Sensitization Seminar for Human Rights Organizations in Tanzania

Organised by the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, in collaboration with the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Tanganyika Law Society

13 December, 2010

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Honorable Judges of the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights,
Honorable Chief Justice of the United Republic of Tanzania
Honorable Judges of the Court of Appeal and the High Court of Tanzania,
Honorable Member of the Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
Honorable Members of the Commission on Human Rights and Good Governance,
Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation,
Deputy Registrar and Staff of the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights,
Deans of Faculties of Law,
Senior Government Officials here present,
Learned Members of the Bar Association,
Distinguished representatives from the Religious Bodies,
Non Governmental Organizations here represented,
Media representatives here present,
Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

1. We have spent the day informing each other about the African Human Rights system and the place of each of our organizations and institutions in that structure. We have discussed the establishment, function and mandate of the Court and the Court’s state of readiness to determine contentious cases and give advisory opinions. We have observed the lack of progress in engaging the Court to ensure that it carries out the mandate for which it was created, in practical terms. We have discussed and crystallized what the Court can do to ensure human rights protection as mandated in its Protocol and how to access the Court and institute litigation before it. We have clarified the role, responsibility and right of each of the organizations and institutions represented here on how to utilize the Court to advance human rights protection in Tanzania.

2. I am extremely pleased with the manner in which we conducted our business, and the degree to which we went to explore the ways that we can employ, in our various capacities, to submit applications on contentious issues or request the Court for advisory opinions. In this regard, I must thank the His Excellency, Seif Shariff Hamad, the First Vice President of Zanzibar opening this seminar and the government of the United Republic of Tanzania for the support they gave to this activity and for their willingness to consider how it can utilize the Court’s advisory jurisdiction, and wish that all other Member States of the African Union follow this lead.
Distinguished Participants, Ladies and gentleman

3. If this seminar has been a success, and we will surely see this by the inflow of submissions to the Court, that is entirely due to the diligent and professional manner in which you, Distinguished Participants, participated in lively and frank discussions in a most enriching manner.

4. While this meeting has now come to an end, we take away with us, the satisfaction that our discussions were fruitful in both substance and context. I am convinced that more meetings will follow this one, and that we will continue to collaborate in our joint efforts to protect human rights in Tanzania. I therefore cannot thank you all enough for having accepted the invitation to attend this seminar, and having come, for the exemplary manner in which you conducted yourselves. At the beginning of this seminar, I explained the role that each of the organizations and participants is expected to play in the promotional plan of the Court to ensure that it carries out its mandate. I particularly asked that you ponder on your particular input in this regard for posterity. I am therefore pleased to note that our discussions clearly show that all participants understand that the success or failure of the Court is our collective responsibility.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and gentleman
5. Allow me to extend my sincere thanks to our cooperating partner, the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), who has actively and strongly supported the promotional initiatives of the Court with the necessary funding. We look forward to their continued support as the program unfolds.

6. I also wish to thank the Registry of the Court and the secretariat of the Tanganyika Law Society for the enormous amount of work they put in to organize the seminar, arrange the programme, flight schedules, accommodation, and all the little administrative tasks necessary to ensure that our discussions were held in a conducive environment.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and gentleman

7. Last but not least, I wish to thank my fellow Judges of the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights for their vision and insistence that we hold this seminar, and for making the sacrifice to extend their absence from their national duties, and after a very heavy and exhausting 19th Ordinary Session agenda, to participate fully at this event.

8. Let me end by expressing the expectation of the Court that we will meet again soon and preferably at the Court. For those who came from outside Dar es Salaam, I wish you a safe journey back to your
bases, where no doubt, you will immediately work on strategies to approach the Court with contentious cases or for advisory opinions. And for those of you from Dar es Salaam, we look forward to continuing the relationship we started with this meeting, and look forward to your hospitality when next we come back. May you all travel safely back to your destinations.

I declare this seminar closed.

African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights

13 December 2010

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