



The 13th Biennial Conference of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI)

"Impact of COVID-19 on Human Rights in Africa:

The role of National Human Rights Institutions in offering a human rights-based approach to better and sustainable recovery towards development beyond COVID-19"

Harare, Zimbabwe, on 3-5 November 2021

HARARE DECLARATION AND PLAN OF ACTION

1. The 13th Biennial Conference of the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI) took place in Harare, Zimbabwe, from 3-5 November 2021. The Conference was held virtually, and it was jointly hosted by the NANHRI and the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC). The theme of the Conference was *"Impact of COVID-19 on Human Rights in Africa: The role of National Human Rights Institutions in offering a human rights-based approach to better and sustainable recovery towards development beyond COVID -19"*;
2. The Conference was officially opened by the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Honourable Ziyambi Ziyambi;
3. In attendance were more than 100 participants who included official representatives of the 46 National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) that constitute NANHRI, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme, the African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, international and regional experts in law, policy and human rights as well as international, regional and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs);
4. The Conference was held against a backdrop marked by the continued spread of COVID-19 that took thousands of lives in Africa, which registered the first cases in February 2020 and subsequently took restrictive public health measures for the protection of all;
5. The Conference was briefed and cultured through an interactive discourse that included a wide and diverse array of experiences, expert knowledge, and the opinions and perspectives of participants. The testimonies delivered at the





Conference gave it a human face from the first-hand lived experience from survivors;

6. During the Conference, the participants discussed, among other things; the human rights situation in Africa in the context of COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, the resulting health crisis; research, the protection and promotion of human rights, and the continuation of development through partnerships, during and beyond COVID-19;

The participants in the 13th Biennial Conference of NANHRI:

7. *Recognising* the need to uphold human rights, and the importance of a human rights-based approach towards sustainable socio-economic recovery during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic;
8. *Highlighting* the importance of the right to life, health and social security for all, in particular, vulnerable groups;
9. *Recognising* the negative impact of COVID-19 on society as a whole, and economic recovery and development;
10. *Noting* the need for NHRIs to remain vigilant and proactive in monitoring and implementing Agenda 2030 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2063 of the African Union, during and beyond COVID-19;
11. *Stating* the need for a credible and empirical based approach in collecting and collating evidence and data to inform the monitoring, reporting and resolution of complaints of human rights violations;
12. *Highlighting* concerns about the lack of information and data on the negative impact of COVID-19 in communities, information which is essential to lobby governments, and inform policy, laws and strategies to secure human rights;
13. *Stressing* the need for a united and holistic approach by stakeholders towards rebuilding and development through reflection on shared experiences and the identification of areas of collaboration; and



14. *Noting* that international solidarity and cooperation to address the repercussions of COVID-19 have not lived up to expectations and that most African countries are still lagging behind regarding vaccination of their populations;

Hereby resolve to:

15. Urge all States to adopt a human rights-based approach in addressing and combatting the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic;

16. Report on the impacts of COVID-19 on the enjoyment by all of their rights, including the rights to life, health and education;

17. Raise awareness on the need to protect and promote the right to life, health, and social security for all, and to strengthen response mechanisms to the COVID-19 pandemic by putting in place adequate infrastructure;

18. Advocate for the inclusion of NHRIs, civil society organisations (CSOs), and other human rights defenders in the design and implementation of national strategies in response to pandemics and other disasters;

19. Commit to the continued promotion and implementation of Agenda 2030 of the SDGs and Agenda 2063 of the African Union;

20. Enhance the capacity of NHRIs in research data collection and analysis through a human rights-based approach in implementing SDGs and continued advocacy and lobby efforts in collaboration with other national and international statistics agencies;

21. Adopt a strategy on how to integrate technology as a critical source of collecting and collating data and information, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic;

22. Identify gaps in States' responses to COVID-19 and implement mechanisms that strengthen the institutional capacity of States during and beyond COVID-19;

23. Combat the social ills associated with COVID-19, that include but not limited to gender-based violence, inability to access education and health facilities for other ailments other than COVID-19 related one, fragile health systems, loss of



livelihoods, restriction of civic freedoms and privacy and surveillance measures that encroach on civil and human rights;

24. Raise awareness and conduct advocacy for the promotion and protection of human rights and socio-economic recovery through a multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral human rights-based approach;
25. Promote strategies to strengthen collaboration and partnerships between state and non-state actors in the promotion and protection of human rights;
26. Engage stakeholders that include, but not limited to States, donors, development partners and supporting national, regional and international structures to support fundraising efforts, and to collectively work together to increase the capacity of NHRIs in the execution of their mandates;
27. Conduct the continued sharing of experiences and international best practices to better inform disaster preparedness and response efforts by states;
28. Strengthen the role of NHRIs in social protection initiatives for extremely vulnerable individuals in society through resource mobilization, health initiatives and education, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic;
29. Raise awareness and conduct advocacy and lobby efforts regarding the challenges of new laws and regulations and the impact of privacy and information protection in tracking COVID-19;
30. Continue to engage with international and regional stakeholders to address the gaps of the international solidarity identified during the pandemic of COVID-19; and
31. Continue to promote the right to vaccination for all without discrimination, especially for vulnerable groups and in remote areas.

Adopted in Harare, Zimbabwe, on 5 November 2021