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The African Union deploys an Observer Mission in Lesotho

Maseru, 21 May 2012 – The Kingdom of Lesotho will hold the national assembly elections on 26 May 2012. In this regards, Mr Jean Ping, Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Commission, has decided to deploy an Electoral Observer Mission (EOM) to Lesotho for the parliamentary elections scheduled for 26 May 2012. Led by General Yakubu Gowon, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the AU Mission is expected, at the outset, to make an independent and impartial observation of the Parliamentary Elections.

The AU EOM arrived in Maseru on 20 May 2012 and had the chance to witness the final big rallies ahead of the next weekend's Parliamentary Election. On Sunday, despite the cold weather, the Basotho rallied in the streets of Maseru with the colors and slogans of the parties running for the elections in order to gather momentum and support. In a tightly fought battle, 15 parties are contesting for the country's 120 parliamentary seats.

After the 1998 contested elections and the subsequent escalation of violence, on 27 April 2012, the parties have committed to a peaceful electoral process and pledged to abide by the Constitution of Lesotho. They have also vowed to accept the results of the poll. In this context, the international community and regional organizations such as SADC, have massively responded to the invitation to observe the electoral process.

The AU EOM is composed of 20 members to be deployed across the Kingdom of Lesotho. It includes members of National Parliaments, high officials of national electoral bodies, Members of Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) of the AU and members of the African Civil Society.

The AU Observer Mission is expected to observe the Lesotho elections in accordance with the AU Declaration on the Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa and the AU Guidelines for Election Observation and Monitoring.

The AU EOM is headquartered in Lesotho Sun.

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