



Statement by Mr. Michael K. Addo

**Chairperson, UN Working Group on the issue of human rights
and transnational corporations and other business enterprises**

Third Annual UN Forum on Business and Human Rights

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Your Excellency, the President of the Human Rights Council,
Distinguished Chairperson, Dr Mo Ibrahim,
High Commissioner,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Working Group on Business and Human Rights I extend a warm welcome to you at this, the Third Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights. We are delighted to see both familiar faces and many new participants including government ministers, business leaders, affected communities, representatives of international and regional organisations, national human rights institutions and civil society writ large. With almost two thousand registered participants, this Forum has exceeded last year's participation and continues to be the largest gathering of its kind anywhere.

What makes the United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights special is the diversity of its participants. . Each voice brings a different perspective to the challenge of identifying effective ways of preventing and redressing adverse corporate human rights impacts. And so I urge you to tell it as it is, ask the searching questions, seek answers to your enquiries and keep an open mind.

The Forum is part of a wider business and human rights movement devoted to setting the building blocks of an international regime fit for purpose. We already have a global standard in the form of the UNGPs that helps to clarify the respective roles of States and businesses on the issue of addressing adverse corporate impacts on people, and with a clear identification of the rights of actual and potential victims. We now need to devise formulae to fill the legal gaps that prevent accountability both at home and abroad. We need to operationalize the Guiding Principles further so that they are meaningful for different sectors.> We need to adjust national regulation in some settings and we need to set up multi-stakeholder initiatives that can push implementation on the ground. In short, we, as a community and as a movement need to scale up the implementation of the UNGPs. [Ladies and gentlemen], We have talked the talk and now we need to find ways of walking the walk.

We acknowledge that the ambitions of our movement are extremely noble but at the same time we pursue our goals of change in a world of acute and real challenges including climate change, global economic slow down, security and health crises. Amid the constantly changing landscape of global governance challenges, we need to find the most effective ways of ensuring alignment, adherence and accountability.

The thematic tracks of the Forum programme will allow participants to delve into strategic substantive areas such as: the role of national action plans; ways to enhance accountability and access to effective remedy for victims; as well as the integration of the Guiding Principles in global governance structures.

Furthermore, we aim to identify good practice in the discussions of several sessions and this is in addition to the separate tracks on good practice models for meaningful stakeholder engagement as well as supporting human rights defenders. A number of parallel sessions will address a range of key trends and issues related to specific rights, groups, sectors or operational contexts.

As our Forum programme demonstrates, our agenda is ambitious. But the main tenets of our movement are clear and simple. States must protect the rights of all its peoples; business must not infringe on human rights; and where an abuse does occur adequate remedy must be provided.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, let us put our heads together to find the best ways of delivering on these undertakings. On behalf of my colleagues on the Working Group we look forward to the lessons from your deliberations and I thank you for your kind attention.

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