



**DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
PRESS RELEASE**

**REGIONAL ADVOCACY FOR THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REGION FOR THE PROMOTION OF THE
RATIFICATION OF THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON THE VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF
DECENTRALIZATION, LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND**

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Bujumbura, Burundi 20 November 2017 - A regional advocacy meeting on the promotion of ratification of the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and local Development for the Central Africa Region held in Bujumbura, Burundi to discuss issues and agree upon actions and recommendations aimed at sensitizing and engaging AU Member States from Central Africa Region on the importance of the ratification of the Charter.

Over 25 delegates attended the three-day (3) meeting which will have the following outcomes:

- Enhanced awareness among Member States of the value of decentralization and strong local governance and the need to implement the provisions of the Charter;
- Increased number of ratifications and improved domestic/national implementation of the Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance, and Local Development;
- Establishment of a road map and monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the recommendations of the meeting;
- Reached at least fifteen (15) ratifications by January 2018;
- By December 2018 all Member States in the Central Region have ratified the Charter.

This regional meeting that takes in the context of the advocacy efforts of the Political Affairs Department of the African Union Commission in sensitizing Member States on the importance of having decentralization and local governance policies/reforms in order to ensure adequate and sustainable development at the local levels. Therefore, it has involved local authorities, parliamentarians and representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as experts from UCGLA, and officials from the Department of Political Affairs of the AUC.



Mr. Freddy MBONIMPA, Mayor of Burundi expressed his appreciation for choosing the Republic of Burundi for hosting this meeting organized by the African Union Commission and bringing together the Delegates from the Member States of Central Africa, namely Cameroon, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, C.A.R, Chad and Burundi. He also expressed his joy as the meeting aims at promoting the ratification of this Charter in the Central African region, a subject both critical and of particular interest for his local community. He then, wished all the Delegates every success in their work and a pleasant stay in Bujumbura.

Dr. Khabele Matlosa, Director for Political Affairs on behalf of the Commissioner for Political Affairs highlighted the fact that it is taking an average of three (3) to four (4) years to get the 15 signatures required for the ratification of a Charter, adding that the AU Commission would like to see a reduction in the time. He recalled the Malabo Decision of 2014 adopting the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization as well as the establishment of the African Union High Council of Local Authorities (AU-HCLA), which shows the commitment of AU Member States to this course. He then called on Member States of the AU from the Central African Region to do the necessary back in their capitals through the different spheres of government by informing them on the importance of this treaty, so as to prepare them adequately for the ratification of this important instrument.



H.E. Mrs. Jeanne D’Arc KAGAYO, Minister of Community Development and representing the Government of Burundi welcomed all to the meeting and informed the participant that the meeting gives the delegations present here the opportunity to immerse themselves in the content of the charter and to define a strategy for the latter to be ratified and implemented as soon as possible in their respective countries. She then gave a brief on her country Burundi, as one that has already taken a big step in ratifying the African Charter. However, she noted that the ratification process is not a long, easy river. It was necessary to make a plea with the Ministry of Foreign Relations and International Cooperation that brought the issue to the level of the Government, the National Assembly and the Senate which facilitated the vote in both chambers. In addition, a strategy had to be put in place to identify any questions Parliamentarians might have asked. It is therefore the combination of these two activities that made it possible to have tangible results. With that, she declared open the advocacy meeting for the Central African Region on the ratification of the African Charter on Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development.

For further inquiry, please contact:

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