

**Addis Ababa Declaration of
The Continental Commemorative Meeting on
The Implementation and Supervision of the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention**

African Union Member States and other delegates assembled on 20 June 2019 in final plenary of a continental commemorative meeting convened by the African Union to mark the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, exactly 45 years since its entry into force, Africa Refugee Day, World Refugee Day and the African Union theme of 2019: ‘The Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Towards Durable Solutions to Forced Displacement in Africa.,

RECOGNIZE the Organization of African Unity’s vision in adopting a regional refugee instrument and the pioneering nature of many of its provisions, including the article I(2) refugee definition and article II(4)-(5) on responsibility sharing;

FURTHER RECOGNIZE the generosity and solidarity with which many AU Member States host refugees;

NOTE, HOWEVER, that the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention is not fully implemented across states party, particularly in relation to refugee status determination and refugee rights, especially those of girls and women;

CALL ON the AU Commission and UNHCR to together publish interpretive guidance regarding the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention’s article I(2) refugee definition, to clarify in particular its implementation in individual refugee status determination and its meaning in relation to new causes of forced displacement, such as climate change and disasters;

FURTHER CALL ON the AU Commission and UNHCR to provide states party to the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention with training in refugee status determination;

NOTE that the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention must be interpreted and applied in light of subsequent developments in international human rights and refugee law, including but not limited to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and its Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Global Compact on Refugees, including its Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework;

FURTHER NOTE that all refugees are entitled to their rights as human beings, including but not limited to the freedoms of movement, expression, association and assembly, and the rights to work, to an education and to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health;

CALL ON states party to the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention to fully implement it in domestic law, including in a manner that gives effect to human rights;

RECOGNIZE the roles of the state, civil society and international organizations, including but not limited to the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the AU Commission, the AU Commission on International Law,

the African Peer Review Mechanism and UNHCR in supporting states to fully implement the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention;

CALL ON states that are not party to the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention to ratify or accede to it during 2019, the AU's Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
20 June 2019