

Poverty, Inequality, Lack of Inclusion Key Contributors to Rights Abuses

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- Lack of respect for life is being compounded by the commercialization and erosion of traditional practices.
- Countries need investment to grow, but must ensure that growth is inclusive to avoid social tensions.
- The World Economic Forum on Africa takes place in Abuja, Nigeria, on 7-9 May 2014. Learn more about the meeting: <http://wef.ch/af14>

Abuja, Nigeria, 8 May 2014 – Africa is facing significant security threats and experiencing high levels of violence and human rights abuses, said panellists at the World Economic Forum on Africa, taking place for the first time in Nigeria. In particular, women, children and civilians are being used as instruments of war and shocking testimonies are coming out of conflict zones.

A lack of respect for human life was identified as a fundamental problem that is leading to increased violence. This

is being compounded by the commercialization and erosion of traditional practices that once stabilized

communities, but are now contributing to human rights abuses, particularly of women.

According to Netsanet BelayAfrica Director, Research and Advocacy, Amnesty International, South Africa,

“ Freedom of expression is an African right. We need to push our African leaders to speak out about transgressions committed by their fellow leaders. ”

Poverty, inequality and lack of inclusion were also identified as key contributors to increasing conflict and radicalization as they create pockets of fragility that can be easily exploited. Christine Musisi, Regional Director, UN Women East and Southern Africa, Kenya, concurred: “ Rapid growth that is not inclusive is irresponsible growth and it is not sustainable. ”

Samura Matthew Wilson Kamara, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone, said

governments, particularly in post-conflict states, have a difficult time trying to balance the needs of investors in the resources sector and the communities that are affected by the exploitation of those resources.

Countries need investment to grow, but it is crucial to ensure that the growth is inclusive to avoid building up social tensions that present potential areas of future conflict. “ You need growth with a human face, ” said Kamara.

The 24th World Economic Forum on Africa will be held in Abuja, Nigeria, on 7-9 May 2014. The theme of the meeting is Forging Inclusive Growth, Creating Jobs.

The Co-Chairs of the meeting are Dominic Barton, Managing Director, McKinsey & Company, United

Kingdom; Jean-François van Boxmeer, Chairman of the Executive Board and Chief Executive Officer,

Heineken, Netherlands; Aliko Dangote, President and Chief Executive Officer, Dangote Group, Nigeria;

Bineta Diop, President, Femmes Africa Solidarité, Switzerland; Jabu A. Mabuza, Chairman, Telkom Group,

South Africa; Sunil Bharti Mittal, Chairman, Bharti Enterprises, India; John Rice, Vice-Chairman, GE, Hong Kong

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