

ACP EU Joint Parliamentary 23rd Session

PANEL DISCUSSION WITH LUNCH

Paramaribo, Suriname

28 November 2012 (13:00 – 14:30)



**Zimbabwe
HUMAN RIGHTS
NGO Forum**

FORTHCOMING AFRICAN ELECTIONS

'With main focus on Zimbabwe & Kenya'

What civil society expects from the ACP EU countries

INTRODUCTION

From the nineties, elections held throughout sub-Saharan Africa signalled a growing public commitment to democratic rule, but in some instances some politicians deployed violence and curtailed rights during election periods and beyond, to hold on to power. While this period demonstrated the desire of Africans to choose their own leaders peacefully and fairly, sadly, elections were often marred by politically motivated violence and other irregularities. Unless these grave problems are remedied, Africans are likely to see more "stolen" elections in the future. This is especially the case in African countries where there is official manipulation of electoral institutions and weak civic institutions, which impinge on credible and peaceful elections thus curtailing democratic trends. The coming few months will see a constitutional referendum and general elections in Zimbabwe, and general elections in Kenya, both countries marred by violence during their last elections.

FOCUS AND OBJECTIVE

While offering an opportunity for a comparative discourse with other African countries, the panel discussion will focus on what civil society expects from the ACP -EU member states in order to ensure that elections are peaceful and credible with respect for the outcome by all parties.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- An action plan of key expectations from civil society, regional and international stakeholders, which will be handed over to the political parties.
- Agreed course of action for follow up and coordination with other related initiatives.

FORMAT OF THE PANEL

There will be two speakers, one representing Zimbabwean civil society and one Kenyan MP. They will provide a brief overview of the current political and human rights situation. This will be followed by an open discussion with opportunities for parliamentary representatives from the ACP-EU countries to contribute. Olle Schmidt, MEP ALDE Sweden will moderate the discussion.

ABOUT THE EVENT SPONSORS:

Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum is an umbrella organisation of 19 human rights organisations in Zimbabwe. Its mission is to reduce organized violence and torture, cruel inhuman and degrading treatment; to challenge impunity and to foster a culture of accountability and the building of institutions of non-violence, tolerance and the respect for human rights in Zimbabwe.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.hrforumzim.org/>

Zimbabwe Europe Network is a network of European trade unions and civil society organisations, with programmes of support and/or presence on the ground in Zimbabwe which seeks to bring the demands, views and aspirations of Zimbabwean civil society into European policy formulation on Zimbabwe. ZEN works through a network of major Zimbabwean civil society coalitions to ensure that European policy on Zimbabwe is Zimbabwean-driven.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.zimbabweeurope.org/>