

## **Day 4**

### **41<sup>st</sup> Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Accra - Ghana**

Daily Session Briefing to the Headquarters of the Africa Union -19 May 2006

Day four commenced by the Chairperson welcoming guests and delegates. She informed delegates that item 4 of the agenda, that is, the "Human Rights Situation in Africa" would be considered. She also informed delegates that the afternoon session would be a private session on Zimbabwe. She also stated that the Commission would be hearing more statements from state delegates that were not present during the first few days, statements from intergovernmental organisations, statements from national human rights institutions and statements from NGOs.

The first state delegate was from The Gambia. She thanked the Commission for inviting The Gambia to the 41<sup>st</sup> Ordinary Session. She added that, The Gambian government is very interested in the promotion and strengthening of human and peoples' rights in The Gambia. She also stated that the government is in the process of domesticating CEDAW and other international treaties. The government is however in the process of domesticating the protocol on the rights of the child. She said that The Gambia had just concluded its presidential parliamentary elections and was given a clean bill of health by international observers.

Other state delegates to make statements came from Senegal, Mali and Lesotho.

This was followed by statements from national human rights institutions. The delegate from the Burkina Faso National Human Right Institution informed the Commission that the institution, like other national human rights institutions is confronted with the same material and financial difficulty. He however said that the past few years have been slightly better since the government of Burkina Faso had made available to the institution some funds to carry out it activities. He stated that because of this assistance a countrywide programme of disseminating the work of the Commission and the Burkina Faso National Human Rights Institutions had been made possible through seminars.

He further said that in the last few years, the Burkina Faso National Human Rights Institution has drawn the attention of the government to police brutality and the plight of women, especially the women accused of witchcraft. He was of the opinion that there is reason for hope despite the human rights problem confronted by the whole of Africa. The Commission was also informed that legislative elections were held recently, and international observers declared that the elections were free and fair, although there were some allegations of fraud in the conduct of the elections.

- Statements were also heard from the following NGOs: Association for Reconstruction and Development of the Mokoho People of Cameroon, Women's Aid Collective of Nigeria, Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe, African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Third World Network, Civil Liberties Organization, Movement for Peace in Kenya, Centre for Human Rights and Prison Condition, Kenyan Human Rights Commission and International Service for Human Rights.

Ethiopia and Tunisia chose to exercise their right to reply in relation to allegations of human rights abuses made against those states by some of the NOGs. In the afternoon, the Commission was seated for a private session for a hearing on the human rights situation in Zimbabwe.