

**DINNER FOR THE JUDGES AND STAFF OF THE AFRICAN COURT**

**8<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2019**

Dear Registrar,

Dear staff members,

I wish you all a warm welcome to this dinner, which, as you are aware, should have happened a few weeks back but for constraints related to my work schedule. I am glad to almost everyone is here and was able to make it to what has now become our family gathering at the beginning of every year.

I would like to take this opportunity to restate some of my words of thanks, as well as hope for what we were able to accomplish last year; and what we can do better this year. As far as last year is concerned, I was particularly sensitive to the professionalism, perseverance and team spirit that characterized the commitment of each and every one of you throughout 2018. What we achieved as a team is a faithful reflection of this commitment and I take this opportunity to congratulate you wholeheartedly.

As I mentioned in my New Year's message to the entire African human rights community, our major achievement in 2018 was judicial productivity, which almost doubled over the past two years. Our main mission is to render justice to Africans and African victims of violation of their rights. We can be proud to have rendered justice to a greater extent in 2018.

As we have already begun to do in 2019, I would like to encourage you to stay focused on the same vision: to strengthen the culture of human rights justice in Africa. In an African Union that, as you know, aspires to reform, I would like that as an African Court, we should stand out as a model for internal reform and an efficiency icon for the rest of the institutions and citizens of the continent.

I encourage each of you, from the Mail Runner to the highest ranking Officer, to carry out his or her professional duties with the utmost commitment and passion in a way that can make 2019 a year of personal excellence and contribute to the success of the Court as an institution. I can assure you of the unfettered support of the Judges of the Court, and in particular of the Bureau in that endeavour.

I wish you all good health, peace and prosperity for the New Year 2019.

Sylvain Oré

President