



Centre for Democracy and Development



COMMUNIQUE

THE NIGERIAN NATIONAL PLATFORM MEETING FOR RATIFICATION, POPULARIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ECOWAS SUPPLEMENTARY PROTOCOL ON DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE AND THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON DEMOCRACY, ELECTIONS AND GOVERNANCE

Organised by Centre for Democracy and Development and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa, Abuja, 29th June 2011

In order to develop and consolidate democracy in Africa which re-emerged in the continent in 1990's, ECOWAS, and later the African Union formulated constitutional and democratic principles through the use of two specific legal instruments; namely *the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance adopted in 2001 and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance in January 2007*. The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA) and Partners organised a one day media advocacy and launch of Platforms in the Republics of Niger, Benin **and now in Nigeria** for the *Popularization, Ratification and Implementation of the two instruments* held at Denis Hotel, Abuja, June 29, 2011.

The main objective of the media sensitization/advocacy and the Nigerian Platform meeting was to **achieve the ratification of the Charter in Nigeria**. Other objectives are to popularize the two instruments and to constitute an Observatory for their respect and application in Nigeria and West Africa.

The meeting was attended by civil society organizations including Women and Youth groups, the Media, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The meeting featured - an opening session, a panel discussion on the two instruments with focus on the

Charter, a second Panel on advocacy and the way forward to achieving the ratification of the Charter in Nigeria and finally the Launch of the proposed Platform. Participants made the following observations, recommendations and commitments:

OBSERVATIONS:

The Meeting

1. Noted with dismay the lack of political will by the Nigerian Government in ratifying and domesticating international treaties as exemplified by its non ratification of *Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance* adopted since 2001 and the *African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance* adopted in January 2007;
2. Expressed concern that this culture of non ratification is adding up and undermining the Country's image as a regional and continental leader in democracy promotion;
3. Observed and condemned the battering last week of civil society actors by President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal in his quest to subvert the democratic process to allow his son Karim Wade succeed him as President;
4. Noted a frustrating slow pace of ratification of the Charter due to lack or insufficient political will on the part of governments and low awareness and demand from the African people, Only 10 out of 38 countries that signed the adoption have ratified i.e. Burkina Faso, Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Lesotho, Mauritania, Rwanda, South Africa, Sierra Leone and Mozambique last week;
5. Appreciate however, the huge turnout at the Nigerian Platform meeting with prime national media managers attending all sessions; this is seen as a good sign for positive change in favour of the struggle for the ratification and popularization of the instruments in Nigeria.
6. The meeting sincerely thanked OSIWA for partnering with CDD to organize such a strategic and awareness raising meeting;

RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMITMENTS

The Meeting:

1. Urgently call on the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria who has recently conducted, against all odds, acceptable elections, to consolidate its progress in democratic advancement by completing the ratification of the two instruments, which are essentially panaceas for democratic elections and governance;
2. Call on ECOWAS Member States who have not yet ratified the Charter to do so;
3. Call on the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to proactively and jointly protect and enforce popular will as demonstrated by the Senegalese people over a period of time now;
4. Established a Network referred to as the Nigerian National Platform to coordinate the efforts towards the Ratification, Popularisation and the Implementation of *the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance* and *the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance*
5. The Platform is firstly committed to ensure **the ratification of the Charter** hopefully in a couple of months and thereafter functions as an **Observatory** to monitor the implementation of both instruments while concurrently ensuring their popularization in the country;

Jibrin Ibrahim

Centre for Democracy and Development

Idiatou Bah

OSIWA