Directorate of Information and Communication

Press Release

YOUTH CONSULTATION ON ENHANCING YOUNG PEOPLE’S MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES

Arusha, Tanzania 28 August 2017 - The African Governance Platform under the auspices of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) Youth Engagement Strategy (AGA-YES) is convening the East and Southern Africa Regional Youth Consultations under the theme “Enhancing Young People’s Meaningful Participation in Electoral Processes in Africa”.

The Consultation provides a collaborative, open and inclusive space for young people to critically and objectively reflect on progress made so far, challenges encountered and prospects for enhancing meaningful youth participation in the electoral processes of East and Southern African countries. The Consultation is taking place at a time when a number of elections have been held in East and Southern Africa – from Kenya to Angola, Rwanda and Lesotho – making it timely.

The Consultation will focus on three thematic areas: assessment of youth participation landscape in Africa; interrogating responsible civic participation and electoral processes in Africa; and enhancing youth participation through efficient electoral management processes.

In his opening speech, Ms. Sandy Quimbaya, Tanzania Resident Director of the National Democratic Institute said, “Today the youth have an exceptional opportunity for change based on new technologies. You have unprecedented access to information and we are all interconnected at the end of the day”.

In her statement, Karin Pluberg, from the German Development Cooperation, GIZ, reiterated the commitment of the Government of Germany towards deepening youth participation in electoral processes through the GIZ/AGA Support Programme.

Amb. Salah Hammad, Ag. Head AGA (African Governance Architecture) Secretariat observed: “As the majority in Africa, youth have the majority of votes across the board and as such, their involvement in electoral processes should be purposive and meaningful rather than adhoc”.

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Mr. Stephen Mlote, Deputy Secretary General for Planning and Infrastructure at EAC (East African Community), in his opening remarks highlighted the need to involve youth in leadership structures on the continent in a more effective way. He urged young people to get involved in civic participation in elections responsibly, admonishing them not to wait to be invited into political spaces but to do the hard work of political engagement before elections. He told the participants to take proactive action and meaningfully engage in the electoral cycle of their respective countries.

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About the African Governance Architecture (AGA)

AGA is a mechanism for dialogue between stakeholders that are mandated to promote and strengthen democratic governance in Africa as a way to deepen coherence, synergy and coordination. The AGA is the overall political and institutional framework for the promotion, protection and sustenance of democracy, governance, human rights and humanitarian assistance on the continent. The principle objective of AGA is implementation of AU Shared Values and in particular the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG). Established in 2011 AGA is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in the AU Headquarters with the AGA Platform Members across Africa.