

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

**REGIONAL CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOPS
AFRICAN UNION POLITICAL PARTY PROGRAMME**

CONCEPT NOTE

AUGUST 2019

I. Introduction

The 2007 African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance urges member states to “strengthen political institutions to entrench a culture of democracy and peace” (art.12.2). However, since the adoption of the Charter, the AUC has paid scant attention to strengthening capacity of political institutions such as political parties. Lack of sustained engagement with actors such as political parties, media, national parliaments and civil society organizations (CSOs) remains a missing link in the AU’s quest for democratic governance. Strengthening democratic/political institutions, particularly political parties, has become increasingly necessary in order to improve not only the quality of elections in the continent but also in achieving the AU’s broader goals and values as enshrined in the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance.

On the basis of the above, the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit (DEAU) of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA)) took a deliberate initiative to develop a Political Party Strengthening Program for the AUC in line with its mandate of promoting democracy and good governance on the continent. Following internal Consultative meeting in July 2016, the DPA developed a Guideline for Engaging with Political Parties, and identified the following key immediate priority areas of intervention: (a) strengthening interparty dialogue to address political intolerance; (b) promoting and strengthening inclusive politics to address marginalization of women, youth and persons with disabilities in leadership positions within political parties; (c) Strengthening the internal management and functioning of political parties to address a lack of intra-party democracy; and enhancing knowledge generation on political parties to address the gap between knowledge on best practices and policy making processes.

Subsequently in June 2018, the DPA organized the first ever Consultative Workshop on Political Party Strengthening Program. The Workshop assembled AUC staff, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), national and international organizations, think tanks, civil society organizations (CSOs) and independent experts with the purpose to exchange experience and ideas on how best the DPA can engage and strengthen political parties in Africa. Participants reviewed and gave inputs into the draft guideline and key focus areas of the program.

The workshop also served as the official launch of the African Union Political Parties Program (PPP). Part of the outcome and the recommendations of the Accra workshop was the need to take steps to fully implement the program, including the need to embark on further consultation with political parties throughout the continent. Thus, as a follow up to recommendation of the Accra Consultative Workshop, the DPA will undertake a number of activities to fully implement the PPP, including undertaking a comprehensive baseline study of the state of play of the program’s key focus areas and

organizing four regional fora in West, South, North, East and Central African regions, with a view to seek the buy-in of the stakeholders, solicit input on the planned programs and ensure AU's added value to activities of political parties vis-à-vis the deepening of a democratic culture, political pluralism, tolerance and peace on the continent.

II. Goal and Objectives

Goal: The main goal of the regional fora is to introduce the AU political party program to key stakeholders, to solicit input in key focus areas of the program, to take account in the design and implementation of the Program, and provide an opportunity for input and additional recommendation on the future programs of the AU.

Specific Objective

- To formally introduce the AU's political party guideline to political parties in the continent;
- Solicit input from political parties on what the AU's added value on continental engagement would be; and
- Reflect upon current issues impacting democratic governance on the continent, including the theme of the year, and the role of political parties.

III. Expected Outcomes

The regional forums are expected to:

- Increased awareness of the AU political party program by political parties across the continent;
- Improved engagement of AU with political parties on the key focus areas;
- Current issues impacting democratic governance on the continent and the role of political parties discussed; and
- Ownership of the PPP by political parties on the continent enhanced.

IV. Methodology

The regional fora will be conducted in facilitated sessions. An overview of the mandate of the AUC – DPA will be presented along with the proposed key priority areas and guiding principles for AU's engagement with political parties in the continent.

Participants will be expected to actively engage in the discussion and ably represented entities as well as make practical recommendations as way forward. Sufficient time and

opportunity will be accorded to participants to constructively critique and make concrete suggestions and proposals on how to improve DPA's engagement with political parties.

V. Working Language

The workshop will be conducted in all AU languages taking the regional representations and venues into consideration.

VI. Participants

Participants will be drawn mainly from Executives of the two leading registered political parties in the National Assemblies of AU Member States, as well as regional and international organisations working political parties program on the continent, and independent experts and think tanks.

VII. Date and Venue

Date: The region fora will take place from January - December 2019 with one forum organised every quarter.

Venue: There will be 4 overall venues five overall venues for the workshops, as follows:

1. **West Africa** – Accra, Ghana
2. **North** – Tunis, Tunisia
3. **Central Africa** – Equatorial Guinea (TBC)
4. **East Africa** – Arusha, Tanzania
5. **Southern Africa** – Gaborone, Botswana

VIII. Documentation

- AU political Party Program Guideline
- Concept Note for the regional fora
- ACDEG African charter on Democracy and Elections and Governance
- DPA – Report on a consultative meeting initiating the Political Party Programing
- DPA - The Political Party Report
- DPA – Political Party Guideline
- AGENDA 2063

IX. Contacts

- Mr. Guy Cyrille Tapoko, Head of Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit, Department of Political Affairs, African Union Commission. Email: tapokog@africa-union.org