STATEMENT BY

HON. DANIEL BATIDAM

(CHAIRPERSON)

AFRICAN UNION ADVISORY BOARD ON CORRUPTION

AT

THE JOINT OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 59TH ORDINARY SESSION

OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES’ RIGHTS

(ACHPR)

AND THE 28TH ORDINARY SESSION

OF THE AFRICAN COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE RIGHTS AND WELFARE OF THE CHILD

(ACERWC)

BANJUL, THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF GAMBIA

FRIDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2016
Honourable Justice Mama Fatima Sing hateh, Attorney General and Minister of Justice of the Islamic Republic of The Gambia -(Representing the Vice President);

H.E. Ambassador Aisha L. Abdullahi, Commissioner for Political Affairs, African Union Commission (Representing the AUC Chairperson);

Advocate Pansy Tlakula, Chairperson, African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights;

The President of the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights;

Heads of other Organs present;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

All Protocols observed!

Good Morning!!!!
I feel greatly honoured to address this august assembly on this occasion of the 59th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights. As many of you may be aware, this is the first time I am attending a Session of the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights in my capacity as the Chairperson of the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption (AUABC). I therefore look forward to the deliberations of this Session, particularly, from the perspective of the socio-political and economic implications of corruption on human and women’s rights in Africa.

**Excellencies, Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me first congratulate the African Commission and the African Court on Human and People’s Rights, together with the African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the Department of Political Affairs of the African Union Commission (AUC) for spearheading the Declaration of 2016 as the African Year of Human Rights. I also wish to commend the Government of the Republic of Rwanda for proposing the second leg of the theme of the year, namely - *with focus on the rights of women.*

This commendation will not be complete without a word of congratulation to my sister, Advocate Pansy Tlakula, the Chairperson, and the Honourable Members of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, for the admirable manner in which this 59th Ordinary Session has been organized. I am optimistic that the deliberations and the outcomes of this Session will go a long way to impact positively the African Human Rights System, particularly the civil and socio-economic rights of the African woman.
Distinguished Guests,

It is no longer news that women – including girls - constitute more than half of Africa’s population. Yet, despite this demographic advantage, African women are still relegated to the background, and remain a minority at the public policy and decision making levels across the continent. The girl-child, for instance, has a lower enrolment ratio as compared to the boy-child in majority of the African primary schools; and women constitute a minority in both the private and public work-force across the continent. It was in the context of the above, among other things, that the African Union decided to prioritize “women empowerment and development” and “women human rights” in the past few years.

The African Union theme for this year, in my own humble view, is a clarion call for all Africans and friends of our dearly beloved continent, to promote and support human rights in general, and the rights of women in particular. The same call was amplified not too long ago by the United Nations through the global principle of ‘Responsibility to Protect’, popularly known as R2P.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The above international calls and continental provisions relating to collective responsibility for human rights, explain why the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights was one of the key stakeholders that facilitated the process leading to the establishment of the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption, with the goal to tackle the gross violation of socio-economic rights in Africa. As we have always argued, the fight against corruption in Africa is also an effort towards deepening of socio-economic rights on the continent.
Excellences, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, once again, on behalf of the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption, I would like to express our profound gratitude to the People and the Government of the Islamic Republic of The Gambia as well as the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, for organizing this important Session. I humbly invite you all to contribute your ideas and suggestions on how best we can wholesomely promote and protect women’s rights in Africa. And, on this note of collective responsibility, I urge us all to re-dedicate ourselves to the promotion and protection of human rights, particularly the rights of women.

I thank you all for your attention.