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**Opening Speech of the Director for Governance and Conflicts Prevention for the Member States Validation Meeting on the Teachers Guides' and Learners' Manuals needed for the AU Strategy for the Inclusion and Mainstreaming of the ACDEG in School Curricula
Maputo, Mozambique
From December 4th-6th, 2023.**

Dear Representative from the Government of Mozambique

Dear Director of ECES

Honorable delegates Representatives from the AU members states, RECs and Regional mechanisms.

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure and honor that I stand before you today on this very significant occasion to discuss a matter of utmost importance to our beloved continent. The African Union project on implementing the strategy for the inclusion of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG) in African school curricula marks a significant step towards fostering a brighter and more inclusive future for Africa.

First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the government of Mozambique for their gracious hospitality and warm welcome to Maputo. I would equally like to extend my gratitude and appreciation to our esteemed partner, the European Centre for Electoral Support (ECES), for their invaluable support in organizing this momentous event. ECES has been a steadfast ally in our efforts to promote democracy, elections, and good governance in Africa. Their sustained engagement and expertise in electoral processes have played a vital role in strengthening democratic institutions across our continent. We are grateful for their continuous support and collaboration in making this activity and many others of the past and future a resounding success. Together, we reaffirm our shared commitment to fostering inclusive democracies and ensuring that the voices of all Africans are heard and respected.

Before I continue, I would also like to take a moment to express my deepest appreciation to the experts who have worked tirelessly in developing the teachers' guides and students' manuals needed for the inclusion of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG) in African school curricula. Developing the teachers' guides and students' manuals is undoubtedly a challenging task, requiring extensive research, collaboration, and expertise in curriculum development. It demands the careful consideration of diverse educational systems, cultural contexts, and age-appropriate content to ensure that the materials effectively convey the

principles and values of the ACDEG to students across the continent. Their dedication, expertise, and unwavering commitment to this project are truly commendable. It is through their efforts that we now have at our disposal the necessary tools to inspire and educate our young minds about the principles and values that underpin our democratic aspirations.

Education is the cornerstone of progress and development. It is the catalyst that shapes the minds and aspirations of our youth, equipping them with the necessary knowledge, values, and skills to contribute to the socio-economic and political transformation of our nations. As we embark on this project, let us not forget the words of the great Nelson Mandela: "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Today, we gather here to unleash the transformative power of education, to shape the future of our continent.

I would like to emphasize the significance of Agenda 2063 in guiding our collective efforts towards a prosperous and united Africa. Agenda 2063 envisions a continent that is politically united, based on the ideals of pan-Africanism and good governance. It emphasizes the importance of democracy, inclusivity, and sustainable development as key drivers of Africa's transformation. By integrating the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG) into our educational systems, we align ourselves with the values and aspirations set forth in Agenda 2063, reinforcing our commitment to building a better future for Africa.

The African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG) represents a significant milestone in our collective journey towards the consolidation of democracy, good governance, and respect for human rights in Africa. Its adoption in 2007 demonstrated our commitment to promoting and protecting democratic principles and values across our nations. By integrating this landmark document into our school curricula, we ensure that the ideals enshrined within it become deeply ingrained in the hearts and minds of our young generation.

Education is not merely about imparting knowledge; it is about nurturing responsible citizens, critical thinkers, and compassionate leaders. By making the ACDEG a substantial part of African school curricula, we foster a sense of civic duty, instilling in our youth the values of transparency, accountability, and respect for the rule of law. We empower them to become active participants in the democratic process, promoting dialogue, consensus-building, and inclusive decision-making.

Moreover, the inclusion of the ACDEG in our educational systems will foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of the diverse cultures, histories, and perspectives that make up the African continent. It will serve as a bridge, connecting our past struggles for freedom and justice to the present realities we face. By educating our youth about the successes and challenges of African democracies, we inspire them to build upon our accomplishments and work towards a future that upholds the principles of equity, justice, and human dignity.

While we acknowledge the challenges ahead in harmonizing and integrating the ACDEG into diverse educational systems, we are confident that through collaboration, unity, and collective action, we can overcome these hurdles. The Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security, in collaboration with member states, will continue to provide guidance, support, and resources to ensure the effective implementation of this strategy. We call upon all stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, civil society organizations, and development partners, to join us in this endeavor and contribute their expertise and resources to make this initiative a success. It is through unity and collective action that we can achieve our goals and transform our vision into a reality.

To overcome these challenges, we have proposed a multi-faceted approach. First, we have established a working group comprising experts in education, curriculum development, and

African governance. This group took the task of developing comprehensive guidelines for the integration of the ACDEG into school curricula, ensuring its alignment with national educational frameworks. Second, we called upon member states to allocate adequate resources to support the project, hence your presence here today. Finally, we will strengthen collaboration between member states, sharing best practices, experiences, and lessons learned in the implementation of this initiative.

In conclusion, the inclusion of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG) in African school curricula holds tremendous potential to shape the future of our continent. By equipping our youth with the knowledge, values, and skills required for active citizenship and responsible leadership, we pave the way for a prosperous and inclusive Africa. Let us extend our gratitude to the experts who have developed the necessary tools and to the government of Mozambique for their unwavering support.

May this project serve as a testament to our commitment to a brighter and more inclusive Africa, where every child is equipped with the knowledge and values to become an active participant in our democratic societies.

Over the next few days, as we work towards the validation of these tools, I implore you to make frank observations, and constructive inputs, and draw our attention to potential blindspots such that the final document would merit our shared ownership.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you once again for your presence, and continued collaboration towards forging the Africa we want.

Thank you and may our collective efforts bear fruit in the years to come.