

AFRICAN COURT ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS

CELEBRATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2018

CLOSING STATEMENT OF HONOURABLE JUGE SYLVAIN ORÉ, PRESIDENT OF THE AFRICAN COURT

- Honourable Vice-President
- Honourable Judges, Dear Colleagues
- Mr. Registrar and members of the Registry
- Madam the Executive Secretary of the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The theme we have just debated on the occasion of the celebration of the International Women's Day is "The Impact of Corruption on Women and the Girl - Child Welfare". The choice of this theme for this year's celebration is obviously inspired by the range of values and principles which the African Union has defined for itself since its establishment. However, in more recent times, the theme of the impact of corruption on women and the girl-child has been particularly echoed in the theme adopted by the African Union for the year 2018 which is "Winning the Fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path towards Africa's Transformation". From the Constitutive Act of the African Union to Agenda 2063, issues of good governance, respect for human rights and observance of the rule of law have remained a constant in the human development discourse in Africa.

In our Continent, discussions on the above issues have gone beyond the cause and effect relation between corruption and under-development. Studies undertaken under the auspices of the African Union itself have concluded that serious violations of economic and social rights in Africa are attributable to systemic corruption. I would like in this regard to make mention of Mbeki Report on capital flight in Africa. Given that this situation has unequivocally taken root, Africa will always be at pains in taking the most effective measures to find a remedy.

In my view, therefore, to celebrate the International Women's Day at the African Court is a most welcome opportunity to reiterate the role that justice is expected to play in finding solutions to the challenges facing an Africa that is winning the war of development based on a more institutionalised battle against corruption. I am thinking of the question that has been widely debated regarding social justice by which positive action in favour of women and the girl-child could, for example, re-establish the unacceptable disparities between the genders. May I, however, particularly emphasize the need to combat corruption through the strengthening of the human rights culture and the rule of law in Africa. On the one hand, it is the failure on the part of the States to respect their human rights obligations that

encourages corruption when citizens are faced with the lack of medicines in hospitals and books in schools. On the other hand, it is the absence of a culture of accountability and sanctions which undermines the rule of law and enhances systemic corruption.

In the circumstance, I am sincerely gratified at the rich exchanges we have just had on the theme of this year. The discussions have been fruitful and opportune, more so as they were introduced and conducted by women, among which are our honourable colleagues Judges and distinguished guests. May I take this opportunity to once again salute the female Judges of this Court and, in particular, reiterate our sincere congratulation to Honourable Judge Solomy Bossa on her brilliant election to the post of Judge of the International Criminal Court.

Going by our discussions of this day, it is my sincere hope that this celebration will not be limited to speeches but will be translated into tangible outcomes in the exercise of the respective mandates of our institutions, including the policy organs of the African Union.

Buoyed by this hope, may I express my sincere gratitude to everyone, men and women alike, for having participated in this activity and declare closed the ceremony marking the celebration of the International Women's Day for 2018 by the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Thank you.