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Civil Society Common Position on Statelessness (30 April, 2014, Saly Portudal, Senegal)

We, the civil society organisations of West Africa, gathered in Dakar for the Regional Meeting on Statelessness, with support from the UNHCR on 29 and 30 April 2014, in Saly Portudal, Senegal:

Recalling

The 1954 and 1961 Conventions on Statelessness;

The 2013 Banjul Appeal on Statelessness;

Referring to the Resolution of African Commission on Human and People's Rights' at 53rd Session on the Right to Nationality in Africa, held in Banjul in October 2013;

Bearing in mind the negative impact on Statelessness in the development of the continent and the socio-economic integration of our peoples,

Concerned with the low rate of birth registration especially in forced migration situations, and weak public policies against Statelessness;

By the denial of basic human rights, especially the right to Nationality to millions of Africans;

By the fact that Statelessness weakens the sense of identity and belonging which are essential in building a strong and vibrant Africa;

Welcoming the momentum that has been generated through State driven awareness efforts in some part of the continent;

Appreciating to growing overtures from all States toward civil society, especially the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, in the interest of a participative approach to dealing with Statelessness in our countries,

Urge

West African States who have not yet ratified the Conventions:

Act upon the recommendations from the 2013 Banjul appeal on Statelessness;

Ratify the 1954 and 1961 Conventions on Statelessness as a matter of urgency;

Support the Resolution of African Commission on Human and People's Rights' at 53rd Session on the Right to Nationality in Africa toward establishing a Protocol on the Right to Nationality in Africa;

West African States who have ratified the Conventions:

Proceed expressly with their domestication;

Pro-actively move on to provide the enabling mechanisms for the identification, prevention, reduction and protection of stateless persons;

Pledge to eradicate Statelessness on the continent and act resolutely upon those pledges;

Take it upon themselves to put in place an Inter- sectorial task force, and devise an assessment framework and an implementation action plan to address statelessness;

Adopt relevant legislation on Nationality based on international commitments against all discriminations against women on the right to Nationality;

Adopt mainstreaming the issue of statelessness in the judicial systems, in national data gathering processes, in research as well as in the secondary and tertiary education systems;

Invest in research and strengthen their relationship with Research institutions and training, centers to integrate Statelessness in the curriculum and in research in general;

Involve civil society as well as the media in the areas of information, education, sensitization and implementation in order deal effectively with Statelessness;

Involve the private sector, in its social responsibility, to contribute in financing the fight against Statelessness for a sustained campaign against Statelessness;

The United Nations High Commission of Refugees to:

Continue its efforts to support those States that have ratified,

Include Statelessness in its name by adding an S to its acronym name: UNHCRS, hence setting to tone to an overall adoption and mainstreaming of Statelessness in national programs.

Adopted in Saly Portudal on April 30, 2014

Participants in the Regional Meeting:

Amnesty International: Benin

Afrique Secours et Assistance (ASA): Cote D'Ivoire

Conscience International Sierra Leone (CISL): Sierra Leone

Forum de la société civile de l'Afrique de l'Ouest (FOSCAO/WACSO): Nigeria

Human Rights Advocacy Center (HRAC): Ghana

Legal Aid Gambia: The Gambia

Front Line Defenders (Même Droits Pour Tous): Guinea

Open Society Initiative for East Africa (OSIEA): Kenya

Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (RADDHO): Senegal

Réseau des Plate-Forme d'ONG de l'Afrique du Ouest et du Centre (REPAOC) :
Senegal

Rhema Care Integrated Development (RCID): Nigeria