

Report: AAAD at FIFAfrica conference in Windhoek, Namibia, September 25 -26

Windhoek AAAD Sessions Brief Report

During the recent FIFAfrica event in Windhoek, the African Alliance on Access to Data (AAAD) convened two sessions aimed at advancing regional dialogue and stakeholder engagement around key developments in the African human rights and information governance landscape. These sessions formed part of the ACHPR's ongoing advocacy to promote the right of access to information and data, freedom of expression, and information integrity in the framework of the African human rights system.

Session 1: Engagement with ACHPR Resolutions on Access to Information

The first session focused on three Resolutions adopted by the ACHPR: the Resolutions on Access to Data, Public Interest Information, and Information Integrity. The session was notably enriched by the participation of the ACHPR's Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information, who opened the event with video-message remarks that effectively set the tone for a substantive and constructive discussion.

The primary objective of this session was to introduce the aforementioned Resolutions to key stakeholders that attended the FIFA event. The session provided a platform to highlight the current processes initiated by the ACHPR to operationalise these Resolutions through the development of normative guidelines. These processes are critical in ensuring that the principles enshrined in the Resolutions are translated into actionable standards and frameworks that can guide Member States in upholding their commitments to human rights.

On behalf of the Alliance, the session also included a detailed presentation on Resolution 620, which pertains specifically to access to data. This presentation outlined the Alliance's contributions to the drafting and consultation processes surrounding the Resolution, underscoring the Alliance's role in shaping regional policy and normative developments. Participants were encouraged to engage with the content of all three Resolutions and to consider their implications for national and regional implementation.

Session 2: Consultation on Draft Guidelines pursuant to Resolution 620

The second session focused on the Draft Guidelines being developed pursuant to Resolution 620. These Guidelines are intended to provide normative clarity and practical direction on access to data. The session facilitated a focused discussion on the structure and substance of the Draft Guidelines, with particular attention paid to the necessity of ensuring their normative distinctiveness from existing instruments, while maintaining conceptual alignment.

Participants examined several key issues that remain under deliberation, referred to as "sticking points", in the draft text. These include definitional ambiguities, the scope of obligations for State and non-State actors, and the alignment of the Guidelines with broader international human rights standards.

A significant outcome of the session was the consensus among participants that further consultation on the Guidelines is merited. Stakeholders strongly supported a more inclusive and participatory process, involving a diverse range of actors particularly governments and the private sector. Such engagement was seen as essential to ensuring the legitimacy, relevance, and effective implementation of the Guidelines, although resources will need to be mobilised for further processes.

Conclusion

The sessions provided a timely and important forum for regional dialogue on the ACHPR Resolutions. The sessions also contributed to deepening understanding, identifying challenges, and building consensus on the path forward. Continued engagement will be essential to ensuring that these normative developments translate into meaningful progress on the ground in advancing information rights and data access across the continent.