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**14<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE PANEL OF THE WISE  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA  
16-17 SEPTEMBER 2014**

**POW/PR/CMM(XIV)**

## **COMMUNIQUE**



The Panel of the Wise of the African Union (AU), which is one of the pillars of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) as provided for in the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU, held its 14<sup>th</sup> meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 16 and 17 September 2014. This meeting took place in the wake of the adoption, by the 23<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Summit of the AU Assembly held in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea on 26 and 27 June 2014, of a decision regarding the appointment of new members of the Panel of the Wise following the recommendations made in this regard by the Chairperson of the AU Commission. The five new members of the Panel are: Dr Lakhdar Brahimi from Algeria (representing North Africa), Mr Edem Kodjo from Togo (representing West Africa), Dr Albina Faria de Assis Pereira Africano from Angola (representing Central Africa) and Dr Specioza Wandira Kazibwe from Uganda (representing East Africa) and Madame Luisa Diogo from Mozambique (representing Southern Africa).

In addition to the outgoing Chairperson of the Panel Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, the meeting was attended by the following outgoing members of the Panel of the Wise who will now become members of the Friends of the Panel group: Madame Marie Madeleine Kalala-Ngoy, Dr Mary Chinery Hesse and Madam Elisabeth Pognon.

The opening ceremony of the meeting which inaugurated the new members of the Panel, was marked by addresses delivered by the following personalities: Ambassador Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security, African Union Commission; the Chair of the Peace and Security Council for the month of October 2014; and, Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, outgoing Chairperson of the Panel of the Wise.

During his opening address, Ambassador Smail Chergui, Commissioner for Peace and Security welcomed the new members of the Panel to the African Union family. The Commissioner thanked them for their commitment to our Continent and to the African Union, their readiness to support the Union on its quest for peace, stability and development for all peoples of Africa, emphasising their experience, knowledge and expertise which will undoubtedly strengthen the Union's efforts in the prevention, management and resolution of violent conflicts in Africa.

The Commissioner noted how since its inception, the Panel of the Wise has captured African and international curiosity and imagination because the AU created, at the heart of its decision-making on conflict prevention, management and resolution, an institution inspired by the centuries-old practice of African elders' centrality in dispute and conflict resolution. In creating a Panel of the Wise, the Commissioner noted, the AU has in many ways recognised the importance of customary, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and roles and the continuing relevance of these mechanisms in contemporary Africa. Independence, experience, maturity, respect . these are but some of the characteristics of Panel members since its inception.

Ambassador Chergui also highlighted some of the considerable achievements of the Panel of the Wise. Reflecting on the pioneering work of the first and second Panels, the Commissioner emphasised the challenges in the operationalisation of the Panel and how a considerable amount of members' time and energy were spent in creatively devising steps to transforming the Panel's Modalities of Operation into realities on the ground, thereby establishing the Panel's modus operandi and gradually testing the best ways to connect with the Union's institutions, namely the

Peace and Security Council, the Office of the Chairperson and other APSA pillars. The Commissioner also highlighted the importance of horizon scanning as an activity of the Panel, the thematic reports on key peace and security issues, and above all to the Panel's preventive diplomacy and other forms of peacemaking particularly in cases of election-related violence. Finally, the Commissioner highlighted the importance of PanWise, an umbrella network bringing together similar mechanisms at the level of the RECs and Regional Mechanisms, AU's High Level Representatives and Special Envoys, the Friends of the Panel, and importantly, individual mediators and institutions engaged in mediation activities at national and subnational levels.

During the opening address, the outgoing Chairperson of the Panel of the Wise, Dr Salim Ahmed Salim reflected on the direct and indirect costs of war and the importance of conflict prevention which should remain a top priority as armed conflicts cause millions of direct casualties, indirect deaths as a result of armed conflict are on average 14 times greater than deaths occurring in combat. Fourteen times greater!

The first working session of the meeting was devoted to the adoption of the agenda as well as the election of the New Chairperson of the Panel of the Wise, H.E. Mrs. Luisa Diogo of Mozambique.

In her statement, the new Chairperson paid tribute to the outgoing members of the Panel, emphasising their pioneering role in establishing the Panel of the Wise as a central pillar of the APSA. In her tribute, the new Chairperson noted with gratitude that it is to former members of the Panel that we owe a Panel of the Wise that has contributed with real added value to the prevention activities of our Peace and Security Council and our Chairperson; a Panel of the Wise that has brought to the table issues and themes which may have otherwise been overlooked (on impunity, justice and reconciliation; on women and children; on governance and democratisation); a Panel of the Wise whose role in the prevention of election related disputes has been proven, again and again, of critical importance. The new Chairperson profoundly thanked Dr Salim Ahmed Salim, President Kenneth Kaunda, Madame Marie Madeleine Kalala-Ngoy, Dr Mary Chinery Hesse, late President Ahmed Ben Bella, President Miguel Trovoada, Dr Brigalia Bam and Mme Elizabeth Pognon, considering that their continuing support as Members of the Friends of the Panel is an assurance for all new Members that their experience and wisdom will continue to support the activities of the Panel.

The second working session of the meeting was devoted to the theme 'The Panel of the Wise in a Networked Environment'. During this session, presentations by staff of the AU Commission staff as well as experts were made focusing on: a review of the achievements and challenges of the Panel of the Wise since its launch in 2007; a comprehensive presentation and discussion on the African Peace and Security Architecture; the legal and normative provisions of the Panel of the Wise and a reflection on enhancing the Panel's interaction with the Peace and Security Council. At this session, the Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) briefed Panel members on policies and practices of UN/AU collaboration on preventive diplomacy and mediation.

The Panel of the Wise reflected on the state of peace and security in Africa during the second working session of the meeting, when a series of presentations and discussions were held on ~~the~~ ~~Panel of the Wise and Africa's~~ ~~Peace and Security Landscape: From diagnosis to Action+~~. This session, designed to enable Panel members to substantively discuss and reflect on the current and future peace and security situation on the Continent (~~horizon scanning+~~) saw several presentations made by AU Commission staff from the Peace and Security) as well think tanks and experts. Presentations included ~~the~~ ~~role of the Panel of the Wise in mitigating emerging threats to peace and security+~~; ~~the~~ ~~role of the Panel of the Wise and early preventive action: From early warning to early response+~~; ~~the~~ ~~role of the Panel of the Wise in preventing election related disputes and promoting good governance+~~; and ~~the~~ ~~Pan-African Network of the Wise (PanWise): Background, rationale and potential+~~.

On Day two, the Panel members also discussed and reflected on strengthening their capacity for early action, which was the principal area of focus during the working session with the Chairperson of the Commission, Dr. NKosazana Dlamini Zuma. The Panel's positioning in the wider context of African Union mediation and related peacemaking activities (ie. linkages with the African Union Commission's Special Envoys, Special Representatives and Chief Mediators, as well as other APSA pillars) will be properly contextualised.

During the first session of day 2, a series of presentations by experts were made on issues as varied as entry-points (fact-finding, solidarity visits, shuttle diplomacy and facilitated dialogues), preventive diplomacy, communication and the role of the Panel's Chairperson and Spokesperson, and the importance of nurturing local and national peace infrastructures, research and knowledge generation, among others.

During the meeting, members also took note of the final version of its report on ~~Mitigating Vulnerabilities of Women and Children in Armed Conflicts+~~.

Finally, members of the Panel discussed the Panel's Strategic Framework 2014-2017.

The Panel agreed that its 15<sup>th</sup> meeting will be held in early January 2015 in Addis Ababa.

