

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

Press Release No: \_\_\_\_/2023

Date: 8 September, 2023

Venue: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

### **The 2<sup>nd</sup> Africa Business and Human Rights Forum called for Inclusive Growth that respects Human Rights**



The second African Business and Human Rights Forum has concluded with a call for action from all stakeholders to promote robust, inclusive growth that respects human rights and increases prosperity for people across Africa.

The African Business and Human Rights Forum is an annual event convening stakeholders across Africa to facilitate a robust and multi-stakeholder dialogue based on the UNGPs that will foster joint action to prevent, mitigate and remediate business-related human rights and environmental abuses. Under the theme 'For Africa, from Africa', this year's forum held from 5 to 7 September 2023, at the AUC Headquarters, focusing on the unique challenges in Africa for promoting greater business respect for human rights, as well as perspectives and opportunities to advance the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), the global standard and authoritative framework for corporate accountability to human rights that was unanimously endorsed by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2011.

The forum was convened by the African Union and co-organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, UN Human Rights (OHCHR), and the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights (UNWG) with support from the governments of Sweden and Japan. It brought together more than 450 people from more than 45 African countries, with representation from government, civil society, business, Indigenous Peoples groups, trade unions, international and regional organizations and national human rights institutions for dialogue and exchange on how to strengthen responsible business and corporate accountability in the region.

At the opening of the Forum, on behalf of AU PAPS Commissioner Bankole Adeoye, Mme Patience Chiradza, Director of the Governance and Conflict Prevention Directorate of AU PAPS, expressed the need to adopt the AU policy on business and human rights to promote coherence at the national and regional levels. "This forum is the Testament to our collective resolve, shared vision and unbreakable commitment to fostering responsible business conduct in the continent bustling with potential," she stressed.

Sessions at the forum covered a wide range of topics, including opportunities to integrate human rights and environmental considerations into the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, ways to address human rights and environmental risks in extractive industries operating in conflict-affected areas, and actions needed to improve access to justice and effective remedy for those whose rights have been violated. The forum also featured side sessions organized by collaborating partners from across Africa, including Action Aid, the International Organization for Migration, Oxfam South Africa, NANHRI, African Coalition for Corporate Accountability, Raoul Wallenberg Institute, Danish Institute for Human Rights, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, DanChurchAid, International Organisation of Employers, East Africa Law Society, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and the International Labour Organization.

“Listening carefully to the panels and discussions that we’ve had, I’m confident that the Africa that we want – where human rights is a core part of the rules of the game – is indeed possible, and we all have key roles to play,” said Damilola Olawuyi, Chair of the UNWG.

The African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC) also launched a new study examining the impact of businesses on the rights and welfare of children in Africa.

At the closing session, representatives of different stakeholder groups expressed commitments moving forward, indicating a strong willingness and need for greater collaboration and coordination among different countries, regions, and sectors to continue the push for greater corporate accountability and to accelerate momentum in business and human rights across Africa.

More information about the Forum can be found at [www.bhrafricaforum.org](http://www.bhrafricaforum.org).

**For further information, please contact:**

1. **Ms. Limi Mohammed** | Web Administrator | Governance and Conflict prevention Directorate of the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Department, African Union Commission | E-mail: [shashlm@africa-union.org](mailto:shashlm@africa-union.org)
2. **Ms. Amy Sellmyer** | Communications Analyst | Business and Human Rights, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) | [amy.sellmyer@undp.org](mailto:amy.sellmyer@undp.org)
3. **Mr. Gamal Eldin Ahmed A. Karrar** | Senior Communication Officer, Information and Communication Directorate | African Union Commission | Tel: +251 115 517 700 | E-mail: [gamalk@africa-union.org](mailto:gamalk@africa-union.org) | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

**Information and Communication Directorate**, African Union Commission | E-mail: [DIC@africa-union.org](mailto:DIC@africa-union.org)  
**Web:** [www.au.int](http://www.au.int) | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia | **Follow Us:** [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#)