



## DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

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## CONSULTATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN AFRICAN UNION POLICY ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN AFRICA



**Abuja, Nigeria, 19 December, 2016:**

The Department of Political Affairs (DPA) of the African Union Commission (AUC) commenced a three-day consultative meeting in Abuja, Nigeria on the development of an African Union Policy for the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in Africa. The consultation being the first of its kind organized by the

AUC brings together experts from the AU Organs and Institutions, National Human Rights Institutions, Civil Society Organizations, Academia, human rights experts and Journalists working in the field of business and human rights in Africa. The consultation is part of the activities of Project 2016 to celebrate 2016 as the year of Human Rights in Africa with particular focus on the Rights of Women.

The overarching objective of the consultation is to facilitate the development of an AU Policy on the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles (UNGPs) on Business and Human Rights in Africa but also to explore ways and means on how the policy could contribute to the implementation of Agenda 2063 and its Action Plan.

In her opening remarks, H.E Dr. Aisha Laraba Abdullahi, Commissioner for Political Affairs Department of the AUC, expressed gratitude to the distinguished participants for availing themselves to be part of the consultation. She stated that *“The governance landscape in Africa is changing rapidly and a quick scan of the advancement in our governance structures and processes over the years shows a clear advancement in the quality of good governance, democracy and human rights in Africa.”*

The Commissioner for Political Affairs further added that economically, many more African countries are climbing the economic ladder towards achieving a developed status. The UN Guiding Principles therefore presents an opportunity for Africa to have a unique

Policy on Business and Human Rights that will define the responsibilities of various actors; the AU, RECs, Member States, business operators, National Human Rights Institutions, the Civil Society and the media among others. The Principles will also enable the AUC to strengthen its work on issue of business and human rights by integrating them in its relevant policies and strategies.

H.E Dr. Aisha Abdullahi in her conclusion underlined that AU Member States have a greater responsibility in the promotion and protection of human rights in Africa; but reminded participants that the promotion and protection of human rights on the continent is a collective responsibility which is crucial for building the culture of and respect for human rights and dignity.

Ambassador Salah S. Hammad, Human Rights Expert of the Department of Political Affairs of the AUC in his statement underscored the importance of developing an all-inclusive AU Policy on Business and Human Rights in Africa. He thereafter stressed on the need to include all stakeholders, particularly the youth and women in policy development as well as decision making processes in order to realize aspiration six (6) of Agenda 2063 which talks of an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential of African people, especially its women and youth.

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