The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) of the African Union Commission is responsible for promoting, facilitating, coordinating and encouraging democratic principles and the rule of law, respect for human rights, participation of civil society in the development process of the Continent and the achievement of durable solutions for addressing humanitarian crises. DPA is mandated to promote AU Shared Values, coordinate AU election observation and monitoring missions, provide technical support to electoral bodies and implement sustainable solutions to humanitarian and political crises, including through preventive diplomacy. Considering its mandate, the Department also serves as the Secretariat for the African Governance Architecture (AGA).

In line with Agenda 2063’s vision of ensuring Africa becomes a dynamic force in the global arena, DPA serves as the Secretariat for the Committee of 10 Heads of State and Government on UN Security Council Reform as well as the Secretariat for the Ministerial Committee on African Candidatures within the International System.

Advancing Democratic and Participatory Governance in Africa

At a Glance

The African Governance Architecture (AGA) is a framework for dialogue aimed at facilitating the harmonization of AU Shared Values Instruments and coordination of initiatives towards the promotion and consolidation of democratic governance on the continent. Some of AGA’s flagship programmes include citizens’ engagement in democratic governance processes, realized through the development and implementation of AGA’s Youth, Women and Civil Society Engagement Strategies. Other initiatives include annual monitoring and evaluation reports on democratic governance trends, challenges and prospects; operationalization of the state reporting mechanism under ACDEG; and enhancing AGA-APSA synergy.

Democracy, Governance, Human Rights and Elections Division (DHRE)

DHRE seeks to enhance democratic governance among AU Member States and the effective realization of human and peoples’ rights on the Continent. Through various specialized units and programmes, the Division coordinates initiatives on governance and democracy assessments, electoral support and observations, improvement of public service delivery, local governance, anti-corruption and protection of human and peoples’ rights.

Humanitarian Affairs, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons Division (HARDP)

HARDP seeks to provide continental direction to the achievement of durable solutions for addressing humanitarian crises. This includes pursuing actions to alleviate the plight of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), including meeting their immediate protection and assistance needs as a result of man-made and natural disasters. HARDP also coordinates the work of the AU on the Special Emergency Assistance Fund for Drought and Famine in Africa (SEAF).

The Resource Centre for Democracy, Governance and Human Rights

The Resource Centre is a facility that offers technical support to the various programmes and activities of DPA. The Centre provides staff of the AU, members of the Diplomatic Corps, including AU Member States Representatives in Addis, academia and researchers with access to up-to-date publications, books, journals and other reference materials on democracy, governance and human rights among other thematic areas. In addition, the Centre offers internet and printing services for users.