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AU MEETING SEEKS TO ESTABLISH THE AFRICAN GOVERNANCE AGENDA

Banjul, Gambia 15 March 2010- A three day meeting of African Union (AU) organs and Regional Economic Communities (RECS) began in the Gambian capital, Banjul, today, with the aim of establishing the basis for coordinated action in the terrain of governance as a measure to optimize interventions of the African governance agenda. The strategic objective of developing an African Governance Architecture (AGA) is to facilitate effective coordination and harmonisation of governance policies and initiatives among stakeholders, with the aim of promoting regional and continental integration- a key mission of the African Union.

Today's meeting builds on the outcomes of two other meetings, held in Cameroon and Kenya in 2009. The two meetings helped to shape an emerging consensus on the concept of an African Governance Architecture as an "evolving process" consisting of **three pillars**: (i) a vision supported by a governance agenda and norms; (ii) a set of governance institutions and actors; and (iii) concrete processes to promote synergies, common agendas and greater impact, including the need to establish an **African Platform on Governance** as the motor to the AGA.

As a follow up to the Nairobi meeting, the technical meeting being held in Banjul aims to improve, consider and adopt the draft framework of the AGA, and to come up with modalities for operationalising the African Governance Platform, which is expected to be a catalyst for improved coordination and complementarity among existing governance institutions and initiatives.

Speaking to delegates attending the technical meeting on the AGA today, Dr Mamadou Dia of the AU Political Affairs Department, who was speaking on behalf of the Commissioner Mrs. Julia Joiner, acknowledged that Africa has and is making steady progress in overcoming some of its governance challenges. However, he added, that while acknowledging these achievements, it is important to reflect on the challenges and work that needs to be done.

"Critical in overcoming these challenges is the need for coordination and harmonisation among the various governance initiatives on the continent as a measure to optimize the

impact of these initiatives. It is for this reason that enhancing the AGA has become a policy imperative of the AU”, he said.

The AGA is being formulated as a result of the realization that there are many institutions with a governance mandate in Africa but they are uncoordinated in their work, and that there is no effective mechanism to evaluate the work of these institutions. Thus, the AGA is conceived as the overall political and institutional framework for the promotion of governance in Africa. The AGA compliments the primary responsibility of the state in the area of democracy and good governance.

The AUC strategic plan 2009-2013 calls for establishment of an appropriate architecture for the promotion of good governance.

Present at the meeting today were representatives from the organs of the AU such as the African Union Commission, African Court of Human and People’s Rights, African Commission of Human and People’s Rights, APRM, Pan African Parliament, Regional Economic Communities i.e. COMESA, EAC: development partners i.e. UNECA, ECDPM, and civil society organisations.

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