
Press Release

Chairperson Receives A Delegation of European Ambassadors



Chairperson Ping (R) listens to the Head of the European Union Delegation to the African Union, H.E. Ambassador Gary Quince (Photo AUDIC)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 17 September 2012 --- The Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), Dr. Jean Ping, received in his office at the AU Headquarters on Monday, 17 September 2012, a Delegation of European Ambassadors in Addis Ababa, who came to express the concerns of the Europe Union over the recent executions of death row inmates in the Republic of Gambia.

Led by the Head of the European Union Delegation to the African Union, H.E. Ambassador Gary Quince, the Delegation included the Ambassadors of France and the United Kingdom, as well as the Deputy Heads of Mission at the Embassies of Germany and Denmark.

Speaking on behalf of the Delegation, Ambassador Gary Quince stated that:

“The European Union expresses its grave concern with regard to the recent executions in Gambia, following the public announcement made on 19 August by the President of the Republic that all death sentences would be carried out by the middle of September.

The EU requests the African Union's support in urging the President of Gambia to refrain from executions of inmates remaining on death row and to revert to the de facto moratorium applied since 1985.

The European Union welcomes the statement made by AU President Boni Yayi in the name of the African continent and the AU, calling on President Jammeh to refrain from executions."

Ambassador Quince further reiterated the European Union's principled opposition to the death penalty.

"We consider that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and the progressive development of human rights," he said.

The Chairperson thanked his guests for their visit and gave them an overview of the African Union's stance and actions with regard to capital punishment and the state of the death penalty in the Continent.

After listening to brief presentations on the issue by Representatives of the AUC Office of the Legal Counsel and the Department of Political Affairs, respectively, the Chairperson directed both Departments to work with the Peace and Security Council and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights to develop a coherent and holistic AU policy on capital punishment, which will be submitted, through the appropriate Organs, to African Leaders at the next AU Summit in January 2013, for their attention and necessary action.

The Chairperson emphasized that such a document should take into consideration existing African Union instruments, the varied positions and situations on the African Continent, the European Union's Guidelines on the death penalty and the global trend towards the abolition of capital punishment.



European Ambassadors present to the Chairperson their concerns over the recent executions in Gambia (Photo AUDIC)

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