OUTCOME STATEMENT

OF

THE EIGHTH AFRICAN GOVERNANCE FORUM (AGF-VIII)

ON

DEMOCRACY, ELECTIONS AND THE MANAGEMENT OF DIVERSITY IN AFRICA

**HELD AT
THE GABORONE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE
GABORONE, BOTSWANA
16-18 OCTOBER 2012**

PREAMBLE

1. The Government of the Republic of Botswana, the United Nations Development Programme's Regional Bureau for Africa (UNDP/RBA), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Union (AU) jointly held the Eighth African Governance Forum (AGF-VIII) in Gaborone, Botswana on 16-18 October 2012. The theme of AGF-VIII was "Democracy, Elections and the Management of Diversity in Africa". The forum brought together about 300 participants, including government officials, African leaders, policy makers, civil society, Regional Economic Communities, leading African and international think-tanks on governance and development partners. Participants to the Forum were drawn from 30 countries covering all the five sub-regions of the African continent (Central, East, North, Southern and West).

2. The Forum provided a platform for various stakeholders to deliberate on the current state of democracy in Africa in relation to elections and the management of diversity. It highlighted progress being made by African countries in nurturing and consolidating participatory democracy. The Forum show-cased best practices in democracy, elections and management of diversity in several African countries.

It outlined challenges with particular reference to gender imbalances and marginalization and disempowerment of the youth. The forum also advanced policy recommendations aimed at addressing key issues that are pertinent to consolidation of participatory democracy, credible elections and institutionalisation of constructive management of diversity in Africa.

3. The Opening Ceremony of the Forum featured H.E. Lieutenant General Seretse Khama Ian Khama, the President of the Republic of Botswana who officially opened the Forum. The UN Assistant Secretary General and UNDP/RBA Director, Mr. Tegegnework Gettu and the UN Under-Secretary General and the Executive Secretary of UNECA, Mr Carlos Lopes delivered statements on the relationship between democracy and development and the cost of electoral violence respectively. The Keynote Address was delivered by H.E. Pedro Pires, Former President of Cape Verde focusing on the overall AGF-VIII theme. The Forum's High Level Panel Discussion involved: H.E. Pedro Pires, Former President of Cape Verde; R.H. Motsoahae Thomas Thabane, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho; R.H. Alberto Vaquina, Prime Minister of Mozambique; H.E. Amos Sawyer, former President of Liberia and the Chairperson of the Eminent Panel of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and Honourable Mokgweetsi Masisi, Minister of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration Botswana. The interactive panel debate drew on the experiences of the panellists in addressing the theme of the Forum and enabled participants to directly engage with the high level panellists.

KEY MESSAGES

Democracy and Development go hand in hand

4. Empirical evidence from various sources, including the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), affirms that democracy and development are mutually interdependent - in colloquial terms two sides of the same coin. One cannot be achieved sustainably without the other. Democratic governance is essential for broad and participatory engagement of citizens in a country's affairs. In his Opening Address H.E. Lieutenant General Seretse Khama Ian Khama noted that good governance has become an important factor in the process of sustainable development. Good governance is a prerequisite for foreign direct investment in Africa. Poor governance has contributed to reduction in FDI flows and political instability, resulting in economic stagnation and civil strife. In fact, recent developments in North Africa (including Tunisia, Egypt and Libya) have shown that autocracy and sustainable human development are incompatible in Africa.

5. Africa is experiencing remarkable economic growth. African economies have weathered the global financial crisis of 2007/08 and the current European debt crisis. In 2012, Africa experienced a GDP growth rate of 4.5 percent. This growth is expected to increase to 4.8 percent in 2013. However, Africa's economic growth is still characterised by heightened joblessness and it is still marked by high levels of poverty and inequality, thus, casting doubt on the continent's ability to achieve the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. Sustainable growth and development must be people-centered, which demands that further democratization is needed to ensure not only inclusive participation of the citizenry, but also equitable distribution of national resources. Democracy can help to tackle the root causes of poverty, inequality and unemployment.

6. Both democracy and development lie at the very heart of human development. People everywhere aspire to improve their wellbeing and to be free to choose the lives they value. Expanding people's ability to exercise these choices is the very definition of human development. Being free to exercise these choices requires the material means to do it – income – being healthy, and having access to education. That is why promoting economic growth that is broadly shared is so

important. It is also about advancing democratic governance, enhancing voice and accountability, and expanding people's participation.

7. Democratic governance is one of the principal reasons why countries such as Mauritius and Botswana have done so well since the last four decades. The 2011 Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance which assesses the state of governance on the continent covering 53 African countries in respect of (a) Safety and Rule of Law, (b) Participation and Human Rights, (c) Sustainable Economic Opportunity and (d) Human Development ranks Mauritius at the top of the best performing countries, while Botswana occupies the third place. In between Mauritius and Botswana is Cape Verde on the second spot of the ranking. Further evidence of the remarkable success of Mauritius, Cape Verde and Botswana in pursuing both democracy and development simultaneously is vividly illustrated in their country reports of the Third Edition of the African Governance Report (AGRIII) as well as the various reports of the UNDP Human Development Reports most notably the 2002 report.

While a key ingredient of democracy, elections are not synonymous with democracy

8. Over 200 elections have taken place over the past two decades in Africa: an indication that the continent is democratizing. However, elections are not an end in themselves. They are a means to an end. That end must be to make societies more open and to include all citizens in national decision-making processes taking into account their political and socio-economic diversity.

9. Elections are not synonymous with democracy; in fact democracy cannot be reduced to organizing regular elections. Elections are a double-edged sword: while they can promote democracy, in other cases they can trigger violent conflicts, as exemplified by the 2007 elections in Kenya and Nigeria, the 2008 elections in Zimbabwe and the 2010/11 elections in Cote d'Ivoire. The political, social and economic costs of these elections for the four countries have been astronomical.

10. The economic cost of the 2007/2008 electoral violence was estimated at around $ 3.6 billion. The physical damage to agriculture and agricultural infrastructure, including Kenya's lucrative horticulture industry, was estimated at over $300 million. In the area of tourism, one of Kenya's biggest foreign currency earners, the violence dissuaded many tourists and potential investors from coming to the country, resulting in earnings from the sector falling by 90 percent in the first quarter of 2008, and continuing to suffer a 30% decline throughout the year. Estimates suggest that at least 20,000 Kenyans employed in the tourism sector lost their jobs during the period immediately after the electoral violence. The post-election violence also had significant impact on the volumes of foreign direct investment flows to Kenya. They dropped by more than 70%.

11. The violence that followed Cote d'Ivoire's 2011 Presidential elections took a heavy toll on the economy causing an 8.3 points drop in the GDP. This fall in the GDP was the result of the contraction in key economic sectors brought about by the post-election political violence. For example, agricultural export and extractive industry sectors, two of the mainstay of the Ivorian economy, were severely affected.. The country's secondary and tertiary sectors also registered declines. In the case of the tertiary, the drop was from +2.7 % of GDP growth in 2010, to -12.7 in 2011. The country also suffered heavy losses in public and private investments in the neighborhood of -15% to -20% respectively.

12. With the political crisis and violence that followed the 2008 elections in Zimbabwe, there was a virtual paralysis of the country's once vibrant economy, which registered an unprecedented 17.9 % GDP negative growth in 2008. Foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country was also badly affected. Indeed, Zimbabwe has been more severely affected in the long term, than any other recent African example. The crash in the country's currency – the Zimbabwean Dollar -under the weight of an hyper-inflation estimated that attained two hundred million percent, accompanied by high levels of unemployment of about 80 % shows the devastating effect bad elections can have. The cumulative effect of this economic hardship forced millions of Zimbabweans out of the country into neighboring countries, and beyond. Although Zimbabwe is on the path of

economic recovery, the challenges ahead are enormous and the fear of trouble elections in 2013 looms large.

13. For democracy to take root, countries should embrace a culture of peaceful, credible and transparent multi-party elections. Recent elections held in 2011 and 2012 and the peaceful transfer of power in Zambia (2011), Senegal (2012) and Lesotho (2012) are a clear demonstration that peaceful and credible elections leading to a smooth transfer of power are possible in Africa. In ensuring credible, transparent and democratic elections all stakeholders including government, civil society, political parties and election management bodies must work to promote democracy, peace and political stability.

Managing diversity constructively is key to the credibility of elections

14. From ethnicity to religion, class, gender, language and clan, Africa is the most socio-culturally diverse continent in the world. Commonly portrayed as a liability, diversity in Africa can in fact be a remarkable resource for nation-building and unity in Africa if it is properly harnessed and constructively managed. It was the APRM Panel that established in 2008 that two of the most intractable challenges facing Africa are diversity management and electoral violence. Diversity is not necessarily a problem for Africa per se. Indeed, if well managed, diversity is an asset for Africa's democratisation and development processes. In such situations, electoral processes tend to be peaceful, credible and legitimate.

15. If mismanaged, diversity can become a liability and cause loss of life and material damage particularly where it is manipulated for political ends, especially during elections. A clear case in point is the 2007 post-election violence in Kenya, triggered by a mobilization of votes along ethnic lines, which cost 1,500 deaths, generated 600,000 internally displaced people and caused enormous economic turmoil. Following the crisis, Kenya adopted a new constitution that triggered sweeping changes in government and society, aimed at mending differences and promoting broad inclusion of Kenya's diverse groups in decision-making and development processes, from the local to the national level. Scheduled for 4 March 2013, it is anticipated that the country's next general election will reverse

its culture of electoral violence and steer the country more towards a culture of peace and tolerance especially during elections. The case of Cote d'Ivoire is another example of a country that further escalated its already existing diversity-based civil war following its ill-fated elections of 2010. At the core of that violent conflict was mismanagement of diversity. More than 3,000 people were killed during the violence that followed presidential elections in Côte d'Ivoire in November 2010 and an estimated 200,000 men, women and children sought asylum in 13 neighbouring countries. Bothe Burundi and Rwanda are widely acclaimed as a African examples application of African solutions to diversity-based civil wars which claimed the lives of about millions of people. In both cases, local and African efforts were employed to bring about peace and political stability that still prevails as of today. In Burundi and Rwanda, important lessons can be learnt as to how best to manage socio-cultural diversities constructively ensuring peace, security, stability and economic growth.

Meaningful participation and representation of women in decision-making still remains a challenge

16. Some recognisable progress has been made on gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa. Rwanda (56.3 percent in the Lower House and 38.5 percent in the Upper House), Seychelles (43.8 percent in the Lower House), Senegal (42.7 percent in the Lower House and 40 percent in the Upper House), South Africa (42.3 percent in Lower House and 32.1 in Upper House), are clear examples of this commendable achievement on the African continent. However only thirteen African countries have so far surpassed the 30% critical mass threshold called for by the Beijing Platform for Action. Other countries have in fact experienced reversals in achieving the critical mass of women's participation and representation in decision-making structures. This negative trend calls for concerted efforts to consolidate gains made and accelerate the momentum towards gender equality in Africa.

17. Furthermore, beyond the numbers, ensuring that women in decision-making positions wield the requisite power and authority to influence policies in their countries remains a challenge. This means that governments, civil society and political parties must work together to promote women's participation and

representation in all decision-making structures at all levels. To that end, a number of African countries have adopted affirmative action measures, including constitutional and electoral reform and gender quota systems, to redress gender inequality and marginalization of women in governance processes. But these measures have not gone far enough to translate into meaningful change across the whole continent. More will need to be done in this area.

Africa's youth are marginalized in governance and development processes

18. Marginalization and disempowerment of youth – including staggering levels of youth unemployment (27.8 percent, as compared with 12.7 percent globally) played a prominent role in the recent political crises and upheavals in North Africa. Young people below the age of 35 account for 65 percent of Africa's total population of 1 billion. Faced with social marginalization and economic exclusion, they have become vulnerable to political manipulation by political elites, especially during election time when they become prone to politically violent activities. Addressing the problem of youth marginalization requires a holistic approach that would involve enhancing the representation and participation of youth in democratic processes and empowering them to play an active and valued role in society, culture and economy. Ensuring quality education for the youth and encouraging entrepreneurship and decent employment will be key to achieving these goals.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **African Governments**

   - Given the centrality of the Public Service in governance, African governments should enhance the capacities required in the public service to effectively manage diversity and inclusion must be progressively developed.

- Governments must develop mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating implementation of programs for managing diversity and inclusion in the public service.
- In order to ensure constructive management of diversity, African governments should adopt appropriate policies in five main domains:
  o The promotion of political participation of diverse cultural groups
  o Inculcation of a culture of tolerance for diverse religions and religious practices
  o Encouragement of complimentary co-existence of customary and statutory law with a view to achieve legal pluralism
  o Promotion of the existence and legal acceptance of multiple languages
  o Conscious effort towards redressing socio-economic exclusion and structural inequalities
- Young people are urged to make good use of already existing constitutional and institutional frameworks to enhance their development by being informed and taking proactive actions in order to occupy their rightful place in society.

2. **The African Union and Regional Economic Communities (RECs)**

- The African Union and Regional Economic Communities must harmonise the normative frameworks on governance, ensure that their Member States ratify, domesticate and effectively implement these agreed shared values on democracy, elections and diversity management.

3. **The International Community including the United Nations**

- The International Community, including the United Nations system, must play a more proactive role in enhancing institutional capacity for Africa towards democracy promotion, electoral integrity and constructive management of diversity.

4. **African Civil Society**

- CSOs should provide the necessary platforms aimed at facilitating dialogue and information exchange among stakeholders on the issues of democracy, elections and diversity management.

- CSOs should design and implement lobby and advocacy programmes aimed at promoting inclusive democracy, electoral integrity and constructive management of diversity taking into account imperatives for gender equality and youth empowerment.
- Relevant think-tanks and research institutions should contribute to knowledge-creation, documentation of good practice and the provision of technical support in the areas of democracy, elections and diversity management through research, analysis, documentation and compilation of databases.

5.   **Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs)**

- The appointment of the EMB members must guarantee their independence and command public confidence and trust.
- Membership of the EMBs must reflect the diversities in the country (e.g. region, gender, age etc).
- EMBs must enjoy financial independence by being sufficiently funded and in a timely manner.
- Staff of the EMBs must be impartial, and uphold integrity and high levels of professionalism and ethical conduct.
- Security of tenure for EMB Commissioners must be ensured in order to facilitate institutional memory and continuity.
- EMBs should be empowered to facilitate necessary legal reform aimed at facilitating broad inclusion of diverse social groups to participate meaningfully in the electoral process such as the persons with disability and other marginalized groups.
- There should be a mechanism to bring on board all stakeholders (especially youth and women's organisations) at all stages of the electoral processes through continuous sustained multi- stake holder dialogue, voter information, civic and voter education.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES: GENDER EQUALITY AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

GENDER EQUALITY

1. **Reform of electoral systems**

    - Advocate for the adoption of electoral systems (e.g. proportional representation) and/or reform of existing systems with a view to facilitate inclusiveness and equal participation of women and men across their diversities.
    - Promote the mainstreaming of gender equality standards and principles in national electoral management bodies and all electoral processes before, during and after the elections .

2. **The role of political parties**

    - Engage with political parties to promote internal democratic, inclusive, and gender sensitive policies and practices, including through their party election manifestos, legislative agendas, and agreed monitoring mechanisms.
    - Support efforts by women politicians to develop and implement a common women's agenda, including a legislative agenda, across party lines.

3. **Addressing violence against women in politics**

    - Propose and promote mechanisms for prevention, monitoring and reporting of political violence, and protection of women and girls from gender-based political violence throughout the electoral cycle.
    - Promote stronger mandates for election management bodies to address this form of violence, better equipped and gender sensitive security sector actors, as well as a more comprehensive legal and policy environment to respond to this challenge.

4. **Support women for effective participation in politics, including elections**

    - Implement programmes intended to support women's engagement in public decision-making, increase women's leverage as voters, including through tools such as women's manifestos or nationally agreed agendas, and support policy watch groups that build women's capacity to track the performance of politicians in order to hold them to account for meeting campaign promises.
    - Promote and support women to undertake electoral law analysis and to build public awareness of and commitment to defend women's rights in the

electoral process; and work with EMBs, government and political parties to counter sexual and gender-based violence.

- Build partnerships with the media to profile positive images of women's leaders, and their achievements in order to counter negative stereotypes of women's leadership and positive role modeling.
- Expedite accession to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) as well as the ratification and implementation of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance particularly those aspects of APRM National Plans of Action (NPoAs) and the Charter relating to gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Increase the resource base for and access by women in political spheres.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

1.   Constitutional and institutional frameworks

- Expedite ratification, domestication and effective implementation of the African Youth Charter (AYC) and the Plan of Action (PoA) as well as the adoption and implementation of complementary sub-regional and national youth empowerment policies.
- AU Member States should support the establishment and operations of youth formations, structures and networks at national, sub-regional and continental levels with a view to promote youth participation in governance, development and peace-building.
- Expedite accession to the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) as well as the ratification and implementation of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance particularly those aspects of APRM National Plans of Action (NPoAs) and the Charter relating to youth empowerment and development.
- The African Union needs to clarify and popularize the status, roles and functions of the Pan-African Youth Union based in Khartoum, Sudan so that national and regional youth formations play their rightful roles in its efforts towards the implementation of the AYC and the AYC Plan of Action.

2.   Youth and socio-economic development

- Prioritise education as the primary gateway to gainful youth employment and empowerment and equality must be ensured in both education and

employment between youth men and women as well as between rural and urban youth.

- Build youth leadership and other competencies that assist young people become valuable citizens and community members.
- Facilitate youth engagement in Agri-business and enhance their skills in order to ensure maximum productivity in this area.
- Provide subsidies and tax cuts to young farmers to encourage their involvement in farming so as to create secure livelihoods and promote food security.
- Capacity of young women must be enhanced for them to engage effectively in the socio-economic and political spheres of society.

3. Youth and election-related conflicts

- Embark on political party system and electoral system reforms to ensure increased participation of the youth in democratic processes.
- Political parties should adopt norms and standards for conducting internal and national elections which promote youth empowerment and explicitly prohibit political manipulation of diversity, especially the youth.
- Ensure that there are stiff sanctions for political parties and candidates who manipulate vulnerable youth to engage in electoral violence particularly when this inflames hostilities among diverse communities for narrow political gains.

-END-