

Declaration by the Assembly on the theme of year 2016

We, the Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), meeting at the 27th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the Union in Kigali, Rwanda, from 17 to 18 July 2016, and after having debated the theme of the year, namely, ‘The African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women’;

...

Now, hereby:

1. AFFIRM that Human Rights and the rights of women in particular are a Collective Responsibility of all in Africa;
2. COMMIT ourselves to enhancing efforts aimed at entrenching and reinforcing deeper understanding of the culture of human and peoples’ rights, in particular the rights of women, and their promotion and popularization amongst the African peoples by declaring the next ten years as “the Human and Peoples’ Rights Decade in Africa” and its *[sic]* Action Plan;
3. RE-COMMIT ourselves to expedite the ratification, domestication and implementation of all human and peoples’ rights instruments, in particular the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in African (Maputo Protocol), and call upon the African Union Commission (AUC) to put in place measures and modalities to support Member States to establish the required capacities and processes for monitoring and review of the domestication efforts;
4. REITERATE our unflinching determination to promote and protect human and people’s rights and all basic freedoms in Africa and the need for the consolidation and the full implementation of human and peoples’ rights instruments and relevant national laws and policies as well as decisions and recommendations made by the AU Organs with a human rights mandate;
5. UPHOLD firmly the principles of universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in the consideration of human rights and elimination of double standards and politicisation;
6. ALSO UPHOLD our common position that the promotion and protection of human rights should be based on the principle of cooperation and genuine dialogue aimed at strengthening the capacity of Member States to comply with their human rights obligations;
7. CALL UPON the Commission to ensure the independence and integrity of AU organs with human rights mandate by providing adequate financing and shielding them from undue external influence;
8. ALSO REITERATE our commitment to eliminate violence and all forms of every discrimination against women and to ensure the protection of the rights of women as stipulated in the Maputo Protocol and the international declarations and conventions as well as empowering women by granting their full rights;
9. FURTHER REITERATE our commitment to promote the right to development (including the right to water and sanitation, health, shelter and education) as an inalienable human and peoples’ right by virtue of which every human person and all peoples are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development, in which all human rights and fundamental freedoms can be fully realized;
10. EXPRESS great satisfaction at the positive contributions made by the AUC and AU Organs with a human rights mandate and REQUEST them to ensure greater synergy between the African Governance Architecture and the African Peace and Security Architecture in order to ensure that the developments in

the terrain of human rights feature prominently on the agenda of the Peace and Security Council;

11. ENCOURAGE the Commission and AU Organs with a human rights mandate to strengthen the African system for the promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights through wider communication and information sharing, coupled with direct support of Member States, by ensuring the strengthening of human rights institutions and putting in place all the necessary measures so that success is documented and challenges noted to ensure that there is on-going review of progress in the implementation of adopted human rights instruments;

12. CALL UPON the RECs to work closely with the Commission and other AU Organs with a human rights mandate in harmonizing their instruments and further urge them to collectively promote and protect human and peoples' rights on the Continent;

13. ALSO CALL ON the Commission and AU Organs with a human rights mandate to identify modalities for the participation of African Research Institutes, Universities, Civil Society and the Media in promoting the culture of human rights in Africa including the protection and promotion of the rights of women;

14. FURTHER CALL ON the Commission and AU Organs with a human rights mandate to identify the obstacles that have hindered implementation of human and peoples' rights instruments and our previous commitments relating to human rights with special focus on the rights of women and to propose modalities for addressing them;

15. NOTE WITH APPRECIATION the support provided by our bilateral and multilateral partners and call on them to continue working closely with us to build and enhance the capacity of the AU and its Member States to promote and protect human and peoples' rights;

16. REQUEST the Commission and AU organs with a human rights mandate to take necessary steps to establish the Pan-African Human Rights Institute (PAHRI) and to encourage Member States to commit to host it;

17. ALSO REQUEST the Commission to report regularly on the implementation of this Declaration.