

Call for Abstracts: Commemorating 10 years of the Model Law on Access to Information for Africa

2023 marks the 10th anniversary of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights' (African Commission) adoption of [the Model Law on Access to Information for Africa](#) (the Model Law). The Model Law was adopted on February 13, 2013 and provides guidance on Member States' legislative obligations in promoting and protecting the right to access information as outlined under article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Charter) and other relevant instruments such as the [Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa](#) and the [Guidelines on Access to Information and Elections in Africa](#). In adopting the Model law, the African Commission sought to provide guidance for developing new legislations, reviewing existing laws, advocating for the adoption of such laws, compiling best practices, and promoting a unified and harmonised approach to access to information throughout the continent. Since its adoption, it is believed that the Model Law played an important role in shaping national legislation on the right to access information, influencing judicial interpretations, and supported advocacy initiatives by civil society organisations (CSOs). Despite the presence of such a progressive instrument, the right of access to information is yet to be fully realised in Africa. There are challenges such as lack of political will, limited infrastructure, digital divide, and the information disorder, including misinformation and disinformation, which negatively affect the information ecosystem.

Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria will be organising a commemorative seminar on 27 and 28 September 2023, which aims to explore the status of access to information in Africa. The seminar will explore the milestones, identify the challenges, and propose recommendations that will enhance the realisation of the right of access to information on the continent, including how access to information normative instruments such as the Model law can be effectively utilised to transform the right to access information aspirations into tangible benefits for the people of Africa.

The Centre for Human Rights invites human rights researchers, academics, and practitioners to submit abstracts on selected themes on access to information in Africa. The Centre

welcomes submissions including continental perspectives, country analysis or comparative assessments.

Recommended topics

The suggested issues for exploration include:

- The domestic impact of African Union human rights standards on access to information, including the Model Law on Access to Information for Africa, the Guidelines on Access to Information and Elections in Africa, and the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa.
- Challenges and opportunities in implementing access to information laws.
- Role and challenges of technology in promoting access to information, including access to the internet and networks disruptions such as internet shutdowns. The role of access to information in promoting transparency and accountability in governance.
- Misinformation and disinformation in the digital age and its impact on the information ecosystem.
- Best practices, case studies, and success stories in the implementation of access to information initiatives.
- Thematic commentaries (elections, health, environmental issues, extractive industries, whistle-blower protection, freedoms of association and assembly, etc).
- Role of civil society, media, and advocacy in advancing access to information.

Submission instructions

1. Abstracts should be between **200 and 250 words**, clearly summarising the proposed paper, including its objectives, and key findings.
2. Abstracts should be submitted via email to henok.kremte@up.ac.za, copying hlengiwe.dube@up.ac.za, no later than **August 4, 2023**. Please include the subject line: 'Abstract Submission - The State of Access to Information in Africa.'
3. Authors are required to attach their photograph and a concise biography (maximum 150 words).
4. Authors whose abstracts are selected will be required to submit their full papers by 12 September 2023.
5. Full papers should be between 1000 and 1700 words and must follow the formatting guidelines provided upon acceptance.

Important dates

- Abstract submission deadline: 4 August 2023
- Notification of selection: 12 August 2023
- Full article submission deadline: 12 September 2023
- Authors will present their articles during the commemorative seminar that will be held online on 27 and 28 September 2023.

Publication

Finalised articles will be published on the [AfricLaw](#) blog.

For more information, please contact:

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