

**PRESS RELEASE No.044/2004****THREE DAYS MEETING OF EXPERTS ON ELECTIONS
DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE (15-17 MAY 2004)**

The three days Experts Meeting on Elections, Democracy and Governance has recommended that the Executive Council adopts the principle of developing a Charter on Elections, Democracy and Governance.

The meeting, which ended on Monday, 17 May was organized by the African Union Commission and attended by Experts on Elections, Democracy and Governance from Member States, Members of the Diplomatic Corps and Observers from UN Agencies and other International Organizations.

The Experts reiterated the need for Africa to face the challenges posed by the principles governing Democratic Elections, and recommended that the forthcoming session of the Executive Council and Summit in Addis Ababa in July 2004, adopt guidelines for effective election monitoring and observation on the Continent.

The participants also examined the prospects of setting up an AU Electoral Assistance Fund to support all-round democratization efforts.

The Commissioner for Political Affairs, Mrs. Julia Dolly Joiner opened the meeting on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré. She, at the opening, highlighted the challenges that Africa has to meet in the 21st century that included consolidation of peace and security, eradication of poverty, and sustainable development.

Addis Ababa, May 19, 2004