

Africans Rising Conference
23rd to 24th August 2016
Arusha, Tanzania



From Left: Muhammed LaminSaidykhan (ACTIVISTA), Essa Sowe (GTU) and IsatouJeng (NGBV)

INTRODUCTION

In October 2015, ActionAid International and CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation hosted a group of African civil society representatives at the Training Centre for Development Cooperation (TCDC) for a workshop to reflect on the idea of establishing a dynamic and robust space where progressive African civil society leaders engaged in various civic struggles could convene to collaborate and share knowledge. What began as a proposal for an Africa Civil Society Centre became the current Africa Civil Society Initiative (ACSI), a decentralized platform for cooperation.

Since then the conversation has expanded and, to date, the online and offline dialogues with over 3000 people have allowed the movement to reach the consensus that; unity, reflected by greater social, political and economic integration, is critical for Africa and its peoples to progress and thrive. Civil society organizations need to be the vanguard of a proactive and positive movement towards unity, action and change; and thus the primary goal of ACSI is to cooperatively build a robust, agile, and inclusive Africa-wide civil society platform for justice, peace and sustainable development.

This is what gave birth to the **Africans Rising Movement for Justice, Peace and sustainable Development**. A movement that brought together 272 representatives (women, men and youth) from civil society and various groups and organizations in Arusha, Tanzania from the 23rd to 24th

August 2016. The validation conference created a platform for dialogue and networking in fostering and shaping the Africa we want. It fostered a conversation during the process of validating the working document that gave everyone a sense of direction as to what needs to be done in achieving the desired objectives of the movement.

As critical partners in the formation of the ACSI, ActionAid International The Gambia supported the participation of two people from partner institutions namely **Mr. Essa Sowe of Gambia Teachers Union** and **Ms. Isatou Jeng of Network Against Gender Based Violence**. As part of the 272 delegates the duo participated fully to the successful implementation of the conference through plenaries and breakaway sessions.

PROCEEDINGS:

Going through the draft working document, five critical themes were identified by the interim committee taking into consideration issues affecting the lives of the people on the African continent. These themes are:

1. Expanding the civic space
2. Gender inequalities
3. Poverty and inequalities
4. Corruption
5. Climate justice

In validating the working document discussions were made during breakout sessions with the task to evaluate the five themes as to whether they should be maintained, changed or add other themes. While some people suggested with strong justifications for these themes to be maintained, there were others who proposed for adjustments and modifications, most especially tackling the issue of inclusion and equality. All the suggestions made were later summed up into five broad themes reflecting the top priority areas affecting the continent and its people. The final themes agreed are:

1. Expanding space for civic and political action
2. Fighting for women's rights and freedoms across society
3. Focusing our struggles on the right to Equity and Dignity
4. Demanding good governance as we fight corruption and impunity
5. Demanding climate and environmental justice

CONCLUSION:

The Africans Rising Conference has created a movement on the African continent for both its habitants and those living in the diaspora to work in solidarity in reconstructing the Africa we want. One of the prominent issues delegates had hold firm unto is the promotion and protection of Women's rights as a critical element in the realization of equality, justice, peace and sustainable development.



Mr. Essa Sowe and Ms. Isatou Jeng after the official closing ceremony

The final declaration was read and shared during the formal closing ceremony and it reads:

The Kilimanjaro Declaration

We, the citizens and descendants of Africa, as part of the Africans Rising Movement, are outraged by the centuries of oppression; we condemn the plunder of our natural and mineral resources and the suppression of our fundamental human rights.

We are determined to foster an Africa-wide solidarity and unity of purpose of the Peoples of Africa to build the Future we want – a right to peace, social inclusion and shared prosperity.

On 23rd– 24rd August 2016, two hundred and seventy two representatives from civil society, trade unions, women, young people, men, people living with disabilities, parliamentarians, media organizations and faith-based groups, from across Africa and the African diaspora gathered in Arusha, Tanzania and committed to build a pan-African movement that recognises these rights and freedoms of our People.

THE CONFERENCE DECLARED THAT:

1. Africa is a rich continent. That wealth belongs to all our People, not to a narrow political and economic elite. We need to fight for economic development that is just and embraces social inclusion and environmental care. We have a right to the ‘better life’ our governments have promised.
2. Africans have a diverse, rich and powerful heritage that is important to heal ourselves and repair the damage done by neoliberalism to our humanity and environment. Being African, embracing the philosophy of Ubuntu should be a source of our pride.
3. African Youth are a critical foundation of building the success in our continent and must play a central role in building Africans Rising.

4. Africa's Diaspora whether displaced through slavery and colonialism or part of modern day migration are part of Africa's history and future. They are a reservoir of skills, resources and passion that must be harnessed and integrated into our movement.

5. We are committed to a decentralized, citizen-owned future that will build support and solidarity for local struggles, empower local leadership and immerse our activists in grassroots work of building social movements from below and beyond borders.

6. We are committed to building a citizen's movement that is accountable to the constituencies we represent and enforcing the highest standards of ethical behaviour.

THEREFORE, WE RESOLVE THAT OUR WORK SHOULD BUILD A LOCAL, NATIONAL CONTINENTAL AND GLOBAL CAMPAIGN THAT IS:

- a. Expanding space for civic and political action
- b. Fighting for women's rights and freedoms across society
- c. Focusing our struggles on the right to Equity and Dignity
- d. Demanding good governance as we fight corruption and impunity
- e. Demanding climate and environmental justice

CALL ON OUR PEOPLE AND ACTIVISTS TO:

Join this Africans Rising Movement and mobilise our people around this shared vision; organise and connect

local struggles under this umbrella; galvanise solidarity with all African struggles. This movement is committed to peace and non-violent action. We assert our inherent rights as Africans and invite our governments, leaders, other stakeholders and institutions to join us in pursuing the Future We Want to leave our future generations.

We commit to mobilizing our people in Africa to launch this Movement on the 25th May, 2017, when we deepen the meaning of African Liberation Day and call on all sectors of our society to mobilize and organize events in every African country that will build the momentum towards the genuine liberation of our beautiful continent.