



**STATEMENT BY  
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AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

**AT**

**THE 12<sup>TH</sup> AU-EU HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE  
BRUSSELS, BELGIUM  
10 JANUARY 2017**

**Distinguished Members of the European Union Delegation,  
Distinguished Members of the African Union Delegation,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

On behalf of members of the African Union Delegation and myself, I wish to begin by thanking the European Union for organizing this 12<sup>th</sup> Round of the AU-EU Human Rights Dialogue here in Brussels. Special thanks is extended to H.E. Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights for hosting us and for leading the EU Delegation and for Ambassador Ranieri Sabatucci and his staff for taking all necessary measures to ensure the success of this Dialogue. We felt the warm welcome despite the cold weather and we are grateful for that.

I also wish to take this opportunity to thank representatives of the AU Organs for their participation in this important Dialogue. My thanks and appreciation also goes to the representatives of AUC Departments and the AU Liaison Office here in Brussels for being part of this process.

We meet once again to continue our AU-EU Human Rights Dialogue as part of the implementation process of the Africa-EU Partnership on Democratic Governance and Human Rights. And as I might be participating in this activity for the last time, I could sense that there is no doubt that our Dialogue has reached a good level of maturity and this gathering today is another step in our cooperation, which allows us to exchange ideas on a wide range of human rights issues of interest to both continents.

I also wish to seize this opportunity to thank members of the African and European CSOs for being part of this process and for their valuable contributions to this Dialogue. We must continue in this spirit by committing ourselves to fully implement the outcomes of all CSOs seminars held so far and in particular the 6<sup>th</sup> Seminar, which was held here in Brussels on 8-9 January 2017.

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**

You will note from the programme before us, that the areas of work that would be covered during today's meeting include human rights development in Africa and Europe, the AU-EU cooperation at the international level as well as cooperation on matters of mutual interest. In the area of Human Rights, I am pleased to inform you that, whilst we continue to confront challenges, progress has been made by completing the implementation process of the first Action Plan of the Human Rights Strategy for Africa by the AUC and all AU Organs with a human rights mandate. The purpose of the Strategy is to strengthen the African human rights system and to deepen the culture of democracy and human rights in conformity with the objectives of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant African Shared Values instruments.

We also celebrated 2016 as the year of human rights in Africa with particular focus on the rights of women. I wish to also take this opportunity to applaud the Decision by the AU Heads of State and Government declaring the next 10 years as the Human and Peoples' Decade in Africa. This declaration provides a golden opportunity for the entire continent to take stock of the human rights situation in Africa and collectively work together to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights.

The declaration seeks to, among other things: enhance public awareness about human rights; expedite the ratification and implementation of the human rights instruments, encourage Member States to develop policies, plans of actions and programmes on the promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights, and encourage Member States to recommit to the promotion and protection of human rights.

The vision of a peaceful, united and prosperous Africa set out in Agenda 2063 can only be achieved through sound planning and results-oriented policies and actions. Agenda 2063 has been adopted by our Heads of State and Government as the Continent's new long-term development blueprint for the next 50 years. Of the seven aspirations of Agenda 2063, the 3<sup>rd</sup> aspiration envisions "an Africa of Good Governance, Democracy, Respect for Human Rights, Justice and the Rule of Law". Our valued partnership with the EU is vital for Africa to realize this noble goal of Agenda 2063.

Once again, on behalf of the African Union Delegation, I would like to express our appreciation to the European Union for supporting both financially and technically the AU human rights programme and activities and also for making all necessary efforts to organize this very important dialogue.

In conclusion, I wish to invite you all to contribute to our collectively in making this dialogue a resounding success. I wish us a fruitful dialogue and impactful outcomes.

I thank you.