The 20th Ordinary Session of the African Union Commission on International Law Opens

The 20th Ordinary Session of the African Union Commission on International Law (AUCIL) kicked off at the AU Headquarters, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with a hope to contribute in resolving some of the legal challenges Africa is currently facing.

Opening the Meeting, Judge Ismael Hersi, AUCIL Deputy Chairperson, stressed on the need for Africa to fully participates in the construction and structuring of the new world order, as the African Union has 55 Member States, and is the largest regional grouping within the United Nations.
“Considering the collective work within our body and the individual expertise of each of the members, I would like to call for more increasing visibility of the AUCIL as a consultative body within the AU, and to the increase in the number of issues that should be submitted to our body for legal advice by political bodies” the Chairperson added.

H.E. Amb. Tesfaye Yilma, Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the African Union, noted that as continent, Africa has managed to develop consensus on various issues through the adopted regional instruments and, in turn, these instruments have made a positive contribution to international law. He added that the AUCIL, as an advisory body to the policy organs of the Union, has a unique opportunity to study various issues in the context of existing legal frameworks and accordingly advise the union.

Drawing on the AU Continental Reflection Forum on Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa’, held in Accra, he recently attended to, the Ambassador recalled that “One of the key messages of the Forum was the need to clarify AU principles such as the principle of complementarity and the principle of subsidiarity between the AU and RECs/RMS in their response to Unconstitutional Changes of Government”.

The AUCIL Session will deliberate on different items on its agenda including: Election of the Bureau, presentation and discussion of the Inter-Sessional Activities of the Bureau and Members, and the ongoing African Union Institutional Reform.

The Session will also consider and discuss a number of ongoing legal studies on political, economic and social issues in African, including on: African convention against slavery, the prohibition on intervention in international law, development of an African convention on judicial cooperation and mutual assistance, continental convention on avoiding double taxation, immunities under international law, maritime piracy, digest of African states’ practice in international law.

The Session will consider draft model law for the domestication of the African charter on the rights and welfare of the child study and codification of comparative mineral and petroleum law in Africa, international environmental law and domestication of the protocol to the African charter on human and people’s rights on the right of women in Africa.

Note to editor:

AU Commission on International Law was created in 2009 as an independent advisory organ to the AU in accordance with article 5(2) of the AU Constitutive Act.
The Commission’s main tasks is to advise the Union on matters of international law, undertakes activities relating to codification and progressive development of international law in Africa with particular attention to the laws of the AU.

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