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"Peace may not be achieved on a sustainable basis without a democratic setting", says AUC Commissioner for Political Affairs.

Addis Ababa, 29 January 2014: Acknowledging the transformative trends of governance on the continent, AUC Commissioner for Political Affairs Dr. Aisha Abdullahi explained that there are more multi-party elections in Africa today than in the 1960's and 70's, which decades were characterized by military coups.

However, Dr. Abdullahi, explained that while inter-state conflicts have receded, the continent still faces intra-state conflicts. She listed weak state institutions, unequal distribution of resources to marginal societies as a result of weak infrastructure, militarization, mismanagement of ethnic diversity, natural resources and environmental degradation as the overarching causal factors of intra-state conflicts on the continent. As preventive measures to such symptoms, the Commissioner advised the development of strong democratic institutions, the inculcation of a culture of peace and democracy, the promotion and observance of human rights, constitutionalism and the rule of law, the adoption of election monitoring and observation, and the prevention of corruption, illicit capital outflows and humanitarian crises.

The Commissioner introduced the Department for Political Affairs (DPA) as the organ of the African Union Commission mandated to contribute to the emergence of a political environment that is conducive to bringing about sustainable development. The DPA aspires to become an efficient and effective vehicle for the AUC in the promotion of greater unity and political integration to achieve an integrated, peaceful and democratically governed Africa driven by its citizens and playing a pivotal role in international political and economic diplomacy. The focal issues for the DPA are gender equality, youth empowerment, minority rights and climate change.

Over the last two years, based on the decision of the Executive Council that was endorsed by the Fourteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly in February 2010, the DPA is working on the establishment of a Pan African Architecture on Governance. To achieve such a goal the DPA has developed an African Governance Architecture (AGA) framework. The commissioner explained that AGA was developed as part of the 2014-

2017 strategic plan of the African Union to prioritize the promotion of peace and stability, good governance, democracy and human rights. In its detail the AGA provides a framework for consultations, coordination, dialogue and collective action regarding these matters.

Commissioner Dr. Abdullahi reserved special praise for the initiative taken by 33 African countries to undergo self-assessment and peer review on the state of their governance arrangement through the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) and the efforts undertaken by AU Ministers of Foreign Affairs, to mobilize support for post-conflict reconstruction and development of African countries from within Africa through the African Solidarity Initiative (ASI). She also acknowledged the adoption of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance on February 15, 2012 while pointing out that 45 out of the 54 member states have ratified the charter.