



# Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa

( I H R D A )

## “LITIGATING ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RIGHTS CASES BEFORE THE AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEM”

### STRATEGIC LITIGATION & CASE IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOP

(via Zoom, 18 to 20 May 2021)

### CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

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The Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA) calls for applications from lawyers to participate in a strategic litigation and case identification workshop on economic and social rights. The workshop is expected to hold on IHRDA’s Zoom Meeting Platform between **18 to 20 May 2021**. The training and case identification workshop is designed to build the capacity of legal practitioners and members of African civil society organizations in West Africa on using African human rights instruments to litigate economic and social rights issues at domestic and regional levels, and boost access to economic and social rights for underprivileged communities. Specific target countries for this workshop are: ***Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone.***

#### **Background to the activity**

Most countries in Africa have ratified major regional and international treaties that oblige States to guarantee the enjoyment of economic and social rights by their people. However, in a lot of these countries, economic and social rights are not justiciable. Thus domestic legal systems tend to exonerate States from their obligation to account for the economic and social rights of their people, undermining economic and social justice. Where national institutions are non-responsive, cases can be litigated at the regional level and can promise to deliver much needed justice. To date, there is a minimal number of economic and social rights cases handled by the African human rights mechanisms. There is a lot of potential at regional level, to bring States to justice, and propel legal and institutional reforms to prevent future violations. To achieve this, national capacity must be built and strategic litigation should be pursued as a way of seeking justice and accountability for these violations.

#### **Description of the activity**

This is a training and case identification workshop that will be comprised of different interactive sessions covering the following topics: (1) Economic and Social Rights and Practice; (2) the African Human Rights System, Mechanisms and Procedures; (3) Strategic Litigation and skills for litigating economic and social rights cases. These sessions will be followed by a final plenary discussion on case identification by the participants, where potentially ripe cases for litigation at the regional level will be identified and later pursued. Following the training, IHRDA will work closely with the local actors to prepare the cases for submission at an appropriate mechanism. IHRDA will facilitate the sessions with select guest facilitators with proven expertise on relevant topics.

**Expected results:** The participants have:

- Better understanding of economic and social rights concepts, principles and practice, including the identification of cases;
- Better understanding of the African human rights system, including the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and its procedures as well as the other sister mechanisms: African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the ECOWAS Court;
- Improved understanding and a sense of application of strategic litigation strategies and skills, especially with respect to litigating economic and social rights cases.

Very specifically, the participants will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to litigate matters related to social and economic rights in their countries and at regional at the regional level. Finally, at least 2 cases will be identified through the case identification exercise and will be pursued jointly with the local actors in the concerned countries.

**Participant profile:**

- A legal practitioner who has previously litigated, or is currently litigating human rights cases at the national or regional levels; or
- A member of a human rights organization (with a legal background) whose organization is involved in human rights documentation, advocacy or litigation;
- A legal practitioner/member of a human rights organization already working on economic and social rights issues or cases, and/or with a keen interest to pursue litigation in this field;
- Must be from any of the following: ***The Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone.***