



FORUM ON THE PARTICIPATION OF NGOS IN THE 68TH ORDINARY SESSION
OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS AND
12-13 APRIL, 2021
ZOOM WEBINAR

THEME: THE AFRICA WE WANT: THE ROLE OF ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE IN THE REALIZATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY IN A POST COVID19 ENVIRONMENT

CONCEPT NOTE

At its virtual meeting held on 6 February, 2021, the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments of Africa at the 34th Ordinary Summit emphasized the need for no country to be left behind in its continental response to Covid19 as it enhances integration.

The Summit further declared 2021 theme as '**Arts, Culture and Heritage: Levers for building the Africa we want**'. The theme will seek to consolidate and support the growth and recognition of Africa's cultural and artistic riches as a common unifying foundation that can galvanize the common will of the African people, those of the continent as well as those of the Diaspora¹

To ensure that the right to culture, like every other human rights are fully enjoyed, there are international and regional policies, legal frameworks that promote and protect the said right and related subjects as is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Art. 27), the Cultural Charter for Africa, Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Art. 17), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (Art. 12) amongst others.

Unfortunately, the level of awareness of the existence of the stated treaties remains on the low side and by large the enjoyment of the said freedoms and rights.

Considering the importance of the theme in the current and post Covid19 environment, the theme for the Forum on the participation of NGOs in the 68th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights which will take place virtually from 12-13 April, 2021 will be framed around the 2021 AU theme '**The Africa we want: the role of arts, culture and heritage in the realization of human rights and democracy**

in a post COVID19 environment. The NGOs Forum will also seize the opportunity of the theme of the year to take stock of the implementation of the decisions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights regarding indigenous people (ACHPR communication 276/03).

The discussions of the said Forum would greatly contribute to the increase of knowledge about the treaties to promote and protect cultural rights in Africa and of Africans in the diaspora.

The general objective of the NGOs Forum is to consolidate collaboration between and among NGOs and civil society activists to enhance partnership and collaboration with the African human rights systems and mechanisms as stipulated in the African Union's Agenda 2063. The specific objective of the Forum is to adopt strategies for the implementation of the theme amongst as an essential tool for the promotion and protection of human rights, good governance, peace and development in post Covid19 Africa.

The Forum would take the form of panel and special interest group discussions.

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, democracy and the rule of law in Africa with a focus on cultural rights and strategies for current and post Covid19 partnership/engagement).

2) Special Interest Group Discussions

1	Enforcement of Covid19 measures in Africa
2	Shrinking civic space and human rights defenders
3	Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Africa (with a focus the rights to health)
4	Role of youths in the implementation of the African Union's Agenda 2063
5	Independence of the Judiciary
6	Impact of Covid19 on elections in Africa

3) Networking for Human Rights in Africa (Strategies and best practices for the enjoyment of cultural rights and freedoms in current and post-Covid19 environment)
Other issues to be discussed include shrinking civic space, elections and electoral violence, impact of Covid19 on human rights defenders, especially women, amongst others.

Language: The deliberations of the Forum would be in English and French with available simultaneous interpretation facilities.

Participants: Representatives from African civil society organizations, international NGOs from Africa and beyond working on democracy, rule of law, governance, human rights, arts, cultural heritage, etc.

Expected Outcomes:

- update from sub-regional Focal Points on the general situation of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Africa with a focus on cultural rights, freedoms and strategies for current and post Covid19 partnership/engagement)
- Adopted strategies for the implementation of related treaties in current and post Covid19 environment
- NGOs Statement at the official opening of the 68th Ordinary Session (highlighting deliberations of the NGOs Forum)
- Adoption of Recommendations and Resolutions to be forwarded to the African Commission for its consideration during the 68th Ordinary Session
- Report of the NGOs Forum

Deadline for online registration: **Wednesday, 31st March, 2021**. The zoom registration link will be shared in due course.

Deadline for submission of draft resolutions and recommendations: Partners are requested to forward soft copies (English and French) of draft resolutions and recommendations (no later than Sunday, 28th March, 2021) to admin@acdhrs.org / library@acdhrs.org for review prior to presentation and adoption by plenary. The ACDHRS is not obliged to accept and review documents submitted after the above-stated deadline.

The Forum on the Participation of NGOs in the Ordinary Sessions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights also known as the 'NGOs Forum' is an advocacy platform coordinated by the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies to promote advocacy, lobbying and networking among and between human rights NGOs, for the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa.

The NGOs Forum shares updates on the situation of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Africa by the African and international NGOs community with a view of identifying responses as well as adopting strategies in contributing towards improving the situation.