



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. P. O. Box 3243 Telephone: 5517 700 Fax: 5511299
website : www.africa-union.org

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

**THE CONSULTATION MEETING WITH MEMBER STATES' EXPERTS ON
TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE CONCLUDES**

PRESS RELEASE N°103/2011



Cape Town, 13 September 2011: A two-day consultation on transitional justice in Africa was held by the Department of Political Affairs of the African Union Commission in Cape Town, South Africa. The aim of the consultation was to develop a clear and more coherent understanding of contemporary application of transitional justice in Africa in light of the ongoing processes towards the development of an African policy framework on transitional justice.

The consultation comprised representatives of AU Member States, the Legal Counsel of the AUC, the Panel of the Wise, UN Women, independent experts on transitional justice, and representatives from the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), South Africa.

Two sessions were presented on 13 September. The first one was Principles and Elements of an Effective African Transitional Justice Policy Framework presented by Ms. Yasmin Sooka from Foundation for Human Rights. The presentation highlighted the key issues which should be considered in the development of a draft policy framework on transitional justice to include incorporating a development agenda, which should take account of the socio-economic dimension, culture, tradition and the environment.

Participants raised the question of implementation of the transitional justice framework and highlighted the importance of the Civil Society Organizations' (CSOs) involvement in this regard. It was stated that there is a pressing need for multi sectoral consultations on the best implementation practices. The draft AU policy framework needs to be referred to the member states in order to ensure the ownership of the states in the process. Furthermore, there is a need for a dialogue between the member states with regards to the draft framework for it to be effective. According to participants, there is a need for co-operation between the African Union and other international organizations and other stakeholders as well as the need to

co-operate with regards to the pooling of the resources in order to maximize the efficiency of the initiatives.

Participants identified the key values, principles and elements of an African Transitional Justice Policy Framework as follows:

- Entrench and promote African shared values.
- African ownership and leadership.
- Mobilisation, support and solidarity.
- Promote national and local ownership.
- Cooperation, coherence and coordination.
- Mediation and comprehensive peace agreements/national unity accords-including limited conditional amnesties.
- Constitutional, legislative and institutional reforms.

The second session was dedicated to crafting a road map and the way forward. The following was proposed in the efforts and processes towards the development, adoption and implementation of an African transitional justice policy framework:

- Continue deliberations in order to find convergence and commonalities on contemporary understanding and application of transitional justice in Africa among national and regional actors on the transitional justice.
- Consolidate and prepare an easy to use reference guide and tool in advance of relevant AU policy making consultations to review and improve the draft framework.
- Conduct validation workshops by independent experts; Regional Economic Communities (RECs), members of transitional justice mechanisms in member states such as members of truth and reconciliation commissions.
- Convene a brainstorming retreat with Peace and Security Council, Panel of the Wise and relevant AU organs and hold AU-CSOs consultative meetings

In his closing remarks Ambassador Emile Ognimba expressed confidence that the proposed African transitional policy framework would benefit from the suggestions for improvement that emerged from the consultation.

###