

NGO Forum preceding the 45th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights

On 9-11 May 2009, Mr. Voke Ighorodje (Consultant for the **ICRtoP** housed at the World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy) participated in the NGO Forum preceding the 45th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights in Gambia. The NGO Forum was held from 9-11 May 2009 at the Kairaba Beach Hotel, in the Gambia. A total of 216 NGOs including international NGOs and inter-governmental organizations participated.

At the end of the Forum, a total of 11 thematic resolutions, 6 countries resolutions and 4 recommendations were adopted by the Forum. Among the thematic resolutions adopted was the [resolution](#) by the ICC/African Court interest group and entitled 'strengthening international justice in Africa' with specific provisions recalling the 2005 Summit Outcome on the RtoP and another provision demanding for the expression of commitment by the AU member states.

#### **45th Ordinary Session of the ACHPR**

The 45th Ordinary Session of the ACHPR entitled 'Human Rights, our Collective Responsibility' was declared open by the Honorable Minister for Justice of the Gambia. In the presentation of the NGO Forum report to the members of the ACHPR during the opening ceremony, the Executive Director of the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) made a case in favor of strengthening the protection capacities of member states and promoting **RtoP**.

During the public session of the ACHPR, WFM-IGP presented [a statement](#) making a call for the establishment of a special mechanism for the promotion of the international justice and the **RtoP**.

#### **Special Interest Group on the ICC/African Court**

Special interest groups are formed around major themes that form the discussions of the Forum. Mr. Voke Ighorodje joined the special interest group discussion of the current hostile attitude of the AU heads of state to the ICC, especially since the indictment issued by the Court against the Sudanese President. Within these issues, NGOs discussed the upcoming meeting of the AU on the ICC and the need to increase NGO representation. In addition, NGOs emphasized the need for NGOs to be more vocal in their support for the ICC to counter the arguments of detractor governments.

After deliberations, the group presented a Resolution on strengthening international justice in Africa. Provisions on **RtoP** were incorporated into the resolution as NGOs agreed that strengthening and implementing the **RtoP** would work towards making the ICC more effective in Africa.

#### **Side Event on International Justice**

FIDH, ACHPR and the ACDHRS organized a special side event on the international justice and the ICC. The meeting highlighted the challenges facing the ICC in Africa. The meeting

noted that of the four country-situations in Africa involving the ICC, three of them were requested by the States themselves while the last one was referred by the UN Security Council. The meeting also touched upon human rights violations in the DRC and IDPs in the Sudan since the expulsion of international NGOs and the restriction of local NGOs. The meeting ended with a call on the ACHPR to make strengthening international justice its theme for the next session.