



## **Cairo Declaration on Priority Measures for the Achievement of Common African Judicial Objectives for the Benefit of the Peoples of our Continent**

### **Outcome of the Fourth Cairo High Level Meeting of the Chief Justices and Presidents of the African Constitutional and Supreme Courts & Constitutional Councils (Cairo, Egypt; February 21-25, 2020)**

*We, the Chief Justices and Presidents of Constitutional Courts, Supreme Courts, Constitutional Councils & Senior Members of the Judiciaries in 33 African countries, gathered here at the premises of the Supreme Constitutional Court in Cairo, Egypt, from 21-25 February 2020, for the Fourth Cairo High Level Meeting of the Chief Justices of the African Constitutional and Supreme Courts & Constitutional Councils;*

*Acknowledging* the importance of enhancing cooperation between the African Judiciaries and recognizing the urgent need of adopting effective measures to achieve the common judicial objectives needed for the sustainable development of our countries and the welfare of our people;

*Eager to* maintain the newly established tradition of annually holding the Cairo High Level Meetings of the African Constitutional and Supreme Courts & Constitutional Councils in Cairo, Egypt, in February under the auspices of the Egyptian Presidency;

*Encouraged* by the openness, comprehensiveness and transparency of the discussions held between the African Judicial Authorities during the First, Second and Third High Level Meetings held in Cairo in 2017, 2018 and 2019 respectively;



*Keen* to build on the outcomes of these three meetings and to enhance the unique communication and information-exchange platform it has created among African Judges to deepen the ongoing conversation on various priority issues of importance to the Judiciaries in our continent;

*Inspired* by the leadership shown by Egypt during its Chairship of the African Union over the past year and its ability to promote cooperation between African countries in numerous fields including judicial matters; and *looking forward to* South Africa's Chairship of the African Union in the year ahead;

*Recognizing* the detrimental effects that corruption has on the delivery of justice, the realization of sustainable development and the achievement and maintenance of peace and security in the continent and that it undermines respect for human rights, transparency and accountability;

*Stressing* the crucial role Judges play in fighting corrupt practices and behaviors at all levels, upholding the rule of law and combatting terrorism across the continent;

*Resolutely Committing* to uphold universally recognized principles of judicial integrity, professionalism, and ethics and mindful that judicial integrity plays an essential role in achieving development, peace and security and recognizing with appreciation the efforts exerted by the Judicial Integrity Group and its members at national, regional and international levels to promote judicial integrity, including through the development, sharing and revising of the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct as well as other relevant instruments, including their respective commentary and measure for their effective implementation;

*Acknowledging* the need for continuing Judicial education and professional development at all levels of the Judiciary;

*Recognizing* the widespread benefits the development and use of information and communication technologies brings to the work of our Judiciaries, as well as the many challenges to privacy and security it poses;



*Expressing sincere gratitude to the Supreme Constitutional Court of Egypt for the steadfast efforts exerted over the past years to follow up on the implementation of the outcome documents of the past three High Level Meetings;*

*Recommitting to the decisions and resolutions of the First, Second and Third Meetings of this body;*

*Having considered the priority needs and key concerns of the Judiciaries of our African countries;*

### **It is Hereby Resolved:**

1. Commend Judges from across our continent, in particular women judges, for their unwavering commitment and dedication to the promotion of the values of independence, integrity, transparency, impartiality, and securing access to justice; in spite of the many challenges they face in performing their duties.
2. Encourage our Judges to participate in and enrich the discussions to be held this year around the theme of the African Union for 2020: “Silencing the guns: creating conducive conditions for Africa’s development”, especially by exploring the relation between development, the rule of law, security sector reform, human rights, transitional justice and governance.
3. Stress that sustainable development, peace and security in the continent are closely linked to the independence, efficiency and impartiality of our Judiciaries.
4. Adopt additional measures to consolidate cooperation in key judicial areas to ensure that all our citizens, without discrimination of any kind, live in free, inclusive and democratic societies that are solidly founded on justice, the rule of law, and high standards of transparency and accountability.



5. Recognize the progress made in the working of the initial phase of the “African Digital Judicial and Constitutional Database and Information Hub” launched in 2019 with the aim of ensuring the digital compilation of all African Constitutions and relevant African Judicial rulings as well maintaining an online platform virtually connecting African Judiciaries by facilitating information exchange on all matters relevant to justice in our continent.

6. Take further steps to ensure that our Judiciaries are equipped to better promote, protect and enforce the human rights and fundamental freedoms of our citizens.

7. Explore and examine the implications of the Judiciary’s resolution of Presidential Election and Electoral disputes on democratic governance in African societies.

8. Strengthen cooperation to widely disseminate in our continent and ensure the application of the principles of judicial ethics, including independence, impartiality, integrity, equality, propriety, competence and diligence, as well as fairness, accountability, transparency, confidentiality, incorruptibility and other universally recognized ethical values.

9. Collaborate further to properly conceptualize the idea of “environmental justice” in the African context, especially in relation to issues such as the equitable distribution of environmental resources and environmental burdens as well as the role of the Judiciaries in conflicts arising from the exploitation of the environment such as land-grabbing, mega-mining and over-fishing.

10. Adopt measures to take advantage of the new opportunities that the rapid development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Africa brings to significantly improve the administration of justice in our countries, especially in relation to enhancing efficiency, access, accountability, timeliness and transparency; while also taking steps to overcome the associated hurdles and challenges.



11. Exchange information and promote best practices across our borders on how to best tackle the challenges stemming from the expansion of the cyberspace in our digital age, especially in relation to the protection and privacy of data, the spread of fake news and the growth of cybercrime; without infringing on online freedoms.

*Finally, recognizing the added value brought by the regular meetings of the Chief Justices and Presidents of Constitutional Courts, Supreme Courts, Constitutional Councils and Senior Members of the Judiciaries in our African countries and the critical importance of following-up on the implementation of the subsequent Cairo Declarations;*

*We recall our decision to institutionalize the Cairo High Level Meetings as a permanent forum based at the Supreme Constitutional Court in Cairo, Egypt and to hold them annually in Egypt in the first quarter of each year in order to serve the Judiciaries of the African Continent and promote cooperation and collaboration on issues of priority.*

*The Secretariat of this 2020 Cairo Meeting is entrusted to start consultations with all relevant stakeholders on possible dates for the holding of the Fifth Cairo Meeting in Egypt in 2021 and to follow-up with the participating countries on the implementation of this Declaration.*

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