



OUTCOME STATEMENT OF 7th NHRI-FORUM ON THE MARGINS OF THE 81ST ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS

1. The Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI) is a regional umbrella organisation that brings together 47 African National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs).
2. From 13-16 October, NANHRI in collaboration with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the National Human Rights Commission of the Gambia, organised the 7th edition of the NHRI-Forum on the margins of the 81st Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR).
3. The theme of the 7th edition of the NHRI Forum is "The Role of African National Human Rights Institutions in Strengthening Accountability, Promotion, and Protection of Human Rights in Africa." The Forum was held in two distinct parts.
4. Part I of the Forum was held from 13 to 14 October 2024. Part I of the Forum addressed critical thematic human rights issues relevant to African NHRIs. The issues discussed include the prevention of torture in Africa, the role of NHRIs in the promotion of socio-economic rights, the advancement of sexual and reproductive health rights, and the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups. Part I of the 7th NHRI Forum also witnessed the launch of the NANHRI report on the status of transgender and intersex persons in Africa.
5. Part II of the 7th NHRI Forum was held from 15 to 16 October 2024. The discussions focused on enhancing synergy between African Parliamentarians and NHRIs in implementing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 and African Union (AU) Agenda 2063, Goal 11. Part II of the 7th NHRI Forum was a two-day deliberation between African NHRIs and Representatives of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) on enhancing Synergy between African Parliamentarians and NHRIs in implementing SDG 16 and AU Agenda 2063, Goal 11.
6. The 7th NHRI Forum was attended by participants representing NHRIs, the ACHPR, the PAP, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the academia, and civil society.

Objective of the 7th NHRI Forum

7. The 7th NHRI Forum aims to strengthen collaboration between African Parliamentarians and NHRIs to enhance the implementation of SDG 16 and Agenda 2063 Goal 11, focusing on governance, justice, and human rights protection. Additionally, the Forum seeks to promote the protection of human rights by equipping NHRIs with the necessary tools and strategies to address challenges like socio-economic rights, torture prevention, and the protection of vulnerable groups.
8. The 7th NHRI Forum held fourteen thematic sessions:
 - State reporting process of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
 - Prevention of torture in Africa: the Kyiv-Copenhagen Declaration
 - The Role of National Human Rights Institutions in the Implementation of Socio-Economic Rights in National Development Plans
 - Comprehensive Sexuality Education and the Right to Education
 - Engagement with the UN Human Rights Mechanisms and Regional Mechanisms
 - Vagrancy laws and decriminalisation of petty offences in Africa
 - Launch of report on the status of transgender and intersex persons
 - Commemoration of resolution 275 and resolution 552 of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
 - Synergising Institutional Mandates for Greater Impact: Pan-African Parliament, National Human Rights Institutions, and the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions.
 - Setting the Scene: Symbiotic and Complementary Relationship between SDG 16 and Goal 11 of Agenda 2063
 - The Role of NHRIs in Promoting a Human Rights-Based Approach to the Implementation of SDG 16 & Goal 11 of AU Agenda 2063
 - The Role of the Pan-African Parliament in Promoting a Human Rights-Based Approach to the Implementation of SDG 16 & Goal 11 of AU Agenda 2063
 - Multi-Institutional Approaches and Strategic Partnerships for the Implementation of SDG 16 and Goal 11 of Agenda 2063
 - Developing an Action Plan for Collaborative Efforts between NANHRI, NHRIs, and PAP on Promoting, Monitoring, and Reporting on SDG 16 & Goal 11 of Agenda 2063

Recommendations

9. After four days of extensive and constructive deliberations, we, African NHRIs, gathered at the 7th NHRI Forum on the margins of the 81st Ordinary Session of the ACHPR, under the theme "The Role of African National Human Rights Institutions in Strengthening Accountability, Promotion, and Protection of Human Rights in Africa:

10. Recognising the fundamental role that NHRIs play in promoting and protecting human rights at national, regional, and international levels in line with the Paris Principles, and their unique position as state-mandated yet independent bodies that hold governments accountable for human rights violations;
11. Reaffirming the commitment of African states to uphold human rights as enshrined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and other relevant regional and international human rights instruments.
12. Acknowledging the important role of NHRIs in implementing SDG 16 and AU Agenda 2063, Goal 11 through promoting good governance, justice and respect for human rights
13. Concerned about ongoing challenges such as socio-economic inequalities, the persistence of harmful cultural practices, gender-based discrimination, the continued criminalisation of vulnerable groups through vagrancy laws, and the insufficient integration of human rights principles into national development plans across Africa
14. Emphasising the need for enhanced synergy and cooperation between African Parliamentarians and NHRIs in strengthening accountability mechanisms and aligning national laws and policies with international human rights obligations
15. Appreciating the different initiatives of the ACHPR and the PAP in advancing human rights protection across the continent.

16. Agree as follows:

17. African NHRIs, the PAP, and the ACHPR should collaborate to embed human rights in national development plans, focusing on inclusive, accountable governance and regularly reviewing progress.
18. Relevant stakeholders at the regional and national levels should support NHRIs in monitoring, reporting and strengthening data systems with local and international partners for evidence-based policymaking on SDG 16 and AU Agenda 2063, Goal 11.
19. Government institutions, developmental agencies, and stakeholders should partner with African NHRIs to create integrated data platforms. This would allow for better monitoring of human rights indicators for SDG 16 and AU Agenda 2063, Goal 11.
20. African states should establish and support National Prevention Mechanisms under the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OP-CAT).
21. African NHRIs should access the OPCAT Special Fund for relevant projects to strengthen their capacity to prevent torture in Africa.

22. African NHRIs should advocate for legal reforms, especially around marginalised groups, and promote alternative custodial sentences for minor offences.
23. African states should strengthen the capacity of NHRIs to protect vulnerable populations by providing sufficient funding and resources to enable them to carry out their mandate effectively and maintain their independence.
24. Civil society organisations and other stakeholders should strengthen the capacity of NHRIs to deliver their mandates through targeted training and advocacy.
25. The African Commission should continue to support NHRIs efforts to promote access to justice for marginalised groups, address discrimination and corruption, and ensure judicial transparency and accountability in Africa.
26. The African Commission should encourage African states to respect the independence of NHRIs as stated in the Paris Principles and desist from weakening NHRIs for holding the government accountable.