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| AFRICAN UNION |  | UNION AFRICAINE |
| الاتحاد الأفريقي African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights | | UNIÃO AFRICANA Commission Africaine des Droits de l'Homme & des Peuples |
| No. 31 Bijilo Annex Lay-out, Kombo North District, Western Region, P. O. Box 673, Banjul, The Gambia Tel: (220) 441 05 05 /441 05 06, Fax: (220) 441 05 04 E-mail: achpr@achpr.org ; Web www.achpr.org | | |

**STATEMENT FROM THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE RIGHTS OF
WOMEN IN AFRICA ON THE OCCASION OF "PAN AFRICAN
WOMEN'S DAY: 31 JULY 2010"**

This year I wish to mark the Day of African Women by adding the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) to the gallant continental giants who have ensured that Africa not only cares about its women and mothers, but that this important anniversary is celebrated to bring recognition and attention to the development of women in Africa.

The theme of the African Union Campaign on Accelerated Reduction on Maternal Mortality (CARMMA): "*Africa Cares, No woman should die while giving birth!*" is derived from the key priority areas in the African Union Policy Framework for the Promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Africa and the 2006 Maputo Plan of Action". As we celebrate the Pan African Women's Day, we should be proud and pay homage to the fact that Africa is focused on this question.

CARMMA was launched on 7th March 2009. Its objectives include amongst others, to expedite the use of universally accessible quality health services including those related to sexual and reproductive health which are critical for the reduction of maternal mortality.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the theme of the just ended 15th Summit of Heads of States and Governments, which took place from the 21 – 28th July, 2010 in Kampala, the Republic of Uganda, was "*Maternal, Infant and Child Health and Development in Africa.*" This theme showed the commitments by African States to the lives and wellbeing of the women and children in Africa.

It is also encouraging to note positive strides which have been made by African Union Member States during this first year of the Decade of the African Women. In this regard, I wish to congratulate States that have initiated the ratification process, in particular the Republic of Uganda for depositing its instrument of ratification of the Protocol to the African Charter

on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa at the opening of the 17th Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union, at Munyonyo, Uganda, on 22 July 2010 bringing the number of ratifications to 28.

It is my hope and desire that as we celebrate this day, the continental environment for women improves through such concerted efforts as the CARMMA. The CARMMA will make meaningful impact on the lives of ordinary women and children when such efforts are increased and diligently implemented by all governments and civil society in our various members States.

By developing women, Africa's colossus will rise even further. The ACHPR will continue to ensure the realization of this development and empowerment through its various Special Mechanisms in general and its mechanism on the rights of women in particular.

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Banjul, 31 July 2010