

## **The Munyonyo Declaration:**

### **Effectiveness of the UN Special Procedures and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Special Mechanisms at the national level.**

**We**, the participants in the inter-mechanism dialogue, which was convened by AfricanDefenders and DefendDefenders, and brought together the Chairperson of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders and focal point for reprisals in Africa, the Chairperson of the UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearance and involuntary disappeared persons, representatives of the National Human Rights Institutions from DRC, Ethiopia, and Kenya, representative from the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions, members of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network, including national coalitions and focal points and human rights defenders from the East and Horn of Africa.

**Recalling** the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders of 1998, the Grand Bay (Mauritius) Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the OAU Ministerial Conference on Human Rights in 1999, the Kigali Declaration adopted by the African Union (AU) Ministerial Conference on Human Rights in Africa in 2003, the resolutions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Good Governance (ACDEG).

**Underscoring** the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action on the importance of preserving and strengthening the system of special procedures, rapporteurs, representatives, experts and working groups to enable them to carry out their mandates in all countries throughout the world;

**Further Recalling** the Accra Declaration and Plan of Action for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders between the National Human Rights Institutions in Africa and Human Rights Defenders adopted at the *first Consultative Meeting in Accra, Ghana, December 2022*.

**Reaffirming the African Union's Agenda 2063**, that fundamental rights and freedoms are essential for fully participating in decision-making and policy formation. These rights shape the future of African citizens and drive a universal culture of good governance, democratic values, gender equality, respect for human rights, justice, and the rule of law.

**Recognising** civil society's essential role in decision-making is imperative for realising equality and justice. Their active participation facilitates meaningful change and contributes to the development of resilient societies.

**Underscoring** the paramount importance of a culture of a safe and enabling environment that values and supports human rights defenders in ensuring justice, human dignity, democracy, and the rule of law.

**Reiterating** our commitment to the outcome of the 2012 Dialogue between Special Procedures Mandate-Holders of the UN Human Rights Council and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, which established regular and systematic cooperation under the Addis Ababa Road Map.

**Concerned** by the growing multifaceted trends of repression of HRDs and violent crackdowns on the rights to freedom of association and assembly, as well as regressive laws, policies, and institutions in some African states that constrain the realisation of human and peoples' rights as provided under the African Charter and other AU human rights instruments.

**Deeply concerned about** the low rate of cooperation and collaboration between the African States authorities and Special Procedures Mandate-Holders of the UN Human Rights Council and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Special mechanisms

**Noting** the limited cooperation and collaboration at the national level between Special Procedures Mandate-Holders of the UN Human Rights Council and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Special mechanisms and the importance of strengthening national institutions to establish a conducive legal, policy, and environment.

**Hereby, call on:**

***African States***

**Imperatively fulfil** their commitment by providing the necessary resources and complete cooperation to the Special Procedures Mandate-Holders of the UN Human Rights Council and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Special mechanisms, enabling them to implement their mandates.

**Provide** political support to reinforce the effectiveness of Special Procedures Mandate-Holders of the UN Human Rights Council and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Special mechanisms, as well as leadership to resourcing the mechanisms;

**Facilitate** and **schedule** country visits by the Special Procedures Mandate-Holders of the UN Human Rights Council and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Special mechanisms.

## **Special Procedures Mandate-Holders of the UN Human Rights Council and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Special Mechanisms**

**Provide** opinions by filing amicus curiae applications in strategic cases challenging repressive laws and practices. This will bring their expertise on such issues to the fore and validate their effort at exercising/implementing their mandate of promoting and protecting fundamental rights and freedoms for all.

**Develop** cooperation indicators with African States, aiming to rigorously measure the extent to which States meet their obligations to cooperate with Special Procedures regarding visit requests and communications.

**Evaluate** and **publish** the different best practices on African Cooperation with the Special Procedures Mandate-Holders of the UN Human Rights Council and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights nationally.

**Regularly assess** the impact of the Addis Ababa Road Map to strengthen international and regional Special Procedures mechanisms with the effective involvement of civil society in joint activities.

**Strengthen** their systems and increase their capacities to monitor and document violations and abuses against HRDs. This should include tracking trends and patterns to inform evidence-based actions. The findings from these monitoring activities need to be made public to ensure transparency.

**Improve** their complaint management and investigation systems to address violations against HRDs specifically. Regular interactions with HRDs are crucial to evaluating progress and enhancing these systems.

**Build strong partnerships** with the African Union Peace and the Peace and Security Council for an advisory role in solving African crises.

### **Development partners**

**Provide** means to support the effective implementation of the Addis Ababa Road Map, a guiding framework for strengthening cooperation between the UN special procedures and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Special Mechanism.

**Mobilise** resources for information technology solutions to monitor, measure, and showcase the on-the-ground impact of linkages between local human rights defenders and regional and international human rights mechanisms.

## Civil society and human rights defenders

**Provide** evidence-based information and communications to engage States in constructive dialogue regarding a structural problem and formulate achievable recommendations.

**Cross-pollinate** engagement with other international and regional mechanisms, such as U.N. human rights treaty bodies, the U.N. Universal Periodic Review, and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

**Monitor** the state's implementation of the special procedures' recommendations at the national level, using country reports as benchmarks for measuring progress towards implementation and documenting gaps.

**Build** strong relationships with mandate-holders through information sharing, participation in consultations, and promoting their work. Highlight their importance and integrate their findings into national advocacy efforts to address domestic human rights concerns, document violations, and urge action from government officials and decision-makers.