



STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 23, 2012

The African Platform on Access to Information calls on the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to advance the Right to Access to Information on the African Continent

The African Platform on Access to Information (APAI), an intercontinental initiative to promote Access to Information on the Continent, took the campaign a step further in its address to the 51st session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The APAI working group, composed of MISA, AFIC, Article 19, IFJ, TAEF, MRA, MFWA, ODAC, and Highway Africa, called on the Commission to recognize September 28th as International Right to Know day, as well as for an expansion of article IV of the Declaration of Principles of Expression in Africa to incorporate the principles of the African Platform on Access to Information Declaration.

The APAI working group submission followed a report made by the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa, Adv. Pansy Tlakula. During her report, the Special Rapporteur bemoaned the slow pace at which states on the Continent were enacting Access to Information legislation, and urged the commission to recall Resolution 167 passed by the Commission in April 2010. Resolution 167 calls for the more effective realization of Access to Information in Africa.

During its submission the APAI working group reiterated the Adv. Tlakula's concern that most countries in Africa had still not adopted comprehensive Access to Information laws or regulations, whilst also pointing out that countries with Access to Information laws had not implemented the legislation effectively. The group emphasized that this year would mark the 10th anniversary of the declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa. The anniversary of the declaration presents an opportunity to assess the

development of the right to Freedom of Expression and Access to Information on the Continent.

Encouraged by a resolution from the preceding NGO forum, which was attended by hundreds of civil society organisations, the group called upon the ACHPR to:

“Pass a resolution authorizing the ACHPR Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa to expand Part IV of the Declaration of Freedom of Expression in Africa to include principles of APAI Declaration.

Pass a resolution requesting the AU Heads of State Summit of January 2012 to adopt September 28 as an International Right to Information Day

Urge AU member states to adopt and implement national Access to Information laws that comply with the APAI Declaration and the model law on ATI developed by the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Information in Africa.

Pass a resolution requesting the African Union Summit of January 2012 to initiate an Experts meeting to develop a continental wide instrument on the right of Access to Information.”

It is hoped that the commission will show its support to the campaign by adopting the resolution and taking the declaration forward to the next AU summit in July 2012.

For more information on the campaign contact:

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