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Press Release

ICGLR International Conference on the Great Lakes Region

Chairpersons of the Election Management Bodies of Member States of Great Lakes Region gathered in Nairobi to share experiences on election observation and media, gender and elections and further to reaffirm their commitment to advancing peace, stability and development in the region by conducting elections professionally

Nairobi (Kenya), 16 July 2019 – A Training Workshop on Election Observation and a Round Table Discussion on Media, Gender and Elections for the Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of the Great Lakes region countries was organized by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the UN Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD). The official launch was done today in Nairobi, Kenya by Ambassador Ben O.H. Ogutu, on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The ICGLR Executive Secretary, Ambassador Zachary Muburi-Muita, the Deputy Executive Director for UNEP in Kenya, Ms. Joyce Msuya, the Representative of the Chairman of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, Prof. Abdi Guliye, and the ICGLR National Coordinator for Kenya, Ambassador Mohamed Mahat made statements at the opening ceremony.

In his opening statement, Ambassador Ben O.H. Ogutu noted that for almost five decades now, more and more regimes in the Great Lakes Region are trying to open up the political space and implement the core principles of democracy and good governance. He therefore recommended that the region considers consolidated approach on the organisation, observation and follow up mechanisms towards credible, free and fair elections.

The ICGLR Executive Secretary, Amb. Zachary Muburi-Muita reaffirmed the commitment of the ICGLR Member States to their mandate of helping to strengthen the capacities of political players especially those of the EMBs in order to increase acceptance of election outcomes. He further stated that in the implementation of its mandate, the ICGLR recognizes the centrality of democracy as a means to achieving a peaceful and stable region which would in turn provide conducive environment for economic development. On her part, Ms. Joyce Msuya indicated that the participation of all ICGLR Member States and different international and regional bodies with diverse experience and expertise is a proof of the importance of election observation. In his remarks, Prof. Abdi Guliye congratulated ICGLR and the UN for organizing a workshop of such magnitude which is a clear indication of the commitment of the 2 organizations to promoting democracy and human rights in the region. Ambassador Mohamed Mahat thanked ICGLR and the UN for choosing Kenya among the 12 ICGLR Member States as the venue of such an important workshop.

The training which is scheduled to end on 19 July 2019 brought together representatives of EMBs from all ICGLR Member States and Representatives of Regional Bodies. The objectives of the training are two-fold, (1) to highlight various aspects of the electoral process with a focus on the latest frameworks, good practices and challenges in the area of election observation and (2) to share experiences and good practices on how best to promote the participation of women and media in electoral and political processes.

It is expected that the workshop will come up with a clear timeframe on the way forward which will lead to further strengthening of the capacities of all political players through trainings and round table discussion on various pertinent issues within electoral processes.

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