



## HUMAN RIGHTS AGENDA NETWORK (HRAN) CHARTER

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### Introduction

The Human Rights Agenda Network (HRAN) emerged from the informal collaboration of human rights NGOs to prepare an alternative report to the Nigeria's Universal Progress Review (UPR) report in March 2009, and also in engaging Nigeria with the International Criminal Court (ICC) in respect of excesses of the security agencies in the north central region and other extra-judicial executions. In 2011, the network put together a Human Rights Agenda (2011-2014) for Nigeria, which identifies milestones in human rights and promotion in Nigeria based on the National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Nigeria (2009-2013) and the recommendations accepted by Nigeria at the Universal Periodic Review of Nigeria (UPR) in 2009.

Since 2012, HRAN has been working towards establishing itself as a permanent and respected network through which civil society and other organisations and activists working on human rights issues can better communicate, coordinate and collaborate on the promotion and protection of human rights in Nigeria. This Charter sets out the agreed governance and operating arrangements that have been agreed by the HRAN membership, which are intended to provide a framework that will ensure the network carries out its activities efficiently and effectively, in an accountable, transparent and independent manner.

### Mission Statement of the Team

The HRAN aims to increase the capacity of human rights activists and organisations and facilitate collaboration amongst them, to ensure they play an effective and high profile role in monitoring, promoting and protecting human rights in Nigeria.

### Governing Principles

The following principles lie at the core of HRAN's mandate and underpin all its activities:

- 1. Speaking with one voice**  
It is important that at this critical stage of our nation building, that human rights NGOs and activists articulate issues of concern and speak with one voice in national, regional and international fora.
- 2. Action in unity, for same goal**  
Our common voice should also be followed by united action that would create the required impact on the human rights situation in Nigeria.
- 3. Strong civil society mobilization**  
We will harness the collective skill and experience of organisations working in the human rights field in Nigeria, to achieve maximum impact through a range of coordinated strategies.
- 4. Partnerships**  
We will collaborate with others to achieve our goals, including with other civil society actors, such as labour unions, business groups, market unions, youth movements, students unions, professional bodies and journalists, as well as with members of the legislature, executive and judiciary who are champions of human rights, to demand together for better governance practices and compliance with human rights commitments.
- 5. Internal democracy within the network:**



Being a collective of NGOs and activists with diverse individual mandates, the HRAN shall operate on open transparent manner with regards to taking common positions of issues, and in taking actions. In this regards, the method of work will involve participation of every member on equal basis. To this end the following strategies have been suggested:

### Core Values and Operating Principles

The following table sets out the core values of the network which should guide how it carries out its business, as well as the behaviors and actions of all its members when participating in network activities or representing the network in public. For each value, a number of operating principles are also set out, which describe how HRAN will put the values into practice when carrying out its activities.

Value	Operating Principles
<b>Transparency</b>	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make public statements of how the network is governed and administered</li> <li>• publish accounts to demonstrate sources of funding and how funds are spent</li> <li>• consult all members on key decisions and actions that affect how the network operates</li> <li>• ensure regular communication amongst membership and with stakeholders on HRAN plans, activities and results</li> </ul>
<b>Accountability</b>	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure there are clear strategies and plans setting out what we hope to achieve through our activities, as well as monitoring and evaluation of how those plans are implemented in practice</li> <li>• have documented governance and administration arrangements that we can be held accountable for complying with.</li> </ul>
<b>Commitment</b>	We will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encourage all members to contribute to the Network in line with their capacity levels, skills and resources</li> <li>• encourage all members to respond constructively and in a timely manner to requests for information or action from the Steering Committee, Secretariat or Thematic Group leads</li> <li>• encourage volunteerism and recognise contributions of members who offer their time, skills, experience and resources to contribute to the work of the network</li> </ul>



<p><b>Credibility</b></p> <p>S T R A T E G I C  O B J E C T</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that resources are used efficiently and effectively to achieve our stated goals and objectives</li> <li>implement external communication strategies to ensure that there is understanding and support amongst stakeholders and the public for HRAN’s mission, objectives, values and activities, as well as awareness of the results it achieves</li> <li>ensure that all actions carried out or statements made in HRAN’s name are in line with the principles set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights instruments to which Nigeria is a signatory</li> </ul>
<p><b>Integrity</b></p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure constructive engagement with our external stakeholders in the public and private sectors, without compromising our core values and adherence to human rights principles</li> <li>operate independently without any affiliation or undue political influence. To this end, all members should declare any conflict of interest that might impact on activities they carry out on behalf of HRAN and lead to accusations of bias or anything else that might damage HRAN’s integrity amongst stakeholders and/or the public.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Equality</b></p> <p>w n g  s t r a t e g i c</p>	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensure that all members are able to contribute and participate equally in HRAN activities</li> <li>ensure there is no discrimination (direct or indirect) because of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, physical ability or any other factor and will try to ensure fair representation of all viewpoints and perspectives when making decisions or carrying out activities</li> <li>ensure there is tolerance for others views providing they are in line with general human rights principles</li> <li>consider affirmative action as a means of promoting equality</li> </ul>

**Strategic Objectives**

The following strategic objectives describe how we will focus our time, effort and other resources in order to fulfil our mission:



1. We will advocate for compliance with international, regional and national human rights treaties, charters and laws, and to put pressure on government to ratify, domesticate and implement human rights instruments
2. We will monitor and document alleged human rights violation cases in Nigeria for use in advocacy, oversight and public awareness raising activities.
3. We will engage in awareness-raising, sensitization and information sharing with the people of Nigeria concerning human rights and their abuses.
4. We will provide a platform for improved coordination and collaboration amongst those working in the human rights field in Nigeria and with regional and international partners, thus helping to increase representation of Nigerian civil society in human rights discourse and advocacy at the highest levels.
5. We will strengthen the ability of our members to work effectively, efficiently and accountably in the human rights field through sharing knowledge and best practice, providing training and capacity development opportunities and raising awareness of funding and other forms of support available to human rights organisations and how to access them.

## Membership

Any Nigerian organization or activist that is working on human rights related issues can apply to be a member of HRAN. Human rights is meant here in its broadest sense and refers to any activities that promote and protect the rights of Nigerians under the Constitution and law, including those which fall into the following categories: civil and political rights; social and economic rights; rights relating to access to justice and administration of justice; women's human rights and the rights of vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, mentally or physically disabled persons and those living with HIV/AIDs.

Member organisations are expected to pay a membership fee, which will be used towards cover the costs of running the network. Paid membership will bring a number of benefits, such as priority access to capacity development opportunities being offered by HRAN. It is hoped member organisations will also contribute to HRAN activities in line with their skills, experience and geographical / thematic interests and knowledge.

## Structure

The network has the following structure:

- ▶ **Steering Committee:** 6 member committee, headed by a Chair, who provide overall leadership and accountability for the network's activities. Steering Group members will be elected by general meeting of members for 4 year tenure.
  - The Steering Committee will be accountable for ensuring that HRAN resources are used in a transparent manner, and will play a lead role in setting the strategic direction of the network, in consultation with all members. It will also provide oversight to ensure that desired results are achieved through HRAN activities and resource allocation. The Steering Committee will also provide a direct accountability line to external funders.
  - The Steering Committee will meet at least two times a year but hold regular online discussions as the need arises. The Steering committee represent HRAN in public forum, authorizes or issues public statements on behalf the network, engage with potential funders, ensures the policies and programmes of the network are credibly implemented, and oversees the work of the coordination office.



- ▶ **Five Thematic Groups:** HRAN will carry out some of its activities through five Thematic Groups, each of which covers a collection of related issues of concern.
  - Each Thematic Group will comprise of organisations or activists working on, or interested on the issues covered by the Thematic Group. It is intended that in volunteering to be a member of a Thematic Group, member organisations will actively engage in HRAN activities, contributing their relevant skills, knowledge, resources and experience when possible.
  - Each Thematic Group will have Lead Member, who will be openly selected through online nomination and confirmation or voting by members where there are more than one nomination for each thematic group. The Lead Member will be responsible for identifying issues and activities relevant to the group and mobilizing other CSOs working within the theme covered by the group into the network.
  - Each Thematic Group leader will designate to the HRAN Coordination Office a contact person with whom the Coordination Office will deal with day to day issues in the subgroup.
  - Thematic Groups will primarily communicate and cooperate through email and phone, but will hold meetings only when it is necessary and available resources.
- ▶ **State Coordinators:** The Steering Committee will select a member organisation to act as a State Coordinator for a specific activity which is to take place at state level. These State Coordinators will mobilise the organisations within the state to take forward the activity and coordinate the activities of member organisations. Responsibilities of the State Coordinators, when selected to undertake a specific activity, include:
  - Reporting on progress of state level activities against timelines
  - Arranging workshops and meetings at state level as required, and needed, to effectively carry out the state level activities
  - Regularly liaising with the Coordination Office and the Steering Committee around timelines and progress.
- ▶ **Co-ordination Office:** This office is staffed by two full-time HRAN employees: a Coordination Office Manager, and an Accounts/Administration Officer. It has responsibility for all administrative activities required to ensure the smooth running of the Network. More staff will or occasional interns/volunteers will be engaged in near future subject to availability of resources.

***Revised and adopted at HRAN general meeting at Ado Ekiti 9-11 May 2013***

***Final revisions agreed at the Leadership Workshop, Abuja, 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> October 2013***