



# **Report of the Policy Forum on Strengthening Human Rights Based Approach to Development in Africa: the nexus between strong human rights institutions and development at the national level**

**September 6, 2017 at the African Union  
Commission Old Building (Plenary Hall), Addis  
Ababa-Ethiopia from 9.00am to 4.00pm**

**DISCLAIMER:**

**VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS REPORT REPRESENT THE OPINIONS OF THE PANELISTS AND PARTICIPANTS**

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Participants of the Policy Forum in group photo



## I Introduction

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The Policy Forum on the theme “*Strengthening Human Rights-Based Approach to Development in Africa: the nexus between strong human rights institutions and development at the national level*” was jointly organised by the **Department of Political Affairs of the African Union Commission, Network of African National Human Rights Institutions** and the **United Nations Development Programme Regional Service Centre for Africa**.

The Forum was a follow-up to the implementation of the recommendations of the Study on the State of NHRIs in Africa which established the state of NHRIs in the continent, in relation to their role and capacity to promote and protect human rights. The Study conducted by the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) responds to the work of the African Union Commission (AUC) on the Human Rights Strategy for Africa which includes the state of institutions that support democracy and human rights.

The study completed in 2016 focused on 6 key areas namely: establishment and oversight, independence; financing; capacity; stakeholder engagement; and right-based service delivery and development. It also highlights best practices, capacity challenges/constraints and subsequently recommends policy options for adoption by NHRIs, governments as well as regional networks and development partners. The Study Report was launched in Banjul-the Gambia on 21 October 2016 in a ceremony attended by representatives of African Union Commission, National Human Rights Institutions, Civil Society Organisations and Development Partners.

The Policy Forum on “*Strengthening Human Rights-Based Approach to Development in Africa: the nexus between strong human rights institutions and development at the national level*” was organised with the aim of initiating dialogue with African Union (AU) member states through the Members of the AU Permanent Representative’s Committee, towards the implementation of various recommendations to states for the strengthening of NHRIs in Africa.

The Forum’s approach was to discuss the integral role played by NHRIs in promoting the development agenda at both the national and regional levels, and accordingly deliberate what needs to be done by the various actors in ensuring efficiency of these institutions.

This Report is the full version of the summary report adopted by participants at the end of the policy forum.

## II Opening session

The policy forum which entailed general discussion on NHRIs and development was moderated by Mr. John Ikubaje of the African Union Commission Department of Political Affairs. He began the meeting by welcoming all participants and indicated the Forum was an opportunity for member states representatives, national human rights institutions and other stakeholders to engage on the contribution of national human rights institutions in Africa to sustainable development at national level.

### Welcome remarks by NANHRI

- Mr. Gilbert Sebihogo, Executive Director of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions

Mr. Sebihogo, on behalf of the Network of African National Human Rights Institution, began his remarks by thanking the African Union Commission and the United Nations Development Programme, who have been partners of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions for a long time and with whom cooperation continues to grow in building the capacity of national human rights institutions. He hailed the crucial role played by the African Union Commission in hosting the Forum for the Permanent Representatives Committee and the National Human Rights Institutions, which is the first of its kind in the history of NHRIs. The



Mr. Sebihogo (NANHRI) making his welcome remarks

event marked an advancement in the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the African Union Commission and the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions and that it would create an opportunity for continuous interaction between the Members of the Permanent Representatives Committee and the national human rights institutions.

Mr. Sebihogo emphasized the importance of Resolution No. 48/134 of 20 December 1993 of the United Nations General Assembly, which recommends that States should establish national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights and to guide public authorities in the field of human rights. He stated that NHRIs in Africa continue to face multiple challenges related to their existence and functioning. According to Mr. Sebihogo, this Policy Forum for representatives of NHRIs in Africa, Permanent Representatives Committee and other stakeholders provides the desired opportunity to deliberate on how to deal with the challenges.



Mr. Sebihogo expressed concern that although as many as 46 countries in Africa had established national human rights institutions which operate under varying conditions, only 21 of these were operating in line with the internationally agreed Paris Principles on the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. This is notwithstanding the integral role played by these institutions as national accountability mechanisms for preventing human rights violation as well as supporting development and implementation of non-discriminatory laws, policies and programs. Other crucial roles include acting as a link and convener between the state and civil society in national development processes; monitoring and informing stakeholders on the impact of policies and actions on the enjoyment of human rights; supporting victims of violations to access justice and reparation and advising governments on human rights issues. Thus, national human rights institutions constitute the cornerstone of national systems for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Underlining the importance of human rights protection and promotion as a pillar Africa's development goals, Mr. Sebihogo stated that the adoption of the Agenda 2063 in January 2015 by the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government was a crucial milestone in the continent's march towards inclusive and sustainable development. The aspirations for the "Africa we want" envisages a united Africa, whose citizens will be free from diseases, extreme poverty, poor sanitary conditions, armed conflicts, bad governance, impunity and corruption - all this having an impact on the enjoyment of human rights. This effectively places human rights based approach at the core of Africa's development agenda, and thereby making national human rights institutions an integral ingredient for sustainable development at the national level.

He concluded his presentation by noting that the study on the state of African NHRIs, which was jointly conducted by NANHRI and UNDP, proposes some pertinent recommendations that are addressed to NHRIs, governments and other partners. He therefore called on the participants and all stakeholders to work towards the effective implementation of these recommendations, in order to strengthen the NHRIs in Africa.

## **Opening remarks by UNDP RSCA**

**- Mr. Dominique Kabeya, Acting Director of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Regional Service Center for Africa**

Mr. Kabeya began his remarks by expressing his delight in participating in the Forum focusing on the state of national human rights institutions in Africa for the reason that this event helps in advocating the UNDP's vision to help countries achieve the simultaneous eradication of poverty and significant reduction of inequalities and exclusion. He added supporting human rights lies at the core of UNDP's Strategic Plan 2014-2017, which places human rights at the centre of its work implemented through three strategic areas of intervention: supporting the strengthening national human rights systems; promoting the application of a human rights-based approach to development programming; and promoting greater engagement with the international human rights machinery.



In his remarks, Mr. Kabeya stated that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Goal number 16 emphasize the role of national human rights institutions in ensuring that development is inclusive and that governments are accountable towards their own citizens in ensuring that their human rights are being realized.

Hailing the collaboration between UNDP, the African Union Commission's Department of Political Affairs and the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI) in organising the event, Mr. Kabeya highlighted the importance of continued cooperation between stakeholders in ensuring human rights is placed at the core of the development agenda in the continent.

Mr. Kabeya also called on all stakeholders to make use of the Study on the State of African National Human Rights Institutions, which is a ground-breaking report and the first of its kind in Africa. This study, conducted by UNDP and NANHRI, is based on solid evidence from a sample of nine countries in Africa, and is highly beneficial to all stakeholders, because it draws a clear picture of the challenges that many African national human rights institutions are currently facing. The report also provides clear policy recommendations for NHRIs, Governments, as well as regional networks and development partners. It is expected to have a significant impact on the ways that the UN system and other stakeholders work with national human rights organizations in Africa.

Recognizing the role of the national human rights institutions in providing deep understanding of how the local and the global perspectives have been aligned within the national context, Mr. Kabeya stated human rights standards are based on both binding international treaty norms, as well as “soft law” emerging from internationally recognized declarations and programmes of action, while most importantly, they are also informed by domestic constitutional frameworks, legislation and interpretative decisions by national courts.

While quoting a report by Mo Ibrahim Foundation which indicates that 37 African countries have improved in the last ten years in terms of participation and human rights, Mr. Kabeya noted that the promotion and protection of human rights remain challenging, but there are plenty of encouraging evidence of remarkable work done on human rights.

Mr. Kabeya (UNDP RSCA) delivering his opening remarks



He ended his remarks by underlining the need for the strengthening of national human rights institutions as an avenue to strengthening the human rights-based approach in Africa and urged governments to demonstrate the appropriate political will for the legal, financial and operational autonomy of NHRIs. The development partners also need to play a critical role in ensuring that NHRIs have the adequate capacity and resources to deliver their roles more efficiently.

## Opening address by AUC

- H.E. Mrs. Minata Samate-Cessouma, Commissioner for Political Affairs, African Union Commission

H.E. Mrs. Minata Samate-Cessouma, in her address delivered on her behalf by Mr. Calixte Aristide Mbari - Senior Political Officer of the African Union Commission, noted that the Forum theme “*Strengthening Human Rights Based Approach to Development in Africa: the nexus between strong human rights institutions and development at the national level*” was not only timely but also relevant to the Africa’s Development Agenda 2063, which clearly defined the AU human rights approach to development, particularly in Aspiration Three (3) of the Agenda, an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and rule of law.

The Commissioner recalled that the AU had dedicated the past three years to the promotion and protection of human and peoples’ rights. For example, year 2015 was dedicated to women’s economic rights and empowerment towards the realization of the Africa Agenda 2063, and in the same vein, 2016 was declared the year of Human rights with special focus on the rights of women. Similarly, the AU leadership declared 2017 as the year of harnessing the Demographic Dividend through investment in Youth to promote the rights of African youth to development.

In recognition of the nexus between human rights and development, the Commissioner noted that the AU continues in the same trajectory of prioritizing the promotion and protection of human and peoples’ rights and declared 2018 as the year of socio-economic rights focusing on the fight against corruption and other related offences in Africa.

She highlighted that the Forum organized by AUC Department of Political Affairs, UNDP Regional Service Center for Africa and Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI), was aimed at initiating dialogue and discussions on the State of the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in Africa. She noted that an important objective for this Policy Forum is to achieve commitment from the AU Member States and NHRIs towards the implementation of the recommendations of the State of African NHRIs Report.



Mr. Mbari (AUC) delivering Commissioner Cessouma’s address

The Commissioner also expressed her appreciation to the leadership and members of NANHRI and the UNDP Regional Service Center for Africa for facilitating the development of the Study on the State of Human Rights Institutions in Africa, and hailed their partnership with the African Union Commission on the project. She also expressed her delight that the representatives of the African Union’s policy-making bodies, the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), were also present in support of the initiative, and that the Forum would provide an opportunity for the Members of the Permanent Representatives Committee to appreciate the urgency of setting up the Permanent Representatives Committee on Democracy, Elections, Human Rights and Good Governance.

The Commissioner concluded her remarks by calling on participants of the Forum to participate actively in policy dialogue on the human rights and development in Africa as well as the round-table discussion on the implementation of the recommendations of the Report of the Study on the State of National Human Rights Institutions in Africa.

### III Policy Discussions

The Forum entailed panel discussions consisting of representatives of the various institutions in attendance. The panellists set the pace for discussions on issues affecting the effectiveness of NHRIs, while proposing solutions to these challenges. Each of the panel discussions were immediately followed by a series of comments and contributions from participants. All three panel discussions were moderated by the AUC and took place as follows.

#### Part I: Africa's Human Rights Commitments:

##### A critical review of AU member states' progress in meeting their human rights obligations

In this part, the forum discussed the African Union member states' commitments on human rights vis-à-vis the actions undertaken by individual states and the situation of human rights in general. In the recent years, focus on human rights has been an issue of priority to African leaders, evidenced by the Proclamation of the Decade for Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on Women's Rights (2016), and the on-going Decade for Human and Peoples' Rights (2017-2026). Despite all these, it has been widely acknowledged that a huge gap exists between policy framework and the implementation on the ground. On the positive side, the 2030 Agenda offers a renewed recognition of the realization of human rights being an essential enabler of development. The Forum discussed the extent to which member states have played their roles in meeting their obligations, and why the protection and promotion of human rights is an essential element of development, particularly in the context of the global 2030 Agenda and the 2063 Agenda of the African Union. The forum also brought into perspective the role of NHRIs as key actors in development at the national level.



Mr. Ikubaje (AUC) moderating the forum discussion. Next to him is Ambassador Pierre (Seychelles, PRC Member) (centre), Commissioner Mute (ACHPR) (left) and Ms. Meskerem (University of Padova) (right)





## Positive developments and achievements of African states in meeting their human rights commitments

- Mr. David Pierre, the Ambassador for Seychelles to the Federal Republic of Ethiopia and Permanent representative of Seychelles to the AU

Mr. Pierre began his presentation by noting that human rights are to be recognized, guaranteed and enjoyed; and that this can only happen when countries set up institutions or mechanism that give traction to the principles enshrined in these instruments. He also emphasized that civic and political rights, economic and social rights, and cultural and environmental rights are equally important in that they are inter-related, inter-dependent and indivisible. Human rights exist everywhere and at all times. They are a work in progress with societies having to constantly interrogate their human rights gains and shortcomings in the light of emerging issues and new challenges. Mr. Pierre underlined that while human rights are universal, they are also captured by regional instruments and they lie at the heart of agendas of our international organisations such as the African Union (AU) and the Commonwealth.

**Human rights are an integral part of the African Union itself.** They are part and parcel of the African integration project being championed and implemented by AU. Important milestones included the adoption of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and Agenda 2063, whose 7 pillars include Aspiration Number 3 envisaging an Africa of Good Governance, Democracy, Respect for Human Rights, Justice and Rule of Law, and the declaration of 2016 as the Year of Human Rights in Africa. These commitments attest to the fact that AU embraces human rights as one of its core values. The setting up of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, the African Court on Human and People's Rights, among others, are the mechanisms that AU is putting into place to guarantee these rights.

Mr. Pierre noted that in its 2015/2016 report on *The State of the World's Human Rights*, Amnesty International points to progress made in Africa on this front despite many challenges. Hence, African states are making progress in terms of living up to their human rights commitments but this is no cause to rest on our laurels as there is much more that needs to be done to make Africa "a land of respect for human rights" as stipulated in Aspiration 3 of Agenda 2063.

**In the Seychellois experience, human rights have always been part of the national debate and development dynamics.** In the colonial days, the focus was on *blue rights*, meaning civic and political rights, as the population fought for universal adult suffrage and self-determination. After independence, and especially during the second Republic, the focus shifted to *red rights*, implying social and economic rights, as the government embraced a people-centred development approach and embarked on programme to set up a comprehensive welfare state with the provision of free-at-point-of-use health care and education, while also promoting subsidized decent housing and salary increments. However, since this emphasis on social and economic rights took place within the institutional framework of a one-party state, it was regarded as a period of regression of civic and political rights. The advent of the Third Republic and return of multi-party democracy in the early 1990s ushered in the era of comprehensive human rights agenda with emphasis being laid on all three categories of human rights.

**Seychelles' human rights architecture is anchored in the Constitution of the Third Republic**, adopted in June 1993. Chapter 3 of the Constitution makes provision for the Seychellois Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (Bill of

Rights), which is the fulcrum of Seychelles' human rights architecture. Article 143 and Schedule 5 established Ombudsman whose function is to enforce the Charter and to investigate instances of maladministration and fraud. The Protection of Human Rights Act 2009 established the Seychelles Human Rights Commission. Seychelles also has a Human Rights Treaty Committee co-chaired by the PS for Foreign Affairs and the Attorney General. This is a multi-stakeholder forum for issues relating to Seychelles' international obligations. Its Secretariat is the Treaties Section (legal unit) in the Department of Foreign Affairs and part of its role of to prepare Cabinet Memorandum or Reports to UN Human Rights Council during Universal Periodic Reviews.

*The Commonwealth Secretariat's Strategic Plan 2013/14–2016/17* outlines “effective institutions and mechanisms for promotion and protection of human rights” as one of its intermediate outcomes and “the establishment, operationalization and strengthening of National Human Rights Institutions that are Paris Principles compliant” as one of its short-term outcomes. The recommendations that Seychelles accepted at its two UPR cycles included some relating to strengthening its NHRI. This goal also aligns with the short-term and intermediate outcomes of the current Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan. For this reason, Seychelles as a member state of the Commonwealth has been working with the Commonwealth Secretariat’s Human Rights Unit to achieve it.

A team from the Commonwealth Secretariat’s Human Rights Unit, composed of its Director, Ms. Karen Mckenzie of South Africa and Mr. John Walter, the Ombudsman of Namibia, and Mr. Sithulsigh, the chairperson of Mauritius Human Rights Commission, undertook three



Section of participants at the forum

working visits to Seychelles producing a Guidance Note and an Institutional Needs Assessment as advisories on the way forward.

Based on the findings and advice shared by the Commonwealth team, the Seychelles Human Rights Treaty Committee deliberated and made recommendations to the Government which then opted to de-link the Ombudsman Office and the Seychelles Human Rights Commission. Seychelles is currently in the process of applying for accreditation of the Seychelles Human Rights Commission to the International Coordination Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights.

As a member state of AU, Seychelles also engaged with the African Commission for Human and People’s Rights through the Commission’s promotional visits in January and April 2015. Following the visits, Seychelles passed the Access to Information Act based on the Model Law provided by the Commission.

In the process of seeking accreditation for its NHRI as an A-status institution (fully compliant to Paris Principles), Seychelles has passed the Access to Information Act in 2016; repealed Public Order Act replaced



by Public Assembly Act which provide for the right to assembly; amended the Penal Code to decriminalize sodomy or homosexuality; and de-linked the Ombudsman and National Human Rights Commission.

Challenges faced by Seychelles in strengthening their human rights institutions include limited technical and financial resources. There is only one human rights expert in Foreign Affairs Ministry and that affects their capacity to honour our reporting obligations.

In conclusion, the present political landscape in Seychelles could give a fillip to the human rights agenda as the power-sharing situation known as co-habitation. This entails the opposition controlling the legislative power with its majority in the National Assembly and the ruling party wielding executive power at the helm of the presidency of the country. This situation has pushed both political parties to vie in scoring more points in the eyes of the electorate by portraying themselves as champions of human rights. Such political strategies can only benefit the people of Seychelles by entrenching the human rights cause.

In recognition of the fact that human rights are not an end in itself but a means towards other goals like sustainable development, human rights advocacy has led to the adoption of the *rights-based approach*, which views the societal challenges through the prism of human rights. This could be a game changer in Seychelles, where welfare programmes are facing serious sustainability challenges (low academic performance, low quality of health care in the public sector, demands for housing outstripping supply and 40 percent of the population experiencing income poverty). The rights-based approach could provide a new narrative and breakthrough solutions. For instance, the discussion is no longer solely about the right to education but also considers *accountability* on the part of teachers (performance measures and the performance bonus) and students (duty to learn). Also, human rights-based approach at the centre of reforms improves service delivery.

Africa has everything to gain from embracing the human rights agenda. Not only will protection and promotion of human rights stoke the economic and social transformation of the continent but it could generate benefits for the whole of humanity. Human rights have been associated with individualism because in the countries where it first set root (Europe) kinship had been destroyed by religion (Francis Fukuyama). In Africa, where kinship is very strong (the motion of Ubuntu), human rights could add to the existing social capital and this could reveal new dimensions of the human rights agenda.

## **Why human rights are an important element for development in Africa?**

- Mr. Lawrence Mute, Member of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights

Commissioner Mute in sought to demonstrate the link between human rights and development in Africa. He highlighted the fact that regional development agenda which states have made commitments to, cannot be achieved without honouring human rights obligations. He said that though the link can be complex, human rights and development are not mutually exclusive. Reasonably, the human rights based approach provides development that focus on the most vulnerable aspects of the people in the society ensuring that no one is left behind.

Over time, state have committed to passing laws and implementing policies on human rights or development. However, the concern is the extent to which states are living their commitment. Human rights situations in Africa attests to many things – that while state parties are party to many treaties linked to development or human rights, implementation is often problematic. The 47th report of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights for instance cites many instances of worrying human rights situations such as the forced



evictions, torture, etc. Regrettably, states have sought to engage on procedural issues as opposed to discussion on the substance of the human rights concerns. Commissioner Mute therefore emphasized on the need for states to focus on addressing the challenges questions rather than on questioning the reliability of the data. In addition, stakeholders should have most of the engagements on these issues at the national level more than at the regional level.

Commissioner Mute added that the African Commission on Human and People's Rights in its roles of protecting human rights, receives complaints and asks states to recompense victims when needed. However, it is the responsibility of the states to implement decisions made by the Commission. He also highlighted the need for implementation of Art. 58 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights to ensure that states that continue to violate human rights are made accountable.

He concluded his presentation by emphasizing need for implementation of the decisions of the commission as a demonstration of state's commitment to protect and promote rights guaranteed in the Charter.

## **Why are NHRIs important role players in the development agenda?**

- Ms. Meskerem Geset, academic researcher - University of Padova

Ms. Geset clarified that NHRIs are state-based, independent, non-judicial institutions for the promotion and protection human rights at national level. The uniqueness in the combination of this essential characterization of NHRIs is what distinguishes them from other human rights actors. These characteristics arguably place them in an advantageous position. As state-based institutions, they have better legitimacy in policy review and advice. They have better access to information, access to government bodies, and access to other non-state actors – meaning that they have an advantage in comparison to CSOs when it comes to influencing national actors. In addition, they are close to the situation on the ground as compared to international human rights monitoring bodies and are situated closely to all national stakeholders. As non-judicial bodies, they do not wait for litigation and are not limited to adjudication of disputes because they have a self-initiated monitoring and promotion mandate. This is as broad as possible, covering all rights and all groups, and gives NHRIs' flexibility in terms of methodologies they use without being bound by strict legal procedures. Being independent, NHRIs also act as watchdogs both for government and private sector, and as intermediaries between international and national bodies and other key actors.

**NHRIs' role in development is largely connected to the global Sustainable Development Goals**, regional development agendas as well as the national development agendas. These development agendas and human rights are inevitably tied together. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development explicitly references human rights throughout its text. The Goals and the targets directly or indirectly reflect human rights standards. The principle of “Leaving No One Behind” integrates cross-cutting fundamental human rights principles such as non-discrimination, participation, accountability.

The Sustainable Development Goals directly correspond to rights under African human rights instruments. More specifically, rights in the African Charter, the Maputo Protocol, and the ACRWC correlate to the Sustainable Development Goals, indicators, and targets. The 2030 Agenda does not introduce any alien concepts or commitments. Rather, SDGs have their foundation in the African human rights instruments and international human rights treaties. Hence, the SDGs are part of the African HR system. It can be stated that the 2030 Agenda is a time-bound and specific elaboration of states' existing human rights obligations into concrete action points. Sustainable development is also a right granted by the African human rights



instruments, that is, the African Charter<sup>1</sup> and the Maputo Protocol<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, the other rights under these instruments also in one way or another target the achievement of sustainable development at individual and group level.

**It is important to understand the linkages between the 2030 Agenda and the regional instruments.** For example, the SDG 1 aims at ending poverty in all its forms everywhere. This goal's target 1.2, aiming at "reducing at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty", also resonates with the following African instruments: 1) Maputo Protocol (*Art 19 (d) promote women's access to credit, training, skills development and extension services at rural and urban levels in order to provide women with a higher quality of life and reduce the level of poverty among women; and Art 19 (e) take into account indicators of human development specifically relating to women in the elaboration of development policies and programmes*); 2) African Children's Charter (*Art 5.2, State Parties to the present Charter shall ensure, to the maximum extent possible, the survival, protection and development of the child*).

Also SDG Target 1.4, aiming at "ensuring that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources", resonates with the following: 1) African Charter (*Art 2 on non-discrimination, and Art. 14 on the right to property*); 2) Maputo Protocol (*Art. 2 on non-discrimination, Art. 12 on elimination of all forms of discrimination, Art. 4 on equal rights in marriage & property, equal inheritance rights; and Art. 19 women's equal access to productive resources including land and the right to property*). SDG Target 1.3 on "implementing nationally appropriate social protection systems" resonates with the following: 1) African Children's Charter (*Art. 20, 2.a.b, which provides for mechanisms of assistance and care for children; assist parents and persons responsible for children; ensure the development of institutions responsible for providing care of children*); and 2) Maputo Protocol (*Art 13 (f) on establishing a system of protection and social insurance for women working in the informal sector*).

**NHRIs play an integral role in translating the development agenda into reality by leveraging their human rights mandate.** This explicit acknowledgement of the importance of economic and social rights, as well as civil and political rights provides a key role for NHRIs in the implementation of the goals. With their wealth of experience in addressing inequality and tackling discrimination, NHRIs are also ideal partners for securing gender and economic equality (as elaborated in SDGs 5 and 10). In fact, the 2030 Agenda's focus on economic and social rights is an opportunity for NHRIs to be more active in the protection of this category of rights, which often lacks in some NHRIs' work. Given their unique mandate and role, NHRIs can play a key role in the implementation and follow-up of the SDGs, and are situated at the core of the 'web of accountability'.

National Human Rights Action Plans (HRAPs) and National Human Rights Indicators being championed by NHRIs in some countries (or at least supported by them) are key to setting national norms and standards for human rights implementation at the domestic level. Currently, human rights are at the heart of the development agendas (SDGs and the 2063 Agenda), and are directly related to human dignity, human security and human development. These have their foundations in African and international human rights instruments, which NHRIs are mandated to promote.

**NHRIs' monitoring mandates should ideally be as broad as possible.** This is required to place NHRIs in a unique position to act as both watchdogs and advisors, in order to uphold the human rights embedded in the SDGs. Their

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<sup>1</sup> Article 22 of the African Charter on Economic, Social and Cultural Development

<sup>2</sup> Article 19 of the Maputo Protocol: 'Women shall have the right to fully enjoy their right to sustainable development'



experience on human rights monitoring should be leveraged for the wider SDG monitoring framework. The monitoring of HRAPs and SDG Action Plans could be parallel and complementary.

The existence of independent National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) is in itself an indicator of SDG 16, which states that Governments should “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions”, which requires establishing and improving appropriate national institutions. The same is underlined in the African Charter (Art 26), which implies the relevance of NHRIs in the African human rights system.

NHRIs can leverage their mandates and functions through their advisory, monitoring, dispute resolution and human rights education roles, which are the key functions outlined in the Paris Principles, to play an effective role in the implementation of the development agendas. Through their advisory role, NHRIs can advise governments, right-holders and actors on rights-centred implementation of development plans, for instance, by assessing the impact of laws, policies, programmes, national development strategies, administrative practices and budgets on the realization of all human rights for all. NHRIs can also develop and strengthen partnerships for implementation by promoting transparent and inclusive processes for full participation and consultation of rights-holders and civil society at all stages of the implementation of the Agenda. NHRIs can play a role in assisting in the development of effective data collection systems and national indicators. NHRIs should also monitor and hold governments accountable for poor or uneven progress by linking human rights monitoring and SDGs monitoring. Finally, NHRIs can secure redress for victims of development-related rights violations. NHRIs can also play a central role in uncovering patterns of inequality and discrimination.

The Mérida Declaration was released in October 2015, when The Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) convened in Mérida, Mexico, to discuss the various roles and functions that NHRIs can undertake to make human rights the foundation for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and help translate the SDGs into reality on the ground. The Mérida Declaration outlined some of the activities that NHRIs can undertake which are captured above. NHRIs and states can use this as a framework for NHRIs' engagement in SDG implementation.

It is important to note that this work is not alien to African NHRIs. Some NHRIs have attempted to monitor government performance and spending on economic and social rights directly or indirectly linked to Sustainable Development Goals. For example, in South Africa, the NHRI has engaged in monitoring of maternal mortality, which is a key objective of the 2030 Agenda and the rights to life and health. In Kenya, the NHRI has been monitoring budget spending and implementation of economic and social rights. Examples from NHRIs outside Africa include India, where the NHRI monitors government spending on mental health which links to the SDG 3, and in Columbia monitoring the spending on water which links to SDG 6.

In conclusion, the convergence between Human Rights and the SDGs, as well as the bridging role of NHRIs in the SDGs explains the integral role played by NHRIs as an accountability mechanism, both for human rights and SDGs. In addition, the right to development and the establishing of national institutions are both human rights obligations under the African Charter which states should strive to meet.

## Plenary discussion

The following issues were raised and discussed by participants:

**Relationship between NHRIs and governments/ authorities:** NHRIs regard the governments as violators of human rights, whereas the governments tend to see NHRIs as deterring implementation of their policies. This problem should be solved. In AUC, we have not witnessed enough emphasis on human rights and these are not monitored well enough. A study should be conducted on how states are implementing their human rights commitments. This should relate to the analysis of national budget spending. Government efforts should be monitored in terms of both implementing the shared development agendas and the human rights agenda. Monitoring and protection of human rights are not currently strong enough, although promotion of human rights is stronger.

**Focus on human rights vis-à-vis national development:** The practice of human rights is not a major problem for developed countries which are full democracies. But can we put development and human rights on an equal footing in poor countries? It has been observed that some of the countries in the continent are respected for their economic development, but their governments have prioritized economic development above the realization of human rights. Should we accept that human rights should be promoted only after certain stage of economic development has been achieved? Human rights are enjoyed at the level of every individual. Another participant responded by stating that every person has rights, no matter if they live in a poor or rich country. If you go to a country, where there is famine, you will have problems if people cannot express their opinions.

**Human rights and low citizen awareness:** How do we promote human rights education in contexts where we have a lot of human rights violations and population with very low educational and literacy levels? We should we pay more attention on promoting quality education to all, in order for the citizens to understand their own rights better.

**Political goodwill in support of NHRIs:** All states in Africa are supportive towards development, but some of them are not so supportive towards human rights. At the centre of development are the people whose needs we are trying to meet. NHRIs should play a key role, especially in monitoring and advising on the country's progress towards meeting its own obligations.

Mr. Mouangue (Cameroon National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms) comments during the plenary session



NHRIs should provide constant feedback to governments on how they are developing the well-being of their own citizens. Understood this way, it becomes clear that NHRIs need to be strengthened. International human rights obligations are meant to benefit our own people. The debate is timely, and NHRIs should be critical to themselves to ensure that they can fulfil this role effectively. We should not dwell on the question of whether we can achieve development without human rights.



**Role of CSOs in the strengthening of NHRIs:** The role of CSOs in supporting NHRIs has often been underestimated. There is need to ensure that CSOs are always involved in such discussions.

**Are states' commitments merely rhetoric?** : With regards to the dedicated years of human rights and the current state of human rights on the continent, the whole picture is not very positive. All African states want to realize development in their countries, but many of them do not really incorporate NHRIs in the process. Some of them are developing policies without consulting or involving NHRIs at all. Respect for human rights and rule of law are imperative for realizing development. African countries should work towards passing laws which ensure that these are fulfilled. Strong economic and social development also needs to be facilitated by appropriate development. Political powers can help in empowering citizens.





## Part II: Challenges to African NHRIs' effectiveness: Are NHRIs adequately facilitated to deliver on their mandates?

In this part, the forum discussed the extent of NHRIs effectiveness in fulfilling their key functions, and the underlying reasons for their ineffectiveness. Emphasis was placed on states' support and facilitation to NHRIs, including political goodwill and financial support. Independence of NHRIs is a critical aspect of NHRIs' ability to deliver on their mandates effectively as key accountability institutions at the national level.

### Hindrances to optimal operation of African NHRIs

- Ms. Kagwiria Mbogori, Chairperson Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR)

**Lack of independence of the national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and political interference:** National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) are only as good as they are independent. The independent nature of NHRIs is what supports and enhances the legitimacy and efficiency in carrying out their mandates. This independence signifies freedom from control or influence; which implies that a person or organization should be autonomous and able to carry out duties without interference or obstruction from any branch of Government or any public or private body or person.

One of the major challenges that all African NHRIs face is how to effectively carry out their mandate independent from the Government because they hugely depend on Government funding. However, the Governments of these states have the ability to limit the formal powers and resources of the NHRIs, rendering the NHRIs weak or unable to create substantive change.

In many instances, Governments have been seen to 'punish' NHRIs that are 'too critical' in exercising their oversight role. While they may not abolish the NHRIs, so as to protect their international human rights reputation, Governments have been seen to instigate substantial reforms which decreases the independence of the NHRIs. This is by, for instance, cutting the funding that the NHRIs receives to paralyze their operations and by creating a hostile environment e.g. Issuing threats to personnel that work at the NHRIs.

A United Nations report by the UN General Assembly on the Human Rights status in Kenya stated that there continues to be a threatening environment for anyone who works with human rights field. It goes ahead to highlight several cases where human rights defenders had been harassed, intimidated, arbitrarily arrested and that there have been cases of murders (extrajudicial killings) of human rights defenders. During the investigations of the 2007/2008 Post Election Violence by KNCHR, some staff members had to flee the country to safeguard their personal security. There were reports that phones of KNCHR employees were constantly tapped by unknown persons who sought to know the progress of the case.

This clearly illustrates the point that if persons working for and defending human rights feel insecure, even within a national body, there exists a major threat to its operational autonomy. This kind of working conditions greatly threaten the autonomy of NHRIs.

**Weak legal frameworks that anchor the existence of NHRI's:** Independence could also be viewed from the frameworks that anchor the existence of an NHRI. As observed in the report of state of NHRI's in Africa, 'NHRI's require a strong legal basis to guarantee their independence. A number of issues arise out of this observation namely: i) Weak legal basis for existence - NHRIs created out of executive orders such as presidential decrees which could easily be repealed or amended. Before the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights was first established under an Act of Parliament, it was preceded by a standing committee on human rights that was established by



a Presidential Decree. Despite its assertions of independence, the committee worked on a part time basis, had no security of tenure and lacked adequate funding and human resources; and ii) Structural limitations and restrictive mandates- this may be imposed on the NHRI by its enabling legislation and may also arise due to poorly written legislation and ambiguous laws rendering them as toothless bulldogs.

**Financial support:** To limit the budget of an NHRI is an effective way of limiting its effectiveness. For an NHRI to efficiently perform its mandate, there needs to be financial independence. It is the sole responsibility of the Government to ensure that its respective NHRI is properly funded. The funding must be adequate and constant, so that the institution is capable of performing optimally. The Paris Principles provide that NHRIs should be properly funded so as to enable them to be independent from the Government. It is observed that financial control by the Government affects independence of NHRIs.

The challenge with many African NHRIs is that they are underfunded, understaffed and under resourced. Governments use funding as a way of gagging NHRIs. These Governments have a tendency of directing that the funding given to NHRIs should cater for specific projects of particular political interest to the Government of the day.

NHRIs are then forced to seek funding from other external donors for them to operate efficiently. There are various downsides in relying on external donors. Firstly, external funding may compromise the independence of an NHRI since the NHRI may start prioritizing issues from donor's interests rather than what they are actually mandated to do which is to act as a Government's Watchdog.

Secondly, relying on external donors when it comes to funding can leave the institution stranded should the donor withdraw the support when the project is already ongoing. Finally, donor support may give the Government an excuse of not adequately funding an NHRI. For instance in the context of KNCHR, 70% of its funding is from donors. This accords the Government some laxity given that the NHRI still performs its duties even with the little funding from Government.

Inadequate funding by the Government also impedes on the NHRI's ability to create awareness to the public on their rights, as this is one of the core mandates of any NHRI.

Inadequate financial support greatly affects the capacity of NHRI's to deliver on their mandate. National Human Rights Institutions under the Paris Principles are required to have the capacity to execute their mandate of promoting and protecting human rights in their jurisdictions. The study of the state of Africa NHRI's done by NANHRI and UNDP elaborate the concept of NHRI's Capacity as pointing to three things: i) Institutional and organizational capacity- this refers to the ability of the NHRI to effectively generate, allocate, and use human, material, and financial resources to attain its mandate; ii) Functional capacity which refers to the ability of an NHRI to effectively discharge its core mandate of handling complaints, monitoring and reporting violations, providing advisory services, and providing education on human rights issues; and iii) Capacity of an NHRI to respond to emerging human rights issues. The capacity of NHRIs to deliver on its mandate is attributed to the funding given to NHRI's.

**Stakeholder engagement:** Efficient stakeholder engagement is very important for the same allows NHRIs to undertake their mandates by enhancing their independence and pluralism; improving their effectiveness by deepening their public legitimacy; ensuring they reflect public concerns; and giving them access to expertise and valuable networks. It can also prevent a State from attempting to compromise the independence and neutrality of an NHRI. The mediums of stakeholder engagement include: a) Engagement at the national level; b) Engagement at the continental level, including peer support; c) Engagement at the international level, including donor relationships; and d) Monitoring and evaluation of stakeholder engagement.



It is imperative to note that this stakeholder engagement has not been easy due to the following reasons: financial and technical capacity; lack of clear strategy for engagement; and sensitive political environments, including where CSOs do not have the space to operate.

## Why state support matters the most to an NHRI's effectiveness:

- Mr. Gilbert Sebihogo, Executive Director of Network of African National Human Rights Institutions

Despite the fact that nearly half (that is 45%) of African NHRIs are accredited with the A-Status meaning that they are fully compliant with the Paris Principles, many are still not living to the standards that their "status" require. Although the reasons differ from one context to another, a common factor is usually the state support and facilitation. State facilitation is the most important constituent of an NHRI's effectiveness. This is because just like any other state entity, their existence and operation relies largely on the goodwill of state actors and the adequacy of resources availed to them.

States have often times made commitments to fulfil their obligations to international treaties which among other things include establishing and strengthening national institutions responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights. The African Charter on Human and People's Rights (Article 26), which has universal ratification places a duty on states to establish independent national human rights institutions that are: a) characterized by effective functioning; b) adequately funded and not subject to financial control; c) accessible to the general public; and d) composed of diverse membership representative of the society.

The same emphasis is made in other African Union policy documents including the Human Rights Strategy for Africa which underscores the need for strengthened capacity of national institutions for an effective regional human rights system. The African Charter on Democracy Elections and Governance also requires State Parties to ensure that national accountability institutions are provided with adequate resources to perform their assigned missions efficiently and effectively.

However, it should be noted the reason why states should give adequate support to NHRIs is not just for the compliance to regional or international treaties, but because it is in their interest to do so. Whilst every state looks forward to achieving its development goals, the human (and peoples') rights-based approach has

Mr. Sebihogo (left, NANHRI) explaining why state support to NHRIs matter the most. On his right are Mr. John Ikubaje (AUC) and Ms. Mbogori (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights)





been proven to guarantee achievement of sustainable development. Thus, the reason why emphasis has been on the human rights approach to the sustainable development goals agenda 2030 as well as Africa's Agenda 2063. Strong human rights institutions are therefore key institutions for the achievement of development goals.

NHRIs contribute to the achievement of any state's development goals in a number of ways. NHRIs are part of the accountability mechanisms at the national level that hold the public institutions and other national actors accountable to their responsibilities towards the people, and on their behalf. For instance, through the human and peoples' rights focus, NHRIs stand as agents against corruption and embezzlement of public resources. A lot of resources in our countries that could have been used in development are lost due to these vices. Basic services such as quality education and access to health are hindered by corruption and embezzlement of funds, denying our people access to these very fundamental rights, which form the foundation of development. Similarly, some sections of our populations live in extreme poverty while countries have resources which could improve citizens' lives if these resources were properly managed. Where NHRIs are functioning optimally, they provide reliable support to the government in ensuring accountability of public bodies in the delivery of services and administration of resources in the interest of the people.

Another way in which NHRIs contribute to sustainable development agenda at the national level is by ensuring that actions of national actors cause no harm whether to the current or future generations, particularly where business interests are involved. This is one of the emerging threat at the present where livelihoods, health and other facets of communities are affected by the nature of business is being conducted. Often, these violations are committed by foreign companies. Government authorities that regulate these activities can be more effective if they collaborated with reliable national human rights institutions.

In some of our countries, NHRIs are already providing advisory role during the development of national legislations to ensure that all aspects of their impact on the people's lives are assessed.

Those are just a few examples from the many ways NHRIs contribute to sustainable development.

Our distress is that, despite all the reasons as to why states require strong national human rights institutions, to enable them deliver on their development agenda effectively, NHRIs in Africa continue to experience frustration and tacit constraints due to a lack of political will and cooperation from their governments.

For instance, (although it is acknowledge that states generally have revenue challenges) it is apparent they do not prioritise financial support to NHRIs in their budgets. By matching Africa NHRIs with economic indicators from the World Bank, NANHRI found that no consistent formula or criteria such as the population size or GDP is generally adopted in deriving NHRIs budgets. Therefore the overall state financing to NHRIs is weak, with budget per capita for some African NHRIs ranging from USD 0.002 to USD 0.75. Regrettably, withholding adequate financing has historically been a common tactic through which governments seek to exert control over NHRIs.

It should be noted that since NHRIs are state entities, obtaining financial support from other sources is limited and therefore their budgets largely rely on the government funds. But even if NHRIs had opportunities to obtain other support, it is important that state funding covers the major proportion of their budgets.

Other challenges faced by NHRIs as a result of lack of goodwill and adequate support from the states include lengthy delays in appointment of commissioners and failure to provide security of tenure for members of the Commissions among others which adversary affect the autonomy of the NHRIs and as a result incapacitate them.

In conclusion, NHRIs are indispensable to the states. They are central to the promotion of sustainable development through enhanced accountability mechanisms at the national level. It should therefore be in the interest of any well-intentioned state to guarantee operational autonomy of its NHRI not just in law but in practice.

## Plenary discussion

The participants made the following remarks:

**Establishment of NHRIs:** One participant indicated that Algeria tries to play a full role in the area of human rights, which have been established in the legislation, including environmental rights. The National Consultative Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights was set up through the 2016 constitutional review. The Commission is playing a key role crystallizing the country's commitment towards human rights.



**Strong NHRIs as fulfilment of regional commitments:** Some of the states in Africa, e.g. Kenya, Ghana and South Africa, have shown clear commitment towards establishing NHRIs which are functional. In Ghana, citizens have benefitted from this. African Peer Review Mechanism recognizes that NHRIs should be strong and can play a role in development. Why would we want to establish NHRIs which do not comply with the internationally agreed standards? It is imperative that states are committed to meet these criteria. Establishing token institutions is the wrong path. AU member state should make the necessary changes at the national level to ensure that the Paris Principles on the status of national human rights institutions are being complied with.

**Dealing with inadequate state financial support:** How do NHRIs circumvent capacity challenges? Information sharing, legitimacy and credibility are major challenges to the operation of NHRIs. For instance, Niger's NHRI is experiencing a major challenge in terms of financial sustainability because the funds keep decreasing and often are disbursed to them too late for the institution to implement activities effectively. The NHRI has had to rely on the support of development partners such as UNDP.

**Effect of state funding to NHRIs independence:** How strong is political goodwill on the African continent towards NHRIs? Can we talk of independence if the NHRIs are funded by the state? There is a growing desperation on these questions. Political will cannot be underestimated, because it is very important for the functionality of NHRIs. If there is no political will at the highest level, all the processes often get stalled.



## Part III: Way forward – What can be done to improve NHRIs' effectiveness?

In this part, the forum made comments and recommendations on what actors can do to ensure strong and effective human rights institutions at the national level as per the global and regional development agendas. The discussion drew insights from relevant researches on NHRIs. Reference was also made to the Report recommendations to the various actors, and how they can collaborate effectively.

### What NHRIs can do to ensure delivery on their mandates amidst financial and technical capacity challenges as well as unconducive political environment?

- Mr. Mitiku Mekonnen Chere, OHCHR-EARO

NHRIs constitute a fundamental pillar of national human rights protection systems, hence, they should be able to operate in all circumstances, including, during limited political spaces and financial and capacity gaps. They should acknowledge that their work is even more crucial during such times since non-conducive political environment will entail negative effect on the enjoyment of human rights by citizens. Thus, the followings are key considerations to NHRIs to deliver their mandate amidst financial and capacity challenges as well as non-conducive political environment:

**NHRIs should assert that they are statutory government bodies:** As the current report, has also alluded to, many actors misunderstood the status of NHRIs and put them with equal footing with CSOs. NHRIs are part of state apparatus funded by state. They should be independent, critical and should be constructive. This misconception will narrow the space for their operation and the expected cooperative approach from government. Ideally, they shouldn't be affected by the political environment or budget cut. Above all, NHRIs must first ensure that there is a clear and proper understanding on their role at the part of the government. Sometimes the budget cut or limited political space may come from one wing of the government. If one organ of the government is not in their favour, NHRIs should design a strategy to work and engage with the other ones, e.g., with parliament.

**Advocacy with the parliament:** In many states, NHRIs are accountable to parliament but fail to closely work and advocate with it. They should always reach parliament and advocate for all possible support to effectively deliver their mandate, and strive to make their findings and recommendations the agenda of the parliament. This should help them to be effective using limited resources and in less politicized approaches than other form of advocacy work. OHCHR has been working together with NHRIs to engage with parliament in different countries, including organizing capacity building trainings to the Parliament on human rights related issues.

**Leadership of NHRIs plays key role:** In any positive or restrictive environment, the commitment and approach of the top leadership of NHRIs matters. We have observed same NHRIs performing differently under different leadership. Thus, the leadership of NHRIs should play key role in engaging with key government officials and other stakeholders to create enabling environment to effective delivery of their mandate in all circumstances; yet as confirmed by the report, there is huge gap in this regards.

**Proper communication strategies:** Proper and effective communication about NHRIs and their work will secure public trust and credibility. Trust and credibility will help NHRIs to be accepted by the public and get financial and technical supports from donors and other actors. OHCHR has always provided support on developing communication strategies and advocate for financial and technical supports for NHRIs in need.



**Prioritization:** When NHRIs face financial and technical capacity challenges or difficult political environment, they should prioritize their engagements and focus on something that will bring meaningful impact. Before deciding to do something, NHRIs should specifically ask: How much finance and human resource do they have? Is the planned work a priority human rights challenges faced in the state? Does the planned work fall under their uncontested mandate? Are there other relevant bodies to join hand? etc. They cannot do everything and be everywhere given the situation they might be in.

**Embark on less costly activities with strategic impact:** NHRIs should always find to do something less costly but with meaningful impact, for example revision/monitoring of policies and legislations or monitoring existing legislation and consistently informing the State about the impact of such legislation on human rights protection, on the activities of human rights defenders, including by making relevant and concrete recommendations. OHCHR has a section specifically dealing with assessing legislations in line with international standards.

**Use or work with other relevant actors:** Establishing partnership and working with other relevant and credible actors is one other possible solution to enable NHRIs to deliver their mandate during difficult environments. For example, working with Anti-corruption commissions, Ombudspersons, Gender commission, Labour boards, Ministries and Credible CSOs (both international and National). Sharing information, joining resources and undertaking joint advocacy work will ease the financial and political difficulties. It should also be recalled that NHRIs should act as a bridge.

**Use recommendations emanating from human rights mechanisms:** NHRIs should use the recommendations of the UN and AU human rights mechanisms. The accepted recommendations of the UPR especially can be used as an entry point to advance human rights promotion and protection work by NHRIs. States have demonstrated commitment towards implementing the UPR recommendations and NHRI in difficult environment should seize this opportunity. NHRIs should also advocate to themselves since many of the human rights mechanisms have recommendations on strengthening NHRIs. OHCHR closely works with NHRIs and inform treaty bodies of any unjustified restrictions and budget cuts or harassments with a view to raise this issue as a concern for states.

OHCHR is the lead mandated UN agency in promoting and protecting human rights in the world. It's support to NHRIs can be categorized into two ways (GAR 70/163): support for the very establishment of NHRIs technical and legal assistance on constitutional and legislative frameworks relating to the establishment, nature, functions, powers and responsibilities of institutions (e.g, national human rights institutions in Bahamas, Benin, Botswana, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, the Gambia, Guinea), or to amend the enabling laws of NHRIs. OHCHR supported Botswana, Lesotho and Burkina Faso to help them establish national human rights institutions.

## What states should do to ensure strong and effective NHRIs in Africa?

- Ms. Hope Tumukunde, Ambassador of Rwanda to the Federal Republic of Ethiopia and Permanent representative of Rwanda to the African Union

The AU holds human and people' rights among its core principles. That is why the AU provides annually a strategic policy orientation by means of the annual themes. But the AU is a continental body together with the African Commission on human and people's rights. This is why this policy forum is very important as NHRIs come in at national level as partners and as mirrors of governments' performance.

NHRIs are central to good governance of any citizen centred system of government in ensuring human rights based approach to development. They are independent organs, they are commissioned by governments to help in undertaking huge tasks of promoting and protecting and in also in assisting in reporting. Therefore, a government that understands the importance and place of its NHRI, would do try its best to resource it.

Any citizen centred government would try all means to Commission an institution that is well resourced, particularly in the following three areas that NHRIs need to function minimally: i) Government's should ensure commissioners are appointed in a timely manner and with a tenure or work that is reliable and guaranteed; ii) Equipping the Commission with proper legal framework which becomes a tough tool for protection citizens' rights - legal framework is a tool for claiming rights; iii) ensuring that government funding and support to the commission is appropriate (within the means of the government) which also signals the importance given to the work of the NHRI. These three are among the most important aspects that states can focus on among the many needs of NHRIs (guarantee of tenure, strong Legal framework, and funding).

In conclusion, it is commendable that the AUC and the secretariat of NANHRI organized this dialogue and that such engagements need to be sustained. In fact, NANHRI Secretariat should find practical ways of working with the Commission closely. This could be done by having a focal staff based at the Commission or any other way. Having such an increased presence in Addis Ababa would ensure that there is closer collaboration and partnership with the AU Commission and with all member states.

### Plenary discussion

The participants made the following remarks:

**Overcoming financial constraints:** NHRIs' budgets should be extended further than their imminent activities and operations. Substantial part of the budget comes from requests. It should be noted that



Amb. Tumukunde (Rwanda, PRC Member) (R) speaking on what states should do to ensure strong NHRIs. On the left is Mr. Mitiku (OHCHR) who spoke on what NHRIs can do to overcome challenges. In the middle is Mr. Ikubaje (AUC).



when the NHRI is serious, it can ensure a buy-in from the government, thus capacity of NHRIs should be developed. The NHRIs should intensify their methodologies to carry out their mandates more effectively, and they should prioritize those rights which should be given more focus. NHRIs also need to ensure that their personnel consist only of respectable persons of integrity.

**Understanding of NHRIs functioning required for proper allocation of funds:** Governments should also try to create a framework, where budgeting for human rights is at the core. Sometimes people responsible for budgeting in the government (the treasury) are not well conversant with the functioning of human rights bodies to appropriate budging. For example, the South African Human Rights Commission has been able to address some important human rights violations in the country, however the challenge is that the priorities keep changing all the time, because human rights concerns are diverse and differ on contexts. Therefore, sufficient core funding is needed to ensure that the NHRI can respond reliably to all human rights concerns as they emerge.

**Dealing with the mismatch between amount of NHRIs work and the resources available:** As a way of increasing their impact and ease of engagement with national actors on human rights, NHRIs should use recommendations from international and regional mechanisms (e.g, Universal Periodic Review and the African Commission of Human and Peoples Rights concluding observations) more, they are human rights recommendations which states have accepted to implement. This should guide the process of prioritizing NHRIs' activities. Some of these recommendations are wide-ranging and can provide easy action items on aspects of human rights.



Representative of Niger comments during the plenary session

**Need to guarantee financial and operational autonomy of NHRIs:** The autonomy of NHRIs is very important, and their budget needs to be sufficient. A wide range of stakeholders should be represented within the NHRIs, including state organs and civil society.

## Conclusion

National human rights institutions are core structures for the promotion and protection of human rights and therefore AU member states should do more to support them through adequate financing and political goodwill. Financial sustainability is key; if NHRIs are not adequately funded, we have to be realistic about the role that they can play in development. NHRIs also need to understand that they are self-corrective institutions, and state organs should know this. NHRI leadership needs to build a constructive relationship with political leaders. There is a need for the PRC to have a Committee where the PRC members and NHRIs can come together and share experiences. It is hoped that this Committee could be established soon.



## IV Round-table discussion: Building Stronger National Human Rights Institutions in Africa

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This session was moderated by Mr. Gilbert Sebihogo, Executive Director of NANHRI. It entailed a presentation of the Report findings and recommendations and lastly the discussions on what can be done by the stakeholders towards the implementation of the recommendations.

### Presentation of the report "Study on the State of African National Human Rights Institutions" - Mr. Tagbo Agbazue, Blandford Consulting

Mr. Tagbo Agbazue, the director of Blandford Consulting gave highlights from the Report. His presentation captured the key aspects of the criteria for the selection of the countries studied, duration over which the study was conducted, methodology used for the study, findings and recommendations. According to the findings presented, the major areas in which the NHRIs studied face challenges include: funding; capacity to manage human resources; leadership; credibility in society; sensitive political environment and stakeholder engagement. The findings presented also highlight best practices found in some of the countries studied. The consultant stressed the need for all stakeholders to cooperate and ensure that the recommendations in the report that had been presented are effectively implemented in order to strengthen NHRIs to effectively fulfil their mandate on human rights and development. The Consultant acknowledged that the issues affecting African NHRIs are many and therefore proposed that a joint task team should be created to determine what needs to be prioritised for implementation.

Two participants made important remarks on the accreditation status NHRIs in Africa which should correspond to their effectiveness and operation at the national level. It was noted that the review process is continuous and that according to the Paris Principles, the category A-status of NHRIs are reviewed by the sub-committee for accreditation every five years and this status could be withdrawn if a NHRI fails to comply with the requirements.

One participant proposed that the report of the policy forum be submitted to the African Heads of States in order to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations presented in the report on the State of African NHRIs and discussed by the participants.

### Stakeholders' roles

Participants agreed that states have the major responsibility in ensuring NHRIs effectiveness. Thus, states should ensure the following is done:

- Put in place strong legal framework in line with the Paris Principles on the status of national human rights institutions to guarantee independence, broad mandate, sufficient powers
- Enable institutional operation particularly through timely appointment of commissioners and providing security of tenure, as well as the general operationalization of the laws
- Provide reliable financial support



- Secure NHRIs operational and financial autonomy to enable NHRIs undertake staff recruitment, programming and budgeting in a manner that allows them to achieve their mandates

NHRIs also have also significant responsibility in ensuring their effectiveness in delivery. They should:

- Mainstream Human Rights Based Approach into the national development plans by linking National Human Rights Action Plans (NHRAPs) to national SDGs targets
- Adopt a collaborative approach with all stakeholders, including civil society
- Strengthen technical capacities of the institutions
- Facilitate information sharing, and knowledge and skills transfer with other NHRIs
- Proactively fostering engagement with AU & UN human rights bodies

The regional bodies such as the AUC and AU human rights bodies should also play a significant part in promoting strong NHRIs in the following ways:

- Promote establishment of strong institutions in line the African Charter and the ACDEG & the SDGs
- Improve collaboration with NHRIs especially in promotional & protection visits & following -up recommendations/decisions, mainstreaming NHRIs role in all areas of work
- Ensure information dissemination to NHRIs (communications, mission reports, state reports and concluding observations)
- Establish formal collaboration framework with all the regional bodies
- Sensitize African Governments on the role of human rights institutions (including through AU & RECs summit agendas)

Lastly, regional networks and development partners, including NANHRI, UNDP, Other development partners should play supporting role:

- Support technical capacity development for NHRIs
- Supplement financial support to NHRIs
- Support forums for exchange of information and sharing of best practices
- Facilitate development of models and benchmarks to enhance capacity of NHRIs

## Way forward and establishment of a Committee to develop an Action Plan on the recommendations of the report

It was noted that the execution of the roles of each of the stakeholders was dependent on their willingness and goodwill to play their part. However a collaborative approach between all the stakeholders was necessary for providing synergy and ease of implementation and follow-up on progress.

To ensure a structured follow-up it was agreed that there is a need for a committee to develop an action plan and pilot the implementation of the recommendations presented in the report on the state on African NHRIs and discussions by the participants through the policy forum. Volunteers were identified among the participants and it was agreed that the following would serve as members of this committee:

	<b>Person</b>	<b>Institution represented</b>
1.	David Pierre, Ambassador for Seychelles to the Federal Republic of Ethiopia and Permanent representative of Seychelles to the AU	AU Permanent Representatives Committee
2.	John Ikubaje, Political Officer (Human Rights) in the Department of Political Affairs of the AUC	African Union Commission - AUC
3.	Gilbert Sebihogo, Executive Director of Network of African National Human Right Institutions	Secretariat of NANHRI
4.	Joseph Whittal, Chief Commissioner of the Ghana Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice	National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)
5.	Kagwiria Mbogori, Chairperson of the Kenya National Commission for Human Rights	
6.	Simon Ridley	UNDP
7.	Chris Mburu	OHCHR

### Validation of policy forum report

At the end of the round table discussions on role of the stakeholders in building the strong national human rights institutions in Africa, the forum rapporteur (Gilford Kimathi) read a summary of the this report of the discussions held in the policy forum discussion of the morning session and the way forward agreed on in the round table discussion done in the afternoon session. The summary report outlined the issues discussed and recommendations that had been put forward in the course of the policy forum. The participants adopted the summary report as the forum outcome and it was agreed that the full report be circulated to participants.

### Closing remarks

The representative of AUC thanked participants for participating in the deliberations and proposing recommendations for the strengthening of African NHRIs. He informed participants that the AU is currently developing a ten-year action plan for human rights and NHRIs are one of the key focus areas of the work of the AUC. He highlighted the fact that African NHRIs are an integral part of the African human rights system and cannot be left out of any initiatives undertaken by the AU. He also informed participants that in the upcoming months the AUC hopes to invite stakeholders to a workshop on the validation of the ten-year action plan for human rights. Just before declaring the session closed, he re-emphasised the AUC appreciation for the presence and contributions of the participants.



## Annex I: Speakers' Biographies

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### Ambassador David Claude Pierre

David Claude Pierre is the Ambassador for Seychelles to the Federal Republic of Ethiopia and Permanent representative of Seychelles to the African Union. Amb Pierre has served in various capacities in the government of Seychelles including in the Ministry of Education, National Youth Service and also High Commissioner of the Republic of Seychelles to various countries. He also been a legislator and also a leader of the opposition. Amb Pierre has also been a member of the Pan African Parliament. He holds a Bachelor of Applied Science and Post Graduate Certificate in Education.

### Ambassador Hope Tumukunde

Tumukunde Hope Gasatura is Rwanda's Ambassador to Ethiopia and Djibouti and also Rwanda's Permanent Representative to the African Union and the Economic Commission for Africa since end of 2015. In this capacity, she is a member of the African Union's Permanent Representatives' Committee (PRC) and the Africa Union's Peace and Security Council (AU PSC). Both of these organs are very important in the African Union's Governance Architecture.

Prior to this appointment, Amb. Hope Tumukunde was the Vice Mayor of the City of Kigali in charge of Social Affairs, for five years. She had previously served as one of the seven Commissioners of the Rwanda National Commission for Human Rights specifically in charge of Women's Rights for five years.

Amb. Tumukunde has held other various government posts primarily in Rwanda's Local Government Administration sector. She was the Governor/Prefet of Butare Province in Southern Rwanda and also served in the same portfolio in Kigali Ngali Province for five years. Amb. Tumukunde has been instrumental in Rwanda's local government reform processes, women's organisations and human rights associations.

Amb. Hope Tumukunde has a Masters Degree in Public Administration from NYU's Wagner Graduate School of Public Service in New York and was the 2008 convocation speaker. She first graduated from Makerere University in Kampala in 1999 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology and Mathematics.

Amb. Tumukunde has also served on several boards notable of them is that of the Rwanda Local Development Support Fund (RLDSF) and that of the Rwanda Tourism University College (RTUC).

She is married to Mr. Baguma Richard Gasatura and they have five children.



## Mr. Lawrence Mute

Lawrence Mute is a lecturer in the Private Law Department of the School of Law of the University of Nairobi where he teaches equality law, disability rights law and human rights law. Between 2003 and 2012, he worked as a Commissioner with the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights. Mute has also worked at the Centre for Law and Research International (CLARION).

Mute has written or edited publications including on constitutions and constitutionalism, human rights, governance, media, disability and sexual minorities.

He is a member of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights since 2013, where he chairs its Committee for the Prevention of Torture in Africa, as well as being a member of the Working Group on Older Persons and People with Disabilities in Africa.

He holds a Bachelor of Laws Degree from the University of Nairobi and a Master of Laws Degree from the University of Warwick.

## Ms. Kagwiria Mbogori

Ms. Kagwiria Mbogori is the Chairperson of the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR). She has broad work experience at the national and regional level. At the helm of the Commission she provides strategic leadership for the implementation of the Commission's strategic plan for the period 2013-2018, that focuses on the promotion of a culture of respect for human rights in Kenya.

She holds a Masters of Law from the University of Notre Dame majoring in International Human Rights Law (LL.M). She is a Law Graduate from the University of Nairobi (LL.B) and holds a post graduate Diploma from the Kenya School of Law.

Prior to joining KNCHR, Ms. Mbogori briefly served as United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as the Chief Technical Advisor for the Judiciary of South Sudan. She also worked for the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) from 2004 to 2013 in a number of capacities in the governance, democracy, human rights and rule of law sectors.

Kagwiria also served as the Executive Director of the Kenya Section of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ-Kenya) and Senior Programme Officer in the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Kenya).

## Mr. Gilbert Sebihogo

Mr. Gilbert SEBIHOGO is a lawyer by profession with interest in International Human Rights Law. He holds an LL.M Degree in Public International Law from University of Pretoria, South Africa; an LL.B from the National University of Rwanda.

Mr. Sebihogo is currently the Executive Director of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI) based in Nairobi, Kenya where he has been facilitating the establishment and strengthening of national human rights institutions in Africa as well as building strategic networks and linkages with partners,



NGOs, and relevant intergovernmental organisations including the African Union and its organs with human rights mandate.

Before joining the NANHRI, Mr. Sebihogo, was lecturer at the Independent University of Rwanda where he lectured Comparative Law and International Humanitarian Law (June 2006 to June 2007). He also served as Consultant for a project of UNICEF within the Ministry for Justice of Rwanda in support to children in conflict with the law in the aftermath of Genocide of Tutsis.

Mr. Sebihogo also served as Prosecutor General before the Court of Appeal in Kigali from January 2001 to December 2004 where he was in charge of six provincial prosecution departments also facilitated the implementation of traditional justice (Gacaca). He also served as provincial prosecutor from 1999 to 2000 in charge of cases of genocide.

Before joining the prosecution department he served as Secretary and legal advisor in the National Assembly of Rwanda in the Department of Foreign Affairs from 1998 to 1999 where he facilitated the drafting of several parliamentary bills including the Anti-Corruption Bill.

Some of his publications include: “Le Rôle des Nations Unies dans la lutte pour le maintien de la paix au Rwanda », Mémoire de fin d’étude, 1988 ; and “Mens Rea as a sine qua non condition of genocide as an international crime in Rwanda”, 2006.

### **Ms. Meskerem Geset**

Ms. Meskerem Geset Techane is a human rights expert from Ethiopia with significant experience at the national and international level. She is currently a Doctoral Fellow at the Human Right Center of the University of Padova (Italy) where she is completing her PhD.

Meskerem has worked, in several capacities, in the legal and human rights field working with national, pan-African, international and inter-governmental organizations. She previously held positions as a High Court Judge in Ethiopia, and Deputy Director of the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA) based in The Gambia. She extensively consulted with the UN, and international and national organizations on diverse human rights issues. She has served, as expert member, in different Working Groups of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, and as Africa research expert for the UN Working Group on Discrimination Against Women (UNWGDWAW).

As a scholar, she participates in research projects and guest lectures in several universities in Europe, Africa and North America. Her current research project focuses on NHRIs and Economic and Social Rights Accountability.



## Mr. Mitiku Mekonnen Chere

Mr. Mitiku Mekonnen is Human Rights Officer at the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights - East African Regional Office. Mitiku has earned LL.B. and LL.M. in Human Rights and Democratization in Africa from Jimma University (Ethiopia) and University of Pretoria (South Africa) respectively. As part of his LL.M. studies, he undertook research on the transfer of cases from the International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda to Rwandan Domestic Jurisdiction. He has also published a book on the Recognition of the Rights to Language under International Law.

Mitiku served as Dean and Lecture of Human Rights, Humanitarian and International Law in Jimma University until 2013. He was also appointed as chairperson of Ethiopian Law Schools Consortium in 2011. In May, 2013, Mitiku was appointed as Director for Human Rights Protection and Monitoring Division of Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. He also served as the Head of Ethiopian Human Rights Commission's National Election Monitoring Committee and coordinated the human rights monitoring of the 2015 Ethiopian National Election.

Mitiku has been in his current position as Human Rights Officer since November 2015. He is responsible for facilitating human rights capacity building support and coordinates the work of the regional office with partners, including NHRIs, Government organs and CSOs in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Djibouti. He is also responsible for following human rights development and for providing analysis on human rights trends in these countries.

## Mr. Tagbo G. Agbazue

Tagbo Agbazue is a development consultant that specialises in governance (public and corporate) in addition to broader sustainability issues pertaining to the long-term growth and competitiveness and sustainability of Africa. These include corporate governance and organisational development, human rights and business; anti-corruption, anti-money laundering measures; rule of law, poverty alleviation strategies, as well as the role of business in development, including in zones of weak governance, conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. Tagbo's work includes training and capacity building, community and stakeholder engagement, social assessments and monitoring and evaluation. He has also built significant prowess in rigorous legal analysis, report writing, working with complex metrics and databases and designing both quantitative and qualitative research projects.

Tagbo led the team at Blandford Consulting which recently conducted the research for NANHRI and UNDP on the "State of National Human Rights Institutions in Africa".

He is a Visiting Scholar at Harvard Law School and a Research Fellow at the Law, Justice and Development Programme of the University of the Witwatersrand Law School. Tagbo is an expert resource person to a several major public and private sector corporations in Africa, a range of regional initiatives and inter-governmental organisations (such as the African Union, World Bank, the UN, African Development Bank and African Export Import Bank etc.), as well as the governments of South Africa, Lesotho, Mozambique, Nigeria and Cameroon. Tagbo has presented on governance, the rule of law, anti-corruption and corporate social responsibility in about 45 countries across Africa and the globe.

He has lectured law at the Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) Nigeria and practiced with Chime, Nnaji and Company (Nigeria), and Edward Nathan & Friedland (South Africa). He is presently a Director of





Blandford Consulting based in Johannesburg; a Senior Governance Adviser to the African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC); and the Convener of Influence Africa, a social enterprise organisation that is geared towards making information about sustainable development easily accessible to 200 million people across Africa, through innovative research and media products. Tagbo sits on the Public Sector Governance Committee at the Institute of Directors of Southern Africa. He is a member of the Governing Board of the Business Action Against Corruption (BAAC), an initiative endorsed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Forum to drive innovative anti-corruption strategies in Africa.

At the AICC, he was from 2006 – 2010, the focal point of the Business and Human Rights Programme in Southern Africa. Tagbo led the research and development team at AICC that developed the South African version of the Human Rights Compliance Assessment (HRCA) and in collaboration with the National Business Initiative (NBI) and the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, Tagbo was involved in national road shows and capacity building programmes for corporations on business and human rights.



## Annex II: Agenda

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### ***Policy Forum on Strengthening Human Rights Based Approach to Development in Africa: the nexus between strong human rights institutions and development at the national level***

Date: September 6, 2017  
Venue: African Union Commission (AUC) old building (Plenary Hall), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
Moderator: Mr. John Ikubaje, AUC Department of Political Affairs

**09:00-09:30 ARRIVAL AND REFRESHMENTS**

**09:30-09:40 WELCOME REMARKS**

- Mr. Gilbert Sebihogo, NANHRI

**09:40-10:00 OPENING REMARKS**

- Mr. Dominique Kabeya, UNDP RSCA Acting Director
- H.E. Mrs. Minata Samate-Cessouma, Commissioner for Political Affairs, African Union Commission

**10:00-11:00 Panel I: AFRICA'S HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITMENTS: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF AU'S MEMBER STATES' PROGRESS IN MEETING THEIR HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS**

- *Positive developments and achievements of African states in meeting their human rights commitments*  
– Mr. David Pierre, Ambassador of Seychelles to the Federal Republic of Ethiopia and Permanent representative of Seychelles to the AU
- *Why human rights are an important element for development in Africa?*  
– Mr. Lawrence Mute, Member of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights
- *Why are NHRIs important role players in the development agenda?*  
– Ms. Meskerem Geset, Academic researcher - University of Padova

**11:00-12:00 Panel II: CHALLENGES TO AFRICAN NHRIS' EFFECTIVENESS: ARE NHRIS ADEQUATELY FACILITATED TO DELIVER ON THEIR MANDATES?**

- *What hinders African NHRIs from operating optimally?*  
– Ms Kagwiria Mbogori, Chairperson Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR)
- *Why does state support to NHRIs matter the most?*  
– Mr. Gilbert Sebihogo



**12:00-13:00**                    **Panel III: WAY FORWARD – WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE NHRIS' EFFECTIVENESS?**

- *What can NHRIs do to ensure delivery on their mandates amidst financial and technical capacity challenges as well as uncondusive political environment?*  
- Mr. Mitiku Mekonnen Chere, Human Rights Officer, OHCHR - East African Regional Office
- *What should states do to ensure strong and effective NHRIs in Africa?*  
- Ms. Hope Tumukunde, Ambassador of Rwanda to the Federal Republic of Ethiopia and Permanent representative of Rwanda to the African Union

**13:00-14:00**                    **LUNCH**

**ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSION: How can we build stronger national human rights institutions in Africa?**

Facilitators:

Mr. Gilbert Sebihogo, NANHRI

Mr. John Ikubaje, African Union Commission

**14:00-14:45**                    **Findings and recommendations from the State of African NHRIs Study Report**  
- Mr. Tagbo Agbazue, Blandford Consulting

**14:45–15:45**                    **OPEN DISCUSSION: Way forward based on the report's recommendation**

**15:45-16:00**                    **Reading and validation of the policy forum report**  
- Mr. Gilford Kimathi, NANHRI

**16:00-16:10**                    **Closing remarks**



## Annex III: Participants

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The Forum was attended by Members of the Permanent Representatives Committee, Representatives of the African Union Commission, National Human Rights Institutions, Network of African National Human Rights Institutions, Academic Researchers, Civil Society Organisations and Development Partners.

The following is the list of names of participants and states/ institutions represented:

### **African Union Member State Missions Representation**

Burkina Faso Embassy	Amb. Bague Kalifa
Ethiopia (MoFA)	Adisalem Desta
Ghana Embassy	Louisa Alomatu
Ghana Embassy	Kezo Nton
Lesotho Embassy	Mausotheba Mekholklda
Liberia Embassy	Sarahfi Dobor
Mauritania Embassy	Mohamed
Mauritania Embassy	Sidi Onlo El Ghady
Mauritius Embassy	Amb. D.Raj Busceeth
Mission of Morocco in Addis	Bouchabib Eloumni
Mission of Morocco in Addis	Elliabib Bourane
Nigeria Embassy	Cfueks Kwosu
Nigeria Embassy	Fimba Taruwhuba
Niger Embassy	Paraiso Souleymane Moussa
Rwanda Embassy	Amb. Hope Tumukunde
SADR	Lamine Yahiaoui
Seychelles Embassy	Amb. David Pierre
Sierra Leone Embassy	Joseph S Kalokoh
Embassy of Sudan	Frew Demoue
Uganda Embassy	TumlesiuyeSirrpiya
Zambia Embassy	Linda Mbangweta
Alegria Embassy	Boutobba Afh

### **African Union Commission - AUC**

AUC	Calixte Aristide Mbari
AUC	John Ikubaje
AUC	Thabit M. AfraH
AUC	Ewgeda Wasie
AUC	Tsion Hailemariam

### **African Union Human Rights Bodies**

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights	Lawrence Murugu Mute
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### **AU Member States' National Human Rights Institution - NHRIs**

Cameroon (National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms)	Gabriel James Mouangue B Kobila
Djibouti (Commission Nationale Des Droits De L'homme - CNDH)	Saleh Said Doualeh



Egypt (National Council for Human Rights)  
Ethiopia (Ethiopian Human Rights Commission)  
Ghana (Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice)  
Kenya (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights - KNCHR)  
Morocco (Conseil National des droits de l'homme - CCDH)  
Niger (Commission Nationale des Droits Humains - CNDH)  
South Africa (South African Human Rights Commission - SAHRC)  
Zambia (Zambia Human Rights Commission)

Ahmed Abdelfattah Haggag  
Dr. Addisu Gebreigzabhier  
Joseph Whittal  
Kagwiria Mbogori  
Abderrafie Hamdi  
Alichina Kourgueni Amadou  
Bongani Christopher Majola  
Mudford Zachariah Mwandenga

### **Network of African National Human Rights Institutions - NANHRI**

NANHRI Secretariat  
NANHRI Secretariat

Gilbert Sebihogo  
Gilford Kimathi Kithure

### **Academic institutions**

University of Padova

Meskerem Geset

### **United Nations bodies**

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights - OHCHR  
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights - OHCHR  
United Nations Development Programme - UNDP RSCA  
United Nations Development Programme - UNDP RSCA  
United Nations Development Programme - UNDP RSCA  
United Nations Development Programme - UNDP RSCA  
United Nations Development Programme - UNDP RSCA  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Dept. to the AU & ECA  
United Nations Office for Project Services - UNOPS

Chris Mburu  
Mitiku Mekonnen  
Dominique Kabeya  
Simon Ridley  
Tomi Lounio  
Duhitha Wijeyratne  
Tihtina Kidus  
Michele Apapa Dontack  
Worknesh M. Gonet

### **Development partners**

Australia  
Canada  
China Mission to AU  
China Mission to AU  
EC Delegation  
German Embassy - GIZ  
German Embassy - GIZ  
Norwegian Embassy  
Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)  
Swedish Embassy

Zoe Tiller  
Anne Bretelat  
Fougang Zhong  
Hongianug Hang  
Rafael Swchat  
Matthias Schauer  
Yao Li  
Audun Fostvedt-Mills  
Francisco Lopez  
Frew Demeke

### **Civil Society organizations and consultancies**

African Disability Forum (ADF)  
Blandford Consulting  
Ethiopia Center for Disability and Development (ECDD)

Berhanu Tefera  
Tagbo Agbazue  
Melaku Tekle



Golden Bridge Consultancy  
Nilewood Promotion



Dr. Ahmed Abdurahman  
Tekaligne Ababate