



Commemorative Seminar on the 10th Anniversary of

the Robin Island Guidelines

Enhancing Torture Prevention in Africa

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Musa Yerro Gassama

Regional Representative

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for

Human Rights (UN OHCHR)-Regional Office-Addis

Ababa



**Mr Andries Nel, Deputy Minister of Justice and Constitutional Development,
Republic of South Africa;**

**Madame Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
and chairperson of the CPTA;**

The Chairperson of the SAHRCA and NANHRI,

Mark Thomson, Secretary General of APT;

Moderators and participants;

It is indeed a great pleasure and honor for me to represent the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pilly, a South African, to this important seminar.

Allow me to express my sincere gratitude to the Chairperson of the CPTA for associating the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human rights to this 10th Anniversary of the Robin Island Guidelines. I am glad that our Regional Southern Africa is also represented.

The relationship between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human rights and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights dates many years ago. Currently, we are witnessing, with great satisfaction, fruitful cooperation between the two institutions in many fronts. For us in the UN, the regional human rights mechanism is an important partner and

we cannot ignore the role of regional institutions and actors in the area of human rights.

Just, in this year, 2012, several dialogues, aimed at enhancing cooperation between UN and regional human rights mechanisms, have been undertaken by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and in particular, the African Commission. These dialogues recognize the importance and utility of strengthening cooperation among international, regional and sub-regional human rights mechanisms, while ensuring greater space for the active and effective participation of civil society and national actors.

I am glad to see that one of the recommendations of the regional consultation organized by OHCHR on enhancing cooperation between UN and African regional human rights mechanisms held in Addis Ababa in February this year is being implemented today.

The need to establish mechanisms of cooperation between UN and African human rights mechanisms on torture, as well as with NPMs, NHRIs and NGOs was highlighted during the Addis Ababa regional consultation.

Another recommendation of the Addis Ababa consultation was the need to building trust between various mechanisms. This seminar provides a very good opportunity to progress in the achievement of these objectives, taking advantage of the presence of the SPT, the ACPHR, NPMs, NHRIs and NGOs.

This seminar also offers an opportunity to further discuss ways and means to implement the recommendations resulting from the Addis consultation, in particular those which can be put in place immediately, for instance, the exchange of calendars and contact details, as well as information sharing on strategic planning, including visits, and the implementation of activities of the various mechanisms on prevention of torture.

I also hope that this seminar would open a wider door for greater dialogue on a possible interface between African NPMs, the SPT and the CPTA, as recommended by participants to the consultation held in Addis Ababa.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that the international workshop on enhancing cooperation between UN and regional human rights mechanisms will be held in Geneva from 12 to 14 December 2012. It will focus on three main areas of cooperation: information sharing, joint



activities, and follow up to recommendations from both UN and regional human rights mechanisms. For each of these areas, there will be an underlying theme of discussion which will allow participants to hold concrete discussions. One of the topics will be prevention of torture. I hope the CPTA will attend to enrich the debate.

Finally, let me say that with the Memorandum of Understanding between the High Commissioner and the African Union Commission signed in 2010, OHCHR will continue to actively cooperate with the African Commission and its special mechanisms, notably the CPTA.

I wish you a happy anniversary and fruitful deliberations and thank you for your kind attention.