

**MOBILIZING CIVIC SOCIETY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION AFRICAN CHARTER ON DEMOCRACY, ELECTIONS AND GOVERNANCE (ACDEG)**



***2 DAYS TRAINING OF CSOS ON THE AFRICAN GOVERNANCE ARCHITECTURE AND THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON DEMOCRACY ELECTIONS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE***

**27<sup>TH</sup>- 28<sup>TH</sup> August 2018  
Royal Suites, Bugolobi  
Kampala, Uganda**



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## List of Acronyms

ACDEG- African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance

EACSOE- East African Civil Society Organizations' Forum

AGA- African Governance Architecture

NGOs- Non Governmental Organizations

EAC- East African Community

CSOs- Civil Society Organizations



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# INTRODUCTION

## Overview of the Workshop

The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG)<sup>1</sup> was adopted by the AU Summit on 30 January 2007, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia as a roadmap to encourage better governance across the continent. It sets out international standards of good governance and democracy in Rule of law, Free and Fair elections, and condemning unconstitutional changes of government. Uganda signed the Charter in December 2008 but is yet to ratify and domesticate the charter through relevant Legal enactments

For so many years, the African democratic transition has been met by distortions from military, foreign, domestic and individual influences; where both the former and later have acted in ways that make the efforts to have democratic governments a futile attempt. The World Bank (1989:60) defines good governance as the “exercise of political power to manage a nation’s affairs”. Hence good governance is regarded as synonymous with sound development (World Bank, 1992:1). Good governance can be understood in terms of three major components: first is the form of political authority that exists in a country (parliamentarian or presidential, civilian or military and autocratic or democratic); second is the means through which authority is exercised in the management of economic and social resources; and third is the ability of governments to discharge government functions effectively, efficiently and equitable. The African charter on elections and good governance aims at achieving this across Africa, especially for countries that have signed and ratified the document.

## Objectives of the Training;

The training set out to achieve the following objectives;

- To orient the CSOs on the African charter on democracy election and good governance and African governance architecture Framework
- To establish possible areas of collaboration of between the CSOs and the African governance Architecture.



## Workshop program Outline

Day	Session Number	Session Title	Session Facilitator
<b>DAY ONE</b>	Session one	Sharing on the African context and ACDEG	Wandera James
	Session Two	Building on the context and governance question in Africa	
	Session Three	The Understanding of AGA and ACDEG	Bhekumusa Moyo
	Session Four	Reflection on the role of CSOs in the implementation of AGA, and ACDEG.	Martha Makenge
	Session Five	Governance and Electoral Accountability in Africa	Sarah Birete and David Manyonga
<b>DAY TWO</b>	Session one	Strategizing for and campaigning for Advocacy.	Bhekumusa Moyo
	Session Two	Shrinking Civic space; the role of ICT and creative Activism	Frederick Kawoya & Jackson Ojok
	Session Three	Will commercialized politics deliver the democratic dispensation for Africa's development?	Henry Muguzi
	Session Four	Forging way Forward	Lilian Alex
	Session Five	Communique with Journalists	General

### Day One 27th of August 2018

#### a) Opening Remarks

The opening remarks were made by Ms. Martha Makenge who highlighted on the African charter on democracy, elections and governance. The attendants were taken through the



status of membership of the African charter; the charter has 46 countries that have signed, 31 ratifications, and 9 have not signed nor ratified. In East Africa Uganda, Kenya has only signed yet South Sudan and Rwanda being the only countries that have ratified the charter on the East African bloc. She noted that it is imperative for countries to ratify the charter and incorporate it in our systems that will in turn help the citizens to enjoy human rights (unconditionally); nondiscrimination and universal suffrage.

**b) Expectations for the workshop as put through by the participants.**

The attendants from different civil organizations and youth led fora were tasked to tell what they expect from the workshop among which the following arose; thorough understanding of who monitors and evaluates the implementation of the African Charter, benchmark for the civil society organizations, Networking platform, understand how ACDEG is going see through the desired democracy and good governance, Way forward on ratifying the charter; for those who have signed already, Uganda to be specific.

**c) Session one; Sharing on the African context and ACDEG**

Mr. Wandera led this session; he talked about the current ills in most African governments, mostly caused by bad governance, among which included, famine, hunger, poverty and disease. Flatteringly, Africa has a lot of resources but in hindsight, due to the bad governance, it is crippled and these resources don't help the populace but a few individuals: most of whom cling to power, as is the case with most African counties.

In his presentation, he made mention of agenda 2063; a very beautiful agenda on paper—but with skepticism that the participants related with—doesn't see it coming to fruition, especially if the necessary changes in governance aren't made. The agenda dreams of an integrated Africa; secure and with quality education for all among the 7 aspirations.

**During and through the session, critical obstacles to the desired status were discussed among which the following arose;** failed peaceful transition in most African countries (Uganda inclusive), Shrinking civil space and infringement on civil liberties and freedoms, Weak government institutions, Weak opposition parties and civil society, and Weak citizenry.



### *Reactions and Contributions: bottlenecks to the desired status*

- Livelihood for the youth; the youth mostly don't have the money and resources to sustain their lives and worse their involvement in campaigns geared towards good governance
- Africa is now dealing with a “black colonialist”; the scramble and partition that was back in the day has been taken on by black colonialism, the leaders loot of their nations(states)
- The attitude of the citizenry is at times so negative, this in turn kills all the would-have new developments(s) in creating a better future for all Africans, now and in the future.
- There isn't ideological bankruptcy, as is often said but rather, there is distortion; most times, people have scattered ideas but no concrete ideologies, that is why sometimes there is no take off and not the former.
- Most civil society organizations don't have sustainability plans

#### **d) Plenary Session: Building on the context and governance question in Africa**

Before break tea, the participants had a presentation on the context and governance question in Africa. An understanding of governance, the management of public affairs in society; electoral accountability—an inclusive, transparent, responsive and integral electoral process

#### **e) Session three: The Understanding of AGA and ACDEG**

Mr. Bhekumusa took the participants through AGA and ACDEG; how the two are related and work hand in hand in promotion of good governance. He called it the overall political and institutional framework for the promotion of good governance in Africa. It works on these principal pillars; concepts (norms and vision), evolution (institutional frameworks) and progress. He emphasized on the need to promote civic awareness, strengthen regional ties, and challenge unconstitutional changes of government and the need for the adoption of sanctions in the event of unconstitutional regimes.

#### **f) Session Four: Reflection on the role of CSOs in the implementation of AGA, and ACDEG.**

The session as moderated by Ms. Martha Makenge narrowed down into the very important role the civil society plays in the implementation of AGA and ACDEG., among which



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include; Sensitization and awareness, Advocacy, Research and documentation, Mobilization and citizens empowerment and appreciating stakeholder's roles

**Unfortunately**, in total agreement, the participants from different organizations said the intended good work is met with the following hardships that at times make it practically impossible to arrive at their pre-determined goals and objectives; among which include, disenfranchisement, commercialization of Politics, militarization, weak judicial systems, patronage, strongman syndrome, and limited resources.

In **hindsight**, the following strategies were put forward if the smooth running of the CSOs is to take shape going forward: Legal/ Judicial activism, Civic mobilization, supporting global campaigns, advocating for reforms in managing of electoral processes and Public vetting of judicial officials

#### **g) Session Five: Governance and Electoral Accountability in Africa; Uganda in Particular.**



**Figure 1: Mr Manyoga David & Sarah Bireete Training on Electoral Accountability**

This session was led by *Ms. Sarah Birete* and *Mr. David Manyoga*; deliberating on the issues to this regard, Sarah noted some of the developments that have taken place from the 1990's, among which include the following; Restructuring the terrain of Political competition and governance, the emergence of media pluralism, the efflorescence of associational life, the demise of the last remnants of colonial rule and institutionalized racism in Africa , revival of regional cooperation and integration efforts and a Demographic shift among others.

**The new wave;** Social media, vibrant civil society, Active citizenry, Youth bulge, Street protests



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Strategies suggested to ensure electoral accountability by the participants and the facilitators include, acting together, building strong institutions, thinking big and fostering agenda, Utilizing the youth bulge, strengthening the regional and global mechanism, Deal with fear (leaders sometimes act only if they are scared), CSOs need to rethink their approaches, and Seeking Africa's diaspora for impetus.

## **Day two 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2018**

Day 2 began with a recap of what transpired on the first day, as led by Ms. Lillian Alex. Onward, day two of the workshop commenced.

### **a) Session one: Strategizing for and campaigning for Advocacy.**

Advocacy as it is, pleading or arguing in favor of a cause or policy for preferred solutions, is one of the key strategies employed by the CSOs and other players to advance their cause to different stakeholders. In this session, the key advocacy tools; public engagement, communications, public engagement and movements. Some of the bottlenecks like protests and being meted with strong resistance from those in power (using the policy and the army) heavily affect the advocacy in most African countries—Uganda inclusive. We thus need a structural change connecting system errors, advocating for specific demands and youth-leading, prepare well; have water-tight arguments, ask questions, build common ground and their ideas, too.

### **b) Session Two: Shrinking Civic space; the role of ICT and creative Activism**

Mr. Frederik Kawoya noted—and out rightly so—that there is shrinking civic space in most African countries and unfortunately, the future of politics and good governance is a free and usable civic space. Outside Africa—and within some African countries—harnessing the influence of ICT doesn't go in isolation of allowing the people to freely access and use the internet, the reverse in Uganda. Quite ironical here today is that we have a president who thinks that ICT is the way but in paradox, doesn't think people should freely access the internet, case in point, Uganda. Besides that, the right for people to freely assemble and demonstrate has also been curtailed by the state; they are met with torture and harassment when they try to exercise that right. Notwithstanding the very risky environment, there have been very many people who have actively engaged in creative activism and taken on their governments on questions of justice, elections and good governance.



**c) Session Three: Will commercialized politics deliver the democratic dispensation for Africa's development? (Discussion); led by Henry Muguzi**

Africa's politics are characterized with high levels commercialization; in some places, it is the new normal: people are principally in politics for political gain. That said, the current state of politics in Africa; Patronage politics, Personality oriented politics and corruption, Unaccountable, and Power of incumbency.

*General state of elections in Africa;* elections are governed by money and patron- client ties, same set of political personalities continue to monopolize electoral victory, *and* Elections don't function as accountability mechanisms which sustain good governance.

**d) Session Four: Action planning; way forward.**

This session was led by Ms. Lillian Alex. The participants came up with action plans that will in turn help to speed the signing and ratification of the charter in Uganda—and beyond. Key and strategic action plans suggested going forward ; advocating for the ratification of the charter, educating the masses through civic education, igniting women leadership, amplifying their voices and deepening their voices on creating peace; incorporating it in the women's situation room, have a microcosm approach to good governance, forming alliances with other important players, popularization of ACDEG and AGA and using spaces available in the ministry of foreign affairs.



## e) Communique with Journalists

 <p><b>Call on the Ratification of African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG)</b></p> <p><b>Preamble</b></p> <p>The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG)<sup>1</sup> was adopted by the AU Summit on 30 January 2007, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia as a roadmap to encourage better governance across the continent. It sets out international standards of good governance and democracy in Rule of law, Free and Fair elections, and condemning unconstitutional changes of government. Uganda signed the Charter in December 2008 but is yet to ratify and domesticate the charter through relevant Legal enactments</p> <p>The Charter provides inter alia;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representative systems of government with separation of powers between the 3 branches of government(Executive, Legislature and Judiciary)</li> <li>• Promotion of democracy, Rule of Law and respect of Human Rights</li> <li>• Ensuring democratic rule and constitutional change of power through free, fair and transparent elections</li> <li>• Respecting ethnic, cultural and religious diversity</li> <li>• Abiding to the human rights respect as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights</li> </ul> <p>In light of the foregoing, ActionAid Uganda and East Africa Civil Society Organisation Forum, representing the entire civil society fraternity in East Africa, implore the Government of Uganda to ratify, domesticate and abide with the contents of the charter- and we make the following prayers;</p> <p><b>That;</b> the government respects the fundamental rights of its citizens and respects dissenting voices and constructive criticism.</p> <p><b>That Considering</b> the already existing infrastructure set forth by the 1995 Uganda Constitution and East African Protocols, this African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance (ACDEG) buttresses efforts and avenues through which Uganda could be the desired and REAL Pearl of Africa.</p> <p><b>Now therefore;</b></p> <p><b>We Implore</b> our leaders to take a leading role in the harmonization of statutory systems by ensuring informed citizen participation as in meaningful governance processes through creation of a conducive and enabling environment as per ACDEG chapter II;</p>	 <p><b>We also Call</b> upon our Government to ensure the co-existence of public and state media guaranteeing free access to information for all citizens and media freedom safeguarded by legal frameworks as guided by ACDEG Article 15;</p> <p><b>We Believe</b> it is very essential that all citizens are aware and enjoy their fundamental human rights as expounded in Chapter IV of the ACDEG. We therefore <b>PLEA</b> for the inclusion and enhancement of human rights education and comprehensive civic education in the school curriculum, from early childhood learning up until tertiary education levels;</p> <p><b>We Urge</b> our Government to respect and account to citizens' wishes with regards to fighting corruption by respecting the rule of law and adhering to democratic processes as provided for under Chapter VII of the ACDEG We call upon the government to take a leading role in ensuring that all citizens are capacitated to participate meaningfully in the development and governance processes with special focus on the marginalized and less privileged citizens;</p> <p>Call for an effective, efficient and full implementation of the of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance;</p> <p>Demand transparent and guaranteed free participation in political processes in the country;</p> <p>Call upon all Ugandans for harmony, tolerance and acceptance of divergent views/opinions that foster a conducive environment for citizens' participation in governance processes to promote peace and development.</p> <p><b>CONCLUSION</b></p> <p>For the calls above to be fully adhered to,</p> <p><b>We Implore</b> our Government to, as a matter of citizens' urgency, Ratify, Deposit, Domesticate, Implement, , Evaluate and Report progress on implementation of the ACDEG as per chapter XI, article 49 ;</p> <p><b>We Demand</b> that the Government sets deliberate measures to popularize the ACDEG agenda for all, from parliamentarians, government officials in line ministries and other institutions under the three arms of government, as well as the Citizens in General on what the ACDEG entails and how its beneficial to the general citizenry.</p> <p><b>Martha Makenge</b> Coordinator East-African Civil Society Forum</p> <p><b>Primus Bahigi</b> Coordinator AGA-Action Aid</p>
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## CONCLUSION

For the calls above to be fully adhered to, members agreed that the government needs to domesticate the African Charter on Elections and good governance. They pledged to continue calling upon the government, as a matter of citizens' urgency, to Ratify, Deposit, Domesticate, Implement, Evaluate and Report progress on implementation of the ACDEG as per chapter XI, article 49.