

**TRES/002/04/25: RESOLUTION ON SUPPORTING CITIZEN ELECTION OBSERVERS**

**AND STRENGTHENING ELECTORAL INTEGRITY IN AFRICA**

We, the participants at the Forum on the Participation of NGOs in the 83<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights held in Banjul, The Gambia 28<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025 resolve as follows:

**NOTING** that the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights confers citizens the right to participate freely in the affairs of government, either directly or through freely chosen representatives in accordance with the provisions of the law;

**INSPIRED** by the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance, which underscores the significance of African States' adherence to universal democratic values, respect for human rights, and the promotion of regular, free, and fair elections that institutionalise legitimate governance and facilitate democratic change;

**CONCERNED** by the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) and military coups, undermining electoral democracy and contributing to insecurity, conflict, and developmental stagnation across Africa;

**FURTHER CONCERNED** by continental trends on decreased voter turnout during general elections, shrinking civic space during electoral campaign periods and the violation of various human and peoples' rights prior to, during and in the aftermath of elections;

**COGNIZANT** of the growing lack of trust in Election Management Bodies (EMBs) due to non-consultative appointment processes and weak transparency, both of which undermine public confidence in the electoral process;

**ALARMED** by the limited attention to political financing issues on the African continent, which has raised concerns about the influence of illicit funds in electoral processes;

**CONCERNED** by the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies in election management without adequate legal frameworks, and the potential for these technologies to increase public mistrust and erode electoral integrity if deployed improperly or used to spread misinformation and disinformation during elections;

**APPRECIATING** the crucial role played by citizen observers in providing oversight and accountability in electoral processes through election observation and monitoring across the continent;

**FURTHER REAFFIRMING** our belief and recognition that electoral democracy and rule of law cannot be consolidated on the African continent without the cultivation of an open and

safe civic space that facilitates citizen participation, either individually or through civic organisations and political groupings;

**THE NGOs FORUM call upon the African Commission to adopt a resolution in which it:**

1. Consider establishing a special mechanism on electoral integrity in Africa which, through a rights-based approach, collaborates with citizen electoral observer groups to ensure that recommendations from electoral observer missions are collated, analysed, widely disseminated and their implementation monitored in order to improve electoral integrity from one electoral cycle to the next.
2. Ensure that its study on artificial intelligence and emerging technologies addresses the issue of technology in electoral processes and ensures that standards are established to safeguard electoral integrity and the related citizens' rights to public participation.
3. Support rights-based trainings of judicial officers and the personnel of Electoral Management Bodies on the use of technology in elections.
4. Support the establishment of multi-stakeholder national mechanisms for effective and responsive engagement of stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of observation recommendations.

**Requests all member states to :**

1. Universally ratify, domesticate and implement the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance as a shared values instrument that demonstrates their collective commitment to electoral integrity and democratic governance.
2. Strengthen the independence of Election Management Bodies and Political Party Regulators by guaranteeing transparency in the appointment of officials that manage them, ensuring security of tenure, and providing adequate funding for their functions.
3. Universally ratify, domesticate and implement the African Union Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection, and to engage with stakeholders to develop further legal frameworks and guidelines which ensure that the use of artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies in electoral processes, serve to enhance rather than undermine electoral integrity.
4. Embrace and legislate for a more open civic space including in the digital sphere, and expunge restrictive laws that hinder freedom of assembly, association, and expression, which are critical to robust political participation.

5. Reform the laws and policies governing election observation to ensure that the accreditation processes for citizen electoral observers are not unduly burdensome, expensive, or restrictive but instead foster inclusivity and bolster the integrity of electoral processes through civilian oversight.
6. Strengthen their judiciaries by providing adequate funding, resources, and guarantees of independence, especially in adjudicating electoral disputes.
7. Enact and strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks that regulate the financing of political parties and candidates for election campaigns.

Done at Banjul, April 30<sup>th</sup> 2025

The Forum