19th MEETING OF THE PANEL OF THE WISE
ACCRA, REPUBLIC OF GHANA
24 OCTOBER 2018

Communiqué
The Panel of the Wise of the African Union (AU) held its 19th statutory meeting in Accra, Republic of Ghana, on 24 October 2018, under the Chairmanship of H.E. President Hifikepunye Lucas Pohamba, former President of the Republic of Namibia. The meeting was attended by Panel of the Wise members, H.E. Amr Moussa, Mrs. Honorine Nzet Bitéghé, Dr. Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe as well as Friends of the Panel of the Wise, Dr. Mary Chinery-Hesse. The Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smaïl Chergui participated in the meeting.

Reflecting on their activities, the Members of the Panel expressed concern over the invocation by member states of the principle of sovereignty to limit access and engagement. There was consensus among Members of the Panel that without effective political support as provided for in relevant instruments of the African Union such as the 2002 Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC Protocol) and the 2007 Modalities of the Panel of the Wise, the Panel will be unable to fulfil its core mandate of preventive diplomacy and mediation in support of the Chairperson of the Commission.

Panel of the Wise member Dr. Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe provided a briefing on the activities of the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa). She highlighted the solidarity missions organised with the UN and the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region to Burundi, CAR and DRC, as well as the joint AU/UN visit to Juba and Bentiu in South Sudan.

Members of the Panel of the Wise further expressed concern about the increasing militarization of parts of the continent, in particular the Sahel and the Horn of Africa regions and the increase in uncoordinated external interventions which undermines the efficacy of African-led solutions to violent conflicts on the continent. In this respect, Members of the Panel agreed that considerable attention should be devoted to understanding the dynamics of external involvement on the continent’s security landscape.
The Panel took note of the findings of the thematic study conducted jointly by the African Union Peace Security Department (AU PSD), the United Nations Department for Political Affairs (UNDPA) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on improving the mediation and resolution of natural resource-related conflicts across Africa.

Members of the Panel of the Wise gratefully acknowledged the AU Commission for its commitment to enhance the capacity of the Secretariat of the Panel, including through the mobilization of additional human, material and financial resources, with a view to ensuring that the Panel discharges its mandate more effectively.

Finally, the Panel of the Wise expressed its appreciation to H.E. President Hifikepunye Lucas Pohamba for his leadership during the last year and elected Dr. Speciosa Wandira Kazibwe as the new Chair of the Panel.