



PRESS RELEASE

High level Meeting of Heads of International Election Observation Missions concludes in Johannesburg, South Africa

Johannesburg, 19 October 2016: A High Level Meeting of Heads of International Election Observation Missions has concluded in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Meeting organised by the African Union Commission is first in the history of international election observation and brought together participants from Africa, Europe, North and South America from the European Union, The Carter Center, ECOWAS, ECCAS, EISA, NDI and The Commonwealth. The main objective of the meetings was to take stock of the roles of Heads of Missions, the lessons they have learned over the years, the challenges they face in the discharge of their responsibilities and what needs to be done to bring about improvements.

The Meeting concluded on the need to strengthen the roles of Heads of Missions and come out with the following recommendations among others on the need for: (a) Election observation missions to be well planned ahead of time and Heads of Missions provided with adequate information and analysis of the electoral process and their roles clearly defined; (b) Heads of Missions to be supported by an effective technical and communication team to enable them effectively deliver on their mandates; (c) Increased collaboration and information sharing among international election observation missions to ensure that they work towards a common objective of promoting credible and transparent elections; (d) Strengthened role of Heads of Missions during the post-election phase by ensuring that they are involved in the presentation of final reports and recommendations to stakeholders in countries where elections are observed; and (e) International Election Observation Missions to be more truthful and bold about the issues they observe during elections to help consolidate democracy.

Finally the Meeting concluded that a regular meeting of Heads of Missions be formalized to ensure continuous sharing of experiences and lessons learned.

For more information, contact:

- Guy Cyrille Tapoko

Ag Head of Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit: tapokog@africa-union.org

- Samuel M. Atuobi

Senior Political/Elections Officer: atuobis@africa-union.org