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OCT
2024

AU Reforms and Civil Society Engagement: Launch of AU Reforms Knowledge Products

#AUReforms

#HumanRights

#CSOEngagement

#ReformDon'tDeform

Concept Note for the AU Reforms Side Event on Civil Society Engagement

Date & Time

15th October 2024 | 13:30-15:30 PM (CAT)

Location:

Jawara International Conference Centre

Organizers:

Initiative for Strategic Litigation in Africa (ISLA); Synergia;
Centre for Human Rights; Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA);
Robert F Kennedy Human Rights (RFK)

Introduction:

The ongoing African Union (AU) reforms have prompted critical discussions about their impact on Africa's human rights systems. In October 2023, ISLA, along with its partners, convened the first AU Reforms Civil Society Roundtable during the 78th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). This side event provided civil society organizations (CSOs) with an initial platform to engage with the AU reforms process, raising awareness of their potential implications for Africa's human rights mechanisms.



Since that first side event, we have developed a comprehensive set of knowledge products designed to guide and enhance civil society's engagement in the AU reforms process. These documents include key briefs on advocacy, state engagement, and comparative perspectives, which collectively provide CSOs with critical tools to participate effectively in the reform dialogue. As we move forward, this side event seeks to formally launch these knowledge products, foster continued engagement, and reinforce the collective advocacy for the protection and enhancement of human rights mechanisms across the continent.

Purpose of the Side Event:

The side event will serve as a platform to launch the AU Reforms Knowledge Products, which have been developed to support CSOs in understanding and navigating the AU reforms process. It also aims to facilitate dialogue between civil society, AU member states, and other key stakeholders to ensure that human rights remain central to the reform agenda.

Objectives:

- **Raise Awareness:** Provide an overview of the AU reforms and their implications for the African Human Rights System.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Launch the AU Reforms Knowledge Products to facilitate informed engagement.
- **Dialogue Facilitation:** Encourage meaningful discussions between CSOs, member states, and AU officials on the reforms' potential risks and opportunities.
- **Strategic Engagement:** Equip CSOs with tools and strategies to engage effectively with the AU reforms process and advocate for the protection of human rights mechanisms.

Knowledge Products to be Launched:

- **CSO Position Paper on AU Reforms:** Highlights the collective position of CSOs on the key issues.
- **CSOs Advocacy Brief:** Outlines how CSOs can engage in the AU reforms.
- **States Engagement Briefing Note:** Provides a guide for engaging AU member states on the reforms.



- **Comparative Perspectives on AU Reforms Processes:** Offers lessons from other reform processes within international organizations.
- **AU Reforms Engagement Paper:** A detailed guide on how to engage with the AU Reform Unit.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased awareness and understanding of the AU Reforms and their potential impact on Africa's human rights system.
- Distribution of key knowledge products to civil society actors, providing them with necessary tools for advocacy.
- Deeper mutual understanding of the reform agenda is reached amongst stakeholder, highlighting both risks and opportunities.
- Strategic discussions on how CSOs can collaborate with the AU and member states to ensure that human rights and governance remain central to the reforms.

Contact Information:

For further inquiries or to confirm your participation, please contact:

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Agenda

Time	Activity	Facilitator
13:30 - 13:40	Opening Remarks (10 Minutes)	Sibongile Ndashe <i>ISLA</i>
13:40 - 13:55	Overview of AU Reforms themes, updates (15 minutes)	Mai Aman <i>ISLA</i>
13:55 - 14:20	CSO Engagement Initiatives and strategies: Entry Points for Advocacy (25 minutes)	Ikechukwu Uzoma <i>RFK</i> Mai Aman <i>ISLA</i>
14:20 - 14:40	Launch of AU Reforms Knowledge Products (20 minutes)	ISLA and Co-conveners
14:40 - 14:55	Perspective of State Parties (15 minutes)	TBC
14:55 - 15:30	Interactive Discussion and Feedback from Participants (30 minutes)	All Participants Moderator- Varyanne Sika
15:25 - 15:30	Closing Remarks	Lydia Kembabazi <i>IHRDA</i>