Preamble


Recalling Decision 115 (XVI) of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government at its Sixteenth Ordinary Session held in Monrovia, Liberia, from 17 to 20 July 1979 on the preparation of “a preliminary draft on an African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, providing inter alia for the establishment of bodies to promote and protect human and peoples’ rights”;

Considering the Charter of the Organisation of African Unity, which stipulates that “freedom, equality, justice and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples”;

Reaffirming the pledge they solemnly made in Article 2 of the said Charter to eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa, to coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa and to promote international cooperation having due regard to the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

Taking into consideration the virtues of their historical tradition and the values of African civilization which should inspire and characterize their reflection on the concept of human and peoples’ rights;

Recognizing on the one hand, that fundamental human rights stem from the attitudes of human beings, which justifies their international protection and on the

other hand that the reality and respect of peoples’ rights should necessarily guarantee human rights;

**Considering** that the enjoyment of rights and freedoms also implies the performance of duties on the part of everyone;

**Convinced** that it is henceforth essential to pay particular attention to the right to development and that civil and political rights cannot be dissociated from economic, social and cultural rights in their conception as well as universality and that the satisfaction of economic, social and cultural rights is a guarantee for the enjoyment of civil and political rights;

**Conscious** of their duty to achieve the total liberation of Africa, the peoples of which are still struggling for their dignity and genuine independence, and undertaking to eliminate colonialism, neo-colonialism, apartheid, zionism and to dismantle aggressive foreign military bases and all forms of discrimination, language, religion or political opinions;

**Reaffirming** their adherence to the principles of human and peoples’ rights and freedoms contained in the declarations, conventions and other instruments adopted by the Organisation of African Unity, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the United Nations;

**Firmly convinced** of their duty to promote and protect human and peoples’ rights and freedoms and taking into account the importance traditionally attached to these rights and freedoms in Africa;

**Have agreed** as follows:

**Part 1 – Rights and Duties**

**Chapter 1 – Human and Peoples’ Rights**

**Article 1**

The Member States of the Organisation of African Unity, parties to the present Charter shall recognise the rights, duties and freedoms enshrined in the Charter and shall undertake to adopt legislative or other measures to give effect to them.

**Article 2**

Every individual shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognised and guaranteed in the present Charter without distinction of any kind such as race, ethnic group, colour, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, national and social origin, fortune, birth or any status.