
Rwanda hosts Consultative Meeting with MPS, Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Civil Society to Promote Constitutionalism, Rule of Law and Good Governance through the AU Instruments

Kigali, Rwanda: 14 November 2016 – The importance of Constitutionalism and Rule of Law remains primordial in entrenching a culture of democratic governance on the African continent. This vision is also rebounded and strengthened by the African Union Shared Values instruments which also form the pillars of the realisation of the vision of the African Union that of a peaceful Africa, prosperous, integrated and driven by the people, as highlighted in Agenda 2063.

On the African continent and especially in the Eastern African region, there has been a growing interest on issues of constitutionalism, rule of law and good governance and this can be demonstrated by an increased interest in the regional treaties which the Regional Economic Communities have also been pushing for.

Addressing participants at the opening ceremony, the representative of the Government of Rwanda, the CEO of the Rwanda Governance Board, Professor Anastase Shyaka, lauded the initiative of the African Union for bringing together representatives of national parliaments, Member States of IGAD and East African Community, the PAP, African Union Commission, the African Union Organs, experts in constitutionalism and rule of law, local government and local development, representatives of civil society organizations, think tanks and other organizations. He outlined the link between Agenda 2063 aspirations (3) and (6) and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) and the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Government and Local Development.

Professor Shyaka reiterated his government’s willingness to work hand in hand with the AU Commission to ensure the full implementation of AU treaties and charters as well as motivate the population to develop greater interest in the development agenda of the Union.
Dr. Khabele Matlosa, Director of Political Affairs, AUC welcomed the participants on behalf of the Commissioner for Political Affairs H.E. Dr. Aisha L. Abdullahi (Amb.). He spoke about the necessity of the development of the Charter on the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) and the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Government and Local Development. Dr. Matlosa urged participants from Member States who did not sign or ratify charters to explain the problems facing them by not ratifying the charters in this dialogue forum, so that AU Commission can be in better position to assist.

Interventions from different delegates enriched the discussion. They highlighted the role of the AU and Civil Society organizations have to play in civic education for ordinary Africans in order for them to be aware of the importance of these Charters and the value of constitutionalism, rule of law and good governance. The growing interest in Governance issue in the region has also been outlined.

Agenda 2063 in its aspiration 3, imagines an "Africa that has implemented good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law to the 2063 horizon" through the consolidation of democratic gains of the continent and improving the quality of governance, the establishment of strong institutions, development oriented and the emergence of visionary leadership in all spheres and at all levels. To achieve this aspiration, Agenda 2063 identifies specific areas of interventions that reflect on the mandates of national, regional and continental parliaments.

The consultation, which will end on 16 November, involves the efforts of the Department of Political Affairs of the African Union Commission, together with Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), supported by International Alert (IA) and International IDEA (IDEA) and it is designed to engage civil society organizations, parliamentarians and representatives of Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Member States in the East Africa region in the importance of constitutionalism and rule of law, governance, especially decentralisation, local governance and development through focusing on the values of constitutionalism and Rule of Law as enshrined in the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) and the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralisation, Local Governance and Local Development.

The following topics will be discussed during the consultation:

1. Promoting Constitutionalism and Rule of Law through the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance;
2. The Parliament and the promotion of constitutionalism and rule of law in Africa: A Comparative Perspective;
3. Promoting the importance of decentralisation and good governance through the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralisation, Local Government and Local Development;
4. Role of national stakeholders in strengthening good governance through the African Charter on the Values and principles of Decentralisation, Local Government and Local Development.
The meeting is attended by representatives of national parliaments, and representatives of ministries of foreign affairs of East African Region, Member States of IGAD, the PAP, African Union Commission, the African Union Organs, Experts in constitutionalism and rule of law, local government and local development, representatives of civil society organizations, think tanks and other organizations

Notes to the Editors:

African aspirations of Agenda 2063

✓ Aspiration 1 (A prosperous Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development): ending poverty, inequalities of income and opportunity; job creation; addressing the challenges of rapid urbanization, improvement of habitats and access to basic necessities of life; providing social security and protection; developing Africa’s human and social capital (through an education and skills revolution emphasizing science and technology and expanding access to quality health care services, particularly for women and girls); transforming Africa’s economies through beneficiation from Africa’s natural resources, manufacturing, industrialization and value addition, as well as raising productivity and competitiveness; radically transforming African agriculture to enable the continent to feed itself and be a major player as a net food exporter; exploiting the vast potential of Africa’s blue/ocean economy; and finally putting in place measures to sustainably manage the continent’s rich biodiversity, forests, land and waters and using mainly adaptive measures to address Climate change risks.

✓ Aspiration 2 (An integrated continent, politically united, based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa’s Renaissance): accelerating progress towards continental unity and integration for sustained growth, trade, exchanges of goods, services, free movement of people and capital through: (i) establishing a United Africa; (ii) fast tracking of the CFTA; (iii) improving connectivity through newer and bolder initiatives to link the continent by rail, road, sea and air; and (iv) developing regional and continental power pools, as well as ICT.

✓ Aspiration 3 (An Africa of good governance, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law): consolidating democratic gains and improving the quality of governance, respect for human rights and the rule of law; building strong institutions for a development state; and facilitating the emergence of development-oriented and visionary leadership in all spheres and at all levels.

✓ Aspiration 4 (A peaceful and secure Africa): strengthening governance, accountability and transparency as a foundation for a peaceful Africa; strengthening mechanisms for securing peace and reconciliation at all levels, as well as addressing emerging threats to Africa’s peace and security; and putting in place strategies for the continent to finance her security needs.

✓ Aspiration 5 (An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics): inculcating the spirit of Pan Africanism; tapping Africa’s rich heritage and culture to ensure that the creative arts are major contributors to Africa’s growth and transformation; and restoring and preserving Africa’s cultural heritage.
Aspiration 6 (An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children): strengthening the role of Africa’s women through ensuring gender equality and parity in all spheres of life (political, economic and social); eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls; creating opportunities for Africa’s youth for self-realization, access to health, education and jobs; and ensuring safety and security for Africa’s children, and providing for early childhood development.

Aspiration 7 (Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner): improving Africa’s place in the global governance system (UNSC, financial institutions, global commons such as outer space); improving Africa’s partnerships and refocusing them more strategically to respond to African priorities for growth and transformation; and ensuring that the continent has the right strategies to finance its own development and reducing aid dependency.

For further information, kindly contact the coordinators of the meeting:

1. Mr. Calixte Aristide Mbari, Ag. Head of Division, Democracy, Governance, Human Rights, and Elections at the Department of Political Affairs, E-mail: MbariC@africa-union.org; Mobile: +250785924741
2. Mr. Issaka Garba Abdou, Senior Political Officer, E-mail: Garbaabdoul@Africa-union.org; Mobile: +250782000683
3. Ms. Darsheenee Singh Raumauth, Constitutionalism and Rule of Law Analyst, E-mail: Raumnauthd@africa-union.org; Mobile: +250780302386

Media Contact:
Mr. Gamal Ahmed Karrar, Directorate of Information and Communication, African Union Commission, E-mail: gamalk@africa-union.org