



Statement by the Centre for Citizens Participation in the African Union (CCP-AU) to the 16th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union

January 21, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

We, civil society organizations from all over the continent meeting under the auspices of the Center for Citizens Participation in the African Union (CCP-AU), welcome the theme of the 16th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union: *“Towards greater unity and integration through shared values”*;

Recognizing that all fifty three (53) member states of the African Union have adopted the values enshrined in the Constitutive Act and the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (ACHPR);

Convinced that the respect and implementation of these shared values and those contained in AU treaties, declarations and decisions by all member States will enable the African Union to move towards greater unity, integration and development;

Cognizant of the fact that the existence of any community depends on the maintenance of shared political and moral values; the violation of which loosens the bond, which holds the society together and thereby threatens it with disintegration.

We therefore note with concern that the following obstacles and challenges continue to impede on the realization of the African Union’s integration and development agenda:

- The poor implementation of policy instruments and decisions of the African Union and the regional economic communities (RECs) by member states;
- The slow pace of ratification and implementation of African Union instruments containing the shared values;
- Continued marginalization and exploitation of women, youth and other vulnerable groups such as indigenous people of Africa, people with disabilities and children;
- Lack of a sustainable and comprehensive funding framework for the African Union which impeded the implementation of the shared values;
- The cardinal tenet of democracy, which is the respect of the people’s will, seems to be under threat in light of the trend towards unjustified disputed elections and consequently negotiated coalition governments;

- Citizens of Africa continue to experience significant challenges related to free movement within sub-regions and the continent such as restrictive migration policies and harassment at border posts;
- Continued gross and massive violations of human and humanitarian rights compounded by lack of access to justice, selective application of the law and culture of impunity in some member states;
- Key decisions of governance institutions such as regional and African Courts and independent Commissions are being undermined and ignored by some member states;

Appreciating the importance of shared values to continental integration and development, we propose the following measures for consideration by the 16th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union:

In order to improve on the signing and ratification of African Union instruments, we recommend that:

- Member states agree on time - frames for the signing and ratification taking into consideration country specific context and realities as opposed to an open-ended arrangement.
- The African Union should encourage member states to participate in all processes leading to the formulation and adoption of policy instruments to ensure ownership, commitment and ultimately faster signing and ratification.
- The African Union and the regional economic communities (RECs) should strengthen mechanisms for monitoring progress in ratification of instruments by member states.

In order to ensure ownership and responsibility for shared values, we recommend that:

- The African Union urgently consolidates the development and implementation of a sustainable and comprehensive funding framework for its operations.
- African Union must ensure genuine and continuous involvement of the people of Africa, civil society, private sector and other stakeholders in the promotion and implementation of shared values.

On wider consolidation and implementation of AU policies and decisions, we propose that:

- The African Union promotes continuous multi-sectoral dialogue among citizens, states, private sector, CSOs, regional and international organizations on shared values contained in the various instruments of the African Union.
- Information on best practices on implementation of shared values be shared amongst member states of the African Union.

- The African Union should encourage member states to ensure that its decisions are reflected in national policies, plans and budgets.
- Member states simplify, indigenize and popularize shared values.

On common perspective and deepening convergence, we propose that:


- Member states agree on convergence schedules for specific integration targets that take into consideration the concerns of all member states.
- The African Union strengthens support mechanisms for states that have difficulties in implementing particular shared values.

For the purposes of monitoring and evaluation of progress towards the implementation of shared values, we recommend that:

- The African Union consolidates tools and frameworks for monitoring the implementation of instruments containing shared values.
- The African Union agrees to periodic reporting, by individual member states and collectively, of progress towards attainment of set targets to implement shared values.

In order to strengthen the governance Institutions of the African Union for effective implementation and maintenance of shared values, we recommend:

- The institutionalization of continental and sub-regional parliamentary oversight through official recognition and integration into the formal structures of the African Union and Regional Economic Communities.
- The consolidation and strengthening of enforcement and accountability mechanisms, and agreement on penalties for member states who violate or undermine the realization of shared values at sub-regional and continental levels.
- The strengthening of governance institutions such as the continental and sub-regional Courts, Independent Commissions and African Peer Review Mechanisms (APRM).
- The consolidation of platforms for different organs of the African Union to cooperate, collaborate and harmonize activities.
- The enhancement of the mandates of Secretariats of the regional economic communities and the African Union Commission.



As civil society, operating on the African continent, we pledge our commitment to work with the citizens of Africa and the member states through lobbying, advocacy, capacity building and social accountability interventions to popularize, sensitize and ensure implementation of shared values.

We call upon all member states of the African Union to fully commit themselves to respect, implement and promote the shared values for Africa to move towards greater unity and integration.

Signed

CCP-AU Board Chair

(On behalf of CCP-AU)