



AU-UN HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
AUC, PLENERARY HALL, JULIUS NYERERE BUILDING
ADDIS ABEBA, ETHIOPIA
24 APRIL 2018

COMMUNIQUE

1. The 1st African Union (AU) - United Nations (UN) High-Level Dialogue on Human Rights was convened on 24 April 2018, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as part of the longstanding commitment to strengthen ongoing collaboration between both institutions. The Dialogue was co-chaired by H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AUC and H.E. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Dialogue brought together the African Union Commissioners, elected officials from various AU organs and senior representatives from both the African Union and the United Nations.

2. The Dialogue was convened following a meeting that took place in Addis Ababa in May 2017 between the Chairperson of the AU Commission, H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Commissioner for Political Affairs, H.E. Ms. Cessouma Minata Samate, the Commissioner for Peace and Security, H.E. Mr. Smail Chergui, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, and the Under Secretary-General and Head of the UNOAU, Mr. Haile Menkerios which recognized the need for both institutions to work more decisively together to prevent the escalation of situations into full-fledged human rights crises. This meeting resulted in a decision to hold an annual AU-UN High Level Dialogue on Human Rights.

3. The principal objective of the High-Level Dialogue is to enhance the strategic partnership between the AU and the UN in the area of human and peoples' rights. It is a Platform to explore and develop joint approaches to preventing and addressing human rights abuses and violations, building on frameworks such as the African Decade on Human Rights and its 10-Year Action Plan, the AU-UN Cooperation Framework on Peace and Security, the Joint AU-UN Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM), as well as recommendations from the regional and international human rights mechanisms, and decisions and resolutions from the AU Policy Organs including the Permanent Representatives Committee, Peace and Security Council, the Executive Council, the AU Summit, the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Security Council and the Human Rights Council.

4. Participants at the Dialogue included representatives from:

AU: the African Union Commission (Bureau of the Chairperson, Departments of Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Women, Gender, and Development, Social Affairs, Office of the Legal Counsel, CIDO and the AU Office in Geneva), the Office of the AU Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR), the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC), the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the African Union Commission on International Law (AUCIL) the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), the APRM as the Chairperson of the AGA Platform.

UN: the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (Addis, Dakar, Geneva, Pretoria, New York, Yaoundé), the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU), the UNECA, and the United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations.

5. The Dialogue was conducted in the spirit of a renewed sense of solidarity and cooperation, guided by genuine and candid exchanges of ideas to identify comparative advantages of the respective institutions and reach an agreement on key strategic areas of engagement.

6. In the opening remarks, the Chairperson of the AUC welcomed the signing of the MoU between the AU and the OHCHR in 2010 as well as the signing of the Joint UN-AU Frameworks for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development noting that protection of civilians and promotion of human rights norms and standards should guide peace and security efforts in Africa. The Chairperson noted the significant progress made by the AU in addressing human rights violations through a number of initiatives, including the 10-Year Action Plan of the Human and Peoples' Rights Decade in Africa.

7. The Chairperson of the AUC praised the ongoing cooperation between the AU and UN in the field of human rights and highlighted the successful deployment of Human Rights Observers in Burundi, CAR, DRC, Mali, Somalia and South Sudan, which is contributing to the promotion and protection of civilians in countries experiencing violent conflicts or emerging out of such conflicts.

8. The Chairperson of the AUC reiterated the commitment of the AU to further strengthen cooperation with the UN, in particular OHCHR and highlighted the need to revisit and take stock of previous joint engagements with a view to addressing challenges and strengthening cooperation between the two institutions.

9. The High Commissioner for Human Rights thanked the AUC for hosting the inaugural AU-UN High-Level Dialogue on Human Rights in Addis Ababa. He believed that the dialogue symbolises Africa's determination to hold true to the key principles which underpin sustainable peace and development across the globe: the principles of justice, equality, human dignity as encapsulated by human rights.

10. The High Commissioner for Human Rights highlighted that the African Union's efforts in conflict resolution and conflict prevention is a lynchpin of stability and security in many troubled regions.

11. During the Dialogue, the Chairperson of the AUC launched the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024) at the African Union. The Decade (was proclaimed by the General Assembly in resolution 68/237 and a Programme of Activities was adopted by the General Assembly on 1 December 2014. The overarching themes of the Decade: "Recognition, Justice and Development" are shared by the AU and the UN. The two institutions agreed to organise further commemorative events on the Decade in the near future and to work together to implement the Programme of Activities for the Decade.

12. The AU and UN welcomed the Declaration of the Human and Peoples' Decade in Africa and its **Action Plan 2017-26**. The two parties agreed that it is a unique opportunity for concrete and tangible improvements in the protection and promotion of the fundamental human rights. The UN agreed to support the AU with its plan to ensure the ratification and implementation of international and continental human rights instruments at the national level.

13. The Dialogue agreed on the following outcomes:

- a) The AU and the UN agreed that the Dialogue should take place annually in order to enhance coordination, systematic information sharing and collaboration.
- b) The AU and the UN agreed that their respective entities should actively involve and coordinate their human rights-related initiatives and engagements with DPA/AUC and OHCHR as Focal Points in order to avoid duplication, ensure effectiveness and complementarity.
- c) The AU and the UN agreed that the existing collaboration aimed at advancing the promotion and protection of human rights should be strengthened in the context of early warning and conflict prevention. They further recognized that discrimination against women and girls is an obstacle to peace and development and committed to ensure that all peoples, even in the most fragile or complex contexts are able to exercise their rights.
- d) The AU and the UN agreed that the OHCHR, UNOAU, and other UN entities and agencies will provide the necessary technical support to the AU Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peace and Security to engage with the Peace and Security Council on the integration of human rights in in the early warning analysis and reporting within the framework of both the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).
- e) The AU and the UN agreed to intensify their joint efforts by strengthening the AU interventions in conflict and post conflict situations. This will include promotion and protection of human rights as well as the advancement of transitional justice,

reconciliation and social cohesion as part of the broader peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction and development agenda.

- f) The AU and the UN agreed to enhance collaboration in the following areas among others:
- Finalization and implementation of the Action Plan of the Human and Peoples' Rights Decade;
 - Finalization and Implementation of the AU Transitional Justice Policy;
 - Finalization and Implementation of the AU Business and Human Rights Policy;
 - Human rights and peace and security (including women, peace and security agenda, and compliance and accountability frameworks);
 - Gender equality and women's rights;
 - Children's rights;
 - SDGs and Agenda 2063;
 - Strengthening institutional capacity building for the AU Organs and Institutions with a human rights mandate.
- g) The AU and the UN addressed the issue of widening the Civic and Democratic space and reiterated their commitment to jointly support the participation of all stakeholders, including National Human Rights Institutions and Civil Society Organisations in the promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights in Africa.
- h) The AU and the UN underscored the need for continued support to the AU in establishing a human rights compliance framework for its peace support operations pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 2320. Strengthening the operationalization of human rights in peace operations is critical for the AU and UN partnership.
- i) The AU and the UN agreed to work closely with the Directorate of Women, Gender, and Development Directorate, the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peace and Security and the Department of Human Resources, Science and Technology to develop joint programmes that would impact positively the lives of African.
- j) The AU and the UN agreed to work collaboratively together to deliver on the declaration of this year (2018) by the AU Policy Organs as the Year of Winning the Fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation. To this end, both sides will work together in their efforts to combat corruption as a threat to the enjoyment of human and peoples' rights in Africa.
- k) The AU and the UN committed to closely working together towards the development, adoption and implementation of a joint AU-UN Framework on Human Rights.

The AU and the UN agreed to hold the Second High-Level Dialogue on Human Rights in Geneva, in 2019.

Done in Addis Ababa on 24 April 2018.

H.E. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

H.E. Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat
Chairperson of the AUC