



*B-Tech Africa Kick-Off Event – Developing the framework for improving human rights by the tech sector in Africa*

**w/c 27th March 2023**

**Organizers:** Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)

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**Event Description:** The B-Tech Africa kick-off event is designed to be a forum for effective stakeholder engagement on the policies, regulations, and measures required to transform the digital human rights landscape. The focus is bringing together critical digital economy stakeholders - including tech companies, regulators and civil society - aligned to implement the United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGPs) on BHR. Notably, the goal is to assess the unique challenges of African economies and outline critical stems that will allow for a deeper understanding of prevalent issues related to existing regulatory and policy constraints and improve company practice. Overall, the aim is to ensure that over time there is a clear path to achieving and implementing the UNGPs across businesses within various sectors and especially within Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), which form the majority of tech businesses on the continent.

**Key Objectives**

- Highlight the importance of implementing the UNGPs for tech companies in the region.
- Highlight the prevalent human rights risks that challenge regional business development in the tech sector.
- Discuss the unique challenges with implementing and enforcing the UNGPs in the region, including those relating to tech companies (such as high-cost implications, regulatory convergence issues, lobbying issues, delayed legislative patterns, etc.).
- Discuss the approaches that can be utilised to ensure adequate uptake of the UNGPs across all sectors
- Discuss accountability measures that can ensure the long-term sustainability of the UNGPs as an effective tool for safeguarding human rights and reducing risks for business within the technology sector.
- Consultation with investors on the UNGP investor tool and direct engagement with technology companies.
- Capacity building for key stakeholders on the understanding and adoption of the UNGPs

**Key Questions**

- What are the unique challenges affecting the implementation and enforcement of the UNGPs in the tech sector in Africa?

- What capacity constraints can potentially hinder the state's ability to safeguard against human rights abuse by technology companies?
- What are the best approaches to ensure tech sector SMEs' effective adoption of the UNGPs in the region?
- What accountability measures can ensure the long-term sustainability of the UNGPs as an effective tool for safeguarding human rights and reducing risks for business within the technology sector.
- What role can organisations such as ECOWAS, AU, EAC play in the UNGPs goal to minimise human rights harm by technology companies in the region?

### **Programme of events**

The broad range of stakeholders will require that issues for discussion are split across clearly defined segments or thematic areas to ensure sufficient expertise to discuss the pertinent issues.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Segment/Thematic Activities</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>No. of Guests</b>
28 March	VC Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation on development of tool for modelling VC HRDD</li> </ul>	VCs/Investors	15-20
29 March	Diplomatic & Legislative Community Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings with key representatives on regulatory landscape</li> </ul>	Diplomatic Community, Regulators, Parliamentarians	N/A
30 March	Multistakeholder Launch Event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to B-Tech Africa project and the UNGPs</li> </ul> Break-Out Sessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investor session (launch of investor tool)</li> <li>• UNGPs compass session</li> <li>• UN Women CSW session</li> </ul>	Tech Companies, Investors, CSOs, NHRIs, Diplomatic Community, Academics, Regulators, Parliamentarians	50-70
30 March	Launch of African Community of Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dinner with CoP members hosted by a local investor partner.</li> </ul>	Tech Companies	10-15