



## CONCEPT NOTE

### **2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Business and Human Rights in Africa**

Theme: CSR as a Viable Option for Sustainable National Development

Proposed Venue: **University of Lagos, Nigeria**

Proposed Date: 21<sup>st</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2016

Organiser: International Network for Corporate Social Responsibility (INCSR)

### **Background**

Latest GDP data show that the economy of the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region continued to under-perform in the first quarter of this year following the slowdown in the final quarter of last year. Most of the countries in the region have been hit by multiple shocks—low commodity prices, tighter financial conditions and shortages of food due to adverse weather conditions in the southern parts of the continent.

Looking at individual countries, ***the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Nigeria contracted 13.70 percent in the first quarter of 2016 over the previous quarter. GDP Growth Rate in Nigeria averaged 0.30 percent from 2013 until 2016, reaching an all-time high of 9.19 percent in the third quarter of 2015 and a record low of -13.70 percent in the first quarter of 2016***". The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts that Nigeria's economy will even slump further. The situation is similar with South Africa. The economy swung to contraction in Q1 due to decrease in the mining and quarrying sector, which suffered from severe droughts. Q1's GDP figure is raising concerns that the economy might be headed towards a recession this year as the outlook for the manufacturing and mining sectors remains low amid weak demand from China and low commodity prices. Elsewhere in the region, the slump in commodity prices has put severe strains on Angola's economy and has also forced the government to seek for aid from the International Monetary Fund. Thus, it has become imperative for the SSA countries, in particular the commodity-exporting countries, to diversify their economies in order to reinvigorate growth.

Both Government and Business play an important role in the sustainability of our society, impact families, communities and the environment. The consequences of globalisation and the economic crisis, have repositioned economic activities towards more inclusive, competitive, sustainable, resource and energy efficient and environment friendly management. African businesses should adequately address the key objectives of competitive and sustainable management, integrating economic, social, and environmental elements and investigating the intrinsic link between the three key components. There is an urgent need to formulate a sustainability framework that addresses the interactions and dependencies as well as tradeoffs in various focus areas. The challenge that these adjustments present, calls for the alignment of corporate social responsibility (CSR) with strategic national growth plan to create a truly sustainable approach to national development within African countries.

This second **International Conference on Business and Human Rights in Africa** has therefore been designed to study and deal with the unprecedented impacts of Sustainability on national growth, societal welfare and the environment. It will facilitate the elaboration of various frameworks with the goal of developing evolutionary sustainability practices.

It will be a leading platform for business leaders, sustainability experts and human rights advocates to discuss the relationship between Sustainability and Economic Development; a place to identify solutions that integrate sustainability principles into good governance and core business, a networking opportunity to build relationships with key partners, a means to gain reputational benefits from being involved. It is also an opportunity to assess the progress made in Africa since the last conference and to look forward to new possibilities for a more sustainable future in the continent.

The conference will therefore place strong emphasis on national laws, regulatory powers, company policies and business strategies that will provide a viable option for sustainable development. The two-day Sustainability Workshop will showcase the innovative approaches being implemented by leading organisations and feature thought leaders and research on a diverse range of issues facing governments and businesses in Africa. We want to bring together representatives from various parts of the globe to share their experiences, challenges and ideas on the matter.

### Conference Focus

The conference will have three focus areas:

1. Economic Issues
2. Social Issues including the UN three – pillar framework
3. The Environmental Issues

### Conference Themes

The Conference will address a range of critically important issues and themes relating to the intersection between Government, business, and sustainable development. Plenary speakers include some of the leading thinkers in these areas, and the conference will feature numerous papers, and workshop presentations. We are inviting abstracts for paper presentations and workshops addressing the broad conference themes in these particular areas:

SN	Broad theme	Sub-themes
1	Good Governance and Economic Sustainability / National Growth	This will cover a wide range of issues relating to good governance and transparency (public and private sectors), corruption, economic regulations - active labour market policies and labour market regulations; ■ counter-cyclical fiscal policies, including public investment and public works; ■ industrial policies; and ■ robust social provisions delivered and sustained through publicly regulated and locally

		appropriate revenue-harnessing systems.
2	Universal Social Norms and Values as a tool for Economic Development	This includes Universal social protection norms such as respect for human rights and dignity – UN GP; ■ meanings of identity and citizenship; ■ commitment to social justice and equality; ■ tolerance; and respect for diversity and religion among others.
3	Environmental Sustainability and Economic Growth including physical and biological factors	<b>Environmental</b> management system (EMS) ■ Business related Environmental Human rights issues, ■ Environmental sustainability factors associated with next-generation biofuels; ■ Extractive industries, occupational health and safety, etc.
4	Beyond Compliance: Business sustainability and Human Rights	Consumer rights, compliance with labour/employment laws, human rights in the value chain.

### Conference structure

The conference will be organised around plenary sessions, group discussions, practical workshops, poster sessions, pilot demonstrations and Open Space sessions. We offer platforms for Panel Sponsorships and Exhibitions.

**For further enquiries and sponsorship, please contact:** The Local Organising Team, email: [admin@incsr.org](mailto:admin@incsr.org), [incsr@gmail.com](mailto:incsr@gmail.com), [admin@debernardsltd.com](mailto:admin@debernardsltd.com), +234 (0) 81 086 10473, 81 718 61482, Web: [www.incsr.org](http://www.incsr.org)