

ACDHRS

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Forum of NGOs Participating in the 89th Ordinary Session of the ACHPR

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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

From Commitments to Action — Advancing Human Rights Across Africa

By Mrs Hannah Forster, Executive Director, African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS)

The conclusion of the Forum of NGOs participating in the 89th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in Dakar, Senegal, marked an important moment of reflection, solidarity and renewed commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights across Africa.

From 8 to 10 October 2026, civil society organisations, human rights defenders, experts and other stakeholders from across the continent and beyond came together under the coordination of the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS). Their deliberations examined the realities facing African communities, the challenges confronting democratic governance, and the urgent need to strengthen accountability and access to justice.

Our discussions were anchored in the African Union's 2026 theme, "Assuring Sustainable Water Availability and Safe Sanitation Systems to Achieve the Goals of Agenda 2063." This theme reminded us that human rights are not abstract commitments. They are reflected in whether communities can access safe water, whether women and children can live in dignity, whether human rights defenders can work without fear, and whether victims of violations can obtain justice and effective remedies.

The Forum provided an important platform for examining these concerns through regional reports, thematic panels and Special Interest Groups. It also enabled participants to develop proposed resolutions and recommendations for engagement with the African Commission and other relevant institutions.

The presentation of the African civil society statement and the Forum's summary report at the opening of the 89th Ordinary Session represented an important step in bringing these collective concerns to the attention of the Commission. However, our responsibility does not end with presenting statements or adopting recommendations. The real measure of our efforts will be the extent to which they contribute to meaningful improvements in the lives of the people whose rights we seek to protect.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the Honourable Commissioners of the African Commission, our partners and supporters, participating civil society organisations, human rights defenders, members of the media, volunteers and everyone whose commitment contributed to the successful organisation of the Forum. Your contributions reaffirm the value of collective action in advancing Africa's human rights agenda.

As we continue our engagement with the African Commission, Member States and national human rights institutions, I encourage all stakeholders to sustain the spirit of cooperation demonstrated in Dakar and work towards the implementation of the Forum's outcomes.

Africa has made significant progress in establishing human rights standards and institutions. Our challenge now is to ensure that these commitments translate into effective protection, equality, dignity and accountability for all.

The Forum has ended, but our responsibility continues.

Mrs Hannah Forster

Executive Director

African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS)

Appreciation to Our Partners and Supporters of the NGOs Forum

The African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) extends its sincere appreciation to all our partners, supporters and stakeholders whose contributions helped make the Forum of NGOs participating in the 89th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights a success.

Held from 8–10 October 2026 at the Pullman Dakar Teranga Hotel in Dakar, Senegal, the Forum brought together civil society organisations, human rights defenders and other stakeholders from across Africa and beyond to engage in critical discussions on human rights, democracy, civic space and access to water and sanitation.

We are deeply grateful for the financial, technical and logistical support, as well as the media coverage and visibility, provided throughout the Forum. Your commitment and collaboration helped facilitate meaningful dialogue, amplify the voices of civil society and strengthen collective advocacy for the promotion and protection of human rights across the continent.

We also extend our appreciation to the Senegalese media, Gambian media and international media organisations that helped share the Forum's discussions and outcomes with wider audiences.

Thank you for standing with ACDHRS and Africa's human rights community. Your partnership remains vital to advancing human rights, democratic governance, accountability and justice across Africa.

Together, we continue to work towards a continent where human rights are respected, protected and upheld for all.



Water Justice Must Begin with Equality, Says Inaugural Panel

Participants call for an end to discrimination that leaves marginalised communities behind in access to water and sanitation.

Access to safe water and sanitation is not only a development priority; it is a question of equality, dignity and human rights. That was the central message of the inaugural panel at the Forum of NGOs Participating in the 89th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), held in Dakar from 8 to 10 October 2026.

The panel, "From Exclusion to Equal Participation: Advancing Water Justice and Democratic Inclusion for Communities Discriminated on Work and Descent in Africa," examined how historic exclusion and discriminatory social practices can prevent communities from accessing essential services and participating fully in public life.

Participants discussed how discrimination can influence where water infrastructure is built, whose needs are prioritised and which communities are represented in decisions about public services. They stressed that communities may remain underserved even when water programmes exist, if planning and resource allocation fail to address entrenched inequalities.

The discussion emphasised that water justice requires more than infrastructure. Governments must include marginalised communities in planning, direct investment to underserved settlements, collect better data on disparities and monitor whether services reach those most in need. Gender-responsive planning is also important, particularly for women and girls' safety, health and menstrual hygiene.

Participants called for stronger monitoring by national human rights institutions and regional mechanisms, public education on discrimination based on work and descent, and meaningful representation of affected communities in water-management structures. The panel reflected the Forum's wider theme on sustainable water availability and safe sanitation, reinforcing that Agenda 2063's ambitions cannot be achieved equitably while some communities remain excluded from essential services.



Afro-Feminist Panel Warns Shrinking Civic Space Is Deepening Risks for Women Defenders

Participants urge gender-responsive protection as women activists face intimidation, online abuse and legal restrictions.

Women human rights defenders and feminist organisations across Africa face intersecting pressures as civic space narrows. Restrictive laws, intimidation and digital abuse threaten their ability to speak out, organise and hold public authorities accountable, participants heard at the NGOs Forum.

The panel explored an Afro-feminist reading of shrinking civic space and the measures States and the African Commission can take to protect freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. Participants noted that women defenders can face the same restrictions as other civil society actors while also being targeted through gendered threats, sexualised abuse and attacks on their families or reputations.

Discussion raised concern about the misuse of digital tools and artificial intelligence to fabricate or distort images and information. Such content can be used to intimidate women, undermine their credibility and expose them to stigma or threats. These risks can discourage women from participating in public life and weaken advocacy on issues affecting women and girls.

Participants called for gender-responsive monitoring of civic freedoms, effective responses to online and offline attacks, and stronger protection networks for women defenders. Governments were urged to respect fundamental freedoms and ensure that security or administrative measures are not used to silence legitimate human rights work.

The panel also highlighted the importance of solidarity among women-led organisations, shared advocacy strategies and access to legal assistance and protection. Its message was clear: civic space cannot be

considered open if women are intimidated into silence. Protecting women defenders is central to protecting democracy, public accountability and human rights.



Forum Panel Calls for Democratic Institutions to Prevent Political Instability

Participants examine the links between unconstitutional changes of government, insecurity and weakened public trust.

Strong democratic institutions, respect for constitutional principles and meaningful public participation are essential to preventing political instability and building sustainable peace in Africa. This was a key message from the panel on “Conflicts and Unconstitutional Changes of Governments: Rethinking Peace, Security and Governance in Africa.”

Contributors examined political transitions, insecurity and the conditions that allow conflict and democratic setbacks to take root. They highlighted how weakened institutions, declining public confidence and restrictions on civil society can compound human rights challenges, particularly when independent oversight and public participation are limited.

Participants stressed that sustainable peace cannot be secured through security responses alone. It requires accountable governance, respect for fundamental freedoms, inclusive political processes and attention to social and economic grievances that can deepen instability. Civil society was recognised as an important actor in documenting abuses, encouraging dialogue and holding decision-makers accountable.

The panel called for stronger democratic institutions, respect for constitutional principles, and greater protection for human rights defenders and civil society organisations. Participants also emphasised the value of regional cooperation and early action to address tensions before they escalate into violence or wider political crises.

The discussion reinforced the need for African institutions to keep human rights at the centre of peace and security strategies. Communities affected by conflict and political upheaval must be able to participate in decisions shaping their future. The panel concluded that preventing instability requires a long-term commitment to inclusion, accountability and the rule of law.



Experts Urge Stronger Protection of Economic and Social Rights During Armed Conflict

Regional guidance could clarify obligations relating to food, housing, health, education and humanitarian relief.

Armed conflict does not suspend the obligation to protect human rights. That principle was emphasised during a panel at the NGOs Forum examining economic, social and cultural rights in situations of armed conflict.

The discussion explored the development of a General Comment to provide clearer guidance on protecting these rights when conflict damages infrastructure, displaces communities and disrupts essential services. Participants considered how fighting can destroy crops, water systems, hospitals, housing and schools, with consequences that continue long after immediate violence.

Contributors highlighted that these harms are not always incidental effects of fighting. Decisions by parties to a conflict can deprive civilians of the conditions needed to survive and live with dignity. The denial of humanitarian relief and damage to objects essential for civilian survival were identified as serious concerns requiring clear standards and accountability.

The panel also considered challenges created when armed groups control territory or influence access to services. While States retain primary human rights obligations, they must also take steps to prevent and address abuses by third parties and ensure access to essential goods and services.

Participants stressed that accountability processes must not overlook economic, social and cultural harm. A General Comment could clarify minimum protections during conflict, draw on affected communities' experiences and strengthen the application of African human rights standards. The panel called for effective remedies, protection for displaced people and rapid humanitarian assistance, reaffirming that conflict cannot be used as a blanket justification for abandoning human rights obligations.



Climate Justice Must Include Persons with Albinism and Persons with Disabilities

Panel calls for accessible climate policies, inclusive emergency planning and greater participation by affected groups.

Climate responses risk leaving people behind when they fail to account for the distinct experiences of persons with albinism and persons with disabilities. This was a key concern raised during the panel “Invisible in the Climate Crisis: The Impact of Climate Change on Persons with Albinism and Persons with Disabilities.”

Participants examined how existing barriers to health, mobility, information and public participation can intensify climate-related risks. Persons with disabilities may face obstacles when evacuating during emergencies, accessing shelters or receiving public warnings. Persons with albinism can face particular health risks from intense sun exposure, making access to prevention, healthcare and accurate information an important part of climate resilience.

The discussion called for climate plans and disaster-response systems to be accessible from the outset, rather than adapted only after needs have been overlooked. Public information should be available in formats people can use, while shelters, transport and essential services must take account of different access requirements.

Participants also stressed that people directly affected by climate change should participate in designing and monitoring adaptation policies. Their experience can help authorities identify risks that might otherwise remain invisible and develop more practical responses.

The panel encouraged stronger links between disability rights, anti-discrimination measures, public health and environmental policy. It concluded that climate justice must be measured by whether policies protect those most exposed to harm. Inclusive planning, accessible information and meaningful participation are essential to ensuring that climate action upholds equality and human dignity.



Strategic Litigation and Mentorship Can Strengthen the Fight Against Gender-Based Violence

Women's rights advocates call for survivor-centred justice and stronger links between generations of activists.

Strategic litigation and stronger collaboration between generations of advocates can help advance accountability for gender-based violence, participants at the NGOs Forum have said.

The panel “Combating GBV Differently: Experiences That Can Be Shared Through Strategic Litigation and Generational Succession” explored how legal action can challenge harmful practices, clarify obligations and help survivors seek justice. Participants discussed how carefully prepared cases can expose systemic failures and establish important precedents for protecting women and girls.

However, the discussion recognised that access to justice remains difficult for many survivors because of stigma, limited resources, fear of retaliation and gaps in support services. Litigation must therefore form part of a wider response that includes survivor-centred services, legal assistance, public education and effective implementation of laws.

Generational succession was another important theme. Experienced advocates hold valuable knowledge of legal strategies, institutional engagement and community organising. Sharing that experience with younger activists can strengthen the sustainability of women's rights movements and help emerging leaders respond to new challenges.

Participants called for stronger use of strategic litigation, sustained support for organisations working against gender-based violence and deliberate investment in mentorship and leadership development. The panel concluded that lasting progress requires both effective legal remedies and a connected movement committed to ending violence and discrimination.



Shrinking Civic Space Threatens Fundamental Freedoms Across Africa

Civil society urges States to end arbitrary restrictions and strengthen protection for journalists and human rights defenders.

Restrictions on freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly remain a major concern for human rights defenders and civil society organisations across Africa, participants at the NGOs Forum warned.

The panel examined legal, political and security pressures that can prevent organisations, journalists and activists from carrying out legitimate work. Concerns included restrictive laws, intimidation, surveillance, arbitrary arrests and administrative measures that limit the ability of civil society to operate.

Participants stressed that these restrictions affect more than individual organisations. When people are prevented from reporting abuses, organising peacefully or criticising public decisions, communities lose important channels for participation and accountability. A narrowed civic space can also make it harder to document violations and secure remedies.

The discussion highlighted the need to ensure that security concerns are not used to justify disproportionate restrictions on fundamental freedoms. States have obligations under regional human rights standards to protect expression, association and assembly, including for those critical of government policy.

The panel called for laws and administrative practices that respect civic freedoms, effective investigations into threats and attacks, and practical protection for human rights defenders and journalists. It reaffirmed that an open civic environment is fundamental to democratic governance and the protection of human rights.



Digital Rights and Youth Participation Must Shape Africa's Technology Future

Forum participants call for privacy, freedom of expression and meaningful youth involvement in digital governance.

As digital platforms become increasingly important to civic engagement, public debate and access to information, participants at the NGOs Forum called for stronger digital rights protections and meaningful youth participation in technology policy.

The panel “Digital Rights and Youth Participation at the Crossroads of African Union Conventions” explored how digital transformation intersects with fundamental freedoms and the role of young people in shaping Africa's future.

Participants considered concerns relating to privacy, surveillance, online harassment and restrictions on digital expression. These issues are especially important for young activists, journalists and human rights defenders who use digital platforms to share information, organise campaigns and document human rights concerns.

The discussion stressed that digital development should be guided by human rights standards. Access to technology must be accompanied by safeguards against unjustified surveillance, discrimination and restrictions on legitimate expression. Online safety is also important for people facing gender-based harassment or targeted intimidation.

Young people were recognised as essential partners in developing policies that affect access to information, participation and opportunity. The panel called for stronger digital literacy, protection of privacy and more opportunities for youth organisations to contribute to decision-making. Its central message was that technology should expand, rather than narrow, opportunities for participation.



Human Rights Defenders in the Sahel Need Stronger Regional Protection

Political instability and insecurity are compounding the risks faced by organisations documenting abuses.

Human rights defenders in the Sahel continue to face a difficult operating environment shaped by insecurity, political instability and restrictions on civic space, participants at the NGOs Forum heard.

The panel examined pressures confronting activists and civil society organisations working in countries affected by conflict, changing political arrangements and security operations. Participants discussed how defenders can face intimidation, legal pressure and restrictions on their organisations while documenting violations and supporting affected communities.

The security context can make this work particularly difficult, while restrictions on independent civic activity reduce opportunities for public scrutiny and accountability. The panel highlighted the importance of distinguishing legitimate security measures from actions that suppress peaceful human rights work.

Defenders play an important role in recording abuses, communicating community concerns and supporting the rule of law. Regional solidarity was identified as a practical priority, including safe ways to share information, coordinate advocacy and refer defenders at risk to protection networks.

The discussion called for stronger protection measures, accountability for threats and attacks, and continued support for independent civil society organisations. It stressed that protecting defenders is inseparable from protecting communities and preserving the space needed for dialogue, accountability and peaceful resolution of conflict across the Sahel.



Sudan Conflict Discussion Highlights Civilian Protection and Coordinated Civil Society Action

Participants emphasise sustained advocacy, accountability and regional attention to the crisis.

The armed conflict in Sudan and its consequences for civilians featured prominently at the NGOs Forum, where participants examined the need for sustained advocacy, protection and accountability.

The panel “New Dynamics of the Armed Conflict in Sudan” considered the changing conflict and efforts by Sudanese and international civil society actors to coordinate responses. The discussion referred to the Nairobi Declaration, which emerged from an expert workshop involving Sudanese and international civil society actors in August 2026, and the establishment of a Sudanese civil society consortium intended to strengthen collective advocacy.

Participants emphasised that civilian protection must remain central to regional and international engagement. Conflict places people at risk of violence, displacement and disruption to essential services, requiring sustained attention beyond moments of heightened media coverage.

The discussion highlighted the importance of ensuring that Sudanese civil society voices are represented in conversations about the country’s future. Organisations working with affected communities can document concerns, identify protection priorities and help ensure responses reflect the experiences of those most directly affected.

The panel called for continued cooperation among Sudanese groups, regional civil society networks and international partners, with an emphasis on civilian safety, human dignity and accountability.



Cross-Border Challenges Require a Coordinated Response in Central Africa

Panel urges regional cooperation to protect defenders whose work and safety extend beyond national borders.

Human rights defenders and civil society organisations in Central Africa face challenges that can extend beyond national borders, prompting calls for stronger regional cooperation at the NGOs Forum.

The panel “Civic Space and Cross-Border Challenges in Central Africa” examined the impact of restrictive laws, security operations, political pressure and cross-border dynamics on the ability of defenders to work independently.

Participants discussed how threats to civic space can take different forms, from legal and administrative restrictions to intimidation of people documenting human rights violations. Where risks cross borders, national protection mechanisms may be insufficient on their own, making regional coordination increasingly important.

The panel emphasised that defenders must be able to communicate, organise and engage regional institutions without fear of reprisals. Restrictions on their work can undermine communities’ ability to report abuses and seek accountability, while weakening civil society’s contribution to democratic governance.

Participants called for stronger safeguards for freedom of expression and association, effective investigation of threats and attacks, and practical cooperation to protect defenders at risk. The discussion concluded that protecting civic space in Central Africa requires a regional perspective and sustained solidarity among civil society organisations.



Forum Calls for Action Against Transnational Repression of Human Rights Defenders

Participants warn that restrictive laws and reprisals can silence advocates and weaken regional accountability.

Human rights defenders need stronger safeguards against transnational repression and the misuse of restrictive laws to silence legitimate advocacy, participants at the NGOs Forum stressed.

The panel “From Restrictive Laws to Transnational Repression: Protecting Human Rights Defenders in Africa” examined the risks faced by people whose human rights work exposes them to intimidation, reprisals and pressure that may extend across national borders.

Participants highlighted how laws and administrative practices can restrict civil society, while threats and reprisals discourage defenders from documenting violations or engaging with regional and international mechanisms. When people fear consequences for speaking out, the wider human rights system loses an important source of information and independent scrutiny.

The discussion underscored that defenders must be able to communicate with the African Commission and other human rights bodies without fear of retaliation. Effective protection requires attention to physical threats, legal harassment, intimidation and other forms of pressure that undermine their independence.

The panel called for stronger regional cooperation, timely responses to threats and effective investigations into alleged reprisals. It concluded that restrictive laws and cross-border intimidation must not become tools for suppressing peaceful human rights work.



Strategic Litigation Can Help Hold Authorities Accountable for Water and Sanitation Failures

Panel links corruption and weak oversight to unequal access to essential services.

Corruption in the water and sanitation sectors can have direct consequences for human rights, particularly for communities struggling to access safe and reliable services.

The panel “Corruption, Water and Sanitation in Africa: Expanding the Frontiers of Strategic Litigation to Protect Access to Water and Sanitation” examined how legal action can challenge failures in public spending, infrastructure delivery and accountability. The session also featured the launch of a report authored by Professor Simbarashe Maguchu.

Participants discussed how misuse of public funds or weak oversight can undermine projects intended to provide water, sanitation and drainage. When infrastructure is poorly planned, inadequately maintained or not delivered as promised, communities may face unsafe conditions, preventable damage and unequal access to services.

Strategic litigation was presented as one avenue for challenging unlawful decisions, seeking remedies and clarifying the responsibilities of public authorities. Participants recognised that litigation depends on evidence, access to information, independent institutions and the ability of affected communities to bring concerns forward.

The panel called for greater transparency in public spending, stronger oversight of water and sanitation projects and improved access to justice. It reinforced the Forum’s central theme: access to water and sanitation must be treated as a human rights obligation, supported by accountability and effective remedies.



Youth, Gender and Cultural Rights Must Be Central to Africa's Future

Young advocates call for inclusive participation and stronger recognition of their role in shaping policy.

Young people must have meaningful opportunities to influence decisions affecting their future, while gender equality and cultural rights should remain central to inclusive development across Africa.

The panel “Gender, Youth and Cultural Rights in Africa’s Future” brought together representatives of youth networks to discuss participation, inclusion and the role of young people in shaping social and political development. It was moderated by Grace Ornila of GYBN Congo, with contributions from Irene Natukunda of GYBN Africa, Aliu Badarage of GYBN Senegal and Fa Mora of GYBN Guinea-Bissau.

Participants considered how gender and cultural rights intersect with opportunities for young people to participate in public life. They emphasised that youth engagement should go beyond consultation and create real opportunities for young people to influence policy, community initiatives and institutional decisions.

The discussion connected youth participation with wider Forum concerns about civic space, discrimination and access to rights. Participants highlighted the value of youth-led organisations, peer learning and collaboration between emerging leaders and established civil society institutions.

The panel called for stronger youth engagement in policy processes, support for young leaders and closer cooperation among youth networks, civil society and human rights institutions. It concluded that Africa’s future will be stronger when young people can participate meaningfully, express their identities with dignity and contribute to decisions shaping their communities.



Special Interest Groups of the NGOs Forum

The Special Interest Group (SIG) sessions formed an important part of the Forum of NGOs participating in the 89th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, providing a platform for civil society organisations and human rights defenders to discuss pressing human rights concerns, share experiences and develop collective recommendations for the African Commission.

The discussions covered eight key areas: Peacebuilding, Conflict Resolution and Armed Conflict; Migration, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and Refugees; Freedom of Assembly, Association and Human Rights Defenders; Environmental Protection, Climate Justice and Ecocide; Communities Discriminated Against on the Basis of Work and Descent; Torture, Prisons and Places of Detention; Indigenous Peoples; and Enforced Disappearances in Africa.

Through these focused discussions, participants examined human rights challenges affecting communities across the continent, identified gaps in protection and accountability, and developed recommendations to strengthen human rights mechanisms and safeguard vulnerable and marginalised groups. The outcomes of the SIG deliberations contributed to the Forum's collective resolutions and recommendations presented to the African Commission, reinforcing the role of civil society in advancing human rights, justice and accountability across Africa.



Resolutions and Recommendations Adopted at the NGOs Forum

The Forum of NGOs participating in the 89th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights concluded with civil society organisations and human rights defenders deliberating on country-specific and thematic resolutions and recommendations aimed at strengthening human rights protection, accountability and democratic governance across Africa.

The Forum considered three country resolutions concerning Somalia, Madagascar and Guinea-Bissau, alongside nine thematic resolutions addressing the follow-up of previous resolutions; protection of human rights defenders against reprisals and judicial harassment; transnational repression; ending female genital mutilation (FGM) and ensuring justice for survivors of gender-based violence; abolition of the death penalty and opposition to its resumption or extension; water management; climate resilience and water security for drought-affected pastoralist communities; the rights of persons with albinism; and enforced disappearances in Africa.

Participants also developed thematic recommendations covering human rights, migration and human trafficking; freedom of religion or belief and combating violent extremism and religious or ethno-religious violence; and Indigenous communities.

These outcomes reflect the concerns and priorities raised by civil society across the continent, calling for stronger legal protections, effective implementation of human rights commitments, greater accountability for violations and improved protection for vulnerable and marginalised communities. The resolutions and recommendations were presented as part of the Forum's contribution to the work of the African Commission, reinforcing the vital role of civil society in advancing human rights, justice and democratic governance in Africa.



Media Visibility and Coverage: Amplifying Africa's Human Rights Agenda

The Forum of NGOs participating in the 89th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights received significant media attention, helping to amplify the voices of civil society organisations, human rights defenders and other stakeholders beyond the meeting rooms in Dakar, Senegal. Through strategic media engagement and sustained communication efforts, ACDHRS worked to ensure that

the discussions, key messages and outcomes of the three-day Forum reached wider audiences across Africa and beyond.



The Forum generated approximately **30 news publications**, reflecting media interest in the issues discussed, including shrinking civic space, the protection of human rights defenders, armed conflict, gender-based violence, climate justice, enforced disappearances, and access to safe water and sanitation. Media coverage helped bring these critical human rights concerns to public attention, while highlighting the collective advocacy efforts and recommendations developed by civil society participants.

The visibility efforts involved engagement with Senegalese, Gambian and international media organisations, whose reporting and coverage contributed to sharing the Forum's proceedings and outcomes with broader audiences. Digital communication platforms and social media also played an important role in providing updates, highlighting panel discussions and documenting key moments throughout the event.

This media visibility was an important part of ACDHRS's commitment to strengthening public awareness of human rights issues and ensuring that the voices and recommendations of African civil society receive wider recognition. By extending the reach of the Forum beyond Dakar, the communications effort helped reinforce the importance of accountability, democratic governance and the protection of fundamental rights across the continent.



Conclusion: From Dialogue to Action

The Forum of NGOs participating in the 89th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights reaffirmed the vital role of civil society in promoting and protecting human rights, strengthening democratic governance and advancing accountability across Africa. Over three days in Dakar, Senegal, civil society organisations, human rights defenders and other stakeholders came together to exchange experiences, examine emerging challenges and develop collective responses to human rights concerns affecting communities across the continent.

Through thematic panel discussions, Special Interest Group deliberations and the adoption of resolutions and recommendations, the Forum provided an important platform for amplifying the voices of vulnerable and marginalised communities and identifying practical measures to address human rights violations. Discussions on civic space, the protection of human rights defenders, armed conflict, gender-based violence, climate justice, enforced disappearances, and access to water and sanitation underscored the urgent need for stronger protection mechanisms and the effective implementation of existing human rights commitments.

As the outcomes of the Forum are presented to the African Commission, the responsibility now lies with states, regional institutions, civil society organisations and development partners to translate these commitments into meaningful action. The impact of the Forum will ultimately be measured not only by the resolutions adopted, but by the progress made in protecting rights, strengthening institutions and improving the lives of people across Africa.

ACDHRS extends its sincere appreciation to all participants, partners, supporters, speakers, moderators and media organisations whose contributions made the Forum possible. Their commitment and collaboration demonstrate the importance of collective action in advancing the African human rights agenda.

As we look ahead, ACDHRS remains committed to supporting civil society engagement with the African Commission and promoting a continent where human dignity, justice, equality and fundamental freedoms are respected and protected for all.

EDITORIAL TEAM:

Mrs. Hannah Forster, Executive Director of ACDHRS

Mr. Sadikh Niass, Adviser of ACDHRS

Mr. Pa Modou Cham, Information and Communication Officer of ACDHRS

Ms. Ellen Ann, Programs Officer of ACDHRS

The Forum may have concluded, but the work continues. Together, let us turn our commitments into action and build a more just, inclusive and rights-respecting Africa.