



CONCEPT NOTE

**FORUM ON THE PARTICIPATION OF NGOS IN THE 66TH ORDINARY SESSION
OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS AND
40TH AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS BOOK FAIR
18-20 APRIL, 2020
BANJUL, THE GAMBIA
VENUE:**

THEME: AMPLIFYING CSO VOICES IN SILENCING THE GUNS

The African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHR) is an independent, non-profit, Pan-African human rights NGO initially set up in 1989 by an Act of Parliament of the Republic of The Gambia. However, in 1995, the Act was repealed and the Centre re-launched.

The ACDHR upholds and promotes Article 25 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights which states that: State Parties have the duty to '**promote and ensure, through teaching, education and publication, respect of the rights and freedoms contained in the present Charter and to see to it that these freedoms and rights as well as corresponding obligations and duties are understood**'. The African Centre works in collaboration with all stakeholders (State and non-State Actors).

It has observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR); Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and a Special Status with the Commonwealth. Its four main areas of intervention are: Gender Equality; Conflict Management and Resolution; Governance and the Right to Development.

The Forum on the Participation of NGOs in the Ordinary Sessions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Commission), also known as the 'NGOs Forum' is a platform coordinated by the African Centre to promote advocacy, lobbying and networking among and between human rights NGOs, for the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa. The NGO Forum shares updates on the human rights situation in Africa by the African and international NGOs community with a view of identifying responses as well as adopting strategies towards a better promotion and protection of human rights on the continent.

The African Union declared 2020 as the year of '**Silencing the guns: creating conducive environments for Africa's development**'. The theme is in line with Agenda 2063 which stresses the imperative of ending all wars, civil conflicts, gender-based violence and violent conflicts and prevention of genocide in its ten-year implementation plan. The flagship project was adopted in 2013 during the OAU/AU 50th anniversary Solemn Declaration of African Heads of State with

the vision 'to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa, to make peace a reality for all our people and to rid the continent of wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters and violent conflicts and to prevent genocide'.

The attainment of peace and security, governance and development cannot be overemphasized for attainment of sustainable development and growth. To translate the vision into action 'A Master roadmap of practical steps to silence the guns by 2020' was adopted by the AU Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) in 2016 for implementation by the AU Peace and Security Commission in collaboration with key stakeholders including RECs, ECOSOCC, organs of the AU, United Nations and CSOs.

In addition, the year 2020 also marks the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in New York in September, 2000. The said Resolution underscores the importance of women's involvement in peace and security issues to achieve long lasting stability.

Consequently, the April, 2020 NGOs Forum will focus on the said theme in a bid to amplify the voices of civil society in contributing towards the implementation of the flagship Project. It will also provide the opportunity to review achievements registered and challenges encountered since the adoption of UNSCR 1325 twenty years ago.

The general content of the *Forum will cover three (3) main thematic areas namely:*

1) Status of Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (update from sub-regional Focal Points on the general situation of human rights in Africa, with a focus on peace, security and the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Africa)

2) Special Interest Groups Discussions (Kindly note that the list of not extensive, new interest groups are welcome)

1. Rights of Women in Africa
2. Human Rights Defenders in Africa
3. Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa
4. Prevention of Torture in Africa
5. Indigenous Populations/Communities in Africa
6. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Africa
7. Rights of Older Persons and People with Disabilities in Africa
8. People Living with HIV (PLHIV) and those at Risk, Vulnerable to and Affected by HIV
9. Extractive Industries; Environment and Human Rights Violations
10. Policing and Human Rights
11. Freedom of Association and Assembly
12. Peace and Security in Africa
13. Enforced Disappearances
14. Corruption

15. Youth and Children
16. Reprisals on HRDs engaging with the ACHPR
17. Internet in Africa

3) Networking for Human Rights in Africa: identifying collective strategies for implementing initiatives of silencing the guns in Africa.

Language and Participants: Proceedings of the Forum will be conducted in English and French with simultaneous interpretation facilities. The Forum will attract participants working on peace and security, governance, democracy, human rights and related issues in Africa and beyond.

Expected Outcomes:

- Adoption of Recommendations and Resolutions to be forwarded to the African Commission for its consideration during the 66th Ordinary Session
- NGOs Statement at the official opening of the 66th Ordinary Session (highlighting deliberations of the NGOs Forum), Report of the NGOs Forum and African Human Rights Book Fair
- Presentation of alternative reports on the situation of human rights in countries whose states reports will be examined during the said Session
- Networking, advocacy and lobbying opportunity at different levels (engaging with Commissioners of the ACHPR).