



Statement of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Occasion of the commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Addis Ababa, 10 December 2018 - On the occasion of the commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948, the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, Moussa Faki Mahamat, calls on all the people of good will across the world to stand up for equality, justice and human dignity for all, irrespective of gender, creed, race or national origin. The Declaration recognizes that the inherent dignity and the equal and fundamental rights of all human beings are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

The Chairperson of the Commission takes pride in the progress the African Union has made in advancing the human rights agenda of the continent. Over the years, the African Union has adopted various instruments for the effective protection and promotion of human and peoples' rights. These include the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention on the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, the 1981 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and its 2003 Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, the 1990 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the 2009 Convention on Internally Displaced Persons. Some of the above, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, make direct reference to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, having expanded the scope of provided for therein.

A number of institutions have also been set up to facilitate the effective implementation of these instruments, including the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. These institutions have made a tremendous contribution to the advancement of human rights on the continent. No effort should be spared to enhance their capacity and avail them the resources required for the effective discharge of their respective mandates.

In July 2016, the Assembly of the Union declared 2017-2026 as the Human and Peoples' Rights Decade in Africa. The Declaration requested the Commission and all African Union organs with a human rights mandate to develop an Action Plan that will focus on accelerating the implementation of relevant African instruments, raising awareness on these instruments and popularizing them, establishing the Pan-African Human Rights Institute, and erecting the African Union Human Rights Memorial. In

addition, on the 21st of October of each year, the African Human Rights Day is celebrated.

On this auspicious day, the Chairperson of the Commission enjoins all Member States of the African Union to recommit themselves to the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including by making renewed efforts in the pursuit of the objectives set and, for those that have not yet done so, by becoming parties to the relevant African and international human rights instruments. The Chairperson wishes to stress that the commitment of the African Union to human rights and dignity must remain firm and unassailable, and that it must ensure that respect for human rights and the dignity of all African citizens are secured without any form of discrimination.

As the world commemorates the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement, it is incumbent on the entire community of nations to guard against the threats posed to human rights, including xenophobia, racism, trafficking of persons, attacks against migrants and climate change, as a mark of their recommitment to the ideals and values of the Declaration.