**African Civil Society Engagement of International Policy Processes: UN Open-Ended Working Group on the security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2025 (OEWG)**

**Resolutions**

**Introduction**

A one-day meeting for African civil society organizations was convened by Media Rights Agenda (MRA) on Tuesday, October 18, 2022, at the 2022 NGO Forum coordinated by the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS). The NGO Forum was held on the margins of the 73rd Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, and the 35th commemoration of the Commission taking place in Banjul, The Gambia, from October 20 to November 9, 2022.

The objective of the meeting tagged “African Civil Society Engagement of International Policy Processes: UN Open-Ended Working Group on the security of and in the use of information and communications technologies 2021-2025 (OEWG)” was to increase awareness and engagement by African civil society actors working in the human rights sector of the United Nations cyber processes relating to responsible state behaviour in cyberspace.

The session organized by MRA in collaboration with Global Partners Digital (GPD), based in London, and was facilitated by the Head of MRA’s Legal Department, Ms Obioma Okonkwo, and Ms Thobekile Matimbe, the Partnerships and Engagement Manager of Paradigm Initiative. It was attended by representatives of African civil society organizations from across the continent.

At the end of their deliberations, the participants adopted this Resolution.

**Observations, Conclusions and Recommendations**

Participants called on African governments to play a more active role in international treaty and policy processes, including the ongoing work of the UN Open-Ended Working Group on the security of and in the use of information and communications technologies (OEWG), in order to ensure that African perspectives and voices are well-reflected in the outcome of such processes while also protecting the interests of African countries and their citizens.

Furthermore, they urged African governments to promote and advance a human rights-respecting approach to the issues of cybersecurity as well as general ICT policies and regulations as cybersecurity has the potential to affect peoples’ well-being, rights, livelihoods, among other aspects of human existence.

Participants proposed that in engaging international treaty and policy processes, African governments should build multi-stakeholder partnerships in order to ensure that the diverse competencies and expertise among the different stakeholder groups, which exist at the national and regional levels are adequately harnessed to advance and protect African interests.

In particular, they called for greater collaboration between African governments and civil society organizations to create awareness among citizens and the entire populations of African countries of cybersecurity issues as the involvement and engagement by ordinary citizens are critical to the successful campaign for and realization of cybersecurity.

The participants called for the inclusion of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) as a key stakeholder group in cybersecurity efforts.

They also proposed the involvement of children and young persons stakeholders in cybersecurity capacity-building as they need to be properly educated in the use and protection of ICTs.

The participants also called for the engagement of the African Union Commission committees working on children, women and disability people in order to engender comprehensive and inclusive cybersecurity frameworks and practices. In addition, they urged the African Union Commission to provide cybersecurity training and other capacity-building programmes to AU member states.

***Adopted in Banjul, The Gambia, this Tuesday, the 18th day of October 2022.***