

**ACHPR/Res.54(XXIX)01: RESOLUTION ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

*The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights meeting at its 29<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Session in Tripoli, the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, from 23<sup>rd</sup> April to 7<sup>th</sup> May 2001,*

**Recalling** Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights which guarantees the right to freedom of expression;

**Recognising** that freedom of expression is an essential attribute of human existence in all spheres of life and that there is now widespread international recognition of the cardinal role of freedom of expression in human progress;

**Noting** that freedom of expression is a potent and indispensable instrument for the creation and maintenance of a democratic society and the consolidation of development;

**Concerned** at the widespread violation of this right by States parties to the Charter through the harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention of journalists, victimisation of media houses deemed critical of the establishment, inadequate legal frameworks for regulating electronic media especially broadcasting, and criminal and civil laws that inhibit the right to freedom of expression;

**Mindful of the potentially** narrow scope of protection given by Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights;

**Recognising** the increasingly specialised nature of information technology and its impact on various aspects of the right to freedom of expression;

**Recalling** the recommendations of the Seminar on Freedom of Expression and the African Charter, it held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> November 2000;

**Decides:**

1. **To develop** and adopt, through a consultative process, a *Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression*, drawn from a comprehensive range on international standards and jurisprudence, to elaborate and expound the nature, content and extent of the right to freedom of expression provided for under Article 9 of the African Charter,
2. **To initiate** an appropriate mechanism to assist it review and monitor adherence to freedom of expression standards in general, the Declaration in particular to investigate violations and make appropriate recommendations to the Commission,

- 3. To hold** periodic meetings with NGOs and African journalists to review progress in guaranteeing freedom of expression across the continent and in implementing the Declaration of Principles.