

AFRICAN UNION

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**THE REPRESENTATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES
IN ORGANS OF THE AFRICAN UNION**
(Item Proposed by the Republic of Senegal)

**THE REPRESENTATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES
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December 10th, 2012

1. At the July 2012 African Union Summit, His Excellency Mr. Macky SALL, President of the Republic of Senegal, once taking for the very first time to the Assembly meeting as the newly elected Head of State tabled in his statement the proposal of establishing a High Council of Local Authorities within the framework of the African Union. This aide memoire aims at providing the African Union decision-making organs with the historical background of the proposal and to inform on the initiatives taken since the proposal was tabled.

I. Historical Background

2. The idea of establishing a High Council of Local Authorities within the African Union framework emerged and matured as the African local governments started meeting altogether. The following key steps can be recalled.

December 1998

- The local governments from all over Africa meet for the first time in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, during the first ever meeting of all Africa local authorities (what is known since then as the Africities Summit), irrespective of the colonial legacy of their countries, and decide to launch a process aiming at setting up a continental organization that will be the common and unique voice of African local authorities of the continent.
- During the same meeting, at the invitation of the Minister for local government of Cote d'Ivoire, 32 African ministers held a session to reflect on the way of accompanying the birth of the African municipal movement.

May 2000

- At the second Africities Summit held in Windhoek, Namibia, the mayors and local authorities of Africa decide to install the Council of the Communes and Regions of Africa (CCRA) as a mechanism of consultation between the three existing umbrella organizations (AULA, African Union of Local Authorities, mainly English-speaking; UVA, Union of the African Cities, mainly French speaking; and UCCLA, Unao de Ciudades y Capitaes Lusofono Africana, of Portuguese language), with the goal to form the united voice of the African local authorities within three years.
- On their side, the ministers decided to create the All Africa Ministerial Conference on Decentralization and Local Development (AMCOD).

- The participants in the Summit of Windhoek recommended that the two regroupings formed during the Summit request their recognition by the African Union. Consultations were held thereafter with President Joaquim Chissano, then President of the Republic of Mozambique and President of the African Union to seek his guidance on this matter.

December 2003

- At the third Africities Summit in Yaoundé, Cameroon, the mayors and local authorities established the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA). An interim leadership of the organization led by the City of Tshwane, then President of AULA, represented by its Executive Mayor, Father Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, was set up in order to draft the constitution of the UCLGA and prepare for the founding congress.
- The Ministers for their part decided to entrust the presidency of the CADDEL to Cameroon, represented then by the Minister of State in charge of Territorial Administration and Decentralization. The mandate given to the president was to constitute AMCOD and to have it recognized as a specialized technical committee of the African Union.

May 2005

- The Founding Congress of UCLGA was held in Tshwane, South Africa, in the presence of the Vice President of the Republic of South Africa, then Mr. Jacobs Zuma, and of HE Mr. Olesogun Obasanjo, then President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and President of the African Union, who was the Guest of Honor of the Congress and pronounced its Keynote Speech. The Constitution of UCLGA was adopted by the General Assembly. The leadership was elected. It comprised on the one hand, the members of the executive committee, 3 for each of the 5 UCLGA regions; and the other hand, the members of the Presidency including 5 Vice-presidents, one for each of the five regions, among which the UCLGA President is elected. The Secretary General of the organization was also appointed.
- Among the resolutions taken during the founding congress appeared that asking the leadership to work for the creation of a High Council of the Local Authorities among the institutions of the African Union.

November 2005

- A Memorandum was formally presented to President Obasanjo on November 30th 2005 in Abuja, requiring in particular the establishment of the High Council of Local Authorities within the African Union. The follow up granted to this Memorandum was not very effective since this question has not been on the agenda of the AU conferences since then.

September 2006

- The fourth Africities Summit held in Nairobi, Kenya, reiterated the recommendation that the UCLGA leadership should continue its efforts to

obtain the creation of the High Council of Local Authorities by the African Union. Follow up sensitization missions to different African leaders targeted various Heads of State (President Kagame of Rwanda, President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya, the President of Cote d'Ivoire, then Mr. Laurent Gbagbo), Prime Ministers of Tanzania and of Lesotho, many ministers for local governments of the African countries. All showed favourable reactions to this initiative.

- For their part, Ministers of local governments decided to target the January 2007 AU conference of Heads of State and Governments and succeeded to be granted the status of specialized committee of the African Union.

March 2007

- The Executive committee of UCLGA meeting in Kigali asked the president and secretary general of the UCLGA to have a consultative meeting with the Commission of the African Union in order to discuss the issue of the High Council among others. The meeting took place in Addis Ababa on 10th March 2007. The President of the AU Commission recommended that a working session be held with the direction of political affairs of the AU Commission to get this proposal followed up in a proper way.

September 2007

- The AU Commission through the Director of Political Affairs, Ambassador Leonard Emile Ognimba invited the UCLGA in Addis Abeba on 6th September 2007 to work on the way to finalize the introduction of the request for the High Council of Local Authorities on the agenda of work of the African Union. Since that date, no signification advance was observed.

November 2011

- During the official launch of the preparations for the sixth edition of the Africities Summit which just took place in Dakar, Senegal from 4 to 8 December 2012, the President of the Republic of Senegal committed himself to ensure a follow-up to the matter of the High Council by having this issue enlisted in subsequent meetings of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union.

May 2012

- In pursuance of EX.CL/Dec. 677 (XX) on the All Africa Ministerial Conference on Decentralization and Local Development (AMCOD), the AU Commission through its Department of Political Affairs convened an Experts Meeting along with the AMCOD Bureau meeting in May 2012 in Yaoundé, Cameroon, to brainstorm of the content and structure of the proposed African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralization, Local Governance and Local Development to

strengthen the normative pillar of the African Governance Architecture. At the meeting participants requested that the establishment of a High Council of Local Authorities be also included in the Charter.

II. Senegal Championship at the AU level

July 2012

3. As a former Minister of Local Governments and Mayor in his country, President Macky SALL was not only aware of the request from African Local governments, but he also strongly believes himself on the necessity of the full representation and participation of Local Governments in the AU decision-making processes. He strongly believes that unless the voice of African Local Governments is represented and heard in AU structures, we cannot fully realize the AU vision of a unified, integrated, prosperous, peaceful continent, driven by its people and playing a strategic role in the global arena. Following the endorsement of the idea by his government and his own commitment to back it at the level of the AU, he raised the proposal in his very first statement at the July 2012 Assembly meeting of Heads of State and Government of the AU.

December 2012

4. After tabling the proposal at the Assembly meeting in July 2012, President Macky Sall called on his government to formally table the proposal in submitting a document for the consideration of the Heads of State and Government. Prior to this submission the proposal was discussed and endorsed by Ministers in charge of Decentralization and Mayors of many African Union Member States which attended the 6th Edition of the Africities Summit on December 8, 2012 in Dakar, Senegal.

5. To ensure a proper inclusive and participatory consultation, the Republic of Senegal adopted the following Road-Map for the operationalization of the proposal.

January 2013

- Technical Consultation on the Action Plan, methodology and working documents among the Senegalese Ministry in charge of Decentralization, the Permanent Representation of Senegal to the AU, AMCOD, UCGLA, Africa Governance Institute and the AU Commission the proposal (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia).
- Establishment of a Task Force on the Proposal.

February 2013

- Brainstorming consultation on the proposal with the relevant stakeholders (UCGLA, AU-AMCOD, Associations of Local Governments etc...) in Dakar, Senegal.

- Consideration of the outcomes of the Brainstorming consultation on the proposal by the AMCOD Board of Directors in Dakar, Senegal.

March-April 2013

- Finalization by the Task Force of the Draft final proposal in Dakar, Senegal.
- Consideration and political validation of the Draft final proposal by the AMCOD Bureau Meeting in Luanda, Angola.
- Diplomatic consultations and advocacy on the proposal by the Republic of Senegal.

June 2013

- Diplomatic consultations and advocacy on the proposal by the Republic of Senegal.

July 2013

- Political validation and endorsement of the proposal by the AMCOD Extraordinary Session.
- Diplomatic consultations and advocacy on the proposal by the Republic of Senegal.

October-December 2013

- Finalization of a Joint Report by the Commission and the Task Force for submission to AU decision-making Organs.
- Diplomatic consultations and advocacy on the proposal by the Republic of Senegal.

January 2014

- Submission of the Joint report by the Commission and the Task Force for submission to AU decision-making Organs.
- Discussion of the Report by AU decision-making Organs.

6. The Republic of Senegal believes that the consultation will both mobilize the support of all relevant stakeholders and reflect the AU commitment to democratic values.

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