



**OPENING STATEMENT BY  
H.E. MR. MOUSSA FAKI MAHAMAT  
CHAIRPERSON OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION**

**AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 77<sup>TH</sup> ORDINARY SESSION OF  
THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS  
(ACHPR)**

**20 October 2023  
Arusha, Tanzania**



**His Excellency Dr. Hussein Ally Mwinyi, the President of Zanzibar and Chairperson of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar,**

**Honourable Dr. Pindi Hazara Chana (MP), Minister of Constitutional and Legal Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania,**

**Honourable Haroun Alli Suleiman, Minister for Constitution, Legal affairs. Civil Service and Good Governance of Zanzibar,  
Your Excellencies, Ministers, and Members of the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania,**

**Excellences, Distinguished Representatives of States Parties to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights;**

**H.E. Amb. Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, African Union Commission [TBC];**

**Honourable Commissioner Rémy Ngoy Lumbu, Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR);**

**Dr. Robert Eno, Registrar of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, representing Honourable Justice Imani Aboud, President of the Court;**

**Mr. Marcel Akpovo, Regional Representative of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to East African Region and to the African Union, representing H.E. Mr. Volker Türk, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights;**

**Ms. Christine GRAU, Ambassador of the European Union to Tanzania and the East African Community, representing H.E. Dr. Eamon Gilmore, the EU High Representative on Human Rights;**

**Honorable Commissioners of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights;**

**Excellences, Distinguished Representatives of States Parties to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights;**

**Excellencies, Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**

**Representatives of the African National Human Rights Institutions;**

**Representatives of the UN Agencies;**

**Representatives of the Civil Society Organizations and Media;**

**Colleagues from the African Union Commission; and**

**Staff of the African Union institutions with a mandate on Human and Peoples' Rights;**

**Distinguished invited Guests;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

**All protocols duly observed;**

As the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, I am deeply honored and pleased to address this esteemed gathering at the 77th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Commission), which is hosted graciously by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, in the vibrant and touristic city of Arusha - a diplomatic hub and home to two of the African Union's human rights and governance bodies. Indeed, with the hosting of this Session of the African Commission - Arusha, for the next twenty-one days, will be the capital of human and peoples' rights in Africa. Allow me therefore, to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for their warm hospitality and unwavering support in making this event possible.

I also extend my sincere appreciation to the Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Honorable Commissioner Rémy Ngoy Lumbu, together with your team of honorable Commissioners, for your staunch dedication towards advancing the cause of human and peoples' rights across our great continent. I also would like to recognize and thank members of the Secretariat of the African Commission for their hard work and for being the catalyst for the effectiveness of the Commission.

As well, I am deeply thankful to all the participants gathered here today - Member States, esteemed delegates, and representatives of Civil Society Organizations. Your presence here underscores the vital importance of our shared commitments to human rights, social justice, and the rule of law.

This session holds particular significance as it provides a platform for us to unite in our collective pursuit of a just and equitable Africa. We come together to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Maputo Protocol, a landmark achievement that reaffirms our commitment to promoting and protecting the rights of women, a cause that lies at the heart of our vision for a better Africa.

Furthermore, the year 2023 serves as a reminder of both challenges and accomplishments, especially in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). As we move forward in this transformative journey, we must remain steadfast in addressing the hurdles that come our way while celebrating the milestones we achieve together. Our

shared efforts in realizing Agenda 2063, the blueprint for our continent's development, must guide us in these endeavors.

It is with grave concern that I address the issue of unconstitutional changes in governance across our beloved continent. We have a permanent duty to remain vigilant to avoid the repetition of such extreme tragedies that do not honor our Continent. Regrettably, human rights violations are still rampant in different parts of the continent, as regularly reported by human rights organizations and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Upholding the rule of law and democratic governance is fundamental to the human rights agenda, and we must remain vigilant in its defense. As leaders, it is our duty to address these challenges head-on, ensuring that every citizen is treated with dignity and respect.

### **Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The vision of a peaceful, united, and prosperous Africa, as set out in Agenda 2063, can only be achieved through sound planning and results-oriented policies. Our gathering here today is a testament to our shared dedication and commitment to this noble cause. I urge all AU Member States to collaborate closely with our Organs, including the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, as well as other relevant bodies, to reinforce human rights and dignity across our continent.

I hope that this important assembly will find not only the reasons for, but recommend viable solutions to the persisting human rights violations on our continent, despite efforts made to eradicate them by the promulgation, adoption, ratification and coming into force of various human rights instruments. I believe firmly that the outcome documents resulting from the discussions will play a pivotal role, in realizing an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law, as envisioned in Aspiration 3 of our Agenda 2063. Beyond this, and bearing in mind the cross-cutting and fundamental nature of human rights, I am equally assured that the constructive conversations and emerging strategies and recommendations from this August gathering, will contribute to the greater goal and overall vision of the African Union of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa – one which envisions a continent at peace with itself, led by its own citizens, and actively engaged in global affairs. The recommendations we make and the strategies we devise here will significantly contribute to turning this vision into reality.

In conclusion, let us recommit ourselves to the noble cause of promoting and protecting human rights in Africa. Let us stand together, united in our resolve, and work tirelessly to create a continent where the rights and dignity of every individual are upheld without compromise.

Finally, I extend my best wishes to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and to all of you gathered here today, hoping for productive and meaningful deliberations throughout this 77th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

I thank you.