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Press Release N. 3 / 2012/ Presidential Election in Senegal

"I CONGRATULATE THE SENEGALESE PEOPLE FOR THEIR POLITICAL MATURITY"

Dakar, 28 February 2012 - February 26, 2012, over 5.3 million Senegalese went to the polls to elect their candidate for the Presidential post in Senegal during the next seven years. The African Union (AU) deployed in this context an Election Observers Mission that found on their arrival in Dakar, a socio-political tension.

The AU Observers Mission had a dual mandate: to ensure that the elections take place in a peaceful context as well as observe that the election is free, fair and transparent.

Marked by a pre-election period punctuated of violence, which is of concern to the African Union and the sub-region, the election of 26th February, however took place peacefully and was transparent following the AU observers Mission that was deployed in 14 regions within the Senegal national territory.

Addressing a press conference that took place after the election on February 26, President Obasanjo commended the political maturity and civility of the Senegalese people all through the election.

The preliminary report of the AU Observer Mission , presented at the press conference, reported on the political context marked by strong political tensions and the challenge faced by the incumbent candidate who is vying for a third term. On election day, most polling stations visited by the AU Observers Mission were open

on time. The mission noted with satisfaction that the elections went on in a generally peaceful climate. No major incidents that could have a significant impact on the vote or the outcome of the election were registered.

The participation rate was generally average in most polling stations observed.

Based on the recommendations and conclusions by the various teams on their field experience, the AU Observer Mission recommends the following:

- Organize an inclusive political dialogue to promote consensus on political issues of great importance;
- Take appropriate measures to objectively validate the ballots;
- Issuing of voters cards on time;
- Ensuring continuity of elections throughout the voting process;
- Strengthen the civic and voter education to increase voter's participation.

According to the AU Observers Mission, the elections were conducted in conformity with the rules and regulations of the legal and institutional framework of Senegal. Despite some minor shortcomings in the electoral process, the AU Mission considers that election was successful. They called on all political parties and their candidates to accept the election results as announced by Constitutional Council.

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