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**FORUM ON THE PARTICIPATION OF NGOs IN THE 63<sup>rd</sup>  
ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON  
HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS  
BANJUL, 20-22 OCTOBER 2018**

**Introductory remarks by Hon. Miarom Begoto,  
AUABC Chairperson**

- **Your Excellency, Madam President of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights;**
- **Honourable Commissioners of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights;**
- **Madam Executive Director of the ACDHRS;**
- **The Director, ICPC Complaints Department, Morocco;**
- **Madam Executive Secretary of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights;**
- **Representatives of Civil Society;**
- **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. I am very pleased to take part in this civil society forum in prelude to the 63<sup>th</sup> ordinary session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. As you know, the year 2018 is dedicated to the fight against corruption and the Board being the continental organ steering this project, is highly solicited in various activities relating thereto. For this reason, I will not be able to attend this important forum up to the end but, already, I can assure you that the Board will appreciate the conclusions and recommendations which will result from gathering.
2. That said, corruption is a harmful practice that tends to become generalized. The plague has spread all over the Earth and no people, no country is able to control it. Corruption has taken on another dimension and is developing on a large scale in our societies with all that this entails as impediments, leading to unfortunate setbacks in countries where this scourge is reigning supreme.
3. Corruption increases poverty, a factor of underdevelopment, impedes the smooth functioning of basic public services, prevents both social and economic development and undermines democracy. It remains a major handicap that jeopardizes the development of countries, penalizes companies, introduces dysfunctions in fair market transactions and in the mechanisms of the economy and, consequently, deprives the State and public bodies of significant financial resources.
4. Despite efforts to fight corruption, the scourge remains an endemic problem in most of our sub-Saharan African countries. The anti-corruption policies that have been promulgated have not been sufficiently implemented. Similarly, the laws promulgated by our States to promote transparency and accountability have not been fully implemented, if at all.
5. As you know, the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption mandates the Advisory Board to monitor

its implementation and to ensure that States adopt and implement preventive and control measures against corruption.

6. The Preamble to the Maputo Convention recognizes the negative effects of corruption and impunity on the political, economic, social and cultural stability of African States and its devastating effects on the economic and social development of African populations. It also recognizes that corruption undermines accountability and transparency in the management of public affairs and socioeconomic development on the continent.
7. According to Article 3(2) of the Convention, one of the principles of the Convention is "respect for human and peoples' rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other human rights instruments".
8. There is no doubt that human rights are inseparable and interdependent, that corruption has serious consequences for governance, and affects all aspects of human rights. As such, failing to combat this scourge would be an impediment to viable sustainable growth and will undermine human rights and development. While corrupt practices may constitute human rights violations, corruption itself should be viewed more as a structural obstacle to the enjoyment of these rights.
9. The fight against corruption cannot be the exclusive preserve of Governments; concerted and common actions appear to be more than necessary in order to pool forces, energies and strategies. It is precisely at this level that the role of civil society actors comes in: to be present where the State has not yet been or has been with little outcome. Civil society must thus ensure that State policies are implemented at local level.
10. Article 22.5.g of the Convention encourages the Board to "build partnerships with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, African civil society, governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to

facilitate dialogue in the fight against corruption and related offenses".

11. Like the Annual Dialogue with national anti-corruption agencies that the Board has been organizing for the past two years, we should also have a regular, if not permanent, framework for exchanges with civil society and the media that play a key role in the promotion and protection of human rights, and hence in the fight against corruption. Civil society can and should pose as a sentry wherever it can be effective, especially through the media that has an important role to play, to better make known the ills of this phenomenon. Article 12 of the Convention also urges State Parties to involve the media and civil society in the fight against corruption and related offences.
12. Ladies and Gentlemen, if our Heads of State went so far as to declare 2018 the anti-corruption year with the theme: **"Overcoming corruption: a viable option for the transformation of Africa"**, it means that awareness of the misdeeds of this scourge is at a high level and that we must seize this opportunity to put in place new strategies to win this fight.
13. The Board remains available to collaborate with civil society to carry out its mission. It should be noted that the Board has already been working for some time with the multisectoral working group on the fight against corruption, a platform of thirty or so civil society organizations coordinated by OSISA. This collaboration is already bearing fruit with the development of a new questionnaire to States on the implementation of the Convention and also the draft amendment to this Convention which is under way.

We wish, as a Board, to extend this collaboration to the entire African civil society: we are aware of the effectiveness of your actions on the ground and of your significant contribution to human rights protection in Africa and we wish to rely on your

expertise, your network and your influence to engage, together, in this fight.

14. Lastly, I would like once again to ask all of us to pool our efforts to better achieve our common goal of eradicating corruption on our beloved continent, for the happiness of our people. United, we will win this fight. The fate of our continent is in our hands and we must work together now to shape the future we want: An Africa where good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law are far from being empty words.

Thank you for your kind attention. I officially declare open, the Forum on the Participation of NGOs at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.