



## **PRESS STATEMENT**

### **13TH NANHRI BIENNIAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN NOVEMBER 2021 TO CULMINATE IN THE HARARE DECLARATION**

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The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) in collaboration with the Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI), will host the 13<sup>th</sup> NANHRI Biennial Conference virtually in Zimbabwe from 3-5 November 2021.

This follows the 12<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference which was hosted by the National Council for Human Rights of Egypt in Cairo from 5-6 November 2019 on the role of NHRIs in the Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). It culminated in the adoption of the Cairo Declaration and Action Plan on GCM. Among other issues, the Declaration stated that the 13<sup>th</sup> NANHRI Biennial Conference would be held in Harare, Zimbabwe, hosted by the ZHRC - the incoming chairperson. At the Cairo Conference, Dr. Elasto Hilarius Mugwadi, the Chairperson of the ZHRC, was elected by the General Assembly as the Vice Chairperson of NANHRI.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference which is the first ever to be held virtually owing to the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, will deliberate on the contribution of the National Human Rights Institutions to economic and development recovery beyond Covid-19.

More than 100 participants drawn from the membership of NANHRI, regional and international State and inter-State institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations are expected to attend the conference.

This year's conference will be organized under the theme,

***Impact of Covid-19 on Human Rights in Africa: The role of National Human Rights Institutions in offering a human rights-based approach to better and sustainable recovery towards development beyond Covid-19.***

The theme was informed by the fact that for close to two years since the first case of Covid-19 was reported in Wuhan, China, measures to control and contain the pandemic have led to violations of economic, social, political, civil and cultural rights at national level across Africa. This has largely been attributed to the lack of consideration of NHRIs as essential services, hence the limited monitoring of the enforcement of the measures.

States and other actors are developing strategies for recovery from the negative impact of the pandemic as the vaccination drive takes shape across the continent. For the NHRIs to effectively contribute to the recovery under the national strategies and plans, ZHRC and NANHRI are organising this event to develop and adopt a common reference framework: *The Harare Declaration and Action Plan of the Network of African NHRIs.*

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The Declaration and Action Plan will be the result of discussions, presentations led by panellists and speakers, and testimonies from select groups. The Harare Declaration and Action Plan will guide the NHRIs in working with other State and non-State actors in supporting a human rights-based approach to better and sustainable recovery beyond the pandemic.

As the preparations for the 13<sup>th</sup> NANHRI Biennial Conference spearheaded by both ZHRC and the NANHRI Secretariat gather momentum, all stakeholders must look forward to one of the most historic conferences of the COVID-19 era which will culminate in the Harare Declaration.

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