

(2024-2028)

Placing People at the Center of Justice in Africa

The African Alliance for
People-Centered Justice
Strategy Document

African Alliance 
FOR PEOPLE-CENTERED JUSTICE

November 2024

Part 1. Introduction

The growing recognition of people-centered justice as crucial to achieving the 2030 Agenda's objectives—eradicating poverty, reducing inequality, fostering shared prosperity, and protecting the environment—underscores the urgency of action. Without this urgency, these global promises risk falling short. While numerous African countries have initiatives promoting people-centered justice, they remain fragmented and insufficient to achieve the level of progress needed to meet SDG16 (equal access to justice for all) across the continent.

SDG16 aligns closely with Goal 11 of the African Union's Agenda 2063, which emphasizes justice as a central theme. This alignment presents a valuable opportunity to leverage these frameworks to strengthen one another. A coalition of diverse stakeholders championing people-centered justice could enhance collaboration and integration between these development agendas. However, Africa currently lacks a continent-wide platform dedicated to advancing people-centered justice at the regional level, while also engaging with global efforts like the [Justice Action Coalition](#) and the [Ibero-American Alliance on Access to Justice](#).

The African Alliance for People-Centered Justice (the Alliance) has therefore been created to mainstream the concept of people-centered justice, supporting local and national actors in implementing justice-focused policies and fostering a unified understanding of its principles. The Alliance is a high-ambition coalition of governmental, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental organizations that seek to promote the understanding and use of people-centered approaches to justice in Africa. It has been established to contribute to the reduction of the justice gap and foster equal access to justice for all by promoting people-centered justice.

Given Africa's vast size and diversity, it is advisable to begin with a focused approach, taking incremental steps to eventually cover the entire continent. Following initial assessments and discussions, the Alliance will launch with partners from nine countries: Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, South Africa, Zambia, The Gambia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone, and partners from other countries are welcome to join. Expanding the Alliance's reach to include more countries, with a focus on representing key continental languages, will be a priority.

This four-year strategic plan outlines the vision, strategic goals, and objectives for the Alliance's initial phase. It also details the governance structure that will guide the Alliance during these first four years.

The strategic goals identified in this strategy document for the Alliance are threefold:

- a. To ensure a common and shared understanding of people-centered justice among a range of formal and informal justice actors,
- b. To mainstream a people-centered approach into the delivery of justice at the country level, and
- c. To expand the work of the Alliance into other countries and regions in Africa.

Part 2. Vision, Mission, Values and Governance

2.1. Vision

To contribute to a just, inclusive, and equitable society in Africa where every individual has access to fair, transparent, and effective justice systems—both formal and informal—that respect human rights, are based on people-centered approaches to justice and uphold the rule of law.

2.2. Mission

To promote people-centered justice and ensure equal access to justice for all across Africa by:

- a. Bridging the knowledge, data and evidence, and communication gaps between practices within different regions across the continent and globally.
- b. Strengthening the enabling environment for the adoption of people-centered justice initiatives by joining forces around shared goals, priorities, and agendas and utilizing open government and interdisciplinary approaches to transform justice systems.
- c. Advancing progress towards the attainment of SDG16 and Goal 11 of Agenda 2063 by empowering justice leaders and partners to develop, implement, and scale innovative solutions to justice problems.

2.3. Values

In carrying out the activities outlined in this Strategy, the members of the Alliance subscribe to the following principles of people-centered justice:³

1. **To put people and their justice needs at the center of justice systems.** To make better use of data to understand what people need and want when they seek justice, the obstacles they face, and the justice they receive.
2. **To solve justice problems.** To transform justice institutions and services through a broader range of formal and informal justice providers to ensure respect for human rights and respond to the unmet legal needs of billions of people, using high-tech as well as low-tech innovative solutions based on data, evidence, and learning, while considering the specificities of the context.
3. **To improve justice journeys.** To empower people to understand, use and shape the law, while offering them fair, informal, and formal justice processes that meet their needs in terms of both procedures and outcomes.
4. **To use justice for prevention and to promote reconciliation.** To make use of mediation and other methods to prevent disputes from escalating, address legacies of human rights violations, and invest in justice systems that are trustworthy and legitimate.
5. **To empower people to access services and opportunities.** To eliminate legal, administrative, and practical barriers that people face to obtain documents, access public services, and participate fully in society and the economy, while promoting gender equality.

2.4. Governance

1. Joining the Alliance

The process of joining the African Alliance has been simplified to ensure ease of access and participation in the work of the Alliance. It will be a three (3) pronged process as follows:

1. Interested governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations will be required to subscribe to the principles of people-centered justice as articulated in Section 2.3 Values,
2. Interested parties are required to articulate which of the Working Groups they will feed into through local, national, or regional implementation, research, and funding or promotion of the principles of people-centered justice and
3. After the Founding Members have joined and the Alliance has been launched, any new members will be accepted, provided that they have adhered to steps 1 and 2 for joining the Alliance above and that no existing Alliance members have a substantial objection to their membership.

2. The Governance Structure

The governance structure of the African Alliance for People-Centered Justice will comprise the following bodies and persons:

1. **The Secretariat** will coordinate the meetings, events, website hosting, social media, queries, and fundraising efforts on behalf of the Alliance. Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies will initially serve as the secretariat until an alternative structure is proposed and adopted by the Alliance.
2. **The Regional Leads** will comprise government and non-governmental organizations from each region and will be responsible for coordinating efforts within their specific regions, including the implementation of this strategy and the growth of the Alliance.
3. **The Leadership Committee** will provide strategic oversight and guidance for the Alliance. It will comprise the Regional Leads, a representative of the Secretariat, a [Young Justice Leader](#), and representatives from donors and international organizations that are part of the Alliance.
4. **The Working Groups** will focus on developing knowledge and implementing various aspects of the strategy of the Alliance. The Working Groups will cover the following topics:
 - a. **People-centered justice research, data, and evidence**—This working group will support countries and organizations that seek to collect and rely on people-centered justice data and support the profiling of works to prevent and resolve pressing justice needs. Where possible, it will work with the [Justice Action Coalition](#) Workstream on Data and Evidence.
 - b. **People-centered justice financing**—This working group will work towards promoting a pivot towards and an increase in funding for people-centered approaches to justice. Where possible, it will work with the Justice Action Coalition Workstream on Justice Financing

- c. **People-centered justice communications**—This working group will work towards promoting the understanding and use of people-centered justice on the continent by producing literature on people-centered justice and convening dialogues that articulate the meaning and benefits of people-centered approaches to justice. Where possible, it will work with the Justice Action Coalition Workstream on Key Messages. This working group will also be responsible for fostering international exchange with the [Ibero-American Alliance for Access to Justice](#), among other stakeholders.
- d. **Diverse Pathways to Justice**—This working group will focus on promoting diverse pathways to justice, including customary and informal justice mechanisms, legal aid, and legal empowerment. Where possible, this working group will work with the [African Center of Excellence for Access to Justice](#).
- e. **People-centered justice for those furthest behind**—This working group will focus on increasing access to justice for those that are furthest behind in Africa including justice for women, justice for children, justice for persons living with disabilities and justice for displaced populations. Where possible, this working group will work with the partners such as the [Justice for Children](#) working group.

3. Strategic Goals, Objectives, and Activities

Strategic Goals

Strategy Goal 1: Ensure a common and shared understanding of people-centered justice among a range of justice actors							
Objective 1.1: To develop a common understanding of people-centered justice among members							
S/N	Activity	Sub-Activity	Output/Deliverable	Main Cost Element	Responsible Entity	Timeline	Comments
1.1.1	Produce a report on the meaning, principles, and opportunities for people-centered justice within the African context	Carry out a desk review of some examples of people-centered justice in Africa, including its importance to SDG16 and Goal 11 of Agenda 2063	Draft report	Research or desk review	Secretariat, Working Group on Research, Data and Evidence	Y1, Q2	
		Adapt and develop the desk review or research into a report on the meaning and principles of people-centered justice for Africa, including its potential use and impact for different justice actors.	Published report (African People-Centered Justice Report)	Online publication	Secretariat, Secretariat, Working Group on Research, Data and Evidence, consultant	Y1, Q4	
Objective 1.2: To raise awareness of the need to adopt a people-centered approach to the administration of justice and foster a shared understanding of the concept							
S/N	Activity	Sub-Activity	Output/Deliverable	Main Cost Element	Responsible Entity	Timeline	Comments
1.2.1	Launch a public awareness campaign to sensitize justice actors on the meaning, principles, and need for people-centered justice in member countries	Coordinate a targeted campaign through speaking engagements and outreach at country-level justice events to sensitize key justice actors or stakeholders from different backgrounds on the meaning and principles of	Designated Alliance members speaking at identified events (e.g., webinars, conferences, etc)	In-person and virtual engagements	Secretariat, Working Group on people-centered justice communications	Y2, Q1-Q2	
		Coordinate a media and social media campaign to sensitize the public and key justice actors or stakeholders from different backgrounds on the meaning and principles of people-centered justice	Media and social media engagement involving the use of influencers	Paid consultancy	Secretariat, Working Group on people-centered justice communications, consultants, and "influencers"	Y2, Q1-Q4	
1.2.2	Organize meetings at the regional level in member countries	Disseminate the African People-Centered Justice Report on the meaning and principles of people-centered justice	Disseminated report	Virtual copy of the report	Secretariat, All Working Groups	Y2-Y4 Q1-Q4	
		Facilitate conversations around the meaning and principles of people-centered justice to promote its use and adoption	Panel discussions at key events, joint statements at regional and international levels, including at the United Nations and the African Union levels	In-person/virtual meetings	Secretariat, All Working Groups	Y2-Y4 Q1-Q4	
		Facilitate presentations on the role justice actors can play under a people-centered approach to justice; provide practical guidelines and approaches to systematically implementing people-centered justice	Panel discussions at key events, exchanges with the Ibero-American Alliance for Access to Justice	In-person/virtual meetings	Secretariat, All Working Groups	Y2-Y4 Q1-Q4	

Strategy Goal 2: Mainstream a people-centered approach into the administration of justice at the country level

Objective 2.1: To gather data and evidence, including data to measure progress and assess performance

S/N	Activity	Sub-Activity	Output/Deliverable	Main Cost Element	Responsible Entity	Timeline	Comments
2.1.1	Promote justice needs and satisfaction surveys in member countries	Identify countries and partners interested in conducting justice needs and satisfaction surveys in member countries	List of countries and partners interested in conducting justice needs and satisfaction surveys	Desk review	Secretariat, Working Group on Research, Data, and Evidence	Y1, Q2-Q4	
		Collaborate with identified countries and partners to develop the survey parameters, including the areas relevant for long-term data gathering. This will include exchanges with the Ibero-American Alliance for Access to Justice and the Justice Action Coalition.	Identified common indicators and parameters relevant for long-term data gathering	Desk review	Secretariat, Working Group on Research, Data, and Evidence	Y2-Y3, Q1-Q4	
		Support countries and partners in carrying out justice needs and satisfaction surveys in member countries	Report of findings of justice needs and satisfaction surveys in member countries	Production of justice needs and satisfaction surveys	Secretariat, Working Group on Research, Data, and Evidence	Y2, Q2	A consultant or sub-award may be required to support this process

Objective 2.2: To create a well-cataloged central repository of information about effective people-centered justice practices

S/N	Activity	Sub-Activity	Output/Deliverable	Main Cost Element	Responsible Entity	Timeline	Comments
2.2.1	Compile good practices on people-centered justice initiatives in member countries organized thematically	Set parameters for identifying good practices on people-centered justice initiatives (such as inclusivity, sustainability, reach and scale, and availability of measurable data) and invite members to submit examples in accordance with a shared template	Identified parameters for identifying good people-centered justice practices	Desk review	Secretariat, Secretariat, All Working Groups	Y1, Q2-Q4	
		Review and compile qualifying submissions into a compendium	Compendium of good people-centered justice practices	Desk review	Secretariat, Working Group on people-centered justice communications	Y2-Y4 Q1-Q4	
2.2.2	Catalog, publicize, and create a central repository with the compendium for Alliance members and the public	Engage the services of a consultant to thoroughly catalog the compendium using important keywords for easy accessibility	Cataloged compendium	Paid consultancy	Secretariat, consultant	Y2, Q2	
		Upload the cataloged compendium online to serve as a central repository for the Alliance members and the public	Accessible website with cataloged compendium	Online publication	Secretariat	Y2, Q3–Y4, Q4	

Objective 2.2: To create a well-cataloged central repository of information about effective people-centered justice practices

S/N	Activity	Sub-Activity	Output/Deliverable	Main Cost Element	Responsible Entity	Timeline	Comments
2.3.1	Identify partners and countries that are seeking to pivot to or increase people-centered approaches (especially those that have collected data)	Create knowledge and peer exchange platforms to support partners and countries seeking to pivot to or increase people-centered approaches, relying on data where possible	Designed people-centered justice initiatives	In-person and virtual engagements	Secretariat, regional leads, Leadership Committee, all Working Groups	Y2, Q1	
		Design specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound strategies	Designed people-centered justice initiatives	Virtual engagement	Secretariat, regional leads, Leadership Committee, all Working Groups	Y2, Q2	
2.3.2	Implement people-centered justice initiatives at the country level	Implement the people-centered justice initiatives as designed and annually measure progress and assess performance.	Progress report	Desk review	Secretariat, regional leads, Leadership Committee, all Working Groups, consultant	Y2, Q3–Y4, Q4	A consultant or sub-award may be required to support this process

Strategic Goal 3: Expansion of the Alliance

Objective 3.1: To expand the Alliance into other countries and regions in Africa

S/N	Activity	Sub-Activity	Output/Deliverable	Main Cost Element	Responsible Entity	Timeline	Comments
3.1.1	Carry out a gap analysis of non-member countries for expansion purposes and the resources needed for the expansion	Conduct a stakeholder mapping by region of government and non-government stakeholders from non-member countries	Stakeholder mapping for non-member countries	Mapping exercise (desk review)	Secretariat, regional leads	Y1, Q2	
		Carry out a gap analysis of the resources needed (e.g., finances, translation, and interpretation services) for the Alliance to expand into those countries	Gap analysis of needed resources for the expansion exercise	Gap analysis (desk review)	Secretariat, regional leads	Y1, Q3	
		Develop a timeline and action plan by region and/or language groupings to be followed during the expansion exercise	Expansion timeline and action plan	Report writing	Secretariat, regional leads	Y1, Q4	The expansion should begin in Y2, Q1
3.1.2	Carry out a gap analysis of non-member countries for expansion purposes and the resources needed for the expansion	Take advantage of Africa-wide events to reach out to new countries and invite them to join the Alliance	Newly admitted member countries	In-person or virtual meeting	Leadership Committee	Y2-Y3, Q1-Q4	

Endnotes

- 1 **People-centered justice is an approach that places people’s justice needs at the center of justice system priorities, policies, and interventions.**
For more information refer to the “Task Force on Justice, “Justice for All – Final Report,” *NYU Center on International Cooperation*, 2019, <https://www.sdg16.plus/resources/justice-for-all-report-of-the-task-force-on-justice>.
- 2 **“SDG Report 2022,”** *United Nations*, 2022, <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2022/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2022.pdf>.
- 3 **Task Force on Justice,** *Justice for All – Final Report.* (New York: Center on International Cooperation, 2019), available at <https://www.justice.sdg16.plus/>
- 4 These principles were first articulated in the Hague Declaration on Equal Access to Justice for All by 2030. See <https://www.sdg16.plus/resources/hague-declaration-on-equal-access-to-justice-for-all-by-2030>. Since then, over 60 countries across the globe have endorsed these principles. See <https://www.sdg16.plus/justice-for-all-acceleration-actions>.

