General statement

by

Delegation of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

at

59th Ordinary session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights

26 October, 2016
Banjul, the Islamic Republic of the Gambia
Honorable Chairperson,
Honorable Members of the Commission,
Distinguished State Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank the Government and people of the Republic of the Gambia for the warm reception and hospitality accorded to my delegation.

My delegation also wish to express its gratitude to the Honorable Chairperson, the secretariat and staff of the Commission for their continued hard work in organizing the Commission’s sessions.

My delegation note with satisfaction; the joint commemoration of the African Union theme for 2016 “African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on Women Rights” by the Commission, the Court, and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

Women’s equal participation is of a paramount importance to advance human rights and development agendas. The Government of Ethiopia showed a persistent commitment to make sure that the rights and wellbeing of women are fully protected in the country. Women always had and are contributing to the independence and sovereign integrity of our nation and the wellbeing of each and every family.

We believe that Africa had a history that provides sufficient lesson on the need to make sure women equality. This lesson and the measures countries must take are well captured on Africa’s Women’s Protocol which my country signed in 2009.

Mrs. Chairperson

Ethiopia was able to continue its economic growth and is implementing the second Growth and Transformation Plan that is projected to improve the living standard of Ethiopians. The Government of Ethiopia firmly committed to promote and protect individuals and groups rights in the country. And that is why among others, the country is scoring an admirable result of decreasing poverty, ensuring an increasing enrollment of women in education, decreasing child mortality rate and thereby achieving the MDG, and increase the rate of access to clean water and sanitation and the coverage of health care.
In addition, there is a political framework in which all peoples in the country are represented at the federal, regional, and local levels. Ethiopia has a constitutional framework that guarantees equality of all the nations, nationalities, and peoples in Ethiopia. The increasing realization of economic and social rights is evidently improving the extent to which people exercise their rights. The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia is at a stage where its efforts to realize development and democracy is seeing the light of the day.

Mrs. Chairperson

These days we have observed violence perpetrated by groups that use the demand of the people as a pretext, claimed lives of innocent civilians, undermined the peace and security of the country and threatened the coexistence among people. In this regard, the negative impacts of social media cannot simply be ignored. In fact we have seen how misinformation could easily go viral via social media and mislead many people specially the youth who are not only our future but also agents of change and transformation.

Social media has certainly empowered populists and other extremists to exploit people’s genuine concern and spread their message of hate and bigotry without any inhibition. In many occasions this leads to serious human rights violation of individuals and peoples.

Thus, my delegation call upon the concerted effort of all members’ states, the commission, human rights defenders and institutions of the AU to collaborate one another to tackle the negative impact of social media on the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa.

My delegation also like to call for a dedicated study by the commission on the negative impacts of social media in the promotion and protections of human rights in Africa by giving specific emphasis to the values of Africa as enshrined in various African Human rights instruments.

With this, my delegation would like to request the African Commission to maintain a fair and objective view towards the human rights situation in African countries and recognize the challenges encountered by states due to the act of subversive and terrorist groups that in several instances masquerade as human rights defenders.

Finally, my delegation would like to commend the commission’s work and continue on its effort to further improve its working methods. Please also allow me to assure you that the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia remains committed to African human rights system and the promotion, protection, respect and fulfillment of human rights as enshrined
under the African Charter, the FDRE Constitution, and the various international and regional human rights instruments.

I thank you all for your attention