AU Reflection Forum on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa Opened

The African Union Reflection Forum on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa opened today in Accra, focusing on the finding solution in addressing the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government in Africa.

In his keynote Address as a special Guest of Honor, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana and Chairperson of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, said that “coups have never been and will never be the solution to Africa’s problems” and emphasised the need for effective deterrence, bold actions and adequate preventive measures”.

“This Forum offers a platform to engage in deliberations on a disturbing development on the continent – unconstitutional changes in governments in Africa”, he noted. The significant interest in this Forum is an indication of the unequivocal, unwavering commitment to constitutionalism and the rule of law, and the outright rejection of all forms and manifestations of unconstitutional changes in governments in Africa, as well as of the manipulation of national constitutions, the President emphasized.

Addressing the Forum, H.E. Amb. Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, on behalf of the Chairperson of the AU Commission entreat the forum to have an eye on some of the AU vision 2063 aspirations: “ An Africa of Good Governance, Respect for Human Rights, Justice and the Rule of law; a peaceful and secure Africa; an Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partners”, among others.

Representing H.E Macky Sall, the President of the Republic of Senegal Chairperson of the African Union, H.E Ambassador Mohammed Lamine THIAW, specified that unconstitutional changes of government represent a reversal of significant social, political and economic gains accrued since the year 1990. “They bear serious implications for security, democratic consolidation and socio-economic transformation and must be addressed through strengthened democratic institutions and human security”, he added.

On his part, H.E. Prof. Mafa Sejanamane, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the AU and Chairperson of the AU PSC for the month of
March 2022, said "It is sad to say that, today, in the history of the African Union, since its establishment, it is the first time for four Member States (Sudan, Mali, Republic of Guinea and Burkina Faso) to be on suspension at the same time. This is a wakeup call for Africa and its organizations, from the national to the continental levels, to seriously reflect on governance structures, he stressed in his remarks to the Forum.

The Forum organized by the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security of the AU Commission, in implementing the decision of the AU Peace and Security Council, the three-day Forum will reflect on the phenomenon of unconstitutional changes of government in Africa with the aim of proffering enduring solutions to the problem.

In particular, the Forum will discuss different aspects of the phenomenon including: triggers for the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government in Africa, continental response mechanisms, shared perspectives on Africa’s governance deficits, strengths and weaknesses of regional frameworks, stakeholders’ responsibility in promoting effective governance, managing complex political transitions arising out of military takeover, and consolidated strategies and structured solutions to address unconstitutional changes of government.

The Forum will be concluded on 17 March 2022, with adoption of Accra Declaration on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa, which will feed Extraordinary Summit on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government, scheduled to take place in May 2022 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

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