

**COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE PARTICIPANTS ATTENDING THE 3rd EAST
AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS' FORUM (EACSOFF)**

CORRIDOR SPRINGS HOTEL, ARUSHA, TANZANIA

MARCH 20-21, 2009.

- 1) Noting that that one of the fundamental principles of the East African Community is that the Community is a people-driven Community as provided for by Article 7 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community;
- 2) Noting that the civil society is a key stakeholder in the integration of the citizens of the EAC and that it occupies an important place in the process;
- 3) Noting that the EAC has four pillars namely Customs Union, Common Market, Monetary Union and ultimately, the Political Federation and that the participation of citizens is fundamentally interdependent on reinforcing a common East African identity;
- 4) Noting that democratic spaces are emerging in the EAC region although inequality and violation of human rights still persist;
- 5) Noting that the clear necessity to integrate the Responsibility to Protect norm (RtoP) characterized by the requirement to protect the region against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity within the EAC;

We, the participants of the 3rd Annual EACSOFF therefore resolve and recommend to the EAC to:

- 1) Reaffirm the need for institutional strengthening of the EACSOFF in its pursuit to influence development in the region and the institutionalization of the Forum as an annual medium for interface with the Summit of the EAC.

- 2) Call for an all inclusive nature and involvement of all non-state actors (with particular reference to the civil society) in the formal structures of the integration process and its full participation and institutionalization in the levels of discussions and negotiations at the EAC (from the sectoral committees to the Council of Ministers). Civil society should be consulted in the on-going negotiations (at the national country committees) on the EAC Common Market and the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the EU-ACP.
- 3) Acknowledge developments at the EAC so far including its development of a Framework on good governance and anti-corruption and its attempts towards instituting conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms at the EAC Secretariat.
- 4) Promote good governance in national Partner States through democratic principles, adherence to rule of law, diligence in administration of justice and in fighting against corruption.
- 5) Admonish and call for the end to all forms of impunity and Human Rights violations and appeal to the adherence to the rule of law and democratic principles within the EAC region and the continent.
- 6) Urge governments to promote adherence to the RtoP norm and for the EAC Partner States and the continent to accept their responsibility to protect their populations against genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and war crimes and to recognize the role of civil society in the implementation of these principles;
- 7) Undertake to fully support the East African chapter of the International Coalition of the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP) and the peace and security architectures within the African Union in general and the EAC in particular;

- 8) Support local and national Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to proactively address issues within their boundaries by sectors and collectively;
- 9) Encourage regional CSOs to be proactive in understanding of the emerging global dynamics as they attempt to address cross-cutting challenges within their own RECs such as poverty, HIV and AIDS and gender issues. The need to be proactive rather than reactive is imperative. Further, call on Civil Society Organizations in the region to continue sharing experiences and best practices with their counterparts in order to develop effective networks towards the promotion of peace, democracy and human rights.
- 10) Involve CSOs in a participatory manner and work closely with the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) in the development of legislation.
- 11) To be at the forefront in mainstreaming of gender, youth, children and other marginalized groups, ensuring balance in all aspects of development and ensure that Partner States domesticate the ratified treaties and protocols on the protection of women and children.
- 12) Underscore the need for regional and continental CSOs to work closely, carry out advocacy with African Union (AU) organs and with institutions who apply policies of the AU.
- 13) Extend the Jurisdiction of the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) to include handling of human rights cases brought before it and to institute best practices in the selection of Judges to the Court.
- 14) Express our gratitude to the EALS and EAC for hosting the 3rd Annual EACSOE.

Signed at Arusha Corridor Springs Hotel, Arusha this twenty first day of March 2009