



---

Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA P. O. Box 3243 Telephone: +251 11 551 7700 Fax:  
+251 115 182 072  
Website: [www.au.int](http://www.au.int)

---

## Opening Remarks

By

Statement by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission at the  
Opening of the 73rd Ordinary Session of the African Commission on  
Human and Peoples' Rights

21 October 2022  
Banjul-Gambia

- **Your Excellency , Alieu Badara Joof, Vice President of the Republic of the Gambia**
- **Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of the Member States of the African Union**
- **Excellency, Representing the President of the Republic of Senegal**
- **Distinguished Delegates of the Member States of the African Union,**
- **Honourable Commissioner Rémy Ngoy Lumbu, Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights;**
- **Distinguished Representatives of the Organs of the African Union;**
- **Honourable Commissioners of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights;**
- **Excellencies, Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**
- **Distinguished Representatives of International Organizations,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen, Representatives of National Human Rights Institutions;**
- **Representatives of Civil Society and Non-governmental Organisations;**
- **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen**

1. It is a great honour and pleasure for me to address your august Assembly on the occasion of the opening ceremony of this 73rd Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat.

2. Indeed, this 73<sup>rd</sup> Ordinary Session is special because, as you know, it coincides with the celebration of the 35th Anniversary of the Commission. It should be recalled that more than 40 years ago, African States adopted a fundamental instrument, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Charter), in Nairobi on 27 June 1981 at the 18th Assembly of the Organization

of African Unity. This African Charter provides for the establishment of a Commission for the promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights on the continent.

3. It is against this background that the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights was established in 1987 as the leading independent regional institution for the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa. In this regard, I would like to use this opportunity to thank the Government of The Gambia for its unreserved acceptance of the Commission from the beginning of its existence to the present day.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

4. The human rights challenges still confronting us today show that the Heads of State and Government of the day were visionary and right to provide our Africa with its own mechanism for the promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights, to promote and preserve positive African cultural traditions and to foster change where it is needed.

5. In the Agenda 2063 adopted in 2013, which contains seven aspirations, the third aspiration aims at "an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law". The consultations for the preparation of Agenda 2063, as well as the dynamism of the continent's NGOs and African civil society in general, show that human rights continue to be of particular concern to us, despite the significant improvements recorded since the adoption of the African Charter as well as the establishment of this Commission until today.

6. Almost ten (10) years down the road, the African Union Member States, Organs, Communities and citizens have embarked on a Special Project; that of evaluating the first ten-year Implementation Plan of the Agenda 2063, and, building on lessons learnt, gaps, emerging issues, challenges and opportunities, come up with a new Plan for the next ten years. I am inviting the African Commission on Human and People's Rights and Stakeholders to actively get involved. Your inputs is highly valuable.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

7. While this is a time for celebration, the present commemoration must serve as a platform for discussion and exchange among all actors and stakeholders in order to carry out, together, an objective introspection and evaluation of the many contributions and persistent and emerging challenges that still remain in the promotion and protection of human rights on the African continent.

8. In view of the persistence of armed and communal conflicts, unconstitutional changes in power, the effects of climate change, the economic recession due to the consequences of Covid-19, etc, it will be necessary for us to grasp and understand the scope of all the opportunities that this Commission has offered us over the past 35 years and to draw inspiration from its jurisprudence, principles and guidelines, general observations, concluding observations, recommendations, resolutions and declarations, which it has elaborated and adopted and which are endorsed by the policy-making organs of the AU. It is only in this way that we can identify new strategies, means and programmes with a view to optimizing our efforts towards the effective respect of human rights on our Continent.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

9. I wish to remind everyone that the issue of human rights is at the heart of the African Union's policy. It is in this context that it has already adopted a *Strategic Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human and Peoples' Rights 2021-2030*, which lays down important guidelines for the Union's overall policy on the promotion and protection of human rights. States, AU Organs and various partners should be guided by it to align their actions and comply with the principles contained therein.
  
10. In concluding, allow me to thank again the Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights for his invitation to this august assembly. I wish you all a very fruitful session and successful deliberations which contribute to the advancement of human rights in Africa.

**Thank you for your kind attention!**