



PRESS RELEASE

MISSION OF THE PANEL OF THE WISE TO TUNISIA

Addis Ababa, 15 April 2011: A delegation of the Panel of the Wise of the African Union (AU) composed of H.E. Miguel Trovoada, former President of Sao Tome and Principe, and Mrs. Mary Chenery-Hesse, a former Ghanaian diplomat and international civil servant, undertook a mission to Tunisia, from 11 to 12 April 2011. The objective of the mission was, first, to mark the continued support of the AU for the efforts of the authorities and people of Tunisia in the current political transition in the country and, second, to assess the situation in that country, in order to identify possible accompanying measures to be taken by the AU.

During the visit, the delegation of the Panel held discussions with the Interim President of Tunisia, H.E. President Fouad Mebazaa, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mouldi Kefi, and the Minister for Planning and International Cooperation, H.E. Mr. Abdelhamid Triki.

The delegation also held discussions with officials of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in the context of the movement, into Tunisia, of migrant workers leaving Libya as a result of the crisis in that country.

The delegation noted with satisfaction the efforts being made by the Government of Tunisia for the transition to a new constitutional order in accordance with the democratic and developmental aspirations of the people of Tunisia. The delegation equally saluted the courage of the people of Tunisia for their preference for peaceful change, and commended them for their solidarity and cooperation with international humanitarian organizations who are assisting African and other nationals affected by the crisis in neighboring Libya.

The delegation encouraged the authorities and people of Tunisia in their efforts towards ensuring that the elections for the Constituent Assembly, scheduled for 24 July 2011, are held under conditions which will allow the Assembly to create institutions capable of fulfilling the democratic aspirations of the people of Tunisia. The delegation equally welcomed the invitation of the authorities of Tunisia to the AU to assist in the provision technical expertise for the conduct, as well as for the observation, of the electoral process, in order to ensure that the elections for the transition are peaceful, credible and capable of contributing to stability and national cohesion.

The delegation appealed to the authorities and people of Tunisia and the various stakeholders to continue with the sense of responsibility they have demonstrated so far and to preserve their values of dignity, tolerance and justice, as they strive to build and consolidate a new democratic Tunisia at this historic moment in their national history.