



# Canada

## Joint Press Release

### African Human Rights Day Commemoration

#### **“A Multi-stakeholder Consultation on the Implementation of Women’s rights and the African Decade of Human Rights”**



**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 25 October, 2016:** A multi-stakeholder consultation on the accelerated implementation of women’s rights and the African Decade of Human Rights was organized jointly by the African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) in collaboration with the Government of Canada on Friday 21 October 2016 to celebrate the African Human Rights Day. The event was held in the context of the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the *African Charter on Human and People’s Rights* as well as the 13<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the

*Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa* also known as the *Maputo Protocol* as well as 2016 as the African Year of Human Rights with Particular focus on the Rights of Women.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Victoria Moaloka, Head of Coordination and Outreach Division of the Women, Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) of the AUC stated that "The African Human Rights System has marked significant progress since the adoption of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights in 1981 which is the cornerstone of the African human rights mechanism and the foundation in which all other human rights standards and norms in the continent including women's rights are founded upon. We thus have a collective responsibility as partners to take bold and sustainable actions to accelerate the advancement of women's rights in Africa".

"The vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa certainly requires that we put the women of Africa and their needs at the center of the efforts because all women's rights are human rights" Ms. Letty Chiwara, UN Women Representative to Ethiopia, the AU and ECA stressed in her keynote statement. She also highlighted the importance of adopting innovative and multi-sectoral strategies in addressing women's rights issues in Africa and further called on all the stakeholders to promote and support the use of the "Multi-sectorial Approach to implementing women's rights in Africa", a manual developed by UN Women in 2010.

"For the Government of Canada, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are integral to achieving sustainable development, peace and security. We will not reach the goals of the 2030 Agenda without achieving gender equality." H.E Amb. Philip Baker, Canadian Ambassador to Ethiopia stated while congratulating the African Union for putting gender equality at the center of Agenda 2063. He further commended the partners for supporting the initiative and reiterated his government's continued commitment to strengthening the partnerships for gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa.

"We appreciate the Declaration of the year as the Year of Human Rights with a Particular focus on the Rights of Women and today's important commemoration but we need to ask questions like how far have we come in addressing persisting women's rights issues including violence against women and Harmful Traditional Practices" Mr. Idrissa Kane, the Regional Representative of the UNOHCHR for Eastern Africa Office stressed in his statement. Going forward, he emphasized the importance of identifying strategies for the implementation of Human Rights commitments to achieve progress towards the full implementation of women's rights.

“Agenda 2063 is a game changer that opens up several key opportunities for collaboration and coordination to significantly shift women’s status in Africa” stated Dr. George Mukundi Wachira, Head of African Governance Architecture (AGA) of the AUC in presenting the African Human Rights Day message on behalf of the Commissioner of Political Affairs Department of the African Union Commission, H.E Dr. Aisha Abdullahi. Dr. Mukundi further stressed the need to take stock of progress on the implementation of human rights commitments to identify strategies to advance women’s rights in the context of the proposed African Decade of Human Rights.

The event saw an expert presentation and rich plenary discussion on the status of Women’s rights in Africa as well as proposals to accelerate implementation in line with the aspirations of Agenda 2063.

The event brought together representatives of Member States and Regional Economic Communities,



experts from the African Union Commission, UN Agencies, civil society organizations, development partners and other relevant stakeholders.

SM/TE/CM/

For Details Please Contact:  
Dr. George Mukundi Wachira, Head of AGA | Department of Political Affairs, AUC.  
Email: [WachiraG@africa-union.org](mailto:WachiraG@africa-union.org)

Tikikel Tadele Alemu  
Regional Liaison Specialist- Liaison to the African Union and UNECA UN Women Off Africa  
Road, UNDP Regional Service Centre Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Tel: ( Office)-+251-9200115170883  
(Mobile)-+251-911421484  
E-mail: [tikikel.alemu@unwomen.org](mailto:tikikel.alemu@unwomen.org)

Media Contact:  
Esther Azaa Tankou, Head of Division of Information |Directorate of Information and  
Communication, African Union Commission (AUC)/ Tel: +251(0) 911361185 / E-mail:  
[yamboue@africa-union.org](mailto:yamboue@africa-union.org)

For further information:  
Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail:  
[DIC@african-union.org](mailto:DIC@african-union.org) | Website: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int) | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

Follow us  
Face book: <https://www.facebook.com/AfricanUnionCommission>  
Twitter: [https://twitter.com/\\_AfricanUnion](https://twitter.com/_AfricanUnion)  
YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/AUCommission>  
Learn more at: <http://www.au.int>