PRESS RELEASE

The Africa Union Election Observation Mission applauds preparation towards the Republic of Kenya’s 4 March 2013 General Elections

Nairobi, 26 February 2013: The African Union Election Observation Mission to Kenya’s 4 March 2013 has taken note of the important measures put in place by Kenya to strengthen the legal and institutional framework for the 4 March 2013 General Elections. The Mission also notes the adequate preparations made by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to conduct free and fair elections.

The African Union Election Observation Mission has further observed the relatively peaceful campaigns and calls on leaders of political parties to use the campaign platform to appeal to their supporters to refrain from hate speech, acts of violence and conduct that could disrupt the peaceful conduct of the elections. In order to foster national cohesion before, during and after the Elections, the African Union Mission calls on political parties to adopt an inclusive approach and embrace all Kenyans regardless of their political leanings.

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.