



## AU-EU HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE



### 11<sup>TH</sup> AU-EU HUMAN RIGHTS DIALOGUE 24 NOVEMBER 2015, KIGALI, RWANDA

#### JOINT COMMUNIQUE

1. The 11<sup>th</sup> African Union (AU) – European Union (EU) Human Rights Dialogue took place on 24 November 2015 in Kigali, Rwanda. The Dialogue was led by the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Dr Aisha L. Abdullahi and the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Mr Stavros Lambrinidis. The AU participants included Hon. Justice Augusto Ramadani, President of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, Hon. Madam Zainabu Kayitesi, Commissioner of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Mr. Omar Faruk Osman, Chairperson for Political Affairs Cluster of ECOSOCC, Dr. Khabele Matlosa, AU Director for Political Affairs, as well as other AU staff working on human rights-related issues. On the EU side the participants included Amb. Gary Quince, Head of EU Delegation to the AU, Amb. Michael Ryan, Head of EU Delegation to Rwanda, Mrs. Kristin de Peyron, Head of Division, Pan-African Affairs, as well as EU staff working on human rights-related issues.
2. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights on both continents and to collaborate on the effective implementation of continental and international human rights instruments. The parties discussed recent developments in Africa and Europe in the area of human rights. The African Union gave an overview of the work of the AU organs with a human rights mandate and the 2015 Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Agenda 2063. The European Union presented the implementation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the developments in the EU External Human Rights Action Policy.
3. The AU and the EU also followed up on the previous recommendations made within the context of the Dialogue. On **human rights and business** the participants welcomed the organisation of the Human Rights and Business Seminar in Addis Ababa in September 2014. Both parties committed to promoting the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles (UNGP) on Business and Human Rights at the national level. The EU committed to support the AU with the development of an African Policy Framework on the Implementation of the UNGP Business and Human Rights.
4. On the **abolition of death penalty** the parties welcomed their cooperation on the first Continental Conference on the Abolition of the Death Penalty in Africa in Cotonou in July 2014 and the Cotonou Declaration, which called on the AU

Member States to adopt the Additional Protocol on the Abolition of the Death Penalty in Africa. The EU expressed its full support to the AU efforts in obtaining a swift adoption of the Protocol.

5. The AU presented its Africa **2016 Human Rights Year**, with Special Focus on the Rights of Women. The two parties agreed that it is a unique opportunity to redouble their joint efforts towards the promotion and protection of human rights on the continent. The EU agreed to support the AU with its plan to expedite the ratification of international and continental human rights instruments at the national level.
6. During the Dialogue, both sides recommitted to the Joint Africa-EU Declaration on **Migration** and Development of 2006, the Africa-EU Declaration on Migration and Mobility of 2014, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Declarations of the Ministerial Conferences of the Rabat Process and of the Khartoum Process on 27 November and 28 November 2014 respectively and the Final Declaration and Action Plan of the 2015 Valetta Summit on Migration. Both parties stressed the rights, safety and security of migrants and it was agreed to expedite the implementation of the agreed action plan of the Valetta Summit of 2015. The parties also called for a continued dialogue on migration and mobility in line with the roadmap for the 4<sup>th</sup> AU-EU Summit and the Valetta Summit.
7. The parties reiterated their outstanding cooperation in the area of **election observation** and welcomed the progress achieved in improving the AU capacity and methodology through EU support in the areas of training, staff exchange and capacity building in 2015. The parties agreed to further strengthen this cooperation.
8. Both institutions decided to reiterate their commitment to fighting **impunity** of all sorts. They welcomed the AU Commission of Inquiry Report on South Sudan and committed to cooperating on the justice, truth and reconciliation mechanisms in South Sudan within the AU and the EU transitional justice policy frameworks.
9. The AU welcomed the EU's sharing of the training modules for peacekeeping operations on human rights as well as the EU support for the human rights mission to Burundi, for which the EU reiterated its support. The EU welcomed the efforts of the AU in deploying **human rights observers** (HROs) to monitor human rights in conflict situations and reporting possible violations of human rights and international humanitarian law as a positive example of the linkages between the African Governance Architecture and the African Peace and Security Architecture. In this respect, both parties agreed to further cooperate towards extending the period of deployment of the HROs in conflict zones. The AU welcomed the EU's offer to assist with the development of a robust roster for African Human Rights Observers.

10. The AU and the EU decided to jointly support a Continental Conference on **Freedom of Expression** in 2016 based on the recommendations made by the civil society seminar, as well as a Seminar on Freedom of Association. Both sides also agreed to help develop national action plans on safety and security of journalists and freedom of expression advocates in conflict zones in Africa and support the production of status report on implementation of access to information in line with the African Model Law on Access to Information adopted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.
11. Both parties agreed to jointly commemorate the UN declared International Day to End **Impunity of Crimes against Journalists** on 2 November 2016 as part of their common commitment to fight impunity.
12. The AU and the EU agreed to partner in organizing the **High-Level Dialogue** on the promotion and protection of Human Rights in Africa in which issues of mutual interests will be discussed.
13. The two sides welcomed and took note of the recommendations presented by African and European **civil society** representatives resulting from the 5<sup>th</sup> AU-EU Civil Society Seminar on Democratic Governance and Human Rights that took place on 21 and 22 November 2015 in Kigali. The seminar focussed on the freedom of expression in both continents.
14. Both parties agreed to provide technical and financial support to their respective **civil society steering committees** in order for them to effectively execute their mandate. AU and EU encourage both steering committees to develop individual mandates as well as a joint mandate to govern and guide their scope and modalities of work.
15. AU and EU recommended to both **Civil Society Steering Committees** to inclusively and meaningfully contribute and ensure their role in all activities and programmes of the partnership on democratic governance and human rights.
16. The two institutions agreed that the **CSOs Seminars** are of great value within the context of the Human Rights Dialogue and jointly affirmed the need for greater space for civil society within this partnership to do its work without undue interference.

The AU and the EU agreed to hold the next round of the Human Rights Dialogue in Europe in 2016.

**Kigali: 24 November 2015**