



Joint Press Release

A Policy Forum on Strengthening National Human Rights in Africa Convened in the African Union

Addis Ababa- 6th Sept 2017: Under the theme of “*Strengthening Africa’s Human Rights Based Approach to Development: the Nexus between Strong Human Rights Institutions and Development*”, a policy forum on strengthening national human rights institutions in Africa convened today Wednesday 6th September 2017, at the African Union Commission Headquarter.



H. E. Mrs. Minata Samate-Cessouma, AUC Commissioner for Political Affairs, in her addressed deliver on her behalf by Calixte Aristide Mbari, Senior Political Officer noted that the Forum theme is not only timely but also relevant to the Africa’s Development Agenda 2063, which clearly defined the AU human rights approach to development, particularly in Aspiration three (3) of the Agenda, an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and rule of law.

The Commissioner recalled that the AU has dedicated the past three years to the promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights. "For example, year 2015 was dedicated to women's economic rights and empowerment towards the realization of the Africa Agenda 2063, in the same vein, 2016 was declared the year of Human rights with special focus on the rights of women. Similarly, the AU leadership has declared 2017 as the year of harnessing the Demographic Dividend through investment in Youth to promote the rights of African youth to development.

In recognition of the nexus between human rights and development, the Commissioner noted that the AU continues in the same trajectory of prioritizing the promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights and declared 2018 as the year of socio-economic rights focusing on the fight against corruption and other related offences in Africa.

Organized by AUC Department of Political Affairs, UNDP Regional Service Centre for Africa and Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRIs), the Forum aims to initiate dialogue and discussions on the State of the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in Africa and to achieve commitment from the AU Member States and NHRIs towards the implementation of the recommendations of the State of African NHRIs Report.

The Policy Forum is an implementation of recommendations of the Study on the State of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in Africa, conducted by NANHRI and UNDP in 2014, which are intended to shape and guide policy options for NHRIs, government as well as regional networks and development partners with regard to the strengthening of NHRIs. The Forum is expected to contribute to the implementation of the recommendations of the Report through enhanced commitments by stakeholders.

The Policy Forum on "*Strengthening Africa's Human Rights Based Approach to Development: the Nexus between Strong Human Rights Institutions and Development*", was attended by the members of the AU Permanent Representatives' Committee, Representatives of the African Union Commission, NHRIs, CSOs, UN Agencies, research and academia, as well as development partners.

The Policy Forum featured panel discussions consisting of representatives of each of these organizations, providing diverse perspectives and set pace for discussion into the various issues affecting NHRIs effectiveness and solutions to the challenges. These discussions aimed at initiating dialogue and initiatives in the respective AU member states on addressing the challenges facing the NHRIs, underscored the crucial role played by the NHRIs in development and discussed some of the challenges they grapple with. At the end, the Forum identified specific actions required to be undertaken by the various actors towards enhancing the effectiveness of the NHRIs.

The report "Study on the State of African National Human Rights Institutions" can be downloaded here in English and French:

http://www.africa.undp.org/content/rba/en/home/library/reports/study_on_the_state_of_NHRIs_in_africa.html

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