As we commemorate the Africa Human Rights Day (AHRD) today, I would like to begin by wishing you all a “happy 2022 Africa Human Rights Day”. I am pleased to convey to all Africans and friends of our dear continent our renewed commitment to the promotion and protection of human and peoples’ rights as enshrined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights (the Charter).

Every year, the Africa Human Rights Day is celebrated on 21 October to mark the entry into force of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the founding treaty of the African human and peoples’ rights system and the African Shared Values. However, this year’s celebration is special as it is takes place against the backdrop of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the African Union as a continental organization as well as the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG).

Under the theme “AU at 20: Towards a full Realization of Socio-Economic Rights in Africa”, it provides an opportunity to take stock of the journey of the African Union as it turns 20 after its establishment and to reflect on the current state of human and peoples’ rights in Africa. It is also an occasion to reaffirm the commitment of all stakeholders, including the States Parties to the Charter, as well as the African civil society, especially the media and academia, to promote and protect the rights of the African peoples. Of particular interest is the right to development as provided for in Agenda 2063, the blueprint for building the Africa we want and the Africa we deserve.

The commemoration of this occasion today is also geared towards promoting sustainable and enduring socio-economic rights that will pave the way for the development of Africa and the African peoples.
As Africa continues to grapple with the challenge of insecurity and underdevelopment, numerous initiatives have been launched on the continent for the realization of development and the promotion of human and peoples’ rights. These include the recently organized African Business and Human Rights Forum in Accra, Ghana from 12-13 October 2022.

However, the African Union and its Member States cannot accomplish this enormous task alone. It requires both our individual and collective efforts, State and Non-State Actors alike, for the full realization of the human and peoples’ rights in Africa and beyond.

To this end, the African Union has resolved to collaborate more with Member States, Regional Economic Communities, private sector, development partners, think-tanks, civil society organizations, academia and the media amongst others, to ensure a participatory journey and co-ownership in building a continent that is united, prosperous and peaceful.

On behalf of the African Union Commission, I wish all Africans and friends of Africa a fruitful 2022 “Africa Human Rights Day”.