

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE HONOURABLE ATTORNEY-GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE, CHIEF MICHAEL KAASE AONDOAKAA, SAN AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE 44TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS HELD IN ABUJA ON MONDAY, 24TH NOVEMBER, 2008.

Courtesies

1. It is with mixed emotions that I speak to you today on the occasion of the Closing Ceremony of the 44th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights which has been holding here in Abuja since Monday, 10th November, 2008.
2. On the one hand, I am happy, and congratulate you on the successful conclusion of what has been another momentous Session in the life of this esteemed commission. But on the other hand, I must confess to a certain feeling of sadness that the stay of our foreign guests who have been in Nigeria for this programme has come to an end rather soon.
3. Madam Chairperson, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, I have been regularly briefed on the progress recorded, and the challenges surmounted, since you started your sittings. I therefore salute your determination and sense of purpose. I have equally been impressed by the enormous amount of hard work and commitment which you have exhibited over the last two weeks in the course of promoting and protecting human rights in Africa.
4. May I also use this opportunity to commend our able commissioners, the Secretariat of ACPHR and the Local Organizing Committee for their efforts in making this 44th Ordinary Session the success it has been for us all. Let me also convey to you, once more, the good wishes and fraternal regards of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, GCFR, the Government and good people of this country on your decision to hold the Commission's Ordinary Session in Nigeria.
5. As a nation, we are determined to ensure that this Session provides added impetus in strengthening the hands of this administration in its crusade to entrench respect for the rule of law as the cornerstone of our democratic governance. In this respect, let me assure you that

Nigeria will continue to respect its international human rights obligations and to support institutions such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights who hold the mandate to advance the cause of human rights on our continent.

6. Madam Chairperson, Honorable Commissioners, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, permit me at this point to reiterate my position that Africa can only develop and progress in the manner we desire, when the dignity of our people is respected in the formulation and implementation of Government policies. It is a message which I hope we can all take back to our respective countries so that together, we can build a truly viable and dignified continent.
7. The Communique of the 44th Session has undoubtedly captured the totality of the human rights situation in Africa today. There is no doubt that a lot needs to be done by Governments and non-Governmental stakeholders in resolving the various human rights problems on the continent. This Commission must however remain unwavering and determined in the pursuit of its mandate. I equally urge all State and non-State Parties across our Continent to treat the Commission's resolutions with all seriousness and a sense of urgency in the interest of our people, the majority of whom are poor and disadvantaged.
8. Madam Chairperson, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am convinced that through our collective efforts, the future of Africa will be bright and fulfilling. I thank you all for your individual and collective efforts towards the renewal of Africa in this century. May I now wish you journey mercies as you go back to your respective destinations. It is my hope that you are leaving with fond memories of Nigeria and we hope to welcome you to our midst in the very near future.
9. I thank you for your attention. May God bless you all and bless Africa.
10. Thank you very much.

**CHIEF MICHEAL KAASE AONDOAKAA, SAN HONOURABLE
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION AND MINISTER
OF JUSTICE**