THE 4TH ANNUAL CONTINENTAL FORUM OF ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODIES

“HARNESSING THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND THROUGH ENHANCED YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN AFRICA”

KIGALI - RWANDA
NOVEMBER 9TH - 10TH 2017

PROGRAMME BOOKLET
THE 4TH ANNUAL CONTINENTAL FORUM OF ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODIES

HARNESSING THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND THROUGH ENHANCED YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN AFRICA

CONCEPT NOTE
The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) of the African Union Commission (AUC) will convene the fourth Annual Election Management Bodies (EMBs) Forum on 9-10 November 2017 in Kigali, Rwanda under the theme “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Enhanced Youth Participation in Electoral Processes in Africa”, in line with the 2017 theme of the African Union. The youth have a potentially prominent role to play in contributing positively to electoral and political processes on the continent of Africa through their demographic advantage. The 2017 Annual EMBs Forum will therefore offer an opportunity for the EMBs and other electoral stakeholders on the continent to share experiences, harness lessons, and examine good practices on enhancing inclusive participation of the youth in electoral processes with a view to nurturing and deepening democratic and participatory governance on the continent.

The African Union recognizes that investing in the youth, who are considered Africa’s greatest asset, will determine the development trajectory of the continent over the next 50 years and position it towards realizing the “Africa We Want”, a strong, united and influential global player as envisioned in Agenda 2063. In recognition of the potentially important roles that the youth could play in shaping political and socio-economic development of the continent, the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government declared 2017 as the year of “Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth.”
The participation of young people in electoral and governance processes has been enshrined in various shared values instruments adopted by the African Union over the years. These include the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (1981); the OAU/AU Declaration on the Principles and Guidelines for Democratic Elections in Africa (2002); the African Peer Review Mechanism (2003); the African Youth Charter (2006) as well as the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) (2007), which came into force in 2012. These instruments generally spell out rights, freedoms, and duties that accrue to young people and provide guidance on how to effectively and meaningfully explore their potential at all levels including in electoral and political processes. In addition to these instruments, the African Union Agenda 2063 underscores the commitment of African leaders to bequeath a united, democratically governed and peaceful continent to coming generations through a set of aspirations. Specifically, Aspiration 3 calls for an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law, while Aspiration 6 of Agenda 2063 calls for an Africa where development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children.

Africa is considered as the most youthful continent with current estimates indicating that 65% of its 1.2 billion population is below the age of 35 years, and over 35% of the youth fall between the ages of 15 and 35 years. By 2020, it is projected that 3 out of 4 people in Africa will be on average 20 years old. Based on these statistics, it follows that in the next decade, the majority of people involved in political and electoral processes around the continent are likely to be in the youth category. It would therefore be necessary to strengthen awareness and capacity building initiatives targeting this category of people so that they can effectively contribute to democratic and socio-economic development of their countries. The youth bulge on the continent suggests that young people should be accorded opportunities to participate in political and decision-making processes in order to contribute to democratic and socio-economic development of their countries.

In representative democracy, elections arguably offer the most salient constitutional opportunities for the youth in Africa to influence the direction of governance through positively maximizing on their numerical strength. Yet, except for a few countries, the participation of youth has been limited to voting, which in itself is relatively low when compared with other socio-political categories. For instance, despite young people’s demographic strength, Africa’s youth participation in political

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processes, including elections, is still relatively lower than that of their elders, particularly in terms of voting. According to a survey conducted by Afrobarometer in 36 African countries between 2014 and 2015, 66% of 18-to-35-year-old respondents voted in elections compared to 79% of citizens above the age of 35. The persistently mixed perceptions about the role and importance of the youth in electoral processes in Africa have led this socio-political category of population to be depicted in paradoxical terms, either as a source of political and social instability, or as a “demographic dividend” carrying hopes for future growth and development.

Institutions such as EMBs, political parties and civil society organisations (CSOs) have not fully explored ways of maximizing the participation of young people throughout the electoral cycle by identifying strategic entry points for engaging the youth. This is one of the factors that has contributed to youth marginalization on the continent of Africa. Illustratively, more often, it has been noted that EMBs and CSOs tend to restrict their value maximization of the youth in most African countries through venturing in collaborative initiatives such as voter and civic education as well as citizen election observation. In addition, most political parties in Africa tend to capitalize on the demographic dividend of the youth by mobilizing them for votes, while they pay relatively less attention to promoting their candidatures in different elective posts.

Youth participation in electoral and political processes is also impacted upon by institutions and mechanisms for conditioning political action such as electoral systems. For instance, only a handful of countries in Africa have electoral systems which have quotas for youth representation in parliament, and ultimately, this has generally impacted the extent to which the youth have gained access to public decision-making institutions and processes in the society. In light of the foregoing constraints, most of the public policy decisions that directly affect the youth have often excluded their input.

According to a survey conducted by Afrobarometer in 36 African countries between 2014 and 2015, 66% of 18-to-35-year-old respondents voted in elections compared to 79% of citizens above the age of 35.

In addition, opportunities for youth to participate in political and decision-making processes on the continent depend largely on the political, socio-economic, and cultural contexts of individual countries where social norms result in multiple forms of discrimination including from a gender perspective. A combination of restrictive systems and structures have resulted in “blocked social mobility” of the young people and in effect, rendered them to become more vulnerable to mobilisation in civil conflicts, including election-related conflicts and violence as witnessed in various countries in Africa. In a recent research, it was noted that 60% of elections in Africa have experienced some form of election-related conflicts from 1990-2015, with young people playing varying roles. All these challenges and effects continue to impact on rapidly growing youth apathy, thereby reinforcing the stereotypes that young people are disinterested in political and electoral processes and as a result, they are branded as objects of social policy or troublemakers.

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2 Ibid.

The above contextual background suggests that the challenges facing youth participation in electoral and political processes remain complex and can only be resolved through multi-faceted policy responses. Therefore, the rationale for the 2017 Annual EMBs Forum on youth participation in electoral processes is to enable EMBs and key election stakeholders to take stock through sharing experiences, harnessing lessons, and examining best practices on promoting inclusive politics by enhancing participation of the African youth in electoral processes. The aforementioned normative frameworks in democracy and governance have not been accompanied by continental and regional strategies that specifically target promotion of youth in electoral and political processes in Africa.

Despite the fact that Africa holds more regular elections than all other continents, the qualitative contribution of the percentage of youth who participate in electoral and political processes still remains bleak at best. There is need to rethink youth participation by transcending the often hailed mobilisation of young people by political parties and candidates to constitute a critical support base for winning elections. This calls for value addition initiatives by empowering the youth not only to cast ballots for their preferred political parties and candidates (quantitative contribution) but also to be able to hold governments born out of their choice to account (qualitative contribution).

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1Abbink, Jon., and Ineke van Kessel, eds. 2005. Vanguard or Vandals: Youth, Politics, and Conflict in Africa. Leiden: Brill
Evidence in a number of countries in Africa suggests that accountability remains one of the major governance deficits due to the fact that democratic culture is not fully entrenched. Empowerment of the youth to demand for more accountability by enhancing opportunities to youth involvement in decision-making positions rather than being mere voters can contribute to addressing some of the policy challenges facing accountable governance in Africa.

The apparent systemic, structural and social-cultural challenges facing the youth clearly highlight the need to interrogate ways in which young people on the continent can be more meaningfully engaged in electoral and political processes to maximise on their potential. In interrogating the barriers to meaningful participation of young people in electoral processes, it is important to develop policy responses and strategies to overcome, for instance, the restrictive national electoral laws and exclusionary policies of political parties, which often set discriminative age limits and prohibitive fees, thus making it difficult for young people to stand as candidates for elective positions.

Current initiatives by EMBs and stakeholders in electoral processes continue to face limitations due to apparent conception of youth as a homogenous social group. Yet, the heterogeneous nature of the youth demography (e.g. rural and urban, literate and illiterate, men and women, digital divide etc) suggests the need to develop adaptive and dynamic approaches to enhancing youth participation in electoral processes. In addition, policies and strategies to foster youth participation in electoral processes should be evolving over time and space and should take into account youth diversity in terms of age, economic opportunities, geographical location, access to new technologies, gender, religion, social status, cultural and political ideology, and literacy levels. Heterogeneity of the youth as socio-political category clearly shows that no single policy trajectory or institution can resolve this complex problem exclusively, hence the need for concerted efforts to chart the way forward for developing collective responses.
goal and objectives.

The goal of the fourth EMB Annual Forum is to enhance inclusive participation of youth in electoral and political processes in Africa. The specific objectives of the forum are to:

1. Provide a platform for the EMBs and other electoral stakeholders on the continent to reflect on barriers and opportunities for meaningful youth participation in electoral processes in Africa;

2. Explore different entry points for engaging the youth by EMBs and other election stakeholders throughout the electoral cycle; and

3. Identify concrete strategies and innovative initiatives at national, regional and continental levels for meaningful participation from young people in electoral processes.

expected outputs.

The 4th EMBs Annual Forum is expected to develop actionable recommendations in order to:

a. Inform programming at continental and regional levels in promoting youth participation in electoral and political processes in Africa; and

b. Strengthen efforts by EMBs and other election stakeholders towards meaningful youth participation in political parties, key organs of the state, EMBs, and Civil Society Organisations;

c. Agreed plan of action for implementation of the provisions on inclusion of youth in electoral processes from the continental and regional instruments;

d. Development of continental, regional and national strategies for youth participation in electoral processes;

e. Inclusion of youth specific participation clauses and/or provisions in electoral systems and electoral law reforms.
methodology.

The Annual EMB Forum will be conducted over two days. A participatory approach will be adopted where various thematic sessions with moderated panel presentations followed by plenary sessions will be conducted. Participants will share continental, regional and national comparative case studies and experiences on the state of youth participation in electoral processes in Africa. Prior to the conference, presenters will be selected based on their experience and expertise. The papers/presentations will be distributed during the Forum and will also inform deliberations during the conference.

The Forum will be opened with a keynote address by a key personality knowledgeable on the theme of the conference.

participant profile.

The participants to the 4th Annual EMB Forum will be drawn from the AUC, Association of African Electoral Authorities, Regional Economic Communities fora for EMBs, national EMBs, youth organisations, and other key democracy and governance actors.
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“HARNESSING THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND THROUGH ENHANCED YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN AFRICA”

## PROGRAMME
Park Inn-Radisson Hotel | KIGALI, RWANDA

### DAY ONE
THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2017

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<tr>
<td>8:30-9:00</td>
<td>REGISTRATION</td>
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| 9:00-10:20   | SESSION 1
OFFICIAL OPENING AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS                                |
| MODERATOR:   | Mr Guy Cyrille Tapoko, Ag. Head, Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit, Department of Political Affairs, African Union Commission |
| 9:00-9:15    | Welcome Remarks:                                                     |
|              | Prof. Kalisa Mbanda, Chairman of the National Electoral Commission (NEC), Republic of Rwanda |
| 9:15-9:45    | Opening Statement by:                                               |
|              | H.E Amb. Minata Samate Cessouma, Commissioner for Political Affairs, African Union Commission |
|              | Statement by:                                                        |
|              | Ms. Caren Wakoli, Executive Director and Founder, Emerging Leaders Foundation |
| 9:45-10:00   | Key Note Address by:                                                |
|              | Prof. Attahiru Jega, former Chairperson of the Independent National Electoral Commission, Nigeria |
| 10:00-10:20  | Official Opening Speech by:                                         |
|              | H.E Édouard Ngirente, Prime Minister, Government of the Republic of Rwanda |
| 10:20-10:45  | Break, Group Photo                                                   |
| 10:45-11:50  | SESSION 2
THE STATE OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN AFRICA      |
<p>| MODERATOR:   | Prof. Sabiti Makara, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Makerere |
| 10:45-10:55  | Video Clip on Youth and Elections in Africa:                         |
|              | Voices of the Youth                                                 |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>10:55-11:25</td>
<td><strong>Presenter:</strong> Ms. Idayat Hassan, Executive Director, Centre for Democracy and Development</td>
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<td>11:25-12:00</td>
<td><strong>Plenary Discussion</strong></td>
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| 12:00-13:00 | **SESSION 3**  
**BRIDGING NORMS AND REALITIES: A REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NORMATIVE INSTRUMENTS ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN AFRICA** | **Moderator:** Mr. David Onen, Principal Political Affairs Officer, East African Community  
**Presenter:** Mr. Ibraheem Sanusi, Youth Engagement Lead, African Governance Architecture Secretariat, Department of Political Affairs, African Union Commission |
| 12:00-12:30 | **Plenary Discussion**                                                                     |                                                                                    |
| 12:30-13:00 | **Plenary Discussion**                                                                     |                                                                                    |
| 13:00-14:00 | **LUNCH BREAK**                                                                           |                                                                                    |
| 14:00-15:20 | **SESSION 4**  
**YOUTH AND ELECTION VIOLENCE IN AFRICA: VICTIMS OR PERPETRATORS?** | **Moderator:** Mr. Doudou Ndir, Chairperson, Autonomous National Electoral Commission, Senegal  
**Panelists:**  
Mr. Pathe Dieng, Director of Strategic Studies and Voter Education, Independent National Electoral Commission, Guinea  
Dr. Melvis Ndiloseh, Senior Lecturer, International Relations Institute of Cameroon |
| 14:50-15:20 | **Plenary Discussion**                                                                     |                                                                                    |
| 15:30-17:30 | Visit to the Genocide Memorial Centre, Kigali                                               |                                                                                    |
| 19:00-21:00 | Dinner, courtesy of the National Electoral Commission of Rwanda, Marriot Hotel            |                                                                                    |

**END OF DAY ONE**
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<td>Mr. Marco Granelli, Senior Manager, Independent Electoral Commission, South Africa</td>
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<td>Tea/Coffee Break</td>
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<td>10:15-11:45</td>
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<td>ACCESSING THE ELECTORAL PROCESS: OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS</td>
<td>Ms. Audrey, Pamela Derom, Vice President, National Council of the Central African Youth</td>
<td>Samson Itodo Executive Director, Youth Initiative for Advocacy Growth and Advancement (Focus on access through legal frameworks for elections)</td>
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<td>10:15-11:15</td>
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<td>Panellists</td>
<td>Dr. Victor Shale, Principal Consultant, Shalestone Elections and Governance Consultants (Focus on Access through Political Parties)</td>
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<td>Dr. Noha Bakr, Senior Lecturer, American University in Cairo (Focus on virtual access through social media)</td>
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<td>11:45-13:10</td>
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<td>RESPONSIBLE CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES: STRATEGIES FOR MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT BY THE YOUTH</td>
<td>Commissioner Joyce Kazembe, Zimbabwe Electoral Commission</td>
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### 11:45 - 12:45
**Panellists:**
- Zied Touzani, Executive Director and Founder, Tun’Act, Tunisia (Focus on electoral reform advocacy)
- Ms. Miriam Obara, Head of Design, Strategy and Branding, SIASA Place (Focus on promoting issue-based youth participation in electoral processes)
- Mr. Rebaone Mmereki, Secretary General, Organisation for Youth and Elections in Botswana (focus on strategies, successes, challenges and lessons-learnt in promoting youth participation in electoral processes in Botswana)

### 12:45 - 13:10
**Plenary Discussion**

### 13:10 - 14:10
**Lunch Break**

### 14:10 - 15:10
**SESSION 8  AFRICA TALKS DG TRENDS**

**MODERATOR:**
- Ms. Rizzan Nassuna, Democracy and Governance Expert, Department of Political Affairs, African Union Commission
- Ms. Suzanne Silantoi Lengewa: Youth and Development Coordinator, Centre for Behaviour Change and Communication
- Ms. Asta Jobe, Co-founder, #Gambiahasdecided

### 15:10 - 15:40
**PRESENTATION ON WAY FORWARD: ROBERT GERENGE, PRINCIPAL ADVISOR FOR EMBS & IBRAHEEM SANUSI, YOUTH ENGAGEMENT LEAD, AFRICA GOVERNANCE ARCHITECTURE, DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS, AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

### 15:40 - 16:30
**SESSION 9  CLOSING CEREMONY**

**MODERATOR:**
- Mr Guy Cyrille Tapoko, Ag. Head, Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit, Department of Political Affairs, African Union Commission

**Statement by:** Prof. Kalisa Mbanda, the Chairman of the National Electoral Commission (NEC), Republic of Rwanda

**Statement by:** H.E Yong-Hi Kim, Secretary General, Association of World Electoral Bodies (A-WEB)

**Statement by:** H.E Minata Samate Cessouma, Commissioner for Political Affairs, African Union Commission

**END OF DAY TWO**
Contact Person:
Robert Gerenge, Principal Advisor EMBs Department of Political Affairs,
African Union Commission Email: GerengeR@africa-union.org