

**Directorate of Information and Communication****COMMEMORATION OF 2018 AFRICA HUMAN RIGHTS DAY: “Fighting Corruption and Advancing Human Rights: Our Collective Responsibility”**

**Banjul, The Gambia, 21 October 2018:** The Department of the Political Affairs of the African Union Commission in close collaboration with the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights and other organs of the African Union with a human rights mandate and distinguished guests commemorated the Africa Human Rights Day in Banjul, The Gambia on 21 October 2018. This year’s theme for the commemoration is “Fighting Corruption and Advancing Human Rights: Our Collective Responsibility” as the nexus between human rights violations and corruption can no longer be ignored.

On behalf of H.E Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Calixte Mbari, Head of the Democracy Governance Human Rights and Election division, Department of Political Affairs welcomed all participants to the Commemoration. He indicated that 2018 was declared as the African year of promoting socio-economic rights, through the fight against corruption as it undermines the effective functioning of public and private institutions and limits the effectiveness of social and public service delivery. He thus highlighted that corruption is a structural obstacle to the advancement of socio-economic and development rights.

Mr. Calixte Mbari also reiterated that while efforts against corruption and human rights violations in Africa have been commendable, there is still a distance to go. He therefore proclaimed that this year is a clarion call to all Africans to join hands together and fight corruption and human rights violations, so that Africa can realize Agenda 2063.

The Commemoration was also addressed by Prof. Shola Omotala, Dean of Social Sciences at the Federal University of Oye, Ekiti State, in Nigeria. He emphasized that corruption undermines access of African people to development and that it is at the base for different types of conflict. Thus, making it a crime against humanity. He further added that there is a need to expand the definition of corruption to include fundamental human rights violation and a threat to national security.

Barister Femi Falana, Senior Advocate of Nigeria remarked that having access to justice is strongly needed to combat corruption. He added that sensitization is needed to raise awareness on human rights violation and its connection with

corruption. He also stressed that civil and political rights cannot be enjoyed in a country where corruption prevails.

On her part, H.E Mrs. Soyata Maiga, Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights closed the commemoration by stating that it is important for African Union member states to ratify all the necessary instruments concerned in order to combat corruption while promotion and protecting human rights in Africa.

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