

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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### THE AFRICAN UNION AND AFRICA TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE LEGACY FUND SIGN HISTORIC MOU ON REPARATORY JUSTICE AND RACIAL HEALING



The African Union (AU) and the Africa Transitional Justice Legacy Fund (ATJLF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) towards enhancing cooperation and collaboration in areas of common interest, including to support the AU, RECs, and Member States in matters relating to Democratic Governance, Human Rights, Rule of Law, Transitional Justice, Reparatory Justice and Racial Healing. H.E. Dr

Monique Nsanzabaganwa, Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission and Dr. Godfrey Odongo, Executive Council Member of ATJLF signed the MOU on behalf of their respective organizations. The signing ceremony took place on the 27<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at the AU Commission.

The signing of this landmark agreement accentuates the over six (6) years relationship between the AU and ATJLF. ATJLF has been a key partner with the erstwhile Department of Political Affairs (DPA), now the Department of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) in the development of the African Union Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP), which was adopted in February 2019. Currently, ATJLF is supporting the implementation of the AUTJP through the secondment of experts and programme staff to PAPS, as well as acting as the fund managers for the AU-EU Joint Initiative on Transitional Justice in Africa to foster implementation of Africa's Continental Transitional Justice Policy through the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ)-Led Consortium.

In August 2022, ATJLF and the AU Commission, in collaboration with the Government of Ghana through the Directorate of Diaspora Affairs at the Office of the Presidency, co-organized the first-ever Accra Summit on Reparations and Racial healing that brought together actors in the field of reparatory justice and racial healing in Africa and the Global African Diaspora. The outcome of the Accra Summit was the Accra Declaration on Reparations and Racial Healing.

Following the adoption of AU Assembly Decision (Assembly/AU/Dec.884(XXXVII)) on building a united front for the cause of justice and payment of reparations to Africans at the 37<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union held on 17-18 February 2024 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, ATJLF is enhancing the capacity of the AU Commission through the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) with technical expertise and seconded staff for effective coordination of the AU Reparations Agenda and the implementation of the Theme of the Year for 2025 – “Justice for Africans and People of African Descent Through Reparations.”

Furthermore, ATJLF has provided grants to Civil Society Organizations working in the field of Transitional Justice in the Gambia, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Cote D'Ivoire to the tune of 2.68 million USD for the period 2024 – 2026.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Dr. Emile Rwagasana, on behalf of H.E. the Deputy Chairperson of the Commission, thanked the leadership of ATJLF for investing in building the institutional capacity of the AU and for their solidarity with the AU in its endeavours to build a united front for the cause of reparatory justice and racial healing for the mass atrocities and historical crimes committed against Africans through, *inter alia*, slavery, the transatlantic-slave-trade, colonialism, apartheid, genocide, and neocolonialism. In addition, he emphasized the critical need for African and Diaspora organisations to partnership with the AU for the development of the Continent as envisioned by Agenda 2063.

On behalf of the leadership of ATJLF, Dr. Godfrey Odongo assured the Commission of the unwavering support of ATJLF in the implementation of the AUTJP. He also added that, “We are currently supporting the AU-EU Joint Initiative to foster implementation of Africa’s Continental Transitional Justice Policy through the ICTJ-Led Consortium launched in October 2023, and we are determined to continue with our support to the Commission through our Justice and Repair Project in the implementation of AU Assembly Decisions on Reparations, especially in rallying Africans and the Global African Diaspora for the theme of the Year 2025 on Reparations and Racial Healing.

The key objectives of the MOU include, but not limited to the following:

- a) **Implementation of the African Union Transitional Justice Policy:** The partnership will continue to provide support to implementation of the African Union Transitional Justice Policy.
- b) **African Common Position on Reparations:** This partnership will promote the development of a cohesive African Common Position on Reparations and Racial Healing, while aligning the interests and perspectives of the AU and the Global African diaspora;
- c) **Justice and Repair for Africans and the Diaspora:** This partnership will support and enhance the drive for continental and global action to demand reparations for mass atrocities and crimes committed against Africans through the slave trade, slavery, colonialism, apartheid, genocide, and neocolonialism through continental bodies and civil society organizations;
- d) **Consensus and Bridge-building:** Through convenings, the AU Commission and ATJLF will seek to connect advocacy groups in Africa and the Global African Diaspora for a common and united reparations agenda;
- e) **Education:** Through convenings, publications, training and creative storytelling, the AU Commission and ATJLF will set the agenda for preserving Africa’s narrative in documenting the history and legacies of mass atrocities and colonial crimes in Africa and the Global African Diaspora;
- f) **Racial Healing:** Through dialogues, narrative building, and convenings, the partnership will promote healing between Africa and its descendants in the Global Diaspora.

The partnership between the AU Commission and ATJLF aims to build a common African and Global Diaspora Voice to improve the advocacy for justice and repair, while amplifying the voices of Africans and the African Diaspora in addressing legacies of mass atrocities, and historical crimes and moral injustices committed against Africans and the Global African Diaspora.

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