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ON
THE OCCASION OF THE COMMEMORATION OF THE 2023 AFRICA HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

THEME: “Maputo +20: A call for universal ratification, implementation, domestication and reporting of the Maputo Protocol”

21 OCTOBER 2023

As we commemorate the Africa Human Rights Day (AHRD) today, I would like to convey to all Africans and friends of Africa, our renewed commitment to the promotion and protection of human and peoples’ rights and fundamental freedoms as enshrined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights.

This commemoration coincides with the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa (Popularly known as the Maputo Protocol).

The Maputo Protocol, adopted by the African Union in 2003, is a testament to our collective determination to uphold and protect every African woman’s fundamental rights and dignity, as one of the crucial pathways to the Africa we want. This connotes an Africa where every individual, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, or social status, can live a life of dignity, free from discrimination and oppression and where every woman and girl can exercise their rights to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, enabling them to reach their full potential and contribute to the continent's development.

Peace and security are also fundamental pillars of the Africa we want. As Africa continues to effectively address the security threats, we must scale up the implementation of numerous country-level, regional and continental initiatives for the realization of sustainable development premised on the safeguarding of the right to development to achieve the desired economic, social and cultural rights.

To this end, the African Union has resolved to intensify collaboration with Member States, civil society, the private sector, to build a more democratic continent that promotes the potential and contributions of every African, especially the woman and girl, as well as the youth and the elderly, to co-own nation building and a continent that is strong, united, prosperous and peaceful.

Africa commemorates this occasion with the rest of humanity, destined to live in shared dignity and anchor the protection of fundamental human and people’s rights. It is therefore with a heavy heart that we celebrate against the backdrop of rising abuses to
human rights in different parts of the globe, especially in the Middle East. We stand with all those who support peace and justice.

On behalf of the African Union Commission, I wish all Africans, a fruitful 2023 “Africa Human Rights Day”.