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## PRESS RELEASE

### THE AU PANEL OF THE WISE CONVENES ITS SECOND RETREAT TO TAKE FORWARD THE AGENDA OF CONFLICT PREVENTION IN AFRICA

**Addis Ababa, 11 April 2013:** The Second Retreat of the Panel of the Wise of the African Union (AU), devoted to the theme: *Institutionalizing the Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise): contribution to Pan- Africanism and African Renaissance*, started today at the AU Headquarters, in Addis Ababa. It brings together members of the AU Panel of the Wise and of similar structures of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), as well as experts in conflict prevention and mediation in Africa.

The objectives of this Retreat are to examine current challenges to peace and security in Africa, promote sharing of experiences, lessons learnt and best practices in conflict prevention, as well as to adopt a PanWise Plan of Action.

The Retreat will be followed by the 13<sup>th</sup> statutory meeting of the AU Panel of the Wise on Saturday, 13 April 2013.



## **Note to the Editor**

### **About the Pan-African Network of the Wise**

The AU Panel of the Wise was created in 2002, and became operational in 2008. ECOWAS' Council of the Wise was created in 1999; COMESA's Committee of Elders was put in place in 2008; SADC's Mediation Reference Group and Panel of Elders was established in August 2010; and IGAD is in the process of putting in place a Mediation Contact Group, whose responsibilities will be similar to those of the AU Panel of the Wise.

Since their inception, the above institutions have taken concrete steps to strengthen their relations and their capacity to collectively address the scourge of conflicts on the continent. These efforts took a concrete shape during the Retreat of the AU Panel of the Wise, held from 4 to 5 June 2012, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, where these institutions agreed to establish a Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise). PanWise is an umbrella network bringing together these various mechanisms, the AU Special Representatives and Envoys, the Friends of the Panel of the Wise and individual mediators, as well as institutions engaged in mediation activities at various levels, with the aim of enabling them to undertake joint activities and cement their partnership.

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