The 8th Retreat of the Pan-African Network of the Wise (Panwise) concludes in Kigali

The African Union (AU)’s Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise Network) held its 8th Retreat in Kigali, Rwanda, from 7 to 8 December 2023 under the theme “Enhanced Technical and Political Coordination between the AU, the RECs/RMs, and National Peace Infrastructures on Electoral Preventive Diplomacy: Best Practices and Lessons-Learnt.”

This pivotal event was convened under the esteemed auspices of the Panel of the Wise, and witnessed the participation of eminent figures, including the COMESA Committee of Elders, the ECOWAS Council of the Wise, the SADC Panel of Elders and Mediation Reference Group, and the IGAD Mediation Reference Group. Complementing these dignitaries were Track II and III actors including National Peace Infrastructures from Member States, along with the AU Commission and the Secretariats of the RECs/RMs.

The primary objective of the 8th PanWise Retreat was to address the critical imperative for proactive strategies in ensuring peaceful and credible electoral processes across the continent. Acknowledging the profound impact of elections on regional stability, the retreat endeavored to foster collaboration, share best practices, and formulate a cohesive approach to preventive diplomacy during elections.

The Retreat sought to contribute to the development of stable, democratic societies across the African continent by bringing together diverse Track I, II and III stakeholders to create a more resilient and comprehensive approach to electoral preventive diplomacy.

In a warm welcome on behalf of Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Dr. Akok Madut, Head of Mediation and Dialogue Division, highlighted the pivotal role of the PanWise Network as “a symbolic representation of Pan-Africanism, which holds the promise of unity and collective action.”
Professor Babacar Kante, Chairperson of the African Union’s Panel of the Wise, further elucidated “The interaction between Tracks I, II, and III, facilitated by harmonious cooperation between the AU and RECs/RMs, constitutes a sophisticated and holistic approach to conflict prevention during elections”.

Over the course of two days, participants actively engaged in productive discussions, sharing their insights on electoral challenges within their regions and delving into regional perspectives on preventive diplomacy. Furthermore, they presented compelling case studies and shared best practices in electoral preventive diplomacy, with a strong emphasis on successful strategies and lessons learned.

In summary, participants stressed the importance of independent electoral commissions, robust accountability structures, and the necessity of addressing barriers to women’s participation in governance. Additionally, they advocated for an extended focus on post-election diplomacy, support to emerging young leaders and proactive mitigation of post-election challenges. They unanimously emphasized that “elections are a process, not a one-time event. Strengthening care after elections is crucial”.

For further information please contact:
Ms. Netsanet Tekeda Alemu, Project Coordinator, Mediation and Dialogue Division, Conflict Management Directorate | Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security | African Union Commission | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | E-mail: NetsanetT@africa-union.org

For media inquiries information please contact:
Mr. Abraham Kebede Gizaw, PAPS Digital Support Officer | Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security | African Union Commission | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | E-mail: abrahamk@africa-union.org

Information and Communication Directorate, African Union Commission | E-mail: DIC@africa-union.org | Web: www.au.int & http://www.peaceau.org | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | Follow Us: Facebook | Twitter | Instagram | YouTube