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African Union Marks History through the deployment of first ever Female Election Observer Mission to the Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of Seychelles



Seychelles, 5th September 2016 - The Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), **H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma**, through the Department of Political Affairs, AUC has deployed a Short-Term Election Observer Mission consisting only of women, to represent the Organization at the Seychelles Parliamentary Elections scheduled for 8-10 September, 2016.



Led by H.E. Ambassador Fatuma Ndongiza, former Chairperson of the African Peer Review Panel of Eminent Persons, the deployment of the Women-only Election Observation Mission to the Republic of Seychelles falls in line with

the African Union's commemoration of the '*African Year of Human Rights with a Special Focus on the Rights of Women*'.

Upon arrival in the country, the AU Head of Mission for the parliamentary election and other observers went to the field to see for themselves the political campaign rally that

were organized by the militants of the ruling party known as the LEPEP and the coalition of the opposition party dubbed the LDS.

The AU women observers were dispatched to Seychelles from the 1st of September, and



will remain in the country until the 15th of September 2016, with the view to assess the participation of women in elected office, and as voters; and that all citizens at national level are well sensitized to exercise their civil rights by responding massively to casting their votes during the elections.

Prior to the Election Day, the AU Head of Mission is expected to meet with the political leadership in the country, including the

Electoral Commission and other national stakeholders, to exchange views and encourage stakeholders to guarantee the holding of fair, credible and transparent elections in the country.

H.E Ambassador Fatuma Ndangiza is also expected to meet the Minister responsible for Women and key actors in the areas of Gender to gather information on the best practices of involving women in elected positions given that Seychelles is amongst the leading African countries that has enhanced women empowerment and gender parity in all sectors at the national level.

Meanwhile, a training workshop has been organized for the AU electoral observers to brief them on the electoral process, guidelines and policies governing the elections. The pre-election training kicked off today 5 – 6 September 2016 at the Berjaya Beau Vallon Conference room. The 26 female observers drawn from 21 African Union Member States, listen to presentations from the different facilitators on understanding the historical background and political context of elections, the constitutional and legal framework, the Observer code of conduct, as well as the state of preparedness for the 2016 parliamentary elections in Seychelles.

The overall objective of the African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) is to provide an accurate and impartial reporting and assessment of the quality of the Parliamentary Elections in Seychelles, including the degree to which the conduct of the elections meet regional, continental and international standards for democratic elections.

The mission will also offer recommendations for improvement of future electoral processes in the country based on observer findings; and ensure that the conduct of genuine elections contributes to the consolidation of democratic governance, peace and stability in the country.

Worth noting is that, Seychellois voters will be heading to the polls to elect their **National Assembly** representatives on 8 to 10 September 2016. This will be the second time



electorates of the island nation go to the polls in less than a year following presidential elections which ran into a historic run-off last December.

Registered political parties in the 115-island archipelago in the western Indian Ocean are expected to field candidates to

stand in the 25 electoral districts.

Candidates for the parliamentary elections will be drawn from the ruling Party LEPEP, the main opposition coalition, Linyon Demokratik Seselwa (LDS) and other independent opposition parties in the country.

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