INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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African Union Commission elections: Ministers discuss parameters for leadership and inclusion.

The senior leadership of the African Union is elected to serve for a term of four years, with the option for re-election for another four-year term. These senior elective posts include the position of the African Union Commission Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson, and the six Commissioners. Since the transition of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to the African Union (AU) in 2002, there have been five (5) elections for members of the AU Commission. The first Commission served from 2003 to 2008, and the current fifth Commission was elected in 2021 and is due to complete its term in 2025.

Ahead of the February 2025 elections, the Executive Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs commenced its extraordinary session today at the African Union Headquarters to consider the report on the preparation for the election of senior leadership. The Ministers will among other issues, discuss the modalities of regional rotation and gender parity. To ensure all five regions of the African Union have a fair chance of having leadership roles at the continental organization, the principle of inter-regional rotation is applied. Gender parity is equally applied in the election process. For instance, if the Chairperson is male then the Deputy Chairperson shall be a female and vice versa. Of the 6 commissioner positions, the posts are divided equally among male and female candidates.

The discussions come in the backdrop of the implementation of the AU Institutional Reforms of 2018 which saw the reduction of the portfolios of the Commissioners from the previous 8 to the current 6 posts. The elections require that the candidates be competent women or men with proven experience in the relevant field, commensurate leadership qualities, and a good track record in government, parliament, international organizations or other relevant sectors of society.

A High-Level Panel of Eminent Africans comprised of one eminent personality, per region oversees the pre-selection process that is the assessment and shortlisting of candidates. The High-Level Panel is assisted by an independent African consultancy firm.

Dr. Mohamed Salem Ould Merzoug Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, and Mauritanians Abroad, and Chair of the Executive Council, underscored the importance of the developing the institutions of the African Union to provide the grounds for the full discharge of our responsibilities, contributing to the strengthening of Africa's integration and unity, and realizing the legitimate aspirations of the people as outlined in Agenda 2063.

He stated, "the process of selecting the team that will lead the AU in 2025 for four years should be defined, I believe, by prioritizing considerations of cohesion, equity, rationality, and a spirit of consensus. Our vision for the future of our continent is intricately linked to our fervent belief in the African Union – a union that cannot exist without us, by us, and for us. Such a union cannot be materialized without our deep commitment, active presence, and the strength of our partnership. The African Union is not merely a forum for exchanging ideas or forming transient partnerships; rather, it is a collective project founded on three essential pillars that constitute the foundation of our shared vision." Read full speech **here**.

The conclusions of the Ministerial meeting today will pave way for regions to embark on intra-regional consultations on procedures for nominating candidates for the portfolios for which they are eligible.

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