



Centre for Applied
Legal Studies

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For immediate release

CALS ATTENDS UN FORUM ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CAL S) furthers its commitment to regional cooperation and advocacy on business and human rights by attending the African Regional Forum on Business and Human Rights in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia between 16 and 18 September 2014. CAL S will also attend the second meeting of the African Coalition for Corporate Accountability between 18 and 20 September 2014.

Notwithstanding African leaders' apparent draw to corporate accountability for human rights violations, civil society's voice has been excluded from dialogues and processes for business, trade and investments, despite the impact these have on the human rights of Africans. For instance, the views of African civil society were excluded from both the African Union's 26th Session and the recent US-Africa Leaders' Summit. It is for this reason that CAL S welcomes the decision of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights' to host a regional forum on business and human rights in Africa.

Attention has been placed on the development of national actions plans (NAPs) that operationalise the UN's Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. As one of the organisations selected by the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights to develop a template for Africa and Asia, CAL S aims to use the platform of the African Regional Forum to confirm that there is no "one size fits all" approach to devising NAPs. Consideration should, in the development of NAPS, be given to gender discrimination and the gendered impact of corporations' activities. Consideration should also be given to the sensitivities that arise in conflict counties and developing economies, and the Global South / Global North dichotomy.

CALS Director, Professor Bonita Meyersfeld, has been selected to sit on a panel discussing the development of NAPs. Meyersfeld will speak to research conducted by Thandiwe Matthews on the efficacy of NAPs on the continent. In so doing, CAL S hopes to affect the discourse that exists on business and human rights by viewing the same through the lens of the African perspective and supporting African solutions.

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