



## Press Release

### **Virtual Peer-Learning Consultative Meeting of African Elections Management Bodies on COVID-19 and Elections in Africa**

**Addis Ababa, 22 May 2020:** The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) of the African Union Commission (AUC) will convene a virtual consultative meeting of African Election Management Bodies (EMBs ) **on 27 May 2020 from 15h00-18h30 East African Time** on the COVID-19 pandemic and elections in Africa. The virtual meeting will be presided by H.E Amb. Minata Samate Cessouma, Commissioner for Political Affairs and will be convened in collaboration with the Association of African Electoral Authorities (AAEA) and Regional Economic Communities' networks of EMBs.

The virtual peer-learning meeting of African EMBs will offer a platform for senior electoral officials on the continent, in particular, those planning to hold elections in 2020 to exchange their experiences and challenges. This is with a view to exploring strategies for better election planning and management in the context of the public health crisis presented by novel Coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

In the year 2020, eighteen (18) elections are scheduled to take place on the continent of Africa. A number of African countries have already held elections during this period of COVID-19 pandemic, some have postponed while others are considering to conduct polls later during the year. The COVID-19 pandemic directly affects the execution of mandate of EMBs as central institutions in the conduct of elections. Albeit a sovereign preserve of the countries concerned, it is worth noting that decisions to postpone or hold elections as scheduled have a bearing on public health, constitutionalism, peace and security, democracy and governance as well as legitimacy of rule in Africa. It should also be recalled that the conduct of elections ought to adhere to international, continental and regional norms and standards for democratic elections.

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