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ETHIOPIAN HUMAN
RIGHTS COMMISSION



**PANEL ON THE ADDIS ABABA ROADMAP OF COOPERATION
BETWEEN THE UN SPECIAL PROCEDURES AND SPECIAL
MECHANISMS OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND
PEOPLES' RIGHTS:
SETTING THE VISION FOR THE NEXT DECADE**

*Remarks by Deputy Chief Commissioner Rakeb Messele,
Ethiopian Human Rights Commission*

73rd Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

**Banjul, The Gambia
Saturday, 22 October, 14h30-15h30**

Honourable Commissioner Rémy Ngoy Lumbu, *President of the ACHPR and Member of the Joint Working Group of the Roadmap*

Honourable Commissioners,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

All protocols duly observed,

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is very pleased to have this opportunity to participate in this Panel discussion to reflect the perspective of sister national human rights institutions (NHRIs) in Africa and the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI), on the Addis Ababa Roadmap. As it has already been said by many, 2022 is a commemorative year which marks the 35th anniversary since the establishment of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Commission) and the 10-year anniversary of the Addis Ababa Roadmap.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Article 45 (1) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (the African Charter) requires the African Commission to "encourage national and local institutions concerned with human and peoples' rights," and to "cooperate with other African and international institutions concerned with the promotion and protection of human and peoples' rights," thus giving a clear mandate to the African Commission to collaborate with key partners, including NHRIs, civil society organisations (CSOs), and United Nations (UN) mechanisms.

In this regard, the Addis Ababa Roadmap is an important framework, which encourages, strengthens, and guides cooperation between the Special Mechanisms of the African Commission (Special Mechanism) and the Special Procedures of the UN Human Rights

Council (Special Procedures). The Addis Ababa Roadmap indicates that Special Mechanisms and Special Procedures can encourage CSOs and NHRIs, as well as other human rights mechanisms and partners of both systems to promote enhanced cooperation between the two mechanisms.¹ It is therefore apparent that both systems consider NHRIs as partners towards the promotion and protection of human rights.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Article 26 of the African Charter further provides that State Parties have the duty to “allow the establishment and improvement of appropriate national institutions entrusted with the promotion and protection of the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Charter.”

Additionally, in its Resolution on Granting Affiliate Status to NHRIs, the African Commission recognised the important role of NHRIs and specialised human rights institutions.

At the international level, the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council regularly adopt resolutions reaffirming international support for NHRIs and encouraging the participation of NHRIs across UN mechanisms and processes.² The resolutions also recognise the important and unique role of NHRIs to monitor, advise, promote and protect human rights at the national level.³ UN treaty bodies and Special Procedures routinely recommend for the establishment and strengthening of NHRIs pursuant to the Principles Relating to the Status of National Institutions (Paris Principles).⁴

¹ https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/SP/SP_UNHRC_ACHPRRoad_Map.pdf P3

² <https://ganhri.org/un-resolutions-on-nhris/>.

³ <https://ganhri.org/un-resolutions-on-nhris/>.

⁴ <https://ganhri.org/un-resolutions-on-nhris/>.

In December 2021, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution which indicates that NHRIs are the “bridge” between international and national human rights protection systems.⁵ The long-standing contribution of NHRIs to the work of the UN bodies and mechanisms, including by sharing their independent human rights information and analysis, was recognised.⁶

In this month of October, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution⁷ which welcomed the valuable participation and contribution of NHRIs and their networks, including their contribution to national mechanisms for reporting and follow-up. The Resolution further stressed that NHRIs, their members, and staff should not face any form of reprisal or intimidation, including political pressure, physical intimidation, harassment or unjustifiable budgetary limitations, as a result of activities undertaken in accordance with their respective mandates.⁸

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Out of the 46 member African NHRIs of NANHRI, 30 are accredited by the Global Alliance for National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI), including EHRC, with an ‘A-Status’.

In practice, some NHRIs, including the EHRC, report to the African Commission on the human rights situation in their respective countries, and to the various Special Mechanisms. Similarly, NHRIs such as EHRC, report to the Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in their countries.

⁵ <https://ganhri.org/2021-nhri-resolution/>

⁶ <https://ganhri.org/2021-nhri-resolution/>

⁷ <https://ganhri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/HRC51-resolution-L.16-Rev.1-as-orally-revised.pdf>, p. 3.

⁸ As above, p. 5, para 4.

NHRIs provide valuable information on context specific thematic issues due to their unique understanding of the situation on the ground. For example, NHRIs are requested to provide information to Special Procedures on various matters, such as on the right of IDPs to participate in elections or on the protection of the human rights of older persons.

NHRIs are key stakeholders that Special Mechanisms and Special Procedures should meet during country visits, but also engage with prior to visits for information gathering, planning, and preparation.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

We note that there have been encouraging steps towards implementation of the Addis Ababa Roadmap over the last 10 years including the issuance of several joint statements, the organization of various joint conferences and seminars, and the holding of regular annual meetings of special procedures and special mechanisms.

Despite these successes, there are challenges and areas which require further attention, particularly the engagement and communication of Special Mechanisms and Special Procedures with NHRIs. For example, although the Addis Ababa Roadmap indicates that NHRIs are partners of both systems, it does not set out how it can effectively engage with NHRIs and how NHRIs can support in the implementation of the Roadmap. It is thus important to clearly stipulate how Special Procedures and Special Mechanisms can engage with NHRIs and what the role of NHRIs should be.

There is also some level of duplication between the two systems, which adds to the workload of NHRIs. Further harmonization of the two mechanisms is recommended to synergize the impact and engagement of NHRIs with both systems.

Awareness raising and targeted training should be provided to NHRIs to further enhance their engagement with the Mechanisms and in the implementation of the Addis Ababa Roadmap.

To set the vision for the next ten years, the Mechanisms can consider adopting annual action plans to lay down specific areas of intervention by the Mechanisms in a given year, and how NHRIs and CSOs could actively support in the implementation.

Distinguished Guests

I wish to conclude by stating that EHRC stands ready to work with the African Commission Special Mechanisms and the UN Special Procedures towards the effective realization of the Addis Ababa Roadmap.

Thank you for your attention.