



**Statement of the APAI Working Group on the Declaration of September
28 International Right to Information Day
At the 56th Session of the African Commission on Human and
Peoples Rights**

Banjul April 2015

Madam Chairperson
Hon Commissioners,
State delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The working group on African Platform on Access to Information (APAI) composed of AFIC, Article 19, IFJ, MFWA, Highway Africa, MISA, MRA, ODAC and TAEF, appreciates the opportunity to address the 56th session of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights.

We would to reiterate our resolve to support the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa and the ACHPR in general to advance freedom of expression and access to information on the continent.

Hon. Chairperson,

The right of access to information forms an integral part of the right of freedom of expression guaranteed by Article 9 of ACHPR.

On 12 April 2013 during the 53rd Ordinary Session held in Banjul, The Gambia the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted the Model Law on Access to Information in Africa. This initiative has had a positive impact on influencing the quality of new access to information laws as well as providing a framework for their effective implementation.

We take note of steps recently taken by Rwanda, South Sudan, Corte d'Ivoire Sierra Leone and Sudan to implement Article 9 of the Charter through adoption of national freedom of information laws. Today sixteen African countries have national access to information laws.

At the 50th Ordinary Session, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights adopt Resolution No. 222 to modify the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression to include access to information and request for a **Commemorative Day on Freedom of Information.**

Chairperson and distinguished Commissioners;

APAI Working Group acknowledges and commends the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information on pragmatic steps she has taken to expand Article IV of the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa to include access to information.

We also commend her efforts in popularizing the Model Law on Access to Information among Member States and civil society stakeholders.

Despite these positive developments millions of Africans suffer one form of violation or the other due to lack of information on how governments go about their work.

Chairperson and Commissioners;

In view of this we call upon the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to:

- i. Urge through its next Activity Report, the African Union to **declare September 28 as International Right to Information Day.**
- ii. Adopt a resolution calling upon all African Union member states to embrace the Model Law on Access to Information in Africa by **adopting and effectively implementing access to information laws.**

These decisions will promote public awareness and mobilise member states to promote the right of access to information for their citizens.

Thank you for your kind attention