



**Statement By H.E. Minata Samate Cessouma
Commissioner For Political Affairs
African Union Commission**

**At The Regional Organizations Humanitarian Action
Network (Rohan) Meeting**

7 November 2017

Executive Secretaries of Regional Organizations;

Excellences Representatives;

Officials from the Humanitarian Policy Group and Overseas Development Institute;

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of His Excellency Moussa Faki, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and indeed on my own behalf, I take this opportunity to welcome you all to the beautiful city of Addis Ababa, the diplomatic city of Africa. A very warm welcome also to the African Union Commission, the headquarters of AU.

As you will recall, at Istanbul, the AU pledged to host this meeting to enable ROHAN reflect on its commitments and modalities for future cooperation. Thank you for honouring our invitation to this meeting.

The AU constituted by 55 Member States and eight Regional Economic Communities which are the building blocks of the Union. In addition, there are of Regional Coordination mechanisms, the African Development Bank, A number of Organs including The Pan-African Parliament, The Court of Justice and Economic, Social and Cultural Council.

The AU and its organs play a crucial role in addressing forced displacement issues. Currently, the AU like the rest of the world and regions is facing a growing humanitarian crisis as a result of natural disasters and conflict.

Today, we meet at a time when the world in general is facing a rapidly changing humanitarian landscape. The continent is now host to over 3.5 million refugees and 15.5 Internally Displaced Persons. This situation of displacement is unprecedented proportions.

In addressing this situation, the AU has adopted a new and robust humanitarian architecture and number of measures, which encapsulate the following:

- Establishment of African Humanitarian Agency,
- Adoption of a comprehensive Humanitarian Policy Framework and Disaster Management Guidelines,
- Establishment of a humanitarian fund and AU Special Emergency Fund on Drought and Emergencies.

In spite of these new measures the AU faces a number of challenges especially in financing and coordinating its humanitarian action. The AU stands to learn from ROHAN members in operationalizing its new humanitarian architecture and disaster response.

The AU has therefore called for a decade of humanitarian effectiveness (2016-2017) as a period during which the Union will implement drastic measures to achieve humanitarian effectiveness by 2026. This period to be accompanied by a 10 years Plan of Action will be a turning point in the history of the Union.

In addition, the AU has dedicated the year 2019 to finding durable solutions for refugees and IDPs in Africa. During this year the AU will commemorate the 50th years of its 1969 OAU Convention governing specific aspects of the refugee problems in Africa and the 10th Anniversary of the Kampala Convention. The two instruments are major achievements for the AU in dealing with the situation of refugees and IDPs. You are invited to participate in the commemorative activities.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The African Union welcomes the establishment of Regional Organizations Humanitarian Action Network (ROHAN), as a framework that can be used to strengthen cooperation among regional organizations and as a key interlocutor with the global system.

This is the third ROHAN meeting you holding. Since the last meeting in Istanbul and Jakarta, ROHAN has registered a number of positive steps in forging close collaboration among RECs.

The AU reiterates its commitment to the resolutions adopted at the ROHAN meeting in Istanbul. Although ROHAN is an informal network and still in its infancy stages, it has proofed as a useful network since its official launch in Istanbul that can strengthen cooperation among the Regional Organizations. Let me therefore congratulate you on this achievement.

The world and our respective regions are facing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. Regular sharing of information on trends and patterns of forced displacement will be critical in enabling our respective regions not only respond to crises but also able to where possible support member states and our organizations to effectively respond to crises.

The Addis Ababa ROHAN meeting and Action Agenda should therefore explore ways and means by which we can strengthen this collaboration even further.

In addition to the sharing of information among us, ROHAN should lead us to the next stage of our collaboration. In particular, ROHAN should have an action agenda that should enable RECs to share not only experiences but cooperate in areas of capacity building, research and technical support.

In this globalized world, the impact of humanitarian crises and natural disasters including communicable diseases and epidemics is not confined to one region. The impact can be far-reaching. In order to be effective in mitigating such effects, we need collective strategies to create and strengthen links to enable our systems work closely on early warning, preparedness and response.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As you are aware, regional communities are building blocks of the global peace and security architecture. Today, the global system is overstretched and needs reformed.

This leaves regional organizations to play a more prominent role in international peace and security. This role is well stated in the UN Charter and constitutes the basis for our continued collaboration.

We need therefore to seize the present moment to ensure that our regional blocs are effective. The acknowledgment of this role by the UNGA is a crucial step in affirming responsibility. We need therefore to collaborate more in all spheres to strengthen our contribution to international peace and security, and humanitarian architecture.

The potential of Regionals and sub-regional organizations remains to be fully utilized. In a number of ways this potential is limited by a number of factors, mainly;

- *Lack of common values:*
- Understanding of the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity
- *Overlapping responsibilities:* with unclear meaning of the term region.
- *Inadequate capacity:*

To be effective, we need to remove a number of artificial barriers. Beyond ROHAN, there is need for regular meetings both at political and technical levels that should serve to deliberate to forge greater collaboration.

Lastly, let me stress the importance of technologies can play in our collaboration. We are in the era driven by technology, climate change and mega trends. Technological advances in our regions should be a valuable resource based on our comparative advantages. We need to step up sharing of innovations through technological transfers.

As I conclude, let swish you all fruitful deliberations and happy stay in Addis Ababa. Enjoy your stay and take off time to discover Addis Ababa.

I thank you.