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**STATEMENT BY
H.E. AMBASSADOR BANKOLE ADEOYE,
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PEACE AND SECURITY,
DURING THE 7TH ANNUAL CONTINENTAL FORUM OF ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODIES**

**14 – 15 NOVEMBER 2022
MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE**



- **The Minister of State Administration and Public Services, Representing His Excellency Adriano Afonso Maleiane, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mozambique,**
- **The Right Reverend Carlos Simao Matsinhe, Chairperson of the National Electoral Commission of Mozambique and host of the 7th Continental Forum of EMBs,**
- **President of the General Assembly of the Association of African Electoral Authorities,**
- **Distinguished Chairpersons of Election Management Bodies of the AU Member States,**
- **Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps and International Organisations accredited to the Republic of Mozambique,**
- **Distinguished Participants,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great pleasure for the African Union Commission to co-host this important continental gathering of African Election Management Bodies in collaboration with the Association of African Electoral Authorities and the National Electoral Commission of Mozambique. Since the 6th EMBs Forum in Kenya held in 2019, it is the first time we are congregating in the post COVID-19 pandemic era. It is my hope we are going to sustain the renewed momentum of African peer-learning in election management.

On behalf of the African Union Commission, I convey profound appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Mozambique for the invaluable support provided towards the successful takeoff of the 7th Continental Forum of EMBs in this beautiful city of Maputo. The good gesture of the Government of Mozambique signifies strong commitment to the management of democratic and peaceful elections in Africa, the Pan-African spirit and our shared values of entrenching democratic governance.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to pay special tribute to all Chairpersons and Senior Officials of African EMBs for the exemplary role played in sustaining the grip of Democratic Governance despite the grave situation in many parts of Africa and globally. An analytical stocktaking reveals that the continent has witnessed a number of peaceful and democratic transitions, thanks to your unflinching efforts. Africa should not always be depicted negatively on the conduct of elections. Your efforts to organize free, fair, peaceful, democratic and credible elections, often in very challenging conditions, including during the COVID-19 pandemic, have brought honour to Africa. We must take charge of our narrative as a continent when democracy is at stake.

I also take this opportunity to **recognize the leadership role of women chairpersons and senior officials within African EMBs**. You have overcome socio-cultural barriers to become champions of democracy. We salute especially women leaders of African EMBs. **For the first time in the continental forum of EMBs, we are going to dedicate a special session on women chairpersons of EMBs**. This is in order to draw lessons from their experiences to inform evidence-based policy and practice shift in promoting gender in the leadership of EMBs on our continent.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The annual continental forum of EMBs serves as a flagship policy platform of the African Union Commission. It fosters good governance and participatory democracy through cross-national peer-learning. Presently, this Forum is the only umbrella electoral practice engagement platform on the continent. It is an integral part of the African Union overall strategy on electoral assistance to the Member States in line with the mandate bestowed upon us under Chapter Seven of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

The theme of the 7th edition of the EMBs Forum is a key promise on **Building Resilience to Safeguard Democracy in Africa**, it is apt for the moment as countries are emerging from the aftershocks of COVID-19 pandemic and global political and economic upheavals. The continent is confronted with shrinking economies which have a direct repercussion on financing of EMBs to organise elections. Natural disasters associated with effects of climate change also bear non-negligible implications for election management.

Recently, the continent has witnessed an **regrettable resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government** which threatens our common democratic gains accrued over the past three decades. Working in strong partnerships with Regional Economic Communities and international and regional partners, we must build the resilience to anticipate and overcome these multiple challenges. This is why I call on the EMBs to key into the Malabo and Accra Declarations which prioritized robust response to insecurity, deepening democracy and collective security.

Chairs of EMBs, Dear Participants,

The top priority of the Commission is to recalibrate the AU's efforts to foster peaceful and democratic elections on the continent. We are redirecting more resources towards technical and financial assistance to AU Member States through EMBs in order to effectively and efficiently manage democratic elections. I am strongly convinced that supporting EMBs, as one of the key pillars of democracy, offers great potential in achieving an **"Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law"** as enshrined in Aspiration 3 of Agenda 2063, our shared vision of **the Africa We Want**.

To end this, we have supported **The Gambia, Somalia and most recently Lesotho**. Equally, the AU facilitated the **first ever continental peer-mission of chairpersons of EMBs** in the August 2022 elections in **Kenya**. Our democratic landscape is changing. Africa witnessed

smooth political transfer of power from ruling parties to the opposition in Zambia, Cape Verde and Sao Tome.

The conduct of AU election observation, an important mechanism for safeguarding electoral integrity, is also evolving. In the AU Commission we have inputted a strong representation for youth and women as important component of the composition of the AU Election Observation Missions. The AU Observation Missions are now made up of 60 percent women. Likewise, the inclusion of preventive diplomacy and mediation in pre, during and post-electoral phases of the electoral cycle has also enhanced the capacity of the AU to contribute to peaceful and democratic electoral outcomes and respond early to early warning signs of political violence.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are aware, with an average of fifteen elections in a calendar year, Africa holds the highest number of elections than any other continent. Certainly, the African Union Commission will **augment its efforts** to respond to the growing needs of our Member States in organizing elections in conformity with international and continental normative standards. We must step up the implementation of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, as we **start planning for the 14 elections scheduled for 2023 in Africa. We need to fulfil our mandate of promoting democracy, good governance, peace and stability on the continent.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the Regional Economic Communities Networks of EMBs as well as our partners for contributing to the AU Agenda 2063. The 7th edition of EMBs Forum is taking place at a time of global democratic recession. This platform offers an opportunity to collaboratively brainstorm and explore concrete solutions to foster democracy, peace and stability through the holding of democratic elections. **I reaffirm the commitment of the African Union to walk with you in this clarion call and to the implementation of the policy outcomes of this Forum.**

I wish you successful and fruitful deliberations.

Thank you.

African Union Commission (AUC)

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Democracy, Elections & Constitutionalism

Statements & Speech

2022-11-14

7th Annual Continental Forum on
Election Management Bodies, 14 - 15
November 2022, Maputo,
Mozambique: Message from
Ambassador Bankole Adeoye,
Commissioner for Political Affairs,
Peace and Security.

AU Political Affairs Peace and Security Department

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