

REGIONAL CONFERENCE “LEADERS FOR JUSTICE WORKSHOPS”

SECOND CONFERENCE ON CURRENT CHALLENGES FOR AN INDEPENDENT AND EFFECTIVE JUDICIARY IN WEST AFRICA



A working judicial system is one of the core pillars of the rule of law. It is a prerequisite for enforcing individual rights, investigating and prosecuting violations of law and for sustainable economic development.

This regional conference is based on the idea that a country’s economic development can benefit from the cooperation of regional partners and the idea that, at the same time, the strengthening of the judiciary in turn strengthens regional legal certainty. It is essential for the development of the judicial systems in West Africa that young professionals show initiative and feel bound by the principles of the rule of law. Progress however also requires support from experienced professionals and politics.

The sixth conference builds on the preceding five regional conferences and continues to develop their topics. The focus of the fourth conference was to provide a platform for young, highly qualified legal professionals from Eastern Africa to exchange views whereas the fifth conference concentrated on the dialogue between young lawyers from West African states who had already had the opportunity to gain some practical experience and therefore already had a network they could refer to.

The Konrad Adenauer Stiftung under the aegis of its Rule of Law Program for Sub-Saharan Africa therefore held their sixth regional conference within the framework of their “Leaders for Justice Workshops”. This workshop was the second conference on the current challenges for an independent and effective judiciary in West Africa. The conference took place between the 15th and 18th of February 2018 In Accra, Ghana.

The aim of the conference was to enable an international dialogue between young practicing lawyers from various West African states and thereby strengthening the network already established in prior conferences. This would provide for essential impulses in improving judicial independence and efficiency. The aim was to further develop the topics discussed in previous workshops, including the speeding up of procedures, transparency as well as corruption. This conference focused on specific aspects of independence, procedural efficiency and the functions of the parties to the proceedings and also concentrated on strengthening the network between lawyers in the region by providing a regular platform to exchange views and experiences on the independence and transparency of the judiciary.

The development of legal systems namely requires a long term approach. A regular conference in the West African region will strengthen the network and will allow for long term progress as support from and cooperation within a regional and international network is essential in ensuring this progress. The regional exchange should also accompany the young professionals during their career within their respective legal system.

Participants included, amongst others, multiple university professors, advocates, judges, magistrates as well as a minister, a PhD student, a retired Supreme Court Justice, multiple KAS representatives as well as a German practicing lawyer.

Impulses gained by the 6th conference will also be accompanied by practically and scientifically founded publications. Conference participants will be encouraged to publish articles and reports concerning topics discussed at the conference in the KAS African Law Study Library. Including young participants enables networking with highly qualified lawyers of the next generation.