

**A Project Proposal
for
Mapping an Electoral Code for the African Union, NEPAD and Independent
Electoral Commissions**

Summary

This proposed initiative is a direct response to Africa's premier continental actors and key programmes, notably, the African Union (AU) and New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), to develop, as part of the continent's emerging democratic governance architecture, Guidelines for Electoral Observation in Africa, and a Charter for African Democracy, Governance and Elections. The AU and NEPAD both called for assistance to evolve and implement these tenets of the democratisation programme. During the 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Organisation of African Union Soutvp.0ns

While it is stated that the APRM is a mutually agreed instrument, voluntarily acceded to by states of the AU, and is an African self-monitoring mechanism, it is going to be difficult to operationalise such democratic benchmarks in general, and such electoral norms and standards in particular.

The APRM further makes the point that the new norms, standards, policies and practices, and in particular their adoption, will have direct spin-offs for economic growth, and by

Electoral processes are crucially dependent on sound political, constitutional, and legal dispensations and, these in turn have a major impact on international confidence, and peace, security, and stability in Africa. The initiative is structured so as to reflect the chronology of events in the management of elections. It argues that robust political and constitutional dispensations that give birth to an election regime and supporting electoral institutions are vital for successful elections. For example, there are three stages of an electoral process: the pre-election (preparatory phase), the elections phase and the post-election phase. The procedures and processes in all three phases are vital for the delivery of free and fair, credible and legitimate elections in an atmosphere of peace and stability.

The main thrust of this initiative is that an electoral code and electoral norms, standards and mechanisms for the African Union and NEPAD should be based on: