
56th ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES’ RIGHTS

21st April – 7th May 2015

Banjul, The Gambia
Introduction

1. This Report is presented on the occasion of the 56th Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (the Commission). It outlines my intersession activity as Commissioner, Chairperson of the Working Group on the Rights of Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities in Africa. The period covered is from the 55th Ordinary Session held in Luanda, Angola (28 April - 12 May 2014) to this present Session and includes my participation to the 17th Extra-Ordinary Session held from 19 - 28 February 2015 in Banjul, Gambia.

Second International Forum on the Rights of Older Persons on Mexico City:

2. From 3 to 6 June 2014, I participated in the Second International Forum on the Rights of Older Persons in Mexico City organized by the Government of Mexico through its Ministry of Social Development and the Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre (CELADE) which is the Population Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). The Forum benefited from the participation of experts from 27 countries and there were also representations from the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

3. I represented the African Commission and made a PowerPoint presentation on the Draft African Protocol on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa. I also gave an interview to Efekto TV, a Mexican government TV station and the Reforma Newspaper on the mandate of the African Commission and its importance in Africa as the premier human rights body established by the African Charter. It was a Forum which made news in Mexico City with the inaugural ceremony taking place before a gathering of some 5,000 persons. The high importance placed by Latin American and Caribbean governments and organisations of that region on promoting and implementing the rights of older persons was evident. As an illustration, some 40,000 caregivers have been given training in Mexico City on their role when they visit older persons at home in their family surrounding. The caregivers would, for example, insist on meeting the older persons and interview them so that they can ascertain that the older persons do receive all the care and help put at their disposal by the state.

4. Interestingly, although no legally binding documents exist imposing obligations on states to respect the rights of older persons in Latin America and Europe, yet constructive measures have been taken with the same object in sight, viz. that of ensuring the respect and observation of those rights through guidelines which have been adopted by states in those respective regions. Thus there is the San Jose Charter on the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean signed by 27 Latin
American and Caribbean States and the European Guidelines which effectively promote those rights through the elaboration and observance of good practices within diverse state mechanisms.

**Seventeenth Extra-Ordinary Session**

5. I participated in the 17th Extra-Ordinary Session of the Commission which took place from the 19 to 28 February 2015 in Banjul, Gambia.

6. Though I did not attend the Session up to its closure due to reasons beyond my control, I took part in the deliberations regarding the most critical outstanding issues before the Commission which had not met at that time for almost a year.

7. I also took the advantage of my presence to supervise the finalisation of preparations for the meeting of the Working Group on the Rights of Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities in Africa that I chair. The aim of the meeting scheduled for the 2 to 4 March 2015 was to consider the comments/inputs/proposals made by various stakeholders on the Draft Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa with a view of adopting the final Draft of the said Protocol before its presentation to the Commission.

**Meeting of the Working Group on the Rights of Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities in Africa, 2-4 March 2015**

8. As mentioned above, due to my sudden departure from the 17th Extra-Ordinary Session before its closure, I have not been able to attend the Meeting of the Working Group on the Rights of Older Persons and Persons with Disabilities in Africa scheduled for 2 to 4 March 2015.

9. I nevertheless ensured that the meeting produced the expected outcomes. Thus, I requested that my colleague Honourable Commissioner Mute kindly chairs the Meeting and he graciously accepted. I wish to express my appreciations to him for assuming the responsibility of the chairmanship of the Working Group during this Meeting. From reading my opening/welcoming remarks to leading the discussions of the Working Group during these two days, my esteemed colleague and the other members of the Working Group worked hard to reach the outcome sought, namely a final Draft Protocol to be tabled at the nearest Session of the Commission after the present one.

10. I would like also in my capacity of chairperson of the Working Group, to express appreciation for the contribution of various stakeholders and partners who have made comments/inputs and proposals for the improvement of the previous Draft of the Protocol.
11. My Honourable Colleagues Commissioners would recall that at the 17th Extra-Ordinary Session, the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission briefed the Commission on the likelihood of a promotion mission to the Republic of Seychelles.

12. Following an exchange of Note Verbales between The Secretariat of the Commission and the Republic of Seychelles, a final agreement was indeed reached on the calendar and terms of reference of this long-due mission.

13. According to the practice of the Commission, Honourable Members of the Commission were informed of the acceptance of the mission by the Republic of Seychelles and the dates of the mission were communicated together with a requirement that Honourable Commissioners willing to join the mission indicate their availability.

14. Unfortunately, due to tight schedules, none of the Honourable Commissioners was able to join the delegation and I undertook the mission alone with three staff from the Secretariat of the Commission to whom I am thankful.

15. The mission which took place from the 6 to 10 April 2015 was exhaustive but very fruitful. One of its outcomes is that the authorities of Seychelles are very keen to host one of the Sessions of the Commission and have committed themselves to resolve the issue of outstanding periodic reports before the Commission.

16. Also, the delegation that I led is satisfied of having promoted the work and mandate of the Commission to civil society in Seychelles and will not be surprised of any upcoming close engagement of Seychellois civil society with the Commission.

17. I must finally once again express my appreciations to the government of Seychelles and its peoples for the warm welcoming and openness in discussions regarding the human rights situation in the country.