

## [ACHPR 65 | The importance of civic space in achieving the 2030 and 2063 agendas](#)

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On 23 October, a panel took place at the 65th session of the African Commission to reflect on the role of civil society organisations in the implementation of the United Nations 2030 agenda for sustainable development, and the African Union 2063 agenda.

At the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the African Union, heads of States adopted in May 2013 the [50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Solemn Declaration](#) which set the path towards agenda 2063. [The agenda](#) reflects the African Union's will to achieve an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens by, among other things, ending all wars, civil conflicts, gender-based violence, violent conflicts and preventing genocide.

A few years later, on 25 September 2015 the UN adopted its sustainable developments goals (SDGs), which seek to realise the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by 2030. This [agenda](#) highlights, among other things, the responsibilities of all States, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, to respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status.

During the event, the panellists focused on one fundamental question: What are the linkages between the UN sustainable development goals and the African Union 2063 agenda, and how can a human rights-based approach contribute to implementing them?

The Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) emphasised the important role that human rights can play in guiding the implantation of these agendas, as key human rights principles are targeted by these goals. Also, human rights actors are essentials in this process to ensure obligations and responsibilities are reflected in development strategies inspired by both agendas. Last but not least, the DIHR presented its newly published report "[African National Human Rights Institutions and Sustainable Development: An Overview of Good Practice](#)". It aims at providing guidance to national human rights institutions and other actors working with a human rights-based approach in regards to the SDGs and the African 2063 agenda.

The representant of Malawi outlined that most of the objectives and the spirit behind those two key documents are usually reflected in African constitutions. These constitutions don't only refer to individuals but to people as a whole, including civil society organisations, when mentioning those who should benefit from the rights and protection they offer. No one should be left behind.

Finally, in his presentation, UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Association and Assembly, Clément Voule emphasised the role of the right to peaceful assembly and association in contributing to sustainable development. He specifically identified five areas in which the exercise of the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association is crucial to achieve both agendas:

- The exercise of these rights contributes to creating an environment conducive to the participation of civil society, an essential condition for achieving the objectives included in both agendas;
- The rights to peaceful assembly and association contributes to increased participation and inclusion which is an essential tool towards development;
- The exercise of these rights is essential to promote transparency and accountability;
- A vibrant civil society, which freely exercises its right of peaceful assembly and association, plays a key role

in a strong partnership and spirit of solidarity in the implementation of these agendas;

- The exercise of these rights supports the organisation and protection of labour rights, which are essential in the fight against poverty.

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