

***An obituary and message of condolence to the Family and Friends of Joel Nana Gustave who passed away on 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2015***



It is with immense sadness that the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) learnt of the passing on of our beloved Joel Nana Gustave - friend, colleague and activist to so many of us over many years. It behoves on ACDHRS, as Secretariat of the Forum of African Human Rights NGOs, therefore, to share this unhappy news, with much regret, and to extend and express our deepest collective sympathy to all who knew, worked with and loved Joel.

Nana, as he was fondly called, has been a long-standing and leading figure on the African landscape, especially at the NGOs Forum, one of the few advocacy and networking platforms in Africa that encourage the promotion of discussions around the provisions of 'All Human Rights for All' without discrimination. He worked especially hard to introduce, consolidate and advance the agenda for Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities providing much input for analysis and advocacy during the period when he served as the pioneer Executive Director of the African Men for Sexual Health and Rights (AMSHer), from 2009 until October 2014.

An internationally recognized advocate and voice on human rights particularly the human rights of Lesbians, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Intersex (LGBTI) persons in Africa, he had remained active during the long but critical period when the persistence of the struggle for the recognition of MSM, LGBTI remained crucial. While we are deeply sorrowful, we celebrate his wonderful, rich life - filled with a burning passion for justice - his unflinching courage; his love for the work he did and the family he acquired in the struggle; his fierce loyalty to stand up and defend for the cause .... And we remember with fondness his savvy political analysis and passionate engagement to be at the forefront of the fight, his laughter, his smiles, his quirky and often contagious sense of humour, his generosity, his warmth ..... We will miss you dearly, Joel...

On behalf of the Governing Council, Management and Staff of the ACDHRS; the NGOs Forum Steering Committee Members, we extend our heartfelt condolences to all his family, his colleagues at AMSHeR, friends and loved ones.

We pray that God grants his family, friends, colleagues and loved ones the strength and fortitude to bear such an irreparable loss.

May his gentle soul rest in perfect peace.