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Africa and the ICC: Engaging North African and Francophone Countries

28-11-2013

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Africa Legal Aid (AFLA) in cooperation with Arab Institute of Human Rights and Avocats Sans Frontières Suisse convened a high level lessons learned Workshop on "Africa and the ICC: Engaging North African and Francophone Countries". The meeting was held in Tunis, Tunisia from 14th to 15th November 2013. Tunisia was chosen as the venue for the Workshop because it is a Francophone North African country and the only country in North Africa to have ratified the ICC Statute so far. Tunisia is also the birthplace of the Arab Spring.



During the Opening Ceremony: From Left, Evelyn Ankumah, Executive Director, AFLA; Prof. Shadrack Gutto, Chair, Governing Council, AFLA; Hon. Mustapha Ben Jaafar, President, Constituent Assembly of Tunisia; Amb. Tiina Intelmann, President, Assembly of State Parties (ASP) to the ICC; and Mr. Abdel Basset Ben Hassan, President, Arab Institute for Human Rights.

This Workshop was part of AFLA's ongoing efforts to engage civil societies across Africa in a series of "lessons learned capacity building exercises" on Africa and the ICC. It was aimed at taking stock of what impact the ICC and international criminal justice have had on the African continent and at promoting ratification of the ICC Statute in Africa, as well as increase understanding and access to the ICC so as to help enhance African support for and cooperation with the ICC. The topical and undertreated issues which were discussed include: The Arab Spring and International Justice, Fostering Greater Cooperation with the Diplomatic Sphere, Gender and International Justice, Complementarity, Ratification and Implementing Legislation, and Litigating Torture Claims.



During the Panel Discussion on The Arab Spring and International Justice: Second from Left, Dr. Ahmed El Gehani, Libya Focal Point for ICC Requests.

A world-class faculty of experts and resource persons participated and shared their knowledge and expertise. These include officials from the International Criminal Court (ICC), International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). We were honored to have among speakers the following: Ambassador Tiina Intelmann, President of the Assembly of State Parties (ASP) to the ICC; H.E. Serge Brammertz, Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY); Hon. Mustapha Ben Jaafar, President of the Constituent Assembly of Tunisia; Prof. Shadrack Gutto, Chair, Governing Council, AFLA; Dr. Ahmed El Gehani, Libya Focal Point for ICC Requests; and Hon. Daniel Amagouin Tesseougue, Procureur General of the Cour D'Apel de Bomaka, Mali.

A Press Conference with TV, Radio and Newspaper Media Houses in Tunisia was held during the Workshop. Targeted beneficiaries of the Workshop include civil societies, legal fraternities, gender advocates, academics, and opinion leaders. The list included high-level government officials from African States and their counterparts from The Netherlands, Belgium, France, Switzerland, among others. A report of the Workshop will be issued soon.

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