

**WORKSHOP ON THE MAKING OF TOOLS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
DEFENDERS IN AFRICA**

**31 August to 3 September 2008**

**Cotonou**

**A-CONTEXTE AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE WORKSHOP**

Having noticed the need of a real agreement from various actors involved in the promotion and the protection of human rights on the continent, the Special Rapporteur (SR) centred her first mandate on the following topic: ***“the rights of human rights defenders: a need for synergy”***. The main objective of this first mandate has been to sensitize member States on the rights and freedoms enshrined in the African Charter and aiming at the promotion and the protection of human rights defenders (HRD) and more precisely the realisation of a culture of respect for human rights in the continent. Through this topic the SR wanted to establish strong link and a dialogue between various stakeholders in the promotion and the protection of human rights and particularly between human rights defenders from all walks of life.

In her second mandate, though sensitization remains a focus, the SR is particularly interested in the strengthening of the capacity of HRD in Africa, thus the topic chosen: ***“Continued synergy in action through a better knowledge of human rights instruments”***.

In addition to ownership by States parties, civil society and population at large of obligations contained in all pertinent provisions enshrined in international and African instruments on the protection of human rights and in particular the United Nations Declaration on the rights of human rights defenders the Grand Bay Declaration and the Kigali Declaration, the SR aims at improving the working conditions of human rights defenders in order to achieve better results in their activities of promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights.

To achieve this goal, it is envisaged to build and enhance the capacity of human rights defenders by providing them not only with a better knowledge of the texts protecting them, but also with the way to use these texts efficiently to advance their cause.

It is recommended in addition to increase the sensitization through dissemination at all levels of these instruments pertaining to the promotion and protection of human rights.

Indeed, it had been noticed that a large number of people are human rights defender without knowing what this implies. Thus, few among these HRD know the

fundamental texts which protect them as well as the means of using them for their benefit. Further, in some cases, the absence of specific national legislations on HRD gives the impression that there is not text which can be used against State. The analysis shows that most of the various Constitutions contain provisions which HRD can use to protect themselves in the course of their activities. However, because of their ignorance or their lack of a good understanding of those laws, many HRD do not use them for their defence.

The popularization through dissemination of basic human rights instruments is thus necessary, not only for HRD as they will be perfectly equipped to continue their struggle, but, also for people from all walks of life who may not perceive the exact meaning of what is to be a human rights defender, his role and his importance.

The lack of knowledge of texts protecting HRD impedes considerably the advancement, the recognition and the real respect for human rights in general and the rights of human rights defenders in particular.

The objective of the SR is then to address this situation through the making of tools which will explain in a simple language, the various texts that protect HRD, the role and the importance of HRD while promoting the protection and the respect of human rights.

## **B-OBJECTIVES AND TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS**

This project has one main objective and some specific objectives targeting a certain number of stakeholders.

### **1) MAIN OBJECTIVE**

It is to efficiently and effectively carry out the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in Africa, through the promotion and the protection of human rights defenders in Africa.

### **2) Specific Objectives**

- a) Effective and efficient implementation of the Special Rapporteur Action Plan, notably the issue of capacity building for human rights defenders who are the main target of her mandate;
- b) To provide human rights defenders with working tools to concretely assist them in their daily work, through the adoption of a simplified approach of the various human rights instruments in general and the rights of human rights defenders in particular. To achieve this goal, it is planned to elaborate three tools in simplified language.
  - **Compilation of resolutions and provisions protecting HRD at regional level**
  - **The United Nations Declaration on HRD in simplified language**
  - **The African HRD manual;**
- c) Strengthening the capacity of human rights defenders for a better promotion and protection of human rights at regional level.

### 3) TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS

It is mainly HRD, but also others stakeholders involved in the promotion and the protection of human rights, i.e. governments, civil society organisations, but also individuals adult as well as children. The goal is to provide considerable assets to HRD in order for them to get a better knowledge of legal instruments that regulate their activities for a better result and a broad dissemination of those texts.

As a matter of fact, a clear and accurate understanding of the role of HRD will contribute to change mentalities with respect to human rights oftentimes perceived by politicians as sanctions against their actions and by simple individuals as a form of politics of opposition.

#### B EXPECTED OUTCOME

The expected outcomes after the workshop are the following:

- Good Knowledge of the African mechanism on the protection of HRD;
- Use of the mechanism by HRD ;
- Strengthening of Capacity of HRD through dissemination and knowledge of instruments protecting them;
- Activities are carried out and availability of working tools to a greater number of populations;

##### 1. Participants

This workshop will gather HRD, notably representatives of different network of HRD in Africa (Central Africa, Western, Northern, Southern and of the Horn of Africa), experts on didactics tools, representatives of civil society, government especially representative of ministry of justice.

##### 2. Trainers

The trainers will be four (04) experts in three different fields; namely:

An expert (01) on didactic tools

An expert (01) in pedagogy

An expert (01) in linguistic

An expert (01) in the African human rights system

And two (02) others trainers who will deliver communication on specific issues.

**Expert on didactic tools:** Will help defenders in the process of elaboration of tools.

**Expert in human right:** To remain in the context of human rights and draw the step to be followed as for the approach the thematic.

**Expert in linguistics:** Should assist in determining suitable word of communicating the message to the greatest number, the majority of the defenders do not have a legal background, thus their difficulties to have a correct understanding of the legal implications of certain texts.

**Expert in pedagogy:** The art of transmission is not innate for all, it is learned. The project does not aim only at making tools, but also it aims at assisting in using these tools.

The pedagogue/educator will determine together with the defenders the best approach to communicate the message. He will make sure that the presentation and the approach used in the handbooks are designed indeed to convey the message in the simplest way

### **3. Methodology**

The approach during the workshop will be participatory, it will be practical, in order to allow participants to identify together with experts difficulties they usually face while using human rights instruments. They will have to make proposals, suggestions concerning the approach to adopt in the elaboration of the tools.

There will be presentations on different topics specific to HRD, these presentations will be followed by debates. The objective here is to give participants the opportunity to understand the issue and to be able to make adequate proposals regarding the contents of the tools, their structure and the pedagogical approach and even make proposals for future tools.

Participants will be divided into working groups and each group will be given specific task regarding the elaboration of the tools.

### **4. Working languages**

The working languages will be French and English with simultaneous interpretation