COMMUNIQUÉ

THE PANEL OF THE WISE CONCLUDES ITS THIRD SOLIDARITY MISSION TO TUNISIA

The Panel commends Tunisia for its efforts towards consensus building and inclusivity
Two members of the Panel of the Wise of the African Union (AU), Mrs. Mary Chinery-Hesse and Mrs. Madeleine Kalala-Ngoy, undertook, in a spirit of pan-Africanism and solidarity, a mission to Tunisia from 1 to 6 July 2013, primarily to mark the continued support of the Africa for the continuation of the steady progress being made by the people and Government of Tunisia for a smooth political transition. The mission also aimed at assessing the level of progress in the finalization of the draft Constitution, as Tunisia prepares for general elections and other relevant aspects of the ongoing efforts, to share with Tunisian stakeholders the most positive African lessons in terms of political transitions, elections and transitional justice, and to identify areas for AU support to ensure that the gains realized are preserved and consolidated.
On Thursday 5 July, the delegation had an extensive meeting with **His Excellency Dr. Moncef Marzouki**, President of Tunisia. President Marzouki, underlined the commitment of the Government and people of Tunisia to collaborate with the AU, stressed that “the advice and counsel you continue to provide to us do not fall in deaf ears”. He also stressed that the key principles of the transition include “consensus and the need to keep our people united”.

The delegation also had fruitful consultations with key Tunisian officials and Tunisian political actors and partners, specifically the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Finance, Interior, Human Rights, representatives of the various political parties (the Troika and the opposition), the group of African Ambassadors, as well as senior representatives of the African Development Bank, the European Union and member states, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and United Nations agencies, among others.

Through its various interactions, the delegation underlined the commitment of the AU to continue its support to the Government and people of Tunisia to achieve a peaceful and sustainable political transition. It noted with satisfaction the determination of Tunisia’s political and other stakeholders to continue to prioritize dialogue. The delegation equally commended the people of Tunisia for placing the interests of the Nation above any other considerations, building consensus and inclusivity, attempting to redress the socio-economic imbalances and injustices which were at the root of the Revolution, restoring the dignity of the Tunisian citizenry, upholding the gains of the pre-Revolution, and preserving and promoting the rights of women.

The delegation impressed on Tunisian authorities, in particular the National Constituent Assembly, the need to develop a clearer timetable for the finalization of the drafting and adoption of the Constitution to avoid a build-up of popular impatience, to learn the most positive
lessons from other African countries on matters of transitional justice and in this regard to work closely with the AU International Law Commission.

On their part, the Tunisian authorities requested the Panel to carry out advocacy activities to explain to international stakeholders the steady progress being made by the transitional institutions to ensure consensus and inclusivity which alone could guarantee the sustainability of the transition; to build a more comprehensive approach to support the ongoing transitions in North Africa; to increase AU visibility in North Africa; and to support the electoral process.

The Panel of the Wise expresses its gratitude to H.E. President Moncef Marzouki, the Tunisian Government, civil society actors, and all national and international interlocutors for the exceptionally warm welcome extended to them, as well as for the frank and candid discussions.

The Panel looks forward to even more fruitful interactions with Tunisian authorities and countries of the region in the near future.

Tunis, 6 July 2013