



19 September 2014 - “Amid rapid economic growth and new investments in land and natural resources, there is an increasing awareness of why human rights must be brought into business strategies and operations,” [said](#) Michael K. Addo, chair of the UN Working Group on [Business and Human Rights](#)

The first African Forum on Business and Human Rights, which gathered in Addis Ababa 200 representatives of governments, business, civil society, and national human rights institutions, concluded with a strong call for action to make business a force for improving human rights in Africa.

Abdalla Hamdok, Deputy Executive Secretary of the [UN Economic Commission](#) for Africa noted, “Not only is this the only way to ensure the interest and welfare of the people of Africa, it is also good business and critical for the sustainability of investments.”

At the meeting the African Union and the United Nations agreed to join forces to support responsible business practices in line with fundamental human rights standards. “All too often human rights concerns have fallen by the wayside in the race to attract foreign investment. We have to fundamentally break with this logic and ensure that business and respect for human rights go hand-in-hand,” said [AU Commissioner](#) for Political Affairs, Aisha Abdullahi.

Participants from across Africa called for responsible business practices that respect human rights, provide adequate safeguards to protect against business-related rights abuses, and ensure victims can seek redress. At the Regional Forum, the AU Commission and the UN Working Group committed to work jointly to advance the business and human rights agenda.

The African Forum will feed into the next global UN Forum on Business and Human Rights – the world’s largest dialogue on business and human rights – to be held in Geneva from 1 to 3 December 2014.