

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia P. O. Box 3243 Telephone: +251 11 551 7700 / +251 11 518 25 58/ Ext 2558

Website: www.au.int

DIRECTORATE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Joint Press Release



THE AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP

LE PARTENARIAT AFRIQUE-UE

Validation Workshop of the African Union Policy on Business and Human Rights.



Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 21st March, 2017: The two-day validation workshop on the Draft AU Policy Framework on Human Rights and Business co-organized by the African Union Commission's Department of Political Affairs and the European Union (EU) kicked off today Tuesday 21st March, 2017 at the African Union.

The validation workshop brought together close to 50 participants composed of representatives from the AU Member States, EU, RECs, National Human Rights Institutions, Businesses, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Academia, Media and Human Rights Experts. Plenary sessions were held in working groups done in English and French to facilitate greater participation and experience sharing.

In his welcome statement, Mr. Mbari Calixte Aristide, Acting Head of Democracy, Governance, Human Rights and Elections Division of the AU Department of Political Affairs welcomed the distinguished participants on behalf of the new commissioner of the Department of Political Affairs, H.E Samate Cessouma Minata. He equally extended words of appreciation to the Director of the department, Dr. Matlosa Khabele, the EU delegation and other stakeholders for honouring the invitation to the validation workshop.

He underlined that the AU is committed to the promotion of human rights in the continent through its Developmental roadmap, Agenda 2063 which envisages “*an Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law*”. This further explained why the African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government at Kigali summit, declared 2017 – 2026 as the “Human and Peoples’ Rights Decade in Africa”. He also stated that Africa has one of the fastest growing economies in the world and as such has the potential to attract even greater economic investments on the continent. There is therefore a need for a business and human rights policy that can address some of the problems that come with fast growing economies particularly the disregard for human rights by businesses. He concluded by reiterating AU’s continuous engagement and commitment with the EU and other stakeholders to the realisation of this new initiative on incorporating human rights in business.

Mr. Luca Zampetti, Head of Political Section, EU Delegation to the AU, in his keynote remarks, restated EU’s willingness to promote Business and Human Rights in Africa by working closely with the AU and other stakeholders. He also highlighted that one of core principles at the EU is human rights and business which remains their area of interest. Mr. Luca welcomed the AU’s intention to launch its own policy on Business and Human Rights which according to him is a necessary tool in the promotion of sustainable development in Africa. The policy will be a stepping stone in the role played by states and businesses to the attainment of Africa’s aspirations rooted its Agenda 2063.

He further underlined that ownership is vital in the promotion of business and human rights in Africa and the world at large and recommended that the exercise be in that direction. In his conclusion, Mr. Luca Zampetti wished the participants a fruitful and productive deliberation but also commended the efforts of the two consultants who drafted the AU Policy on Business and Human Rights.

The outcome of the working sessions during the workshop will serve as input to finalize the AU Policy Framework on Business and Human Rights which will be presented to the AU Specialized Technical Committee (STC) on Justice and Legal Affairs to discuss the final draft by the 8th of May, 2017 as well as its adoption by the policy organs of the AU.

SM/

For Details Please Contact:

Amb. Salah Siddig Hammad | Department of Political Affairs | African Union Commission | Email: HammadS@africa-union.org | Tel: +251 (0) 91 305 7711

Mr. Ikubaje John G. | Political Officer (Human Rights) | Department of Political Affairs | African Union Commission | E-mail: GbodiJ@africa-union.org | Tel: +251 (0) 92 320 8041

KAUP-LAPONIN Karin | Political Counsellor | Delegation of the European Union to the African Union | Cell +251 (0) 9 3777.0878 | Email: karin.kaup@eeas.europa.eu

Media Contact:

Mrs. Esther Azaa Tankou | Head of Division of Information | Directorate of Information and Communication, African Union Commission (AUC) / Tel: +251(0) 911361185 / E-mail: yamboue@africa-union.org

For further information:

Directorate of Information and Communication | African Union Commission | E-mail: DIC@african-union.org | Website: www.au.int | Addis Ababa | Ethiopia

Follow us

Face book: <https://www.facebook.com/AfricanUnionCommission>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/AfricanUnion>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/AUCCommission>

Learn more at: <http://www.au.int>