

GCAP AU PRESS CONFERENCE NOTES

DATE: 1 FEBRUARY, 2010

VENUE: PANE OFFICE, ADDIS, ETHIOPIA

By Simekina Kalusi, National Coordinator, GCAP Malawi

E-mail: skaluzi@yahoo.com

The establishment of the African Union as a continental force to help secure Africa's democracy, human rights and a sustainable economy, especially by bringing an end to intra-African conflict and creating an effective common market; creates an opportunity for Africa to have a united front to engage with the west and its institutions. Hence, GCAP as a grouping of Civil society organizations worldwide, is of the view that the chairmanship of the AU should be given a voice and a seat at the G20 as a continental force. We are therefore by this launching At the Table campaign, urging the AU to consider and adopt this concept.

GCAP is aware of the next AU meetings in July 2010. We are also aware of the G20 meetings and UN Summit which will take place in Canada and New York in June and September 2010 respectively.

Considering that the G20 meetings normally drive the development agenda globally and that Africa Institutional representation is non-existent, we are of the view that this is a serious disadvantage to the continent as there are no institutional report back mechanisms in place and therefore difficult for other African nations to hold anybody accountable; yet Africa and the poverty agenda continue to dominate the G20 meetings.

In spite of the unprecedented development in science and technology and increases in global wealth and prosperity, Africa continues to experience poor economic growth and declining social development. Many African countries can only register minimal economic growth since independence. It is our view that, more political will is needed at both national and regional levels as some MDG targets still remain critical. It is our hope that, Africa's inclusion in the G20 will

grant her leverage at this decision making level to take her destiny into her own hands.

If the idea of the AU membership at the G20 is considered and adopted by the AU, GCAP coalitions in Africa and around the World will rally behind the decision and subsequently join it in lobbying the G20.