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LIBERAL PROPOSAL FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE AND PEACEFUL TRANSFERS OF POWER IN AFRICA

Adopted by the Africa Liberal Network at the Liberal Forum on the subject of:

“Issues of Democratic Governance in Africa:

Some Reflections on Democratic Transitions and Transfers of Power”

Ouagadougou, 14 March 2014

Given that the Africa Liberal Network, a member of the Liberal International, remains, in accordance with the Oxford Manifesto of 1947, committed to the values of Freedom, Democracy and Peace;

Given that the situation of security and democracy which has prevailed in some African countries constitutes a major concern for the international liberal community as a whole;

Given that the Africa Liberal Network, in its founding Charter and in the Johannesburg Declaration of June 2003, has adopted as its mission to defend and promote freedoms, democracy, peace and the rule of law everywhere on the African continent.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

In Africa, the enthusiasm for democratic governance does not emanate from an understanding shared by the different players of its meaning. It relates more to the scope and range of political, institutional and economic, not to mention ethical and social, issues.

Nevertheless, democratic governance is capable of providing a suitable base on which to build the agreement on the rules of the political game in Africa where, in addition to a legal basis, there may be a number of divergent cultural foundations conferring legitimacy. This is due to the fact that the agreement made in principle is continuing to evolve.

In Burkina Faso, the issue of democratic governance is linked to the conditions needed to foster the advent of peaceful political transfers of power.

In view of the tendencies to jeopardise democratic gains, all the political players of Burkina Faso need to federate their efforts, in order to preserve and strengthen the conditions of functional democracy. In fact, it behoves them not only to comply strictly with the constitutional provisions in force, but also to make certain of them inviolable and irreversible.

The organisations which subscribe to the liberal philosophy, particularly the Africa Liberal Network, supported, among others, by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, play a decisive role in the preservation of peace and cohesion in society in Burkina Faso.

From an institutional standpoint, every contemporary democracy draws on a single shared base whose purpose is the freedom and development of individuals. For that a framework is required: rule of law, separation of powers, social justice, respect for the institutions and for the principle of the mandatory accountability of those in power, protection of freedoms and other fundamental rights, political pluralism, freedom of expression and opinion, peace, security and social cohesion.

To the African political class as a whole, the stakeholders of Civil Society and the international, regional and sub-regional community, the Africa Liberal Network makes the following proposal expressed in the Resolution below:

1. To achieve peaceful democratic transfers of power in Africa in compliance with the legislative framework:

./ To impose compliance with the provisions of the 2001 ECOWAS protocol on good governance and democracy and of the African Union Charter of 2007 on good governance, democracy and elections;

./ To ensure widespread acceptance, through the adoption of constitutional provisions, of the limit on the number and duration of terms of office;

./ To prohibit any amendment of the electoral laws that would jeopardise democratic gains within a period of one (01) year before holding elections;

./ To foster dialogue between all the parties concerned with a view to achieving a consensus on the electoral roll, the nature of the voting system, the delimitation of electoral boundaries and the electoral timetable;

./ To ensure the monitoring of the electoral process by international observer missions, from the development of the process to the publication of the results.

2. To promote a liberal democracy in Africa:

./ To ensure that activists and sympathisers are educated in the values and principles of the liberal plan within the member parties of the ALN through the establishment of appropriate platforms interacting with the partners;

./ To create and consolidate bridges between the political parties and Civil Society;

./ To foster the creation of observer training platforms for the purpose of forming election observation missions in partnership with the appropriate organisations.

3. To foster democratic transfers of power in national harmony in Burkina Faso:

./ To learn lessons from historical tensions and crises as well as from constitutional revisions in the past, with a view to preventing situations leading to chaos or acts of force;

./ To foster dialogue between the political parties, Civil Society and all the other stakeholders in the democratic process, with a view to creating the conditions for the peaceful transfer of power;

./ To maintain the limit of the number of presidential terms of office at two (2);

./ To invite the International Community and the Liberal Networks (ALN, ALDEPAC and LI) to play an active role in all the processes requiring compliance with the constitutional legislation on term limits and their duration.

Signed by:

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./ Mr. Mohamed Tall, Union des Forces Républicaines (UFR) / Guinea

./ Hon. Thierno Bocoum, REWMI (The Country)Party/ Senegal (observer)

./ Mr. Zéphirin Diabré, Union pour le progrès et le changement (UPC) / Burkina Faso (observer)

./ Maître Djibril War, Alliance pour la République (APR) / Senegal (observer)