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PRESS RELEASE

JUSTICE IN DIVERSITY: AFRICAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS, A NEW HOPE FOR AFRICA

The sun rises every morning, bringing light, warmth and a new life to all parts of the world. For Africa, the birth of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights promises justice, effective redress and a new hope for Africa.

The Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) adopted the Protocol to the African Charter establishing the African Court on Human Rights in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso on 10 June 1998, bringing it into force on 25th January 2004, after receipt of the 15th Instrument of ratification of the Comoros on 25 December 2003. At the July 2004 A.U. Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the Human Rights Court and the Court of Justice were integrated.

The key objective for establishment of the African Court on Human Rights is to complement and strengthen the protective mandate of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Judges of the Court were elected at the A.U. January 2006 Khartoum Summit and took oath during the Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Banjul, Gambia on 2nd July 2006. The permanent seat of the Court will be in Arusha, Tanzania.

Different non-governmental organizations and independent national human rights organizations from all corners of Africa came together in Niamey, Niger, in May 2003, to form a Coalition to advocate for and help in nurturing an effective Court. The Coalition has representation (focal points) in the North, West, East, South and Central Africa.

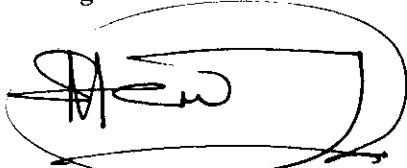
The Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), as the Eastern Africa focal point of the NGO Coalition for an Effective African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, together with the East African Law Society (EALS), are convening a two-day Roundtable on the African Court and Regional Human Rights Systems from the 31st March – 2nd April 2008, at Impala Hotel, Arusha, Tanzania.

The Roundtable whose theme is; **“Strategies to Promote Human Rights through Regional Human Rights Systems** aims at creating awareness of the African Court on Human and People’s Rights, facilitate interface with the Judges of the Court and to provide an opportunity for participants to share comparative experiences on regional human rights systems relevant to the African Court on Human Rights.

The Roundtable will bring together a select group of participants, drawn from Africa, comprising of Judges of the African Court, public interest law organizations, human rights organizations, members of sub-regional Courts, members of the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights and a delegation from Latin America, who are familiar with the Inter-American Human Rights system to share comparative experiences.

Just as the sun sets to bring rest and hope for another day, so does the African Court bring optimism for a diverse Africa, united in justice and human rights.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LS', enclosed within a large, hand-drawn oval shape.

Livingstone Sewanyana
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FHRI