

**ACHPR/Res.293 (EXT.OS/XVII) 2015: Resolution on 2015 Elections in Africa**

*The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, meeting at its 17<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Session held from 19 to 28 February 2015 in Banjul, The Gambia;*

**Recalling** its mandate to promote and protect human and peoples' rights under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Charter);

**Considering** the principles and objectives of the African Union guaranteed by the Constitutive Act of the African Union;

**Considering** the political, institutional and global framework for the advancement of governance and human rights in Africa, promoted by the African Governance Architecture (AGA);

**Recalling** Article 13 (1) of the African Charter which stipulates that "every citizen shall have the right to participate freely in the government of his country, either directly or through freely chosen representatives, in accordance with the provisions of the law";

**Further recalling** the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance which emphasizes the importance of consolidating on the continent, the political culture of change of power, based on the holding of regular, free, fair and transparent elections, conducted by national, independent, competent and impartial electoral bodies;

**Bearing in mind** its previous Resolutions on electoral process and participatory governance in Africa, in particular Resolutions ACHPR/Res. 184 (EXT.OS/IX) 2011, ACHPR/Res. 232 (EXT.OS/XIII) 2013, ACHPR/Res.239 (EXT.OS/XIV) 2013 and ACHPR/Res. 272 (LV) 2014;

**Recalling** its previous Resolutions on freedom of expression, freedom of association and of assembly and human rights defenders in Africa, in particular Resolutions ACHPR/Res. 62 (XXXII) 02, ACHPR/Res.99 (XXXX) 06, ACHPR/Res. 151 (XLVI) 09 and ACHPR/Res.196 (L) 11;

**Reaffirming** the importance of holding peaceful, transparent, free, fair and equitable elections organized by independent institutions;

**Affirming** that this fundamental right has to be exercised in a peaceful environment and in a responsible manner in order to preserve peace, security and stability on the continent;

**Noting** with satisfaction the successful holding of presidential elections in the Republic of Zambia;

*Considering* that general elections are scheduled in 2015, in particular in the Republic of Burundi, the Kingdom of Lesotho, the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Republic of Sudan, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Guinea (Conakry); presidential elections in the Togolese Republic, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, the Central African Republic and the State of Libya; and parliamentary elections in the Republic of Benin, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Republic of Chad and the Republic of Niger;

*Noting* with concern the recurrent election-related human rights violations and irregularities that mar the electoral processes;

*Recognizing* that the credibility of an electoral process and the legitimacy of the elected authorities strongly depend on the effective participation of citizens in a transparent and fair process, as well as respect for their fundamental freedoms of expression, of association and of assembly;

*Further recognizing* the crucial role played by the civil society, including human rights defenders and journalists in the context of elections;

**The Commission :**

*Calls on* States Parties to the African Charter organizing elections to:

1. Guarantee, in accordance with their obligations under relevant regional and international conventions, the fundamental rights of citizens, in particular the right to participate in a free, democratic and transparent electoral process, freedom of assembly and of expression as well as equal access to the media for all stakeholders ;
2. Guarantee the rights of civil society organizations, including those of human rights defenders and journalists to enable them to conduct election-related activities in a conducive and reprisal-free environment;
3. Take the necessary measures to preserve social harmony to guarantee a credible and inclusive electoral process;
4. Guarantee the independence of institutions in charge of organizing elections and provide them with adequate resources for the effective implementation of their mandate;

5. Promote the participation of national and international observers throughout the electoral process;
6. Take the necessary measures to prevent, investigate and identify authors of election-related human rights violations, and guarantee immediate, fair and equitable redress for victims;

*Urges* political party leaders and candidates participating in the elections to place the general interest of the people at the core of the electoral process and to call on their members to exercise their rights in a civic and responsible manner;

*Calls on* Sub-Regional Organizations, the African Union and the International Community to support governments and other political actors of countries concerned in order to promote the smooth conduct of elections, in particular, by training election officials and sending election observation missions;

*Lastly renews* its call on all States Parties that have not yet done so, to ratify the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, and to ensure its effective implementation.

**Done in Banjul, The Gambia on 28 February 2015**