



# AFRICAN CENTRE FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES (ACDHRS)

CENTRE AFRICAIN POUR LA DEMOCRATIE ET LES ETUDES DES DROITS DE L'HOMME

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## AFRICAN CENTRE FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES

### HUMAN RIGHTS DAY STATEMENT

#### INTRODUCTION:

Today, as we stand on the precipice of progress and justice, the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) proudly joins the global community in commemorating Human Rights Day. This significant occasion serves as a poignant reminder of our shared commitment to upholding the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is an opportunity for reflection, advocacy, and a collective call to action to ensure that the flame of human rights continues to burn brightly in every corner of the world.

#### THE ESSENCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

Human rights are the foundation of a just and equitable society. They are the bedrock upon which democratic principles are built, and they represent the inherent dignity and worth of every individual. On this auspicious day, we reiterate our unwavering belief in the universality, indivisibility, and interdependence of human rights. Regardless of race, gender, religion, or socio-economic status, every person is entitled to the same fundamental rights and freedoms.

#### CHALLENGES AND PROGRESS:

As we reflect on the journey so far, we acknowledge the significant progress made in promoting and protecting human rights globally. However, we cannot turn a blind eye to the persistent challenges that continue to plague our societies. Discrimination, inequality, and injustice persist in various forms, reminding us that the struggle for human rights is an on-going endeavour.

In many parts of the world, individuals still face persecution based on their beliefs, gender identity, or political affiliations. Marginalized communities bear the brunt of systemic discrimination, denying them access to basic necessities such as education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. This Human Rights Day, we stand in solidarity with those who are oppressed and reaffirm our commitment to addressing these pressing issues.

#### THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY:

Civil society plays a crucial role in advancing the cause of human rights. The ACDHRS, as a stalwart advocate for democracy and human rights, remains committed to fostering a vibrant civil society that actively engages in the promotion and protection of human rights. Through education, awareness campaigns, and strategic partnerships, we strive to empower individuals and communities to be agents of positive change.

#### PROMOTING EQUALITY AND INCLUSION:





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Human rights can only be truly realized in societies that prioritize equality and inclusion. The ACDHRS remains dedicated to advocating for policies that dismantle systemic barriers and foster inclusivity. We call on governments, institutions, and individuals to actively work towards creating environments where diversity is not only tolerated but celebrated.

## ADDRESSING EMERGING CHALLENGES:

In the face of evolving global challenges, the protection of human rights requires adaptability and foresight. Issues such as the impact of technology on privacy, climate change-induced displacement, and the consequences of global health crises demand innovative solutions grounded in a human rights framework. The ACDHRS commits to addressing these emerging challenges head-on, ensuring that human rights remain at the forefront of our collective consciousness.

## GENDER EQUALITY AND THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN:

Gender equality is not just a fundamental human right; it is also essential for the achievement of sustainable development and the realization of all human rights. The ACDHRS urges governments across the African continent to prioritize and champion the cause of gender equality by ratifying and domesticating international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Maputo Protocol.

The ratification of these protocols is a solemn commitment to eliminating discrimination and violence against women, ensuring equal opportunities in political, economic, and social spheres, and acknowledging the importance of reproductive rights. Domesticating these protocols is equally crucial, as it involves incorporating these international standards into national legislation, creating a legal framework that actively protects and promotes the rights of women.

In addition to ratifying and domesticating protocols, the ACDHRS encourages governments to invest in programs that empower women economically, socially, and politically. By providing equal access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities, we pave the way for a society where women can fully participate and contribute to the development of their communities and nations.

## MINORITY RIGHTS:

In tandem with our commitment to gender equality, the ACDHRS emphasizes the importance of protecting the rights of minorities. Ratifying and domesticating treaties such as the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities is paramount. This commitment is a testament to the recognition that diversity is a strength to be celebrated, not a source of division.

Governments must create inclusive policies that safeguard the rights of minorities, ensuring their full participation in all aspects of public life. Education and awareness campaigns are essential to dispel stereotypes and prejudices that perpetuate discrimination against minority





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groups. The ACDHRS calls on governments to actively engage with minority communities, seeking their input and perspectives to create policies that genuinely reflect the needs and aspirations of all citizens.

## YOUTH EMPOWERMENT:

The youth are the torchbearers of change and progress. Recognizing their invaluable contribution to shaping the future, the ACDHRS places a special emphasis on empowering young leaders. Through mentorship programs, educational initiatives, and platforms for youth expression, we aim to nurture a generation that is not only aware of its rights but is also equipped to advocate for the rights of others.

## CONCLUSION:

As we mark Human Rights Day, let us rekindle the flame of justice and solidarity. Let us stand united against injustice, discrimination, and oppression. The ACDHRS remains resolute in its commitment to promoting and protecting human rights across the African continent and beyond.

On this momentous occasion, we extend our gratitude to all individuals, organizations, and governments that tirelessly work towards a world where human rights are not just an aspiration but a lived reality. Together, let us continue to strive for a future where every person, regardless of their background, can live in dignity, equality, and freedom.

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The African Centre has observer status with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights  
*Le Centre Africain a le statut d'observateur aupres de la Commission Africaine des Droits de l'homme et des peuples*