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African Commission on Human & Peoples'
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Commission Africaine des Droits de l'Homme et des
Peuples

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Closing Speech by the Chair of the African Commission, Her Excellency Honourable Commissioner Justice Sanji Mmasenono Monageng Delivered at the Close of the 44th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

- **Honourable Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Michael Kaase Aondoaka;**
- **Honourable Members of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;**
- **Honourable Members of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights;**
- **My Lord Chief Justice of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**
- **Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps accredited to the Federal Republic of Nigeria;**
- **Distinguished Delegates of African Union Member States;**
- **Distinguished Representatives of International Organisations;**
- **Distinguished Representatives of National Human Rights Institutions;**
- **Distinguished Representatives of Non-governmental Organisations;**
- **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;**

All protocols respectfully observed

Honourable Minister of Justice, in my own name and on behalf of the Members and staff of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, I have the honour to convey to you, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar' Adua, His Government and the People of this Great country, our heartfelt gratitude for hosting the 44th Ordinary Session of the African Commission. Your hospitality has left us speechless. You have given us nothing but the very best.

Allow me also to salute the Organising Committee, in particular, Mrs M.U. Agbamuche, the Director at the Department of International and Comparative Law at the Federal Ministry of Justice, for her leadership in organizing this Session. That this meeting is

happening today in Abuja is a tribute to her selfless efforts and the dedication of her team. Thank you very much Mrs Agbamuche.

Ladies and Gentlemen: As we close this 44th Ordinary Session it is not just a celebration for another successful Session. As we all go home, we carry with us the sobering awareness that the work of upholding human dignity and democracy is never done – that far too many people in our continent are still denied their human rights. The foundations of human rights must be continually reinforced through national efforts, and through regional and international cooperation, and through strategic partnering and robust team work.

And that is where we come in. As a Commissioner, we should also be a voice of conscience, looking at the challenges in Africa today – whether it is the Great Lakes Region, Somalia, Darfur or the Kivu District in the DRC. These challenges call for a new commitment in protecting human beings against gross violations through highlighting and providing a forum for victims to raise their grievances and to see their issues addressed, heeding the voice of the helpless from different parts of the region; enabling NGOs to put alternative views and perspectives from governments, and developing norms and standards that we can all aspire to live up to. In this Session, as some of you might now know, we have adopted a number of resolutions on some of the burning issues in the continent, to express our concerns over some pressing human rights issues. But Resolutions are not enough. We must translate our collective commitments into practice, remembering that the promotion and protection of human rights is our collective responsibility.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to pay tribute to my fellow Commissioners, for the important contributions they have made during this two-week period as we knuckled down to work here in the beautiful city of Abuja. I have witnessed at close range your dedication, your attention to detail, and your personal sacrifices for the cause of human rights.

Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, let me also take this opportunity to express my heartfelt appreciation to the staff of the Commission. With only a handful of legal officers and a few support staff executing a multitude of tasks, it is sometimes a wonder how they somehow manage to get the work done. What can I really say? Except to say thank you. I also want to reserve some special thanks to our drivers, interpreters and translators. We all know that without them there will be no Session.

Before I leave this rostrum, I would like to reiterate my profound gratitude to the Government and People of Nigeria, for all the facilities put at the disposal of the Commission enabling a successful 44th Session. I also want to thank all the Delegates of State Parties, who continue, more and more, to demonstrate a willingness to contribute to the success and richness of our deliberations.

Thank you very much.