



EAST AFRICA LAW SOCIETY

**COMMUNIQUE OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE EVOLVING PEACE PROCESS IN
BURUNDI: A CIVIL SOCIETY CALL TO ACTION
BUJUMBURA, BURUNDI, JULY 22-23, 2008**

- 1) Noting that the ceasefire agreement reached on May 2008 is **currently on course** with all protagonists in the agreement respecting the ceasefire and indicating willingness to complete the peace process;
- 2) Noting that peace and conflict in Burundi is a regional issue by its very nature, and that the East African Community Partner States are interdependent and have a responsibility to ensure regional peace, security and stability;
- 3) Noting that circulation of arms in Burundi is grave despite the planned disarmament programme, and extends and affects neighbouring countries and frontiers;
- 4) Noting that impunity continues to contribute to fuelling criminal and violent acts among the people of Burundi and that impunity is serious, and characterized largely by assassinations since independence; without formal prosecution;
- 5) Noting that ethnicity is still largely unresolved and ingrained in political ideologies, and that violation of human rights persists;

We, the participants of the Consultation, are therefore committed to the following and call upon the East African Community, the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Great Lakes Regional Peace Initiative on Burundi, and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, to act accordingly:

- 1) Express our gratitude to East Africa Law Society and Burundi Bar Association for hosting the Consultation on the Evolving Peace Process: A Civil Society Call to Action; and for the warm reception and hospitality accorded to us and urge the EALS to continue to play a leadership role in the region and on this particular issue;
- 2) Take note of the emerging peaceful conditions in Burundi and express solidarity with the ongoing negotiation process between the Government, under the leadership of H.E Pierre Nkurunziza and the FNL-Palipehutu Force; and call upon all parties engaged in the peace process to abide by their commitment to enable Burundi to return to a state of peace, security and stability, as the best assurance for the country's reconstruction and economical development;
- 3) Consider the protection of women and vulnerable groups including child soldiers;
- 4) Call for the restoration of peace and security as necessary ingredients to ensure return of confidence in the management of public assets, security, good governance and economic development;
- 5) Call for the immediate enforcement of the arms disarmament policy;
- 6) Participate in the processes for the institutionalization of monitoring systems, amendment of the Electoral Act and the establishment of an independent and a permanent Electoral Commission, to ensure free and fair elections in 2010 and thereafter;
- 7) Underscore the need for an end to ethnicity which is deeply entrenched and that lessons learned from the past be taken into consideration as Burundi abides to the principles of democracy and human rights;
- 8) Call for an end to the culture of impunity, for investigations into those involved in war crimes and other atrocities during the conflict, and adherence to the rule of law and democratic principles;
- 9) Encourage the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and advocate for the establishment of an independent International Criminal Tribunal on Burundi to investigate and prosecute those responsible for such crimes;

- 10) Underline and advocate with utmost necessity for the establishment of an impartial, independent and competent Judiciary that adheres to a transparent nomination process of its judges;
- 11) Appeal to the international community and the above-mentioned regional organizations to promote civilian participation in political processes; to provide support and leadership for the enhancement of human rights in Burundi; and to act decisively towards poverty alleviation through targeted measures and resource mobilization;
- 12) Emphasize the urgent need to sign, ratify and domesticate international and regional human rights instruments;
- 13) Promote adherence to the Responsibility to Protect principles and appeal to the government of Burundi to accept its responsibility to protect its population against genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and war crimes; and to recognize the role of civil society in the implementation of these principles;
- 14) Facilitate the development of a regional civil society early-warning system and early-response and reporting capability;
- 15) Encourage CSOs in the region to continue sharing experiences and best practices with their counterparts in Burundi in order to develop effective national, regional and international networks towards the promotion of peace, democracy and human rights.

Signed at Hotel Novotel this twenty third day of July 2008