



**STATEMENT BY H.E. MINATA SAMATE CESSOUMA  
COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS  
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

**AT THE WORKSHOP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS AND  
TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE MECHANISMS IN DARFUR**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA  
18 JULY 2017**

**Your Excellency, Ambassador of the Sudan to Ethiopia and Permanent Representative to the AU**

**Honorable Representatives of the Office of the General Prosecutor for the Special Court of Darfur Crimes**

**Honorable Representatives of the Justice, Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

**Honorable Representatives of the National Human Rights Commission of the Sudan**

**Honorable Representatives of the Advisory Council for Human Rights**

**Distinguished Representatives of the Centre for the Studies of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVSR)**

**Distinguished Representatives of UNAMID**

**Distinguished Representatives of the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights**

**Distinguished Representatives Human Rights Experts and Representatives of Civil Society Organizations**

**Colleagues**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this workshop organized by the Department of Political Affairs of the African Union Commission in close collaboration with the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVSR) and the United Nations and African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID). This important workshop brings together the Human Rights Institutions and Transitional Justice Mechanisms in Darfur at a time when the development of an African transitional justice policy has just been completed and only awaits official adoption by the AU Policy Organs.

This workshop is also timely and pertinent given recent political developments in Sudan. More significantly, we are gratified by the National Dialogue recently concluded in the Sudan to reaffirm the collective need to guarantee and respect human and peoples' rights, the rule of law, democratic, credible and peaceful elections, democratic and participatory governance. The National Dialogue also committed the key stakeholders to upscale efforts towards achieving sustainable peace and development in Darfur and other parts of the Sudan.

Our meeting today is also taking place at a time when a numbers of African countries, such as The Gambia, are undergoing the transition from violent conflict to peace and from authoritarian rule to democratic governance. Therefore, a critical reflection on the role of the African Union on transitional justice in Africa is timely and appropriate. On-going conflict situations in such countries as South Sudan, Central African Republic, DRC, Mali, Libya, the Sahel Region, the Lake Chad Basin etc illustrate the importance of transitional justice to peace-making and peace-building efforts in Africa.

An appraisal of the AU policy pronouncements on non-impunity, truth, peace, justice and reconciliation in Africa all reaffirm the need for greater African coherence, understanding and ownership on transitional justice. The African Union and its Member States have increasingly called for greater African leadership and more o internal dialogue in resolving violent conflicts. Establishing Transitional Justice Mechanisms in Darfur provides the best hope for practical application of the principle of African solutions to African problems aimed at achieving the ultimate goal of building sustainable peace in Darfur.

The AU has initiated a consensus building process to reflect on African experiences on transitional justice, and to establish frameworks for constructive management of conflicts. In this context, we need to reflect on the linkages between transitional justice, governance, peace building and socio-economic development as well articulated in Agenda 2063-The Africa We Want. As highlighted in Agenda 2063 and the 2030 global agenda on sustainable development, more investment needs to be made in building resilience of communities and strengthening institutions in conflict situations. It goes without saying that empowered communities can manage risk and use opportunities to improve their livelihoods enabling them to live with dignity. Investments towards creating a community that is resilient to conflict is key in building sustainable peace, advancing democratic governance and ensuring socio-economic development and structural transformation.

In addition, there is need to connect these discussions with other policy processes such as the implementation of the African Union Policy Framework on Post Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD), the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and elaboration and implementation of the African Shared Values. Specifically, the convergence between the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) should center around structural prevention of conflict by promoting principles of democratic and participatory governance on the continent and contributing to silencing the guns by the year 2020.

Against this backdrop, the objective of this consultation is to explore ways and means to provide technical support to the Human Rights Institutions and Transitional Justice Mechanisms in Darfur with a view to enhancing the effective discharge of their mandates. Here, I must acknowledge with appreciation the efforts of the Government of the Sudan in adequately following up and monitoring the implementation of the negotiated political settlements to bring a lasting peace and justice to the people of Darfur. I also must

applaud the role played by UNAMID and other international, continental and regional bodies in supporting transitional justice processes in Darfur.

**Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen:**

In conclusion, let me express my profound gratitude to H.E. the Ambassador of the Sudan, the representatives of the Human Rights Institutions and Transitional Justice Mechanisms in Darfur and Experts present here today for accepting our invitation at short notice to be part of this important workshop. I would also like to thank the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation and in particular its able Director, Madam Nomfundo Mogapi and her dedicated staff, for their continued support to the Department of Political Affairs and for facilitating the convening of this meeting.

I also wish to seize this opportunity to thank Mr. Amadu Shour of the Human Rights Section of UNAMID and his staff for honoring the partnership that exist between our two institutions for the benefit of the people of Darfur.

My thanks also go to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for East Africa for supporting this process.

Last but by all means not least, let me extend my gratitude to my team from the Department of Political Affairs under the sterling stewardship of Ambassador Salah Hammad for facilitating all administrative and logistical aspects of this workshop.

Most finally, it is my sincere hope that this workshop is not just a one-off event. I trust that building on this workshop, we will sustain our mutually beneficial partnership in seeking durable peace, sustainable democratic governance and meaningful socio-economic development in Africa in general and in the Sudan, in particular, inspired by both Agenda 2063 and the 2030 global agenda on sustainable development.

It is now my singular honour and privilege to declare this meeting open and wish you all fruitful deliberations.

I thank you for your kind attention.