

AFRICAN UNION

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Press Release

Head of the African Union Observation Mission to Nigeria's Elections to Conclude Stakeholder engagement Today Ahead of Elections Tomorrow

Abuja, Nigeria 15 February 2019: The head of the African Union Electoral Observation Mission (AUEOM) to Nigeria, Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn is today holding his final round of meetings with stakeholders in the Nigerian general elections to take place on Saturday 16th February 2019. Since the mission's deployment, Mr. Desalegn has been receiving updates from various stakeholders including political parties, the electoral commission, civil society, government officials and other observer groups.

Mr. Desalegn is heading a 50-member delegation, which includes the African Union Commissioner of Political Affairs Mrs. Minata Samate Cessouma.

The deployment of the delegation by the African Union Commission (AUC) was done following an invitation by the Nigerian Government and Electoral Commission, and as part of the AU Commission's mandate and commitment to supporting credible, transparent and inclusive electoral processes in member states of the African Union.

84 million Nigerians are registered voters. Of this number, over 22 million are young people. There are 73 presidential candidates.

After the elections, the Head of the AUEOM will release the African Union's preliminary statement before the media at a date and time to be announced.

The AUEOM's mandate is derived from relevant African Union instruments on democracy, elections and human rights, especially the 2007 African Union Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance; the 2002 OAU/AU Declaration on Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa; the 2002 African Union Guidelines for Election Observation and Monitoring Missions; and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and will operate in accordance with these and other relevant international and regional instruments as well as the legal framework governing elections in Nigeria.

The overall objective of AUEOMs is to promote democracy, strengthen democratic institutions and build public confidence in electoral processes in AU Member States. The Missions are in line with the AU's aspirations outlined

in Agenda 2063, particularly Aspiration no.3, which aims to ensure good governance, democracy, and respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law on the continent. The conduct of free, fair and credible elections in Member States is deemed critical to the realization of the AU's aspirations and its overall goal of ensuring an integrated, peaceful and prosperous continent.

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