Remarks by Dr. Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the Kenya 4 March 2013 General Elections

Nairobi, 02 March 2013:

I am very pleased to be here today with the Kenyan people as they prepare to vote in the next two days. As you are all aware the African Union Election Observation Mission started off way back in January 2013. A Team of Long Term Observers was deployed on the 12 January and it was launched during the visit of a Joint pre-election assessment mission of the AU Panel of the Wise and the COMESA Committee of Elders. These teams were later reinforced by the Short Term Observer Mission Headed by His Excellency President Jaoquim Chissano, former President of the Republic of Mozambique, and Dr. Aisha Abdulahi, Commissioner for Political Affairs of the African Union Commission. I must note that this is the first time that we are fielding a long term observers, and it is also the first time that we have had a Commissioner to join an Elections Observation Mission.

Since January, as the African Union, we have consulted with quite a wide range of stakeholders in Kenya. During my brief visit, I have met with some political parties, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), and the President of the Republic of Kenya, President Mwai Kibaki. I am very pleased to note that important measures have been put in place by Kenya to ensure that peaceful and credible elections are organized. We have noted that adequate preparations have been made by the IEBC to administer these elections.

I have been briefed by President Chissano, the Mission Leader of our Election Observation Mission that campaigns have gone well; I was informed of the security measures that the national security organs of Kenya have put in place to ensure adequate security before, during and after the polls. I have also been informed of the impressive work done by civil society organisations, who have jointly deployed over 20,000 domestic observers. The collaborative efforts of the domestic and international observers will contribute to supporting Kenya’s democratic process.

I am confident that Kenya will come out in large numbers to exercise their right to vote. I would like to appeal to the Kenyan people, political parties, and Presidential candidates to
In the remaining few days to the Elections, it will be important for the media also to provide balanced and equitable reportage by focusing more on women, youth and emerging parties. The African Union Election Observation Mission urges the media to refrain from being used as the channel for the propagation of hate speech and ethnic sentiments.

The African Union Election Observation Mission further calls on the IEBC to step up voter education to ensure that all Kenyans are familiar with the processes governing the Elections, particularly the voting process and put in place contingency measures to address any challenges that may arise due to the number of elections to be held on the same day.

On election security, the African Union Election Observation Mission lauds the measures put in place to secure the Elections. The Mission however calls for increased cooperation between the IEBC and the security agencies to ensure peaceful elections.

It would be recalled that the African Union launched its Long Term Election Observation Mission on 12 January 2013. The Long Term Observers have since 25 February 2013 been joined by 60 Short Term Observers who will be deployed throughout Kenya before, during and after the Elections.