



CALL FOR PAPERS

Special Issue of the *African Journal of Democracy and Governance* (AJDG) Commemorating the 10th Anniversary of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG)

Introduction

The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG) was adopted on 30 January 2007 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, during the 8th Ordinary Session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU). On 16 January 2012, Cameroon became the 15th AU Member State to deposit its instrument of ratification with the Chairperson of the AU Commission (AUC). In line with its Article 48, ACDEG came into force on 15 February 2012. 2017 therefore marked the 10th anniversary of its adoption and the 5th of its entry into force, offering an excellent opportunity to reflect on Africa's democratic dividend and deficits during the first decade of ACDEG and on the present and the future of democratic governance in the continent.

Coming from an unenviable history of unconstitutional changes of government, bad governance and human rights abuses, the adoption of ACDEG was a milestone in the history of the continent. It signaled the intention of Africa's political leaders to consolidate efforts towards building a democratic society based on common shared values subscribed to by AU Member States in various regional instruments. These include the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, AU Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, and other instruments such as the Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance and the African Peer-Review Mechanism (APRM), which were adopted within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Almost all African problems revolve around democracy, the rule of law, governance and elections, making ACDEG the most important AU binding instrument. Accordingly, ACDEG also inspired Aspiration Three on the AU Agenda 2063: "An Africa of good governance, democracy, and respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law".

ACDEG consists of 11 chapters (53 articles) dealing with Definitions (1), Objectives (2), Principles (III), Democracy, Rule of Law and Human Rights (IV), Democratic Culture and Peace (V), Democratic Institutions (VI), Democratic Elections (VII), Sanctions in Cases of Unconstitutional Change of Government (VIII), Political, Economic and Social Governance (IX), Implementing Mechanisms (X), and Final Provisions (XI) respectively.

To give effects to States' commitments, ACDEG provides for different mechanisms and levels of application. At the national level, State Parties should implement the objectives and apply the principles in ACDEG through legal, executive and administrative and any other measures. At the continental level, the AUC should develop benchmarks for the implementation of commitments and principles of the Charter and evaluate compliance by State Parties; promote the creation of favourable conditions for democratic governance in the African continent, in particular by facilitating the harmonization of policies and laws of State Parties; take the necessary measures in order to assist State Parties in electoral processes through the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit and the Democracy and Electoral Assistance Fund; and ensure that effect is given to the AU decisions in regard to unconstitutional change of government on the continent.

At the regional level, AUC should establish a framework for cooperation with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on the implementation of the Charter and commit them to encourage Member States to ratify or adhere to ACDEG and designate focal points for coordination, evaluation, and monitoring of the implementation of the commitments and principles enshrined in this Charter in order to ensure massive participation of stakeholders, particularly civil society organisations in the process. However, the Commission remains central coordinating structure for the implementation of ACDEG. It shall coordinate evaluation on the implementation of the Charter with other key AU organs including the Pan-African Parliament, the Peace and Security Council, the Human Rights Commission, the African Court of Justice and Human Rights, the Economic Social and Cultural Council, the RECs and appropriate national - level structures (Articles 44-45). This is mainly done through the African Governance Architecture (AGA) Platform. AUC through the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) hosts the AGA Secretariat.

State Parties should report to AUC every two years on the legislative or other relevant measures taken with a view to giving effect to the principles and commitments in the Charter. Reports are copied to the relevant AU organs for appropriate action within their respective mandates. Through the Executive Council, AUC should prepare and submit to the Assembly, for appropriate measures, a synthesized report on the implementation of ACDEG (Article 49). As of 15 June 2017, out of the 55 AU Member States, 45 had signed ACDEG but only 30 had ratified and deposited their instruments of ratification.¹ On 17 March 2017, Togo became the first AU Member State to report on the implementation of ACDEG to AUC.

To commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the adoption of ACDEG and the 5th of its entry into force, the AGA Secretariat has requested the Institute for Democracy, Governance, Peace & Development in Africa (IDGPA) to produce a special issue of its *African Journal of Democracy and Governance* (AJDG).

About the Journal

AJDG is a bilingual (English/French), peer-reviewed, multi-, inter-, and trans-disciplinary journal. It is dedicated to issues of democracy, good governance, development and peace in Africa. The Journal features on the Norwegian List of international journals (<https://dbh.nsd.uib.no/publiseringsskanaler/KanalTreffliste.action>) and is therefore accredited in many countries.

Guidelines for Contributors

Guidelines for articles and book reviews are available on <https://journals.co.za/content/journal/ajdg?page=submit-a-paper>. Manuscripts (4000- 8000 words including an abstract of 150-200 words in both English and French, 6 to 9 Key words, notes and/or references) should be typed double-spaced (Times New Roman, 12) using the Harvard referencing system (Author's surname – year: page, no footnotes).

Topics to be addressed

Manuscripts shall deal with any topic related to ACDEG, including but not limited to the following:

- Democratic trends, elections and governance since independence in Africa ;
- Rule of law and the state of constitutionalism, democracy, and good governance in Africa;
- Promotion and protection of human rights in Africa;
- Originality, significance and weaknesses of ACDEG;
- The right to democratic governance as a human and peoples' right in Africa;
- The nexus between constitutionalism and constitutions, democracy and elections in Africa or between democracy, peace, good governance and development in Africa ;
- Corruption and its impact on democracy, elections, governance and development in Africa ;
- Democratic, credible and peaceful elections in Africa;

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https://au.int/web/sites/default/files/treaties/7790-sl-african_charter_on_democracy_elections_and_governance.pdf (accessed on 15 March 2017).

- ACDEG as panacea to peace and security challenges in Africa;
- Unconstitutional changes of governments in Africa and responses from the AU and RECs ;
- Democracy, presidential term limits and the « Third term syndrome » ;
- States' compliance with, challenges of ratification, domestication, and implementation of ACDEG ;
- AGA and the promotion of constitutionalism, the rule of law, human rights, good governance and democratic elections ;
- The AUC, RECs, APRM and promotion of constitutionalism, the rule of law, good governance, development, peace and democratic elections ;
- The judiciary, electoral commissions and democratic elections in Africa ;
- Civil society organisations and the promotion of ACDEG ;
- Women and youth participation and representation in governance in Africa ;
- The international community, constitutionalism and democracy in Africa ;
- Authoritarian trends and new forms of democratic struggles in Africa ;
- Prospects for ACDEG and AU Agenda 2063 ;
- Democratic dividends and deficits in Africa ;
- Constitutionalism, rule of law, democracy and good governance in Africa : Some case studies and best practices ...

Deadline for submission and contacts

The deadline for submission is Wednesday 28 February 2018. Manuscripts should be emailed to amangu@idgpa.org and rizzan@africa-union.org / nrizzan@gmail.com with a statement that they are original contributions, which have not been published or sent elsewhere for publication.

The special issue of the *African Journal of Democracy and Governance* commemorating the 10th anniversary of ACDEG and the 5th of its coming into operation is expected by June 2018.

Dr Khabele Matlosa, Director, DPA, AUC, will be the guest editor of this issue.