Twenty-fifth (25th) Statutory Meeting of the Panel of the Wise

The 25th Statutory meeting of the Panel of the Wise was held on 12 – 13 May 2023 at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The five (5) members of the Panel participated in the statutory meeting namely H.E. Domitien Ndayizeye, former President of Burundi and Chairperson of the Panel of the Wise, H.E. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, former Deputy President of South Africa, H.E. Amre Moussa, former Foreign Minister of Egypt and former Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Hon. Lady Justice Effie Owuor of the Republic of Kenya, and Professor Babacar Kante of the Republic of Senegal.

Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security delivered opening remarks and welcomed the members of the Panel of the Wise on behalf of the Chairperson of the Commission. The commissioner further thanked the Panel for their indefatigable individual and collective support to the work of the Chairperson and the Peace and Security Council, and their commitment to silencing the guns in Africa. He further briefed the Panel on the efforts of the Chairperson of the Commission to ensure a ceasefire in Sudan in coordination with multiple stakeholders.

Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, PhD. Director for the Conflict Management Directorate presented the State of Peace and Security in Africa that highlighted the developments in Ethiopia and Sudan; the status of implementation of the peace agreement in South Sudan; the political transitions in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Guinea; and the efforts of the High-Level Panel for Libya towards the reconciliation process in the country.

H.E. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka as a member of the High-Level Panel that facilitated the Ethiopian Peace Talks briefed the Panel on the status of implementation of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (CoHA) signed by the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF). H.E. Mlambo-Ngcuka further briefed on her consultations with Ethiopian women, and underscored the need for their meaningful participation in the implementation of the CoHA.

H.E. Domitien Ndayizeye and Professor Kante reported on the fact-finding missions they undertook to the Central African Republic and the Republic of Chad. They underlined the need for the Commission to accompany countries undergoing transitions with all the tools at its disposal.

Hon. Justice Effie Owuor briefed the members of the Panel on the preventive diplomacy activities undertaken in close collaboration with the ECOWAS Election Observation Mission to promote a peaceful atmosphere amidst tensions following the announcement of election results in Nigeria.

Based on the various presentations and briefings received, and in line with its modalities for the functioning of the Panel of the Wise adopted at the 100th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council, the Panel made the following observations and recommendations:

1. **Welcomes** the “Agreement on Lasting Peace through the Cessation of Hostilities” signed by the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the
Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) signed on 02 November 2022 in Pretoria, South Africa, under AU-led facilitated peace process;

2. **Commends** the parties for the ownership and leadership shown in the resolution of the conflict in Northern Ethiopia, and for the progress in the implementation of the peace agreement; and **urged** the parties to facilitate the participation of women and youth in this process;

3. **Recalls** the ongoing conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, and its dire consequence on the Sudanese population across the country in the face of humanitarian crisis; **further recalls** the communiques of the AU Peace and Security Council of 16 April 2023, and the Ministerial Special Session on Sudan on 20 April as well as the call of the Chairperson of the Commission for a ceasefire on 15 April and 06 May 2023. And in this regard, **reiterates** the call for the establishment of humanitarian corridors, unhindered humanitarian access, and the evacuation of injured civilians. **Further reiterates** the call for the international community to combine their efforts to strongly and expeditiously engage in collective action towards silencing the guns in Sudan;

4. **Expresses** solidarity with the people of Sudan and applaud their efforts, especially the efforts of national mechanisms on the ground, such as the Resistance Committees and the Sudanese Red Crescent;

5. **Welcomes** the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians Sudan signed on 15 April 2023 by the belligerent parties, and **appeals** to the two parties to implement the provisions outlined within with the aim of permanently silencing the guns in Sudan, and further appeal the parties to be mindful of the particular needs of women, children and vulnerable persons;

6. **Underscores** the important role of civil society, including women and youth, in any subsequent negotiations to be undertaken towards the political process. And in this regard, **stresses** the critical role of a return to a civilian rule and **expresses** readiness to accompany Sudan towards democratic order;

7. **Congratulates** the people of Nigeria for peacefully concluding the presidential and parliamentary elections, and **encourages** further democratic consolidation; as well as the Republic of Djibouti and Republic of Benin for successfully holding parliamentary elections so far in 2023;

8. **Commits** to accompanying countries undergoing complex political transitions, including Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, Chad, and Sudan;

9. **Further Commits** to use their good offices to consolidate peace and **decides** to accompany countries undergoing elections in 2023, namely Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Eswatini, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Liberia;

10. **Further decides** to remain actively seized of the aforementioned issues for the remaining period of their tenure;

11. **Endorses** the report of the Chairperson of the Panel of the Wise presented at the 1142nd session of the Peace and Security Council at the Ministerial level held on 03 March 2023;

12. **Appreciates** H.E. Domitien Ndayizeye the outgoing Chairperson of the Panel of the Wise for his astute leadership, and **decides** to elect Professor Babacar Kante of the
13. **Looks Forward** to the convening of the 14th High-level Retreat of the African Union Special Envoys and High Representatives expected in October 2023 in Egypt.

For further information, please contact:

Ms Netsanet Tekeda Alemu, Policy Officer and Focal Point | Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security | African Union Commission | E-mail: NetsanetT@africa-union.org | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

For media inquiries, please contact:

Mr Paschal Chem-Langhee, Communication Officer | Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security | African Union Commission | E-mail: Chem-LangheeP@africa-union.org | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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