



PanAfrican Online Citizen Consultation

May-July 2023

The PanAfrican Online Citizen Consultation allows African citizens to contribute to the implementation of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) in Regional Economic Communities. The platform encourages civil society, grassroots initiatives, youth, and activists from the continent and its diaspora to engage in thematic discussions and contribute to the platform from anywhere in Africa and the diaspora. The goal is to allow citizens to be heard by decision-makers and support a different form of governance. The Pan African Citizen Online Consultation is being implemented by **AfricTivistes** as part of the Charter Project Africa.

The platform allows all to engage in thematic discussions, to log in and contribute at your convenience from anywhere in Africa and its diaspora. **Citizen participation is fundamental to Charter Project Africa. Let your voice be heard!**

The consultation approach, which complements regional discussions organised by the consortium members, responds to a demand observed on online

platforms - that of being heard by decision-makers at all levels as the average African citizen calls for a different form of governance. Charter Project Africa consortium member Gorée Institute recently held a regional gathering in Senegal on **“Enhancing citizen engagement in democratic governance in Africa”** bringing together the Civic Tech Fund beneficiaries of the West African region.

The West Africa fellows are implementing civic tech projects around the four themes (below) we are asking you to contribute to for two months until July 30th, 2023.

Theme 1: Citizen Participation in African Elections

In recent years, citizen participation in elections across Africa has shown both progress and challenges. According to data from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), voter turnout in African countries varies widely, ranging from as low as 30% to as high as 90% in some cases. However, on average, voter turnout in Africa has been relatively low compared to other regions, with an estimated average of around 55%. This indicates a significant portion of the African population not engaging in the electoral process. Additionally, voter apathy, political disillusionment, and lack of trust in the electoral system remain persistent issues that hinder citizen participation. To address these challenges, it is crucial to explore effective strategies and initiatives aimed at increasing citizen participation and fostering trust in the electoral process.

If you have opinions, contributions and ideas on this topic that will improve citizen participation in elections, please submit your contributions for policy and decision makers using the guidelines provided under the **Your Opinions** section.

Theme 2: Democracy, Digital Space, and Youth Participation in Africa

The intersection of democracy, digital space, and youth participation holds significant potential for advancing the principles outlined in the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG) and enhancing democratic governance in African Union member states. The rapid expansion of digital technologies and access to the internet has transformed the political landscape,

providing new avenues for citizen engagement and participation. With Africa's youthful population being a driving force behind political and social change, empowering and involving young people in decision-making processes is crucial. By leveraging the power of digital platforms, governments can enhance transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in democratic governance. Moreover, fostering an enabling environment that promotes digital literacy, access to information, and meaningful youth participation can contribute to strengthening democratic institutions and achieving the objectives of the ACDEG.

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Theme 3: Participation of Women and Vulnerable People in Africa

The participation of women and vulnerable populations in democratic processes is vital for achieving inclusive and equitable democratic governance in Africa. However, significant challenges persist that hinder their active engagement. Women continue to face gender-based discrimination, social and cultural barriers, and limited access to resources and education, which undermine their ability to participate fully in political and electoral processes. Similarly, vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and the economically disadvantaged, often encounter systemic exclusion and marginalisation, preventing them from exercising their democratic rights and influencing decision-making. Addressing these challenges is crucial to realising the principles outlined in the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG) and fostering democratic governance that truly represents and serves all members of society.

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Theme 4: Citizens' Monitoring of Public Policies and Accountability in Africa

Effective citizens' monitoring of public policies and accountability is crucial for promoting transparency, good governance, and democratic principles in Africa. However, there are significant challenges that need to be addressed to ensure the success of such monitoring efforts. One of the primary issues is the lack of access to information and limited civic education, which prevents citizens from fully understanding their rights and responsibilities and inhibits their ability to monitor public policies effectively. Additionally, there is often a lack of mechanisms for citizen engagement and participation in decision-making processes, which further exacerbates the accountability gap. Moreover, weak institutional frameworks, corruption, and insufficient enforcement of laws contribute to a culture of impunity and hinder the effectiveness of citizens' monitoring. Addressing these problems is essential for fostering democratic governance and achieving the objectives of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG).

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