



**Forum on the Participation of NGOs in the 46th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and 20th African Human Rights Book Fair
7-9 November, 2009
Banjul, The Gambia**

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The African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) is an independent non-governmental pan-African organisation, established in The Gambia since 1989. Since its inception, the Centre has been playing a central role in promoting and protecting human rights and democracy in Africa, through the media of capacity building, networking, action-oriented research, publication and documentation.

The Forum on the Participation of NGOs in the Ordinary Sessions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights is one of the main advocacy tools that the Centre uses to promote networking among Human Rights NGOs, for the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa. In collaboration with the African Commission and other human rights organizations, the African Centre has facilitated the participation of civil society organizations, academicians and other professionals from Africa and beyond in the African Commission's sessions.

The last Forum held in Banjul, The Gambia in May, 2009 was a resounding success with 137 participants, coming from civil society organization and NGOs in Africa and beyond, inter-state organizations, the academia, and so on.

As is traditional, the African Centre will host the Forum on the participation of NGOs in the 46th Ordinary session of the African Commission. The forum will deliberate generally on the human rights situation in Africa in general and attempt to bring to the fore specific situations that need to be highlighted in order to attract the attention of the African Commission in particular and the international community and other concerned bodies.

The ACDHRS will also organize the **20th African Human Rights Book Fair** during the Forum and the public sessions of the Commission, to enable NGOs network and initiate or renew, the exchange of materials and information, as well as to publicize their activities.

Objectives

The main objectives of the Forum are:

- to foster closer collaboration and co-operation among NGOs, and with the African Commission for promotion and protection human rights in Africa
- to provide a discussion platform for organizations working on democracy and human rights issues in the continent.
- to promote inter-regional/organizational networking for the implementation of decisions of the Forum as contained in the ACHPR Communiqué

Language

The Forum will be conducted in both English and French with simultaneous interpretation facilities.

Participation

All participants to the Forum are expected to meet the full cost of their participation, including a registration fee of US\$100 (one hundred United States Dollars) or its equivalent in Gambian Dalasis. Please note that this amount is **subsidised** by the African Centre to meet the cost of tea and coffee breaks, lunch, documentation, stationery and other administrative logistics for the duration of the Forum **only**.

Furthermore, note that the said amount should be paid by **ALL** participants in cash at the registration desk on **Saturday, 7th November, 2009**.

Due to the fluctuation of the US Dollars, the cost of participation will be reviewed for the May 2010 NGO Forum.

Resource Persons

Resource persons for the Forum are usually eminent activists and experts dealing with democracy and human rights issues in Africa.

Place and Duration of the Forum

The three-day Forum would take place from the 7th – 9th November, 2009 in Banjul, The Gambia while the Sessions of the African Commission would hold from 11th to 25th November, 2009.

Book Fair

Display of publications at the **Book Fair** is encouraged for greater participation at the Forum. We encourage participants to hand carry all publications they wish to display at the Forum

Further information will be communicated to interested individuals and organizations upon receipt of the reply form.

Proposed Agenda

The following topics are proposed as the main themes for discussion at the NGO Forum:

1. Human Rights and Democracy Situation in Africa
2. Protocol on Women's Rights in Africa & the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
3. Beijing Plus 15 Review meeting and 30th Anniversary of CEDAW
4. The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and the International Criminal Court
5. Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa
6. Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
7. Information and Human Rights
8. Human Rights Defenders in Africa
9. Minority Rights
10. Indigenous Peoples Rights
11. Children's Rights
12. Networking for Human Rights

Should you have any comments, proposal to the proposed agenda, please forward to the ACDHRS. However, please note that any proposal(s) to include a new theme or topic to the afore-said agenda should take cognizance of the fact that the NGO Forum Agenda is determined by the agenda of the proceedings of the African Commission Session.

Furthermore, proposals by organizations or individuals must be accompanied by proposed names of resource persons and an expression of their willingness to support their participation in the Forum, if necessary, as well as to provide the relevant documentation needed to facilitate the presentations on the given theme or topic.

Visa

We would wish to encourage participants to make necessary visa arrangements where required before departing from their respective countries for The Gambia.

Accommodation

With regards to accommodation, the African Centre would negotiate rates of rooms on behalf of participants and forward such information to participants.

Application Deadline

Participants must complete the attached reply form and return it to the African Centre no later than **Friday, 9th October, 2009** by either **Tel: 00 44 62 341-2 or Fax: 00 220- 44 62 338-9 or email: acdhrs@adhhs.org / admin@acdhrs.org / csec@acdhrs.org** in order to facilitate administrative and logistic arrangements. The African Centre is not obliged to process reply forms received after the deadline.

You are kindly encouraged to disseminate this information brochure to your network members as widely as possible.