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**SPEECH BY H.E. DR. AISHA ABDULLAHI COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL
AFFAIRS AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION ON THE OCCATION OF THE PAN-
AFRICAN PARLIAMENT COMMITTEE MEETING IN ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

11-15 MARCH, 2013

STATEMENT BY H.E DR. AISHA ABDULLAHI,

COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

**YOUR EXCELLENCY, HON. BETHEL AMADI, THE PRESIDENT OF THE PAN-
AFRICAN PARLIAMENT
HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE PAN AFRICAN PARLIAMENT
DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN**

As I warmly welcome you all to Addis Ababa, the home of African Union Commission, On behalf of the African Union Commission (AUC), to express my most sincere appreciation to the invitation to be in with you at this occasion of the **PAP Permanent Committee Meeting** especially after a very successful participation at your **“Regional Parliamentary Meeting On African Governance Platform And Promotion Of African Union Legal Instruments”** last year in Port Harcourt Nigeria. I thank you also for choosing Addis Ababa as the venue for this Meeting. It makes it easier for some of us to attend from our offices and homes. Permit me Honorable Members to thank the Government of Ethiopia for hosting the Meeting And my special thanks also go to all the Honorable members who have dedicated their service for the good of the continent.

Distinguished Honorable,

Permit me **Honorable Members** to tell you that, I have just returned from Kenya with H.E **Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma** the Chairperson of the Commission where the African Union Commission participated fully in Election Observation Mission and engaged with all Election stakeholders in Kenya to ensure a free, fair and transparent election devoid of violence. The leadership of African Union during the African Union Election Observation Mission in the person of President Joaquim Chissano shown through the entire Observation Mission and we are indeed very proud of the role we

played and will continue to play in democratic stability in Kenya and the entire continent. The African Union Election Observation Mission was also in Djibouti and played its expected Observation role.

At this juncture **Your Excellency, Mr. Speaker and the Honorable members of the PAP**, I would like to refresh our mind on the mandate of the Department of Political Affairs, African Union within which DPA can co-operate and collaborate with PAP. I am glad that the two are already engaging at a very regular and efficient level through Election Observation. Our mandate in DPA includes strengthening governance, consolidating democracy and ensuring credible, transparent and legitimate elections, promoting and protecting human and people's rights, transitional justice, rule of law, constitutionalism and seeking sustainable solutions to humanitarian affairs in Africa. The department has evolved over the years and has made giant strides in developing various guiding and normative frameworks around the various themes and strands of the DPA work. Through years of learning and improvement, the Department pioneered the development of a comprehensive African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which became one of the most important normative frameworks for the African people because of its comprehensive and cross-cutting nature across both DPA and other departments within the African Union. At the heart of the Charter is the way it brought together, the different messages and previous norms into a comprehensive document covering various issues in African – from Governance including Political, Economic and Corporate Governance. Rule of Law and Human Rights, Democratization, Elections and Peace to Public Service Provisioning and, Transparency, Accountability and Probity in public Service. **Honorable Members**, The

Charter serves as our mandate guide on how we facilitate embracement and implementation of Democracy, Election and Governance principles in the continent.

Your Excellency, Mr. Speaker and the Honorable members, this meeting is also very crucial at a time like this as it coincides with the 50th Anniversary of the OAU/AU celebration and the renewal of African quest for greatness through the spirit of Pan Africanism and the African Renaissance. It is also important at a point when the African Union is looking more inwardly on how to move from norm setting to norm implementation and you would agree with me Honourable members that you will play a big role in moving that agenda forward

Your Excellency Mr. Speaker

You would recall that in Port Harcourt Nigeria, we looked at African Governance Architecture Platform and its Platform and how different Organs of the AU and RECs can come together for greater outcome in terms of governance democracy, human rights and humanitarian affairs on the Continent. At the end of the Port Harcourt Meeting, we agreed for grater collaboration and partnership between the AUC and PAP in general and DPA and PAP in particular and highlighted specifically the need to take AGA implementation to the lower levels of governance in the continent.

Your Excellency Mr. Speaker, recall also that our meeting in Port Harcourt also touched on DPA work and how DPA and PAP can collaboratively work for greater good of the continent. One of the areas we shared and hope that DPA and PAP would continue to partners is on the Convention on Corruption which is our hope that the Honorable members would advance forward through support for its ratification by member States and popularizing in their various countries. The African Charter on the

Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration is also an important normative framework that would ensure accountability, transparency and service orientation in our public service. The ratification, popularization and implementation of the Charter at the national level would lead to greater good on the continent. We seek close collaboration with the Honorable Members of PAP on making that possible.

Your Excellency and Honorable Members, your role as an AU organ is crucial in information African people about the various AU norms and further ensures that the norms we agree on as a Union is carried through to the grass-root level as captured in your vision as “***a common platform for African peoples and their grass-roots organizations to be more involved in discussions and decision-making on the problems and challenges facing the continent***”. Your diversity, country coverage, institutional and state support provides us an opportunity for PAP to inform AU/DPA how best to ensure that the various norms are domesticated and implemented at the country levels of each AU Member State.

Your Excellency and Honorable Members, permit me to refer again to elections. As I mentioned earlier, we have just returned from Djibouti and Kenya for election Observation respective. And as you already know, it is an AU mission but a Mission in which AU through DPA and PAP have continued to make possible through consistent deployment of Observers to any member State conducting election. I am very proud of the partnership and collaboration between DPA and PAP in African Union Election Observation Mission which I witnessed firsthand in Kenya with her H.E the chairperson of the Commission. I thank you and as for continued collaboration in the Observation Mission. We have seen many improvements as a result of the collaboration

and experiences are documented as best practices. One example is that the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit of DPA is on the verge of publishing an Administrative and Logistic Manual based on the experiences of observers over the years.

Your Excellency Mr Speaker and the Honorable Members, on the Human Rights angle, the AU has made much progress in protecting and defending the rights of African people. By elaborating and adopting an impressive series of human rights instruments, the African Union and many African Governments have shown their willingness to promote and protect human rights. The AU has also been able to improve and reinforce its institutional framework and key strategic orientations. This includes the development of the Human Rights Strategy for Africa (HRSA), and African Governance Architecture (AGA) and its Platform and coordination between governance, development, and peace and security through the relevant mechanisms existing within the AUC as a way of moving forward Human Rights agenda to reflect in Governance. Beside **the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance** which I have mentioned early, **the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention)** need to generate more attention and popularity with the African people and there is no better organ than the PAP to take this message to the African people. The **Durban Declaration and Program of Action to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance** also requires urgent attention of the Honorable Parliament in a period when conflict emanating from intolerance is ravaging our dear continent. Other Human Rights areas which the African Union are participating seriously is the areas of

Death Penalty, which the African Union in 2008 issued a resolution encouraging African Countries to suspend death penalty practices in the continent. Till date 9 countries in African have become parties to 2nd optional protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and political rights and 8 countries have willingly abolished death penalty. Those countries who still retain death penalty would soon become minority and we urge the Honorable Members of PAP African Parliament to take the message even further.

African Union also remains conscious of the **Right to Development** and how it can bring development closer to the people of Africa. The DPA are currently working on designing an assessment mechanism with which we can evaluate and support member state in monitoring their development progress in line with African Union Shared Value Instruments. **Your Excellency and Honorable Members**, DPA would like to work with PAP in ensure effective review of development effectiveness in the various member state and ways through which we can support countries to continue on the vertical pole towards development.

Your Excellency Mr Speaker, the African Union through the Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees and Displaced Affairs Division of DPA has also continued to show commitment to protecting the rights of the Refugees and Displaced people in humanitarian situations. This Division carries out its programmes and activities as mandated by the African Union which is committed to the main objectives of devising ways and means of finding durable solutions to the problems of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons (IDP's), alleviate their suffering, addressing the root causes and humanitarian crises such as natural and man-made disasters. And the Division in

collaboration with International partners has continued to work together with the concerned countries to promote peace, security, stability and national reconciliation in order to create conducive conditions for the return of victims of forced displacement, the best solution to the problem. However, while executing the various activities, the Commission is faced with some many challenges include global climate change and food crisis, population growth and urbanization, competition for scarce resources as well as international migration and mixed movements of people which in one way or another impact in the search for durable solutions to humanitarian situations. The commission has continued however to work closely with partners to monitor situations and act proactively before them become dire.

Your Excellency Mr Speaker, Humanitarian Situations in African is real; climate change is real, African Women, Children and Men are increasingly forced out of homes due to conflict, many face serves cases of malnutrition and lack of food. Ten, thousands if not million have died of severe humanitarian disaster. We need to promote peace in our various countries and restrict the number of arms coming into our various counties; we need to ensure that through Legislation our various governments care for people in dire humanitarian situation. We need to restore their dignity and give them hope for a better future.

Your Excellency Mr. Speaker

Honorable Members

Distinguished Delegates

Before I conclude, I would like to thank the Honorable Members of the Pan-African Parliament for the support and partnership DPA has received since I assumed duty as the Commissioner. I am proud of what you are doing and what we can achieve together. I would also like to pledge my personal commitment and that of my Department to fostering greater collaboration between DPA and PAP and indeed other organs of the African Union in ensuring greater collaboration and outcome in the areas of **Governance, Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs**. We value this partnership and collaboration and hope that together we would bring peace, good governance, economic and political stability to the African people and continue.

I Thank You .