



Democracy in Africa – a way forward

CONFERENCE DETAILS

CALL FOR PAPERS: All papers to be received no later than 2 May 2018

DATE: 24 – 25 May 2018

VENUE: TBD

INTRODUCTION:

At the end of World War II in line with the Atlantic Charter a majority of states have looked to democracy as a form of government that best meet the needs of citizenry. For this reason the discussions and debates on democracy remain pertinent to the progress of humanity. In Africa a continent new to democracy as a form of government the debate has gained traction as the people in the 54 countries that make up Africa demand for rights and that such rights be protected. Despite the cynics regarding democracy in Africa, stating that the continent harbors “important attributes of democracy [but is] not considered fully democratic.”¹ Afrobarometer research indicates that “on average across the continent, Africans prefer democracy to any kind of government.”² Considering the need for democracy in Africa it is essential that we have this debate on what democracy in Africa is at present and what it should be.

Democracy trends in Africa:

This conference seeks to deal with the impact, role and importance of democracy in Africa. Looking at a modern Africa one that is part of “a new world order” joined together with the world “to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind – peace and security, freedom, and the rule of law.”³ What does democracy mean to Africa and how do its people experience it on a daily basis.

¹ Collier, D & Levitsky, S. 1997. *Democracy with adjectives: Conceptual innovation in comparative research*. World Politics 49 (April 1997): 430-451

² Afrobarometer. Democracy in Africa demand and supply. [Online] <http://afrobarometer.org/blogs/do-africans-still-want-democracy-new-report-gives-qualified-yes> Accessed 17 November 2017

³ Bush, G. 29 January 1991. *Address before a joint session of the Congress on the State of the Union*. [Online] <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=19253> Accessed on 28 November 2017

What has events within government on the continent had on the outlook of democracy? If one considers the court involvement in the Kenyan elections, the military's involvement in the ousting of Robert Mugabe as president in Zimbabwe, constitutional changes in the Republic of Gabon 2011, in the Republic of Chad in 2005, the Republic of Cameroon in 2008, the Republic of Congo Brazzaville in 2015 and the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2011 with the sole objective of maintaining power without democratic alternation, to name but a few of the issues present on the continent. These events and the others not mentioned influence democracy as it is also influenced by the various cultures and traditions of the people. As such the conference poses the following questions:

- What does democracy mean in African? Can one talk of African democracy as opposed to Western democracy? What are the challenges and where has progress been made?
- What is the role of civil society in Africa and how does it contribute to the consolidation of democratic instruments on the continent?
- Is the promotion of civil servants for the quest for democracy guaranteed?

The African Democracy Forum will be hosting this conference *Democracy in Africa – the way forward* in Kigali, Rwanda and aim to bring together scholars, civil servants and civil society representatives familiar and expert on democracy in Africa to debate and discuss the state of it here. The conference will be taking place over two days and we will host eight sessions in which the following topics will be discussed. These topics are as follows:

1. The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Good Governance – positives, challenges and country involvement
2. The African Union and the challenges faced by democratization in Africa
 - a). conflict
 - b). terrorism / extremism in Africa
 - c). the role of religion in African politics
3. Participation in democratic consolidation in Africa
 - a). the role of women and youth
 - b). the role of political parties (in particular opposition parties)
 - c). the role of Civil Society
 - d). the change of the constitution as a weapon of longevity to power
4. The way forward for democracy
 - a). defining democracy in Africa as the universality of democracy

We are looking forward to receiving your academic papers and welcome your participation in this initiative. Please address all inquiries to mikhaila@africademocracyforum.org and malanac@gmail.com and send all papers to the ADF Secretariat africadf.secretariat@gmail.com