### Fifth Annual AROCSA Conference, 2020

**Theme:** CIVIL SOCIETY SUSTAINABILITY IN AFRICA’S CHANGING LANDSCAPE

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<th>CALL FOR PAPERS</th>
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<td><strong>VENUE:</strong> University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa</td>
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<td><strong>DATES:</strong> July 29 – 31, 2020</td>
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### ABOUT AROCSA

The Association for Research on Civil Society in Africa (AROCSA) was established in September 2015 to promote and advance a community of excellence in research and practice on civil society in the service of African development. One of AROCSA’S main goals is to convene an Annual Conference which seeks to bring together scholars and practitioners for networking, learning and skills-building. AROCSA is driven by the vision of an Africa where knowledge generation and dissemination on civil society by scholars reflect global excellence standards and propels development.

### OVERVIEW OF CONFERENCE THEME

The social, political, technological and civil society landscape of Africa are changing along multiple dimensions, and the influence and impact of Civil Society are needed now, more than ever. Africa needs to prepare for a future that will be characterized by shifting global and continent-wide political dynamics, demography, technology and more. The future of Africa is hinged on a Civil Society that places itself strategically, to not only react to changes, but to proactively play a key leadership role in shaping Africa's future.

The sustainability of civil society's existence, influence and impact must be confronted along two dimensions. First, it is important to investigate the **internal factors** that will ensure the sustainability of civil society organizations themselves (broadly referring to all non-government, non-business, citizens' collective action movements and organizations). This internal view requires a review of how civil society’s actors identify, secure, utilize and reproduce resources that will keep them operating and able to achieve their goals. This means efficient use of technology beyond operations and more strategically in advocacy, policymaking and service provision; a review of **funding models** that will support growth; a review of the workforce and ensuring that people have the capacity to thrive in the new and rapidly-changing socioeconomic context.

Secondly, it is important to understand the **external factors** that affect sustainability in the larger context within which civil society organizations and movements operate. The changing political landscape, including the rapidly closing civic space, Africa’s new engagements with China and Russia, and other emerging global powers, and regional integration attempts including the recent adoption of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, all have an effect on the continent’s sustainability. **Socially**, inter-regional migration (both regular and irregular), the opportunities (free trade) and challenges (xenophobia), the growing youth numbers and the growing ageing population all exert new pressures on society. Civil society has a critical role to play in stabilizing a fluid and uncertain society through advocacy and action that institutionalizes solutions. Philanthropy is looking for new models, digital activism, resource mobilization and new models of resourcing civil society.

The first two decades of the Millennium have brought changes in political leadership through citizen and military-driven popular uprisings (Egypt, Algeria, Sudan), peer pressure from regional bodies (The Gambia) or resignation under duress (Zimbabwe), to name a few. As political leadership has changed, the hope for better, new alternatives have not materialized, and disappointed citizens seem poised for further action that may be poised to disrupt the new status quo. What role does, or will civil society play in these dynamics?
SUBMISSIONS
The annual conference welcomes participation from researchers in all academic disciplines, and from a range of professional backgrounds – including civil society practitioners, consultants, and activists and policymakers. Graduate students from all backgrounds are particularly welcome. AROCSA is particularly interested in empirical academic research papers, conceptual academic papers, and systematic reviews, especially those done in collaboration with civil society practitioners.

SUB-THEMES
We welcome submissions that address the following sub-themes as related to Africa:

1. Leadership and governance
2. Building a pipeline for leadership renewal
3. Technology (AI) and data
4. Leveraging Africa’s youth
5. Agile workforce
6. Philanthropy and new financing models – impact investment, social entrepreneurship
7. Knowledge creation /normative development
8. Social movements and new forms of organizing
9. The environment and natural resource management
10. Climate adaptation funds
11. Media
12. Philanthropy
13. Science and Technology

FORMAT OF THE CONFERENCE
The conference program will include the following:
- Opening Plenary
- Breakout sessions
- Roundtables discussions focusing on practitioner experiences
- Poster exhibitions showcasing work done by CSOs
- Pre-conference Skills Development Workshop for early career scholars
- Film screening on a relevant video documentary, or a Debate on a relevant issue if there are compelling submissions.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF SUMMARY PAPERS
Please contact the AROCSA office with your questions by e-mailing conference@arocsa.org.

Steps on How to Submit a Summary Paper
1. Register to become a member of AROCSA, if you are not a registered member
2. Submit a 600-word summary paper to conference@arocsa.org. The deadline for Submission is February 7th, 2020
3. AROCSA review and acceptance, announcement and Feedback by: February 21, 2020
4. Final submission of paper according to the guidelines/format by: June 15th, 2020

The 600-word summary should include the following:
1. A title that clearly identifies the conference theme being addressed;
2. Problem or issue that will be addressed in the presentation;
3. Topic’s relation to the state of knowledge in the field (including relevant literature);
4. Methodological approach (including analytical strategy and data sources);
5. A brief account of conclusion and its significance to an international audience.

Please note that you do not need to be a member of AROCSA to submit a paper. However, we encourage all authors who are not registered members of AROCSA to register to be members of AROCSA, before submitting a summary.