

United States Mission to the African Union **Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit** **Fact Sheet**

Although the AU and its predecessor, the OAU, have conducted over 100 observation missions since 1990, neither the OAU nor the AU had a specialized unit in charge of election observation and/or other electoral assistance.

The establishment of the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit (DEAU) was approved during the AU's 11th Ordinary Session held in Accra, Ghana during July 2007. The Chairman of the African Union Commission approved on July 31, 2007 the fast track procedures for the recruitment of three officers to fill DEAU post. The DEAU will be stood up by the end of November 2007.

US Contributions to the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit

- a. The U.S. views elections as a tool for citizens to hold government officials accountable. Consequently, transparent and competitive elections are a prerequisite to achieving good governance programs in Africa.
- b. In September 2006, the USG agreed to provide over USD 2 million to the AU through the International Foundation for Elections Systems (IFES). IFES will assist the African Union's Political Affairs Department (AU/PAD) to establish a DEAU and to develop its capacity to create a pool of trained African elections experts capable of providing effective election monitoring and other electoral assistance throughout the African continent.

