DRAFT
CLOSING STATEMENT BY
H.E. AMB. BANKOLE ADEOYE
COMMISSIONER FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PEACE AND SECURITY
AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

AT

THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE SIXTH AUC-NANHRI POLICY DIALOGUE ON
THE STATE OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFRICA

WITH THE THEME:
AFRICAN NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS: CHAMPIONING A HUMAN
RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFCFTA

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
17 MAY 2023
16:30 – 17:00 Hours (EAT) Medium Conference Hall
Your Excellency, Ambassador Willy Nyamitwe, Ambassador of the Republic of Burundi to the AU, Representing the Chairperson of the AU Permanent Representatives Committee;

Your Excellencies, Ambassadors, Members of the African Union Permanent Representative Committee (PRC);

Honourable Rémy Ngoy Lumbu, Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights.

Honourable Justice Blaise Tchikaya, Vice-President of the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights;

Mr. Joseph Whittal, Vice-Chairperson of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions;

Mr. Gilbert Sebihogo, Executive Director of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI).

Distinguish Members of the Diplomatic Corps.

Representatives of African Union Human Rights Organs, and UN Agencies;

Representatives of African National Human Rights Institutions;

Representatives of Civil Society and Non-Governmental Organizations;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All protocols observed.

On behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, His Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, I wish to thank you all and appreciate the precious time that you dedicated to attend and contribute to the outcome of this sixth AUC-NANHRI Policy Dialogue on the State of African National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs).

I thank the Secretariat of the Network of the African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI) for collaborating with the Political Affairs, Peace, and Security to jointly organize this important Dialogue with the AU PRC Members. Thank you to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the GIZ, and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute for Human Rights and Humanitarian Law for Supporting this Policy Dialogue. I also appreciate the AU Organs with Human Rights mandate, represented here, particularly the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the African Court, the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, APRM and the African Anti-Corruption Board.
Today, we receive the Declaration and Plan of Action of this Sixth Policy Dialogue, on the theme “National Human Rights Institutions, Championing A Human Rights Based Approach in the Implementation of the AfCFTA”. The Action Plan gave us a strategic overview of actions that will be carried out by the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) and other stakeholders and my hope is that, before the Next Forum, we will be able to report on action taken and their results in fostering the Human Rights Based Approach to the implementation of the AfCFTA. These interventions should also contribute to the implementation of the Rights to Development in Africa for the benefit of African Citizens in line with the AU Human Rights Decade for Africa and the Aspirations of Agenda 2063.

The reflections on the current state of National Human Rights Institutions in Africa highlighted the great opportunity that represents the NHRIs in terms of fostering human rights for a peaceful and prosperous Africa and the challenges that have to be addressed. Nevertheless, the NHRIs should continue to demonstrate dynamism and passions for the promotion of a culture of respect for human rights in Africa and continue fulfilling their mandate in supporting Member State on human rights issues.

In this regard, I express my will through the Department to support the African NHRIs in strengthening them for effective functioning in line with the Paris Principles in collaboration with the AU Organs with Human Rights mandate. In the same line, I wish to seize the opportunity of this closing ceremony, to announce the African National Human Rights Institutions Awards that the Department of Political Affairs, will soon launch to recognize NHRIs that are performing well on the Continent, in collaboration with the NANHRI and the PRC Sub-Committee on Democracy, Governance, and Human Rights. This will contribute to evaluating the impact and the results that your various NHRIs will be producing on the ground.

**Your Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen,**

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a historic agreement that has the potential to transform the economic landscape of the African continent. However, it is important to ensure that the implementation of the AfCFTA is carried out in a way that upholds and promotes human rights and peace. And it has been acknowledged over our three days of discussions, that National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) can play a crucial role in championing a human rights-based approach to the implementation of the AfCFTA. This can be done by promoting awareness, monitoring implementation, providing advice and guidance, advocating for human rights, and facilitating dialogue in line with the Declaration and Action Plan of this Policy Dialogue. This is our collective responsibility, and it is my hope that this Dialogue will enhance the engagement of the AU PRC Members to support the human rights agenda for a peaceful and prosperous Africa.

I thank you.