

ARUSHA DECLARATION ON GOOD PRISON PRACTICE
(27 February 1999, Arusha, Tanzania)

Preamble

- Aware of the fact that the management of prison is a social service, and that it is important to keep the public informed about the work of prison service;
- Further aware of the need to promote transparency and accountability in the management of prisons, and prisoners in Africa;
- Recalling the Kampala Declaration on Prison Conditions in Africa 1996 which sets out an agenda for penal reform in Africa;
- Noting the Kadoma Declaration on Community Service Orders in Africa 1997 which recommends greater use of non-custodial measures for offences committed at the lower end of the criminal scale;
- Further noting the provisions of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention Against Torture and other Forms of Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment safeguarding the right to life, prompt trial and dignity of person;
- Bearing in mind the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, the Basic Principles for the Treatment of Prisoners, the Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (the Beijing Rules), the Body of Principles for the Protection of all Persons Under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment and the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials;
- Further bearing in mind that prison officers, who comply with national and international standards for the protection of prisoners deserve the respect and the co-operation of the prison administration where they serve and the community as a whole;
- Noting that conditions in most African prisons fall short of these minimum standards;

The Prison Services in Central, Eastern and Southern African (CESCA) agree with the following principles :

1. To promote and implement good prison practice, in conformity with the international standards mentioned above, and to adjust domestic laws to these standards, if not yet done so;
2. To improve management practices in individual prisons, and in the penitentiary system as a whole to increase transparency and efficiency within the prison service;
3. To enhance the professionalism of prison staff and improve their working and living conditions;
4. To respect and protect the rights and dignity of prisoners as well as ensure compliance with national and international standards;
5. To provide training programmes to prison staff which will incorporate human rights standards in a way that is meaningful and relevant and improve the skills base of prison officers and, for this purpose, to establish a CESCA Training Board;
6. To establish a criminal justice mechanism comprising all components within the criminal justice system to co-ordinate activities and to cooperate in the solution of common problems;
7. To invite civil society groups into the prisons to work in partnership with the prison service to improve conditions of prisoners and the working environment of prisons;

8. To call upon governments and national and international organisations to give full support to this Declaration.

Arusha, Tanzania, 23-27 February 1999