



**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMB. BANKOLE ADEOYE AU COMMISSIONER
FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, PEACE AND SECURITY, AT THE HIGH-
LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

PALAIS DES NATIONS – GENEVA

27 FEBRUARY 2024

President of the Human Rights Council.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates

At the outset, I wish to congratulate the Kingdom of Morocco for assuming the Presidency of the Human Rights Council.

Excellency, presently, a multiplicity of challenges ranging from growing terrorism and violent extremism, unconstitutional changes of government, protracted conflicts, and impact of climate change on peace and security have become recurrent. These threats all negatively affect the full realization of the body of rights, including the right to development.

The Protocol of the AU Peace of Security Council eloquently asserts that ‘the observance of human rights and the rule of law, as well as the implementation of post-conflict recovery programs and sustainable development policies, are essential for the promotion of collective security, durable peace, and stability in Africa.

President of the Council, Distinguished Delegates

The promotion and protection of human rights remain topmost priority for the AU. The African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, 2 leading AU Institutions are true beacons of hope on the continent. The rich jurisprudence of the African Court especially, has been trailblazing and covers all the three generations of rights.

I would like to commend South Africa for being equivocal in its support for the Palestinian cause and for defending the human rights of the Palestinian people as demonstrated in the case it submitted to the International Court of Justice.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Through Agenda 2063, aspiration 3 and 4, the AU is taking actions toward the promotion of democratic governance and the protection

of human rights in Africa, as well as efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, promote, constitutionalism, citizens' participation, to ensure the rule of law. The AU also promotes social accountability and transparency by African governments through the implementation of the African Governance Architecture (AGA) and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

Distinguished Delegates

The year 2024 marks the 20th Anniversary of the establishment of the African Union Peace and Security Council, through which the promotion and protection of Human Rights remain relevant and at the heart of issues.

Also, 2024 has been declared by African Union Heads of State and Government as the year of education in Africa, with the theme – **To Educate an African Fit for the 21st Century**. Therefore, building the Africa we Want must be solidly anchored in inclusive, quality and lifelong education, which seamlessly translates to the Right to Education.

The African Union considers the right to development as one of its strategic priorities. The Constitutive Act of the African Union, adopted in 2000, stipulates that member states should undertake to ***"promote the political and socio-economic integration of***

the continent" to ensure sustainable development and improved living conditions for all Africans.

The significance of the right to development lies in the fact that it embodies a comprehensive approach to the realization of human dignity and security.

The AU is convinced that the right to development must be holistic and people centered. The principles of the right to development require that equal opportunity be given to all peoples for access to basic resources, education, health services, food and housing, employment and fair distribution of income.

As noted in the 2019 Report on the Right to Development in Africa, published by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in these terms, quoted that ***"the right to development is a fundamental right as it is the essential means of ensuring respect for other human rights and promoting a decent life for all."***

I appreciate the partnership between the AU Commission and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to foster the discourse on the right to development.

The African Union and the United Nations have developed a common understanding and established several frameworks and policies on the interlinkages between the right to development, and peace and security.

Specifically, the AU and UN signed the:

1. AU-UN Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security” and the “AU-UN Joint Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063
2. The African Union Compliance framework on Human Rights in Peace support operations, in conjunction with the UNOHCHR and EU
3. The AU-UN joint Framework on Human Rights and
4. The joint Project mainstreaming Human Rights in the Continental Early Warning.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

As I conclude, I would like to underscore to this august Council that 15 African countries will hold Presidential, Legislative and General elections in 2024. This is a fervent testament to exercise the right to vote, particularly for the women and youth in our political process.

Consequently, Unconstitutional Change of Governments serve as a gross denial of citizens of their right to vote and the AU remains absolutely steadfast in its condemnation of UCGs – demonstrated by its zero tolerance for undemocratic means to power.

The AU invites the President and members of this Council, to continue to work collaboratively towards a balanced approach to implement simultaneously the political and civil rights along with the economic, social, and cultural rights in response to the fundamental challenges faced in Africa.

For us in the AU, the right to development is instrumental to safeguarding and promoting the triple nexus of peace and security, effective governance, which incorporates human rights, and sustainable development.

I thank you.