



## 2017 UN Forum: Focus, aims and context

The UN Forum on Business and Human Rights is the global platform for yearly stock-taking and lesson-sharing on efforts to move the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) from paper to practice. As the world's largest gathering on the topic of business and human rights, it provides a unique space for dialogue between governments, business, civil society, affected individuals and communities and international organizations on major human rights issues in the global economy.

The central theme of the 2017 UN Forum is *"Realizing Access to Remedy"*. The Forum will address the critical issue of access to remedy by examining systemic flaws and shortcomings in existing efforts and reviewing emerging good practices and innovations, with a view to achieving greater coherence and committed action in the service of human rights and rights-holders. Discussions will include the full range of mechanisms covered by the third pillar of the Guiding Principles: from State-based judicial and non-judicial mechanisms to non-State-based remediation and grievance mechanisms involving companies, industry bodies, multi-stakeholder initiatives and regional and international institutions. For list of non-exhaustive list of potential topics [click here](#).

As a starting point, a constructive dialogue among all stakeholders, featuring new ideas and practice-based perspectives to address current gaps and their root causes, is essential for building greater understanding of challenges and delivering coherent solutions. Such dialogue needs to be action-oriented and aimed at identifying concrete commitments from actors in positions to advance change and overcome existing barriers to remedies. Moreover, such dialogue needs to involve victims, human rights defenders, community and workers' organizations, civil society from all regions, governments, national human rights institutions, business associations, companies, lawyers and investors. The 2017 Forum provides a unique opportunity to bring these various groups together to examine recent initiatives and explore common ground and practical solutions for ensuring more effective access to remedy.

The Forum plenary and other sessions will also address broader policy trends and consider the role of the business and human rights movement in today's political and social contexts around the world. In doing so, the Forum will explore how the business and human rights lens can help tackle some of today's greatest human rights challenges, whether linked to the workplace, global supply chains, domestic economies or particular sectors; and provide a transformative vision of the role of the business sector in achieving sustainable development. This includes exploring strategies and forging coalitions between stakeholders to defend human rights and implement the Guiding Principles.

Moreover, the Forum will feature sessions for newcomers to become familiarized with the Guiding Principles – including an introduction to the "landscape" of remedy mechanisms – and how the Guiding Principles intersect with other frameworks for responsible and sustainable business.



## Further background, pre-Forum dialogue and agenda

Further explanation of the focus, aims, context and key considerations for the 2017 Forum will be outlined in a forthcoming background note by the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights. In order to facilitate pre-Forum dialogue around the themes and topics of the 2017 Forum, the Forum organizers will soon launch a blog series platform. All stakeholder groups are encouraged to take part.

The Forum Secretariat is currently undertaking a mapping of ongoing research and projects linked to access to remedy in the area of business and human rights. All stakeholders are encouraged to submit brief information about ongoing or planned research and projects for 2017-18 related to this issue. The information should be submitted [via this online form](#).

A tentative Forum programme is expected in July. Parties interested in contributing to the programme are invited to express interest and submit brief proposals for parallel sessions in line with the focus of the 2017 Forum. Details about this process are available [here](#).

## Topics on access to remedy for the 2017 Forum programme

When addressing the theme of access to remedy, it is envisaged that a wide range of topics and issues may be covered. For example, the Working Group and Forum Secretariat welcome session proposals and ideas linked to (but not limited to) the following:

- *Mapping the landscape of grievance mechanisms, access and how they interface*
- *Examples of how grievance mechanisms function*
- *Affected stakeholder and victims' perspectives and approaches*
- *Judicial remedy and government action (both civil and criminal/administrative law aspects)*
- *NAPs and access to remedy*
- *Lessons from cross-border cases and issues*
- *Effectiveness of State-based non-judicial mechanisms*
- *"Design" of effective operational-level grievance mechanisms consistent with the Guiding Principles*
- *Learning from mechanisms that tend not to be labelled as "business and human rights" mechanisms*
- *State as an economic actor and access to remedy (State-owned enterprises, public procurement, public finance, investment policy and agreements)*
- *International and regional mechanisms and conceptual and practical opportunities and challenges for applying extra-territorial obligations*
- *Remedy in post-conflict and transition contexts*
- *Industry- and sector-focused challenges and approaches (beyond business-led mechanisms and processes)*
- *The role of trade unions in achieving more effective remedy solutions*
- *Role of lawyers (including in-house and external counsel) in relation to pillar three*



- *Human rights litigation – trends and challenges*
- *Leverage and solutions for more effective remedy in supply chains*
- *Case studies of effective stakeholder engagement that have led to better remedy solution (and identifying the factors that make such solutions successful and replicable)*
- *Technology platforms and access to remedy*
- *Multi-stakeholder initiatives and access to remedy*
- *Innovative ideas for new international remedy mechanisms*
- *Remedy and gender*
- *Practical steps taken by remedial mechanisms to take account of the needs of those at particular risk of vulnerability or marginalization*
- *Government and business peer review learning for better remedy*
- *“Forward looking remedies” and how they work in practice (i.e. ways that remedies can contribute to future prevention and improvements in operating standards)*
- *How “policy coherence” in the design and integration of remedial mechanisms in judicial systems can contribute to better regulation*
- *Exploring the concept of “rights compatibility” in the design of remedies for adverse human rights impacts*

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## **Mandate and information about the organizers**

The Forum was established by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011 “to discuss trends and challenges in the implementation of the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) and promote dialogue and cooperation on issues linked to business and human rights, including challenges faced in particular sectors, operational environments or in relation to specific rights or groups, as well as identifying good practices” (resolution 17/4, paragraph 12).

The Forum is guided by the [UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights](#) and organized by its Secretariat at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).