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African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights		Commission Africaine des Droits de l'Homme & des Peuples
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**STATEMENT BY THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND
PEOPLES' RIGHTS (REPRESENTED BY HONOURBALE
COMMISSIONER MED S.K. KAGGWA)**

AT THE

**STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE 2ND PERMANENT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE AFRICAN UNION ECONOMIC
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)**

**26-28 MAY 2015
KHARTOUM, THE SUDAN**

Honourable Chairperson of the African Union Economic Social and Cultural Council;

Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps accredited to the Republic of The Sudan;

Distinguished representatives of African Union Organs and the African Union Commission here present;

Distinguished Delegates of African Union Member States;

Distinguished Representatives of International Organizations;

Distinguished Representatives of National Human Rights Institutions;

Distinguished Representatives of Non-governmental Organizations;

Distinguished Guests;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

All protocols respectfully observed.

It is my honour and privilege to attend the Standing Committee Meeting of the 2nd Permanent General Assembly of the African Union Economic Social and Cultural Council (AU ECOSOCC). Allow me to express on behalf of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the Commission), and on my own behalf, appreciation to the AU ECOSOCC for inviting the Commission to this meeting. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Government and People of the Republic of The Sudan for accepting to host this important meeting and for the warm hospitality accorded to us since our arrival in Khartoum.

The Commission as the principle AU Organ mandated to promote and protect human rights on the continent has over the years made tremendously efforts to minimize human rights violations in the continent, and create an environment in which **ALL** human rights are better promoted and protected. The Commission appreciates very much its collaborative relationship with other AU Organs and has taken numerous steps to ensure that this collaboration is a reality. Furthermore, the 2010 Rules of Procedure of the Commission generally mandates the Commission to establish formal relations of cooperation with all AU organs with human rights mandate. AU ECOSOCC amongst others is mandated to contribute to the promotion of human rights, the rule of law, good governance, democratic principles, gender equality and child rights. It is pleasing therefore to note in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration, that AU ECOSOCC attended the just concluded 56th Ordinary Session of the Commission and not only made a statement at the opening ceremony on its efforts in contributing to the human rights agenda of the AU, but also contributed to the rich deliberations at the Session. Beyond what already exists, it is therefore imperative that the Commission and AU ECOSOCC should take this relationship further.

Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

With respect to ensuring respect for human rights in particular, the Commission has made significant developments in this regard. The Commission has established 14 Special Mechanisms which deal with thematic human rights issues of concern on the continent including establishing the **Working Group on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**. What is most outstanding amongst others is the fact that through the Working Group, the Commission has adopted the **Principles and Guidelines on ECOSOC Rights** defining the precise nature of the obligations for States Parties to respect Economic, Social and Cultural rights enshrined in the African Charter and the **State Party Reporting Guidelines for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights** to give tangible information on the legislative and other measures States are taking to respect, protect, promote and fulfill socio-economic rights within their respective jurisdictions.

The Commission just as with AU ECOSOCC also collaborates with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) which respectively enjoy observer and affiliate status with the Commission to partner with it in fulfilment of its mandate to promote and protect human rights in Africa. NGOs play a significant role in the activities of the Commission through initiatives such as raising awareness on violations of the African Charter, litigating individual Communications on behalf of

individuals, monitoring States' compliance with the African Charter, and increasing awareness about the Commission's activities through conferences, workshops, among others. The granting of status with the Commission also enables NGOs to participate directly in the Commission's activities, and to even request issues of particular interest to be included on the Commission's agenda. NGOs and NHRIs with observer and affiliate status are required to submit reports to the Commission on their activities in the promotion and protection of human rights, every two years in addition to suggesting topics for resolutions of the Commission. The Commission therefore benefits from these relationships because these organizations act as a conduit between the Commission and the ordinary citizens of State Parties, who are the beneficiaries of the rights and duties enshrined in the African Charter. Furthermore, NGOs and NHRIs have the added advantage of making changes at the national level. They can always lobby (with) their governments to support the adoption of policies and other measures to ensure protection and promotion of human rights. It is worthy to note that to date 485 NGOs and 24 NHRIs have observer and affiliate status with the Commission respectively.

Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

The promotion and protection of human rights in Africa can only gather momentum if there is cooperation and collaboration between the African Commission and other human rights stakeholders in ensuring the protection of

human rights in Africa. Despite the challenges that exist which have impeded full realization of human rights in Africa, the battle is not lost because many opportunities have presented themselves and all we need to do is use the avenues that are available to our advantage.

Finally, as human rights are our collective responsibility let us all join hands in the promotion and protection of human rights on our continent. The Commission therefore urges all stakeholders to work together on this very noble cause and reiterates its commitment in working with all AU Organs including the AU ECOSOCC and those with a human rights mandate in the stride towards a better Africa where human rights is respected.

I once again thank the AU ECOSOCC for inviting the Commission to this meeting and wish us all fruitful deliberations.

I thank you all for your kind attention.