



Invitation to stakeholders to submit proposals for parallel sessions

The Forum Secretariat and the [UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights](#) invite all relevant stakeholders to express their interest in contributing to the programme of the Sixth Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights (Geneva, 27-29 November 2017) by submitting brief parallel session proposals.

Parallel sessions, led by external organizations, are an important part of the Forum in line with its open and inclusive nature.

The number of submissions has grown exponentially since the first Forum in 2012. In order to ensure coherence and focus across the programme, the Forum Secretariat and the Working Group seek to prioritize proposals that are aligned with the theme of the 2017 Forum and reflect the criteria and information listed below. Given the anticipated high number of proposals, it will not be possible to accommodate all proposals. Submitting organizations may also be asked to explore joint re-submissions.

Criteria for statement of interest and brief session proposals:

- Clear and simple title.
- Clearly defined session objectives.
- Clearly defined key discussion questions.
- 3-4 suggested speakers, plus moderator (ideal number: 3 speakers + moderator, who is a skilled discussion facilitator – if names of envisaged speakers cannot be indicated, please indicate the profile of envisaged panellists).
- At least half of speakers should be women; regional diversity should also be kept in mind.
- Demonstrate how the envisaged session reflects the 2017 Forum's stated focus.
- Demonstrate ways to make sessions interactive and engage with the audience (with a "workshop feel").*
- For concrete "case study" type session proposals, demonstrate how the session would include all main parties (both victims and companies and ideally governments) in the panel and involve pre-dialogue among the panelists.**
- Demonstrate how the envisaged session would be practice-oriented and explore concrete ways to overcome specific challenges; reflect the Forum's multi-stakeholder dimension where appropriate; integrate a gender perspective; and identify good practices.
- Sessions involving victim perspectives and perspectives of other affected stakeholders are encouraged. Proposals involving victim perspectives should demonstrate how meaningful direct participation of victims can be ensured. Organizations that have access to funding and logistics support to enable participation of victims and other affected stakeholders should indicate this.

In evaluating statements of interest and session proposals, the Forum Secretariat and the Working Group will be guided by their policy of ensuring coherence as well as balance in terms of stakeholders, regions and gender. They will also seek to ensure that no one organisation or speaker has too many roles and that the programme includes a variety of relevant voices. The Working Group and Forum Secretariat may request adjustments to proposals as necessary to ensure coherence and balance.



**Innovative formats such as role play, hypothetical case study/dilemma discussions, and other participatory approaches are encouraged.*

*** The spirit of the Forum is to hear a range of perspectives and explore forward-looking lessons learned and practice-oriented solutions to business-related human rights challenges, in a constructive multi-stakeholder setting. Case studies can provide practical insights into real-life experiences and challenges faced. In this regard, cases where the parties have established mechanisms for dialogue may be particularly useful for exploring lessons that can be replicated or inspire action in other contexts.*

Submission process

Deadline: 26 May 2017

However, note that early submissions are strongly encouraged. For overlapping proposals, the Forum Secretariat may encourage submitting organizations to explore joint re-submissions.

[Complete the online form](#) by indicating: organization name, session title, type of session, brief description of focus and objectives, envisaged speakers, explanation of format, other relevant information (see the list of criteria, as relevant), the name of the contact person(s) and contact details. Further information and attachments may be submitted to: forumbhr@ohchr.org

**Please use the following subject line in the email: “2017 Forum session proposal – Name of Organization”.*

Please note: Due to limited space available, the organizers will be able to accommodate only a limited number of proposals. Submitting organizations are encouraged to present brief statement of interest and proposals only. Confirmation will be sent to submitting organizations by the end of June.

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*

Practical information

- The 2017 programme will include a mix of Working Group/OHCHR-led sessions and sessions led by external partners. The programme structure will depend on the submissions received.
- Each session normally lasts 80 minutes.
- The room layout is fixed. Each room typically includes a front row of desks (for the main speakers) with audience seats facing forward.
- Video recording / live-streaming is normally only provided for a limited number of sessions organized by the UN held in Room XX.
- The UN has a very limited budget for the Forum, including for travel of participants. For the small number of UN-sponsored participants, priority is given to stakeholders from the Global South.
- The UN is not in a position to provide interpretation or cover travel or other costs of session participants. This includes arrangement of interpretation of externally-led sessions, which is the responsibility of external organizers. If organizers bring their own interpreters, interpretation booths are available.
- For clarification of expectations of session organizers and moderators, kindly refer to the following [guidance document](#) prepared for previous events.