



SPEECHES OF THE AMBASSADOR

Speech by His Excellency Ambassador Jean-Michel on Human Rights Day



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Head of Delegation of the European Union to Sudan

On the occasion of the Human Rights Day 2018

Excellences,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Firstly, let me sincerely thank everyone for joining us here today to celebrate the International Human Rights Day.

It has become a tradition that the European Union Delegation to the Sudan celebrates the International Human Rights Day on the Anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations.

Our Celebration of the Human Rights Day this year is very special and very unique since this year marks the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the EU worldwide is launching a campaign to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Universal Declaration is the cornerstone of international human rights law. Its first article captures its very essence: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights".

For the first time in history, the Declaration recognized the inherent dignity and equality of all human beings. It stresses their rights and freedom without discrimination of any sort. Human rights have no borders. They are universal, indivisible and interdependent. The declaration recognized that the respect for human rights is the only possible foundation for a free, just and peaceful world.

Although 70 years have passed from the adoption of the Declaration in 1948, the Declaration is more relevant than ever, as no country in the world can yet be said to have attained all of its goals.

The promotion and protection of human rights are at the heart of multilateralism.

Based on its strong commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights, democracy and to the rule of law worldwide, the EU stands up and continues without relent to support human rights and basic freedoms, to speak out against human rights violations and to use political and financial actions to support them. Human rights are also at the very heart of EU relations with other countries and regions and are guiding all the EU development cooperation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me invite you to celebrate this day as a day of commitment to promote and protect the human rights of the Sudanese People. Political as well as social, cultural and economic rights Including the right to food and protection from hunger , the right to health, right to education, the right to work and

employment, the right to water and sanitation, the right to housing, and the right of every Sudanese citizen to enjoy his, own culture. But above all is the right of every Sudanese citizen to decent standard of living and personal peace and security.

In celebrating this day, we are also reminded that all the Sudanese citizens are entitled to the civil and political, rights including the right of physical and mental integrity, The right to life, and the right to safety; protection from ill treatment and torture . It is also the right of every Sudanese citizen to be protected from discrimination on all grounds such as race, gender, national origin, colour, age, political affiliation, ethnicity, religion, and disability; As well as the individual rights such as privacy and the freedoms of thought, speech, religion, press, assembly, and movement

We are proud to particularly devote the celebration of the Human Rights Day this year to the Human Rights of Sudanese Women and to 'Equality and Justice for Women '

The EU strongly believes that Sudanese Women are great women and they are the granddaughters of the powerful Candace (Kandake) the queens of Nubia great and powerful women in the Human History.

We know that Sudanese women make an important contribution to the economic and social life of their country. We also know also that they are more likely than men to share and invest their income in ways that benefit their families,

communities and countries. Also Sudanese women display remarkable resilience and fortitude by adopting new roles and taking on new responsibilities when confronted to the ravages of war and conflict in the country.

The Sudanese Constitution 2005 is one of the most advanced constitutions regarding women. Article 27(3) provides that "All rights and freedoms enshrined in international human rights treaties, covenants and instruments ratified by the Republic of the Sudan shall be an integral part of this Bill"

The Government of Sudan has also adopted another National Policy for the Empowerment of Women in March 2007.

Despite the excellent constitutional provisions and the existence of a national policy, more efforts are needed to promote women's rights in the country.

Here I would like to highlight some important points:

1. The National Policy should regularly be updated to ensure its effective implementation and the involvement of all the stakeholders in particular the civil society. Here I would like to stress that without women's empowerment and gender equality, Sudan will not be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

2. Promoting Human Rights of women means that all policies, strategies and programmes should be designed with the objective of progressively improving the rights and status of women. Gender Equality should also be mainstreamed in all the sectors in particular decisive sectors such as Health, education, justice, employment etc. Here special attention should be paid to women in the rural and far remote areas of Sudan.

3. Legal reform process should be continued to ensure that all laws and legislations that are in contradiction with the constitution should be abolished and to guarantee maximum protection for the rights of women and girls in the country. Here I would like to welcome the revision of the Criminal Act 1991 that was done in February 2015 under which offence of rape had been defined separately from the offence of adultery, and adding crime of sexual harassment to the crime of gross indecency.

4. The EU has taken note of the commitment to ratify the CEDAW Convention and the optional protocol to the African charter on women's right.

5. The EU stands ready to assist, if needed, the Sudanese authorities in order to facilitate the full ratification of these two conventions.

6. National efforts to eradicate poverty should use gender lens to ensure that well are well integrated and economically empowered

7. Harmful traditional practices affecting the rights of women and girls are unfortunately still very prevalent in the country. 2018 has witnessed particular debate and attention to the issue of child marriage. Therefore special should be paid to combat harmful practices. Here I would like to welcome the Bill of Female Genital Mutilation 2018 which was developed to be tabled to the National Assembly for adoption

8. Education of women, particularly those living in rural areas, should be singled out as a key to breaking the cycle of poverty in the county.

9. We also would like to call for more systematic and coordinated efforts within the country to protect disadvantaged women, particularly migrant workers who face irregular immigration status and limited access to justice. Here I would like to welcome the country adoption of law to combat human trafficking on 3 March 2014, and the accession of the country to the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children done on 2 December 2014. In particular I welcome the country recent ratification of the Protocol against the smuggling of migrants by Land Air and Sea (which was ratified on the 9th of October 2018)

10. Violence against women and girls is an injustice of epic proportions and a stain on all of our societies. This is one of the most widespread human rights abuses which cross all generations, nationalities and communities. Efforts to eradicate Violence against women in the country in particular violence against women in conflicts. I am particularly glad that two leaders of the struggle against sexual violence in war have won this year's the Nobel peace prize.

11. Here I would like to mention that the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) are embarking on a new, global, multi-year initiative focused on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls - the Spotlight Initiative.

12. Women civil society organizations are the powerful and colourful part of the Sudanese Civil Society. Although all types of civil society organizations should be given the space to effectively participate in the development of the country; however women organization should in particular be encourage and supported.

13. We look for 2020 to see efforts in place ensure greater numbers of women holding positions in politics and Government, thus allowing them to participate more in decision-making processes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Support for human rights defenders is an integral part of the European Union's external policy on human rights. Human rights defenders represent natural and indispensable allies in the promotion of human rights and democratisation in their respective countries, in particular given the current worrying trend of the shrinking space for civil society in many countries.

Sudanese Women Human Rights Defenders are wonderful women courageous, dedicated, strong, and committed and we are privileged to have them today with us. We have also seen how the roles of women human rights defenders have become highly visible in 2018.

Sudanese Women Human rights defenders should be honoured, protected and appreciated for the courageous and outstanding work they are doing.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In celebrating the theme of equality and justice for women, I would like to mention that the EU is adopting more and more innovative approaches and is building effective partnerships. In order to strengthen the human rights of women, the EU will not leave any one behind and will work with all partners including, government, civil society. To this end the EU will effectively use its political and financial instruments to support the Human rights of women, in particular the EIDHR programme and the EU gender Action plan 2016-2020

In doing its work the EU will build on the example that the Sudanese women are already setting - in bringing positive change to their lives and their communities.

Through our development cooperation, and other ongoing programme in Sudan, we want to reiterate our commitment to ensuring that all women and girls can truly shine!

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