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Conference on the 30th anniversary of the African Charter for Human and Peoples' Rights: Call for papers

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Deadline: 15 July 2012

30 years after the adoption of the African Charter for Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) on 21 June 1981; 25 years after the ACHPR entered into force on 21 October 1986; and 10 years after the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) came into operation on 26 May 2001, The Verloren van Themaat Centre for Public Law Studies in the Department of Public, Constitutional and International Law College of Law University of South Africa The African University in the Service of Humanity is pleased to announce that it will be hosting an international conference in celebration of the African Charter, under the title, **The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Protection of Human Rights in African Union Member States: Thirty/Twenty-Five/Ten Years on - Achievements, Challenges and Prospects** in Pretoria, South Africa from 5th - 7th November 2012

Objectives

The primary objective of the Conference is to provide a forum for robust retrospective and prospective debate on human rights in Africa since the adoption and entry into force of the African Charter for Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the African Union (AU) Constitutive Act. How these two instruments have contributed to the promotion and the protection of human and peoples' rights in Africa will be the main question addressed during the conference.

The Conference will critically revisit the conventional discourse on human rights in Africa and the African human rights system. It will examine the ACHPR, its significance, originality and shortcomings. Importantly, it will assess the contribution of the ACHPR and its enforcement mechanisms to the promotion of human rights in Africa, the progress, setbacks, challenges and prospects. It will at the same time reflect on the AU Constitutive Act and the various initiatives and instruments adopted by the AU better to protect human and peoples' rights. It is expected that the Conference will help develop policy-based interventions aimed at improving human rights, which are inextricably linked to democracy, peace and development.

The Conference is expected to attract officials and experts from the AU, African sub-regional organisations and AU member states, law-makers, ministers, judges, members of the African Court and Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, human rights scholars, lawyers, students and other activists.

The members of national human rights institutions and civil society organisations, United Nations (UN) officials, human rights experts and students from other corners of the world, as well as representatives of different organisations interested in the promotion of human rights, democracy, constitutionalism, good governance and leadership, peace, security and development in Africa and in the improvement of the living conditions of the African people will also benefit from the interaction afforded by this opportunity.

IN THE LIGHT OF THE ABOVE, WE ARE PLEASED TO CALL FOR PAPERS TO BE ADDRESSED UNDER THE FOLLOWING SUB-THEMES:

1. Comparative discourse on the protection of human rights

" What is the current state of the human rights discourse in Africa and globally?

" What can the African human rights system learn from its Inter-American and European counterparts, especially from their jurisprudence, founding instruments and enforcement mechanisms, in order better to promote and protect human rights in Africa?

2. The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights: Challenges and prospects

" What is the state of knowledge and awareness of the ACHPR and other African human rights instruments among African officials, judges, lawyers, African citizens, within African civil society organisations, in law-enforcement mechanisms such as the army and the police, at schools and at academic institutions?

" What are the importance and the shortcomings of the ACHPR and should it be amended further to address those shortcomings and other challenges posed by the protection of human and peoples' rights in 21st century Africa?

" What is the state of compliance of African states with the ACHPR and other African human rights instruments and what are the prospects for human and peoples' rights on the African continent?

3. The AU and the protection of human rights

" How has the AU fared in promoting human and peoples' rights under its Constitutive Act, the ACHPR and other regional instruments? What are the challenges, opportunities and prospects for human and peoples' rights under the AU?

" What is the status and role of the AU's developmental vehicles such as the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer-Review Mechanism (APRM) with regard to the promotion of human rights?

" What is the relationship between leadership, good governance and African renaissance?

" What role has been played by AU's building blocks such as Southern African Development Community (SADC), Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS), and Eastern African Community (EAC) in promoting human and peoples' rights in their regional integration agenda?

" Is there any nexus between regional integration, peace, security, democracy and development and the promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights?

" Should the AU Constitutive Act be amended further better to promote and protect human and peoples' rights in Africa?

4. Civil society and the advancement of human rights

" What are the social forces championing or opposing human and peoples' rights in Africa?

" What is the role of civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in the promotion and litigation of human and peoples' rights at the national, sub-regional and regional levels?

" How can Africans and other people contribute or learn from other regions in the promotion of human and peoples' rights, including social and economic rights?

5. Enforcement of the ACHPR at the regional, sub-regional and domestic levels and the promotion of human and peoples' rights

" What is the state of enforcement of the ACHPR at the regional, sub-regional and domestic levels?

" What has role the African Commission played in the promotion of the rights under the ACHPR, including socio-economic rights? What are its achievements and landmark decisions? How can its jurisprudence be assessed and what are the challenges it faces in enforcing the ACHPR?

" Why did it take so long to establish an African Court on human and peoples' rights and what challenges it should overcome better to promote and protect human rights on the African continent? What has the African Court achieved thus far in protecting human and peoples' rights and what comments can be made on its founding instrument(s)?

" What role have sub-regional courts played in promoting and protecting the rights enshrined in the ACHPR?

" What is the place of the ACHPR and other AU instruments in the domestic jurisprudence of AU member states and the contribution of their domestic courts to the development of African human rights jurisprudence?

" What role have been or should be played by the African Court and Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, sub-regional and domestic courts in promoting and protecting human and peoples' in the ACHPR with regard to the responsibility of state and non-state actors such as multinational and foreign companies? Is there any jurisprudence emerging in this regard?

All abstracts should be directed to:

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The deadline for the submission of abstracts (300 words maximum) is **15 July 2012**. Authors of successful abstracts will be notified before the 15th August 2012 and required to submit their full papers by 25 September 2012. The authors should indicate the sub-theme under which their papers fall. These papers will be subject to peer-evaluation before invitations to the conference will be issued. Publication of the papers presented is planned.

The Conference will be held in English, French and Portuguese. Papers can be submitted in English, French and Portuguese. Simultaneous translation will be provided.