

## **Why companies should have human rights policies**

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As a National Human Rights Institution, the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) sees its role as one of prompting both the state and non-state actors to best practices that have practical value of enhancing the protection of human rights.

Through our policy work, usually aimed at encouraging government to ensure that policies are human rights compliant, we have seen how a policy statement expressing commitment to move in a particular direction has the tremendous effect of galvanizing thought, focus and action in the desired policy direction.

Similarly, a policy statement on human rights by a business entity would not only signal a desire to move in the 'rights' direction, but over time it is bound to act as a call to action. Conversations within the company are bound ask, "what does this policy really demand of us?" It is this conscience-gnawing value that turns policy statements into operational strategies. To start the journey of taking greater responsibility for human rights therefore, a policy statement on human rights is an extremely good place to start.

The KNCHR would like to see more businesses especially those publicly listed in the Nairobi Stock Exchange, state corporations and big market leaders in various sectors, acknowledge their corporate responsibility to respect human rights by having a policy on human rights.

As an African based National Human Rights Institution our own legitimacy rests on taking rights protection initiatives that make a real difference in the lives of millions of Africans that live in dire poverty. Given that businesses impact on human rights immensely, getting them to use the opportunities they have to take greater responsibility for human rights is an objective we shall continue to pursue.