Third Specialized training of AU Election Observers

Rabat, morocco, 29 april – 03 may 2024

Opening remarks by His Excellency
Ambassador Bankole Adeoye
Commissioner for political affairs, peace, and security

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Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department
African Union Commission
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
Your Excellency Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African cooperation, and Moroccan expatriates.
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Course participants,
Ladies, and gentlemen,

At the outset, let me affirm the honour for me to be back in Rabat to join you in this third specialized training of African Union election observers which the kingdom of Morocco so graciously hosts and sponsors.

Honourable Minister, allow me to convey to you, the compliments and warm greetings of His Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission. Chairperson Mahamat and myself deeply appreciate the kind gesture of the kingdom of Morocco in its support for the AU to consolidate democracy in our Member States through capacity building for our AU election observers: potential and already practicing.

It is important to note that under the able leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed the Sixth (vi), Morocco is making significant political strides towards prosperity, serving as a model for the continent.

As a key AU Member State, Morocco's efforts help strengthen our commitment to transparent and credible democratic governance.

Since its launch in 2022, the AU has been able to train more than 150 African experts in election observation methodology based on the AU mission’s curriculum. The participants, especially the new ones in this training, will benefit from professional training that will qualify them to become independent observers of elections in Africa.

Participants will be placed in the database of electoral experts of the Democracy, Elections and Constitutionalism unit (DEC) within the PAPS department.

Indeed, and as recognized by testimonies of some African citizens in a documentary on AUEOMs, election observation missions play a fundamental role in contributing to better democratic governance of AU Member states. This is because they contribute effectively to reassuring stakeholders in electoral processes through their presence on the ground and also by carrying out, if necessary, mediation and preventive diplomacy missions in pre-electoral, electoral and post-electoral crisis situations.

Excellencies,
Ladies, and gentlemen,
The innovative approach for this 3rd edition is to organize a parallel dialogue-seminar that will be held on the 2nd of May 2024, in partnership with the policy center for the new south, a member of the au continental network of think tanks for peace (NETT4PEACE).

This dialogue will offer us the opportunity to provide political context to the training programme, in terms of the environment and dynamics in which elections are held and thus further enrich the content of the course.

The dialogue-seminar on May 2nd will tackle key issues in democratic processes, focussing on themes such as the underrepresentation of women and youth in governance, media, digital use and misinformation / disinformation.

The seminar will also explore reforms that ensure transparent and credible elections, with civil society organizations playing a crucial role in promoting democratic practices. The ultimate goal is to strengthen democratic governance in Africa and achieve Agenda 2063.

This public-private collaboration between the AU, kingdom of Morocco, and the policy centre for the new south, reflects a model strategic partnership that is the way to go in the execution of our priorities at all levels of governance, local, national, regional continental and global.

Honourable minister,
Distinguished participants,
In rounding up, please allow me to highlight some of the efforts made by the au in terms of reinforcing female and youth representation in its election observation missions.

Last year, of the 652 electoral observers deployed: 58.30% were male observers, 41.70% female observers, including 17 expert members of the management teams and 54 young people. This indicates that the au is prioritizing gender equality and parity. We therefore encourage member states, candidates, political parties, and coalitions, EMBs, CSOs and governments to do likewise to better ensure gender inclusivity.

This training is another example of a systematic policy that prioritizes youth and women while providing participants from nearly 50 African countries the opportunity to engage in an open brainstorming session on election issues with senior officers from the au commission and other African experts. To all participants, I entreat you to seize this opportunity with enthusiasm. Engage deeply and share your insights during the training and seminar.

While in Morocco, you should also explore its beauty, enjoy its rich culture, and experience the warmth of its people. The Kingdom's centuries old vibrant heritage symbolizes the strength and diversity of our continent. You are Africa's future. Your dedication to democracy will help drive political stability and economic growth, in line with the goals of agenda 2063. Accordingly, let this training and the dialogue-seminar later inspire you to lead with vision.
Together, let’s commit to a democratic Africa, united in its diversity, strong in its solidarity, inspired by its Pan Africanism ideal and focused on the African renaissance for a brighter, more hopeful tomorrow.

Thank you.