

many Member States, given the visible improvement in the professional management of elections by national election management bodies;

4. **Totally rejects and condemns** unconstitutional changes of government and **expresses** full support for the general will of the people as democratically expressed through free, fair and credible elections and collective commitment of Member States to democracy, rule of law and good governance;

5. **Welcomes** the steady preparations underway in Member States for the upcoming elections to be organized during the first half of 2022; and **encourages** all stakeholders in the concerned Member States to take all necessary measures and create conducive conditions for the successful organization of timely, peaceful, inclusive, transparent and credible elections in accordance with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance; and, in this context, **urges** political parties and independent election candidates to place the supreme interest of their countries above all else, accept election outcomes, make full use of all available legal channels to settle any election disputes that may arise and to refrain from any recourse to election-related violence;

6. **Underlines the critical importance** for Member States which organize elections, in line with their national elections calendars, to ensure safety and security of the voters against COVID-19, in accordance with the AU Guidelines on Elections in Africa in the context of COVID-19 pandemic and other Public Health Emergencies, as well as the safeguard protocols issued by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO);

7. **Encourages** all Member States to prioritize the active participation of African women, the youth and people living with disabilities in political processes, particularly elections, possibly through affirmative actions and reducing the fees for enlisting election candidature, in line with the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (The Banjul Charter), the Protocol to African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), as well as the Africa Youth Charter;

8. **Commends** the efforts being deployed by the Commission to ensure the organization of peaceful, credible, transparent, and democratic elections on the Continent through the continued provision of technical assistance to Member States, election observation and preventive diplomacy engagements in potentially disputed elections; and **requests** the Commission to redouble efforts in the mobilization of required resources, to support electoral processes, in order to ensure timely deployment of election observers in sufficient numbers in all Member States organizing elections, particularly in those in transitions, as well as to document lessons learnt from AU Election Observer Missions;

9. **Also requests** the Commission to organize an annual reflection forum to enable national elections management bodies to share experiences and lessons learned, with a view to further improving electoral processes in Member States;

10. **Further requests** the Commission to scale up the participation of women and youth in future AU Election Observer Missions, in line with AU set targets on gender parity and youth empowerment;
11. **Urges** all Member States to continue to uphold constitutionalism by deepening and consolidating democratic culture, including by building strong and independent national institutions, with a view to preventing election-related conflicts and crisis situations;
12. **Stresses** the important role of vibrant civil society organizations and responsible media, both print and electronic, in electoral processes and **encourages** these entities to always contribute more positively towards promoting the integrity and credibility of elections and maintenance of peace and stability in Member States, especially by promoting civic education and accurate public information, as well as refraining from inflammatory reporting and miscommunication that may incite violence;
13. **Also encourages** all Member States, that have not yet done so, to sign, ratify and domesticate the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, without further delays; and
14. **Dedicates** the Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on Elections in Africa held between July and December 2021 to the memory of the late Mr. Guy Cyril Tapoko who served diligently as Head of Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit in Governance and Conflict Prevention; and
15. **Decidesto** remain actively seized of the matter.