



**Mandate of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations
and other business enterprises**

**Save-the-Date:
African Regional Forum on Business and Human Rights
16-18 September 2014, Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)**

The United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights is convening the African Regional Forum on Business and Human Rights, due to be held from 16 to 18 September 2014 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Forum is co-hosted by the African Union Commission, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Global Compact are collaborating to support the organisation of the event.

The Forum provides a multi-stakeholder regional platform for dialogue on the implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which are the United Nations-endorsed standard to define the respective duties and responsibilities of States and business enterprises for preventing and addressing adverse human rights impacts arising from business activities. The Working Group on Business and Human Rights has a mandate to promote the effective and comprehensive implementation of the Guiding Principles world-wide and to identify, exchange and promote good practices and lessons learned. The event is the second regional forum convened by the Working Group.¹

Participants will include representatives from global, regional and domestic businesses, industry associations, Governments, international and regional bodies, trade unions, civil society, national human rights institutions and other stakeholders. The main goals are to promote multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation on business and human rights and on the implementation of the Guiding Principles, provide capacity-building opportunities for practitioners and civil society, identify material issues and challenges on business and human rights in the region, identify emerging innovative practices designed to manage corporate impacts, and reinforce synergies between global efforts and initiatives at the regional and local levels.

Key issues that will be expected to be addressed at the African Regional Forum include challenges and opportunities for implementing the Guiding Principles related to:

- National action plans,
- Access to effective remedies (both judicial and non-judicial)
- Investment in natural resources (extractive industries and land),
- The important role of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and the informal sector,
- Ways of promoting the prevention and mitigation of business-related human rights risks,
- Capacity building
- Sharing experiences and lessons from other regions.

The organizers will engage relevant stakeholders in the process of preparing the Forum and reach out broadly across the African region to ensure wide and balanced representation.

Participation will be subject to space limitations (250 approximately). There is no charge for participating in the event, but the cost of travel and participation is the responsibility of participants. For inquiries, please contact regionalforumbhr@ohchr.org with copy to wg-business@ohchr.org. Further details about the event and the programme will be announced as soon as possible on the below website: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Business/Pages/AfricaRegionalForum.aspx>. Stakeholders are invited to submit background documentation that may be posted on the forum website, including information about relevant initiatives and developments.

¹ The [first regional forum was held for Latin America and the Caribbean](#) in August 2013.