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AFRICAN COURT ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS

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## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION**

### **OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 18<sup>TH</sup> ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COURT ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS**

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Dar Essalam, 20<sup>th</sup> September 2010 / 20h50

- **His Excellency Jakaya Mrisho KIKWETE, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, opens the 18th Ordinary Session of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.**
- **Four new Judges sworn in.**
- **Judge Gerard Niyungeko of Burundi elected President of the Court and Judge Sophia A. B. Akuffo of Ghana was re-elected as Vice President.**

The 18th Ordinary Session of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights opened today in Dar Es Salam, Tanzania.

His Excellency Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, graced the occasion with his presence. He delivered a memorable speech before the Court in which he recalled Tanzania's unflinching support for the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. He further stated: "When the idea of the African Court was first mooted Tanzania was part of that discussion. That was not only because of our obligation as a member of the then OAU, but also because of the earnest significance we attach to the cause of justice... This is also the reason why we were among the first countries that offered to host this Court".

For his part, Judge Jean Mutsinzi, President of the Court, thanked the President of the United Republic of Tanzania for kindly gracing with his presence the opening of the 18th Ordinary Session of the Court which coincides with the swearing-in of four new judges elected last July at the Summit of the African Union in Kampala, Uganda.

The President of the Court also recalled in his statement that despite its achievements, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights was still faced with constraints of a legal and material nature which inhibit the successful pursuit of its mission to protect human and peoples' rights in Africa. In reference to some of the legal constraints, he emphasised the importance of allowing individuals and non-governmental organizations to file petitions on human rights violations before the Court.

In that regard, Judge Jean Mutsinzi commended Tanzania for being one of the rare African Countries to have recognized the authority of the Court to hear petitions filed by individuals and non-governmental organizations. The other countries are Burkina Faso, Mali and Malawi.

During the ceremony, four newly elected judges namely, Augustino S. L Ramadhani of the United Republic of Tanzania, Duncan Tambala of Malawi, Elsie Nwanwuri Thompson of Nigeria and M. Sylvian Ore of the Ivory Coast, were sworn in before the Court thus replacing three judges whose term of office had come to an end and one judge who had resigned to assume other duties. It should be noted further that Judge Fatsah Ougouergouz (Algeria) who was re-elected on the same occasion, was not sworn in as he was already a member of the Court.

### **Election of the new Bureau of the Court**

After the opening ceremony and as required by Rules, the Court proceeded with the election of the new Bureau of the Court. The outcome was the election of Judge Gerard Niyungeko of Burundi as President of the Court for a term of two years and the re election of Judge Sophia A. B. Akuffo of Ghana as Vice -President of the Court for the same period. It should be noted that the Judge Gerard Niyungeko was the first President of the Court, from 2006 to 2008.

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**To view the following click the links below:**

- [Speech by H.E Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania](#)
- [Opening speech by Judge Jean Mutsinzi, Former President of the Court](#)



**The President of the African Court on Human and People's Rights Jean Mutsinzi escorts President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete out of the Hall Conference shortly after President Kikwete opened the 18th Ordinary Session of the Court this morning.**



**President of the African Court on Human and People's Rights, Jean Mutsinzi presents a copy of the African Charter on human and Peoples' rights to President Jakaya Kikwete during the opening of the 18th Ordinary session of the Court held in Dar es Salaam this Morning.**



## **New Bureau of the Court**



**The new President of the Court : Judge Gerard Niyungeko**



**Vice -President of the Court : Judge Sophia A. B. Akuffo**