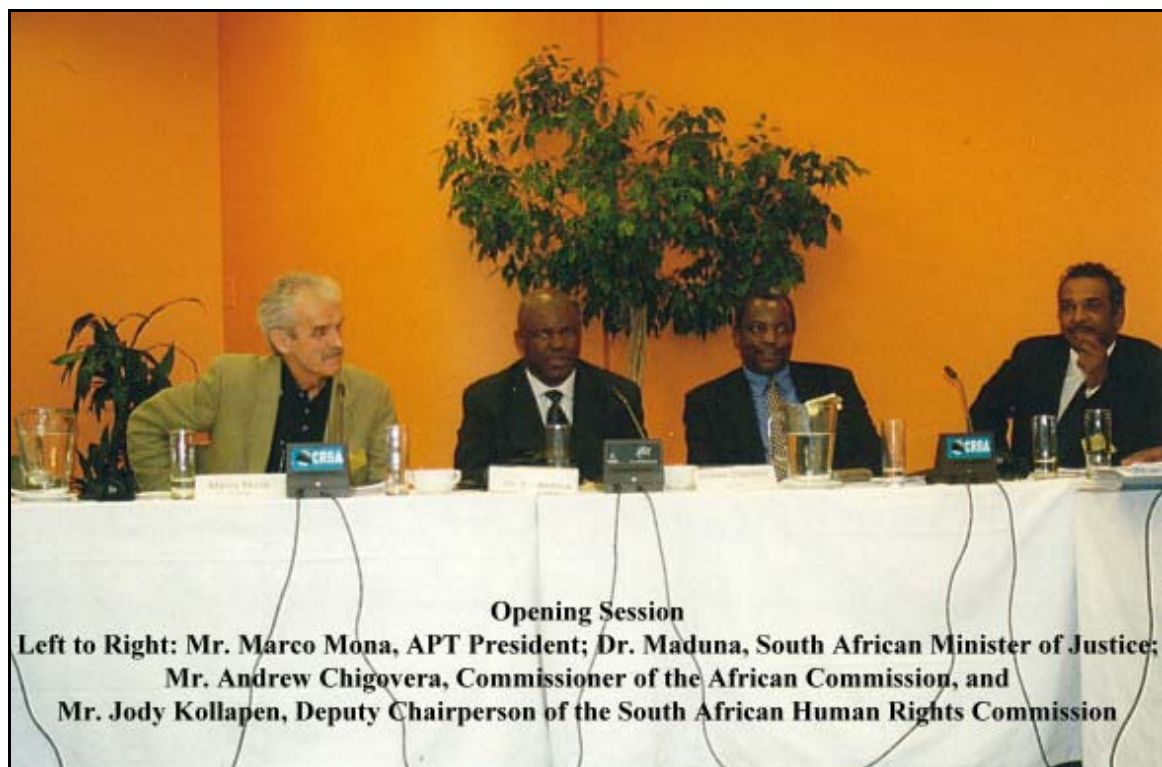


Historic adoption of the 'Robben Island Guidelines'

On Robben Island, on 14 February 2002, a momentous step forward in the prevention of torture in Africa was taken with the adoption of 'Guidelines and Measures for the Prohibition and Prevention of Torture, Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment and Punishment in Africa' - **The Robben Island Guidelines**.

The Robben Island Guidelines were adopted by the participants of a workshop organised by the APT in collaboration with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), which has the role of promoting and protecting Human Rights within Africa. The aim of the workshop was to draft a document containing concrete measures for the prohibition and prevention of torture and other forms of ill-treatment which could be implemented by African States and promoted by a variety of actors throughout Africa.

The workshop took place between 12 and 14 February 2002 in Cape Town and on Robben Island. Overall, [26 participants](#) attended coming from a variety of backgrounds including representatives from; the African Commission, African based NGOs, international NGOs, African police services, African sub-regional institutions, African and International experts.



The opening session of the workshop was honoured by the South African Minister of Justice, Dr. Maduna, who congratulated the APT and the ACHPR for the joint initiative and emphasised, as a survivor of discrimination under the apartheid regime, the importance of improving the human rights culture within Africa, in particular the right for everyone to be free from torture and

other forms of ill-treatment or punishment. The Guest of Honour at the closing ceremony was Judge Desai representative of Justice John Hlope, Judge President of the Cape Provincial Division of the High Court. He commended APT and the African Commission for spearheading this initiative.

The 'Robben Island Guidelines' are designed to assist African States to meet their international and regional obligations for the effective enforcement and implementation of the prohibition and prevention of torture, which is enshrined in many international and regional human rights instruments such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the United Nations Convention Against Torture. Therefore the workshop participants adopted a '[Robben Island Statement](#)' urging the ACHPR to endorse the Robben Island Guidelines during the 31st Session in May 2002, thereby demonstrating the commitment of all African States to take concrete steps to prevent torture and ill-treatment.

The APT will be actively monitoring the possible endorsement of the Robben Island Guidelines and the effective implementation of its provisions. The APT hopes that the Robben Island Guidelines will mark a positive turning point in the fight against torture within Africa, promoting a culture of tolerance and respect for human dignity.

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