

# Ghana AU Civil Society Coalition

## Introduction

The Ghana AU Civil Society Coalition is a network of about 33 civil society organizations that was formed in April 2007, with the Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG) as the convener. The coalition emerged as a result of the pressing need to fill the knowledge and participatory gaps in the debate on the *Union Government* proposal, which is the sole item on the agenda for deliberations at the 9<sup>th</sup> Ordinary session of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union in July, 2007 in Accra, Ghana.

## Goals of the Ghana AU Civil Society Coalition

Among the general goals of the Ghana AU Civil Society Coalition are the following:

- ❖ to create public awareness of the *Grand Debate*;
- ❖ to elicit and harmonize public opinion on the issue;
- ❖ to provide the needed platforms for citizens- government consultations on the issues in a manner that facilitates citizen input in the official Government position on the Debate; and
- ❖ to provide a platform for coordinating continental CSO activity towards, during and after the Summit.

## ACTIVITIES OF COALITION

In line with its goals, the Ghana AU Civil Society Coalition is undertaking a series of programs among which are the following:

- ***Teach-in workshop on the AU***  
Organized in April 2007, this workshop sought to provide a platform to increase understanding of the African Union, particularly of its decision-making structures, seek avenues for securing a more comprehensive participation of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the debate, as well as to build consensus among local CSOs on other pertinent issues to be raised at the Summit.
- ***AU Summit Publicity Program***  
On May 25, 2007, the Coalition undertook an elaborate media campaign aimed at "Sensitizing the public on the AU Summit and the Grand Debate." To facilitate discussions, experts on regional integration, public officials including parliamentarians, and civil society leaders and activists were invited to brainstorm the Union Government proposal on radio, TV, and in the print media.
- ***Interactive Meeting with Foreign Ministry***  
On June 1, 2007, the Coalition also organised an interactive meeting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and NEPAD under the theme "***Informing Ghana's Position on the AU Grand Debate.***" That meeting brought together high-profile personalities from the media, academia, traditional councils, CSOs, private organizations, present/former public officials etc., and sought, among other things, to (a) find out Ghana's official position, if any, on the Grand Debate; (b) collect and collate civil society's views on the matter; and finally, (c) provide a platform for civil society-Government engagement on the issue.
- ***Regional Outreach Programs***  
On June 14 2007 the Coalition also launched three regional sensitization programs running simultaneously in Tamale (Northern Zone), Kumasi (Middle Zone) and in Accra (Southern Zone). These outreach programs brought together a well-balanced representation of ordinary men and women from all walks of life including students, farmers, chiefs and queen mothers, assembly members and District Chief Executives etc. from all the regions of the country to discuss the issues on the Grand Debate.

- ***Continental Conference***

On June 22-23, 2007, the GAUCSC shall host a continental conference of African civil society organizations and stakeholders in the on-going consultation processes on the continental Union Government proposal. This conference seeks to create a platform, to among other things, promote structured debate and collation of views on the issues that have already been dealt with at the level of national debates in civil society and Parliaments/legislatures while addressing outstanding issues not yet covered in the national level debates on the AUG proposal. The Conference is also expected to help participating CSOs formulate a common position on Union Government proposal and submit their proposals, if any, for consideration at the Accra Summit.

- ***Interactive Session with Heads of State and Government***

The GAUCSC is currently working towards putting together a high-level interactive meeting between five select African Heads of State and Government and selected civil society representatives from across the continent on July 1, 2007. This forum, expected to be covered live by major national and international media houses, will seek to provide an opportunity to lobby the AU and enlist its support for CSO proposals that may arise from the continental conference in June.

## **Members of Coalition**

**Third World Network - TWN**

**Institute for Democratic Governance - IDEG**

**ActionAid, Ghana**

**OXFAM**

**International Center for Conflict and Human Rights - ICCHR**

**West Network for Peace**

**DZREKE Virgins**

**SNV**

**PRONET**

**National Catholic Secretariat**

**ClayDord Consult**

**Trade Union Congress**

**NCAP**

**Sam Okudjeto & Association**

**Abibiman Foundation**

**ISODEC**

**Private Enterprise Foundation**

**GNECC**

**PARDA**

**VTF Program**

**NNED**

**Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition**

**Legon Center for International Affairs**

**AU**

**SEND Foundation**

**Christian Council of Ghana**

**INFODEV**

**IBIS, Ghana**

**Growth and Poverty Forum – GPF**

**Organization of African Trade Union Unity –OATUU**

**AAIG**

**Commonwealth Human Rights Institute - CHRI**

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