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INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE 5TH PANEL OF
THE WISE OF THE AFRICAN UNION
ADDIS ABABA, 29 MARCH 2022

PRESS RELEASE

1. The fifth Panel of the Wise (the Panel) held their inaugural meeting on **March 28 – 29, 2022 at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia** following their appointment by the 35th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government on February 5 – 6, 2022 to support the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and Chairperson of the Commission on issues relating to peace, security and stability in Africa.
2. Pending the nomination from the Southern Africa region, the 5th Panel is comprised of the following eminent persons: H.E. Domitien Ndayizeye, former President of Burundi (Central Africa Region), H.E. Amre Moussa, former Foreign Minister of Egypt and former Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (Northern Africa Region), Hon. Lady Justice Effie Owuor (Eastern Africa Region), and Professor Babacar Kante (Western Africa Region).
3. H.E. Amb. Adeoye Bankole, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security delivered the keynote address on behalf of H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission at the opening ceremony that was chaired by Alhaji Sarjoh Bah Ph.D, Director of Conflict Management Directorate. H.E. Amb. Cessouma Minata Samate, the Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development of the AU Commission also interacted with the Panel on efforts to address forced displacement and worsening humanitarian crisis on the continent. The Panel was formally introduced to the PSC and briefly participated as observers in the open session of the PSC on the Consideration of Policies on Child Protection in AU PSOs and mainstreaming Child Protection in APSA, held on 29th March 2022.
4. In line with modalities for the functioning of the Panel, H.E. Domitien Ndayizeye was elected as the chairperson of the Panel for one-year term. In this capacity, H.E. Ndayizeye reiterated the Panel's commitment to work closely with the PSC, the Chairperson of the Commission, Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (RECs/RMs), and relevant African and international partners, on the governance, peace and security challenges on the Continent, in pursuit of Agenda 2063.
5. The Panel noted the diverse presentations made by the Commission such as the mandate and modalities for the functioning of the Panel; the APSA and AGA synergies; the subsidiary mechanisms of the Panel: the Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise), the Network of African Women in Conflict Prevention and Mediation (FemWise-Africa) and the newly established Network of African Youth on Conflict Prevention and Mediation (WiseYouth); lessons learned and best practices of the Panel's engagement since operationalization in December 2007; presentation on climate change issues and the AU Theme of the Year; and the horizon scanning on state of governance, peace and security on the continent.

With respect to the horizon scanning, the Panel:

6. **Expresses concerns** over the persistent threats to governance, peace and security such as elections, unconstitutional changes of government and complex political transitions and violent extremism. The Panel **also noted** the conflict situations across the continent, particularly in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, South Sudan and Sudan, and its resultant loss of lives,

livelihoods, properties, forced displacement, and reversal of socio-economic and political gains. In this respect, the Panel paid tribute to the deceased and the injured and commiserated with their families and loved ones.

7. **Notes with displeasure** the resurgence of military coup d'états in Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Sudan and its potential domino effects on the continent given the existence of similar vulnerabilities in other Member States. **Commends** the efforts of the Union, particularly the PSC and RECs/RMs, to transform the situation and restore constitutional order; and **takes note** of the outcomes of the Accra Declaration on unconstitutional changes of government (UCG). **The Panel encourages affected Member States to set and adhere to timelines for restoration of democratic rule; urges the immediate transformation of structural causes of UCG. The Panel commits to support ongoing political transitions in Sudan, South Sudan, Chad and Somalia, including deploying its subsidiary mechanisms – PanWise, FemWise-Africa and WiseYouth.**

8. **Welcomes** the declaration by the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia of an indefinite humanitarian truce to provide requisite relief to population in dire need; and the announcement by the Regional Government of Tigray to observe the truce and its declaration of an immediate cessation of hostilities. Salutes and expresses appreciation to the formidable efforts of H.E. Olusegun Obasanjo, the AU High Representative for the Horn of Africa in promoting durable peace and political dialogue in the country and across the region; and **reiterates** the High Representative's call for **permanent comprehensive and unconditional ceasefire with cessation of hostilities; and political solution through nationwide dialogue and reconciliation process.**

9. **Notes with concern** the slow implementation of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ACRSS), **and calls for the implementation of the R-ACRSS, the operationalization of the Hybrid Court and transitional justice mechanisms to foster justice, reconciliation and social cohesion.**

10. **Commends** the Troops and Police Contributing Countries to Somalia for their unwavering commitment and support to the government and people of Somalia; and **encourages the Federal Government of Somalia to continuously work with the Federal Member States of Somalia to agree on consensual roadmap for the completion of the parliamentary elections.**

11. **Decides** to prioritize regular horizon scanning to the PSC to inform relevant options for response and rapid interventions in conflict situations with the aim of preventing and managing potential violent situations. **Further decides**, in its first-year, to support Member States undergoing elections, political transitions, constitutionalism and promotion of consensus building, including through national dialogue, reconciliation and transitional justice issues, and climate and security.

12. **Commits** to enhance effective coordination and collaboration with similar mechanisms at the RECs/RMs within the framework of PanWise, and with women and youth through FemWise-Africa and WiseYouth respectively. **In this respect, further commits to organize the 7th PanWise**

meeting to revitalize the mechanism; and appoints Hon. Lady Justice Effie Owuor and H.E. Catherine Samba-Panza as co-chairs of FemWise-Africa.

13. **Notes with concern** the conflict situations in Ukraine, Yemen and Syria with resultant humanitarian, economic and political consequences of international dimensions particularly for Africa; **and calls on all parties to engage in constructive dialogue. Expresses commitment to engage with international civil society organizations working in Africa on conflict prevention and mediation issues.**

14. **Decides** to convene its next meeting in June 2022.