

2014 African Regional Forum on Business and Human Rights

Special Session: Human Rights Reporting Frameworks: African Perspectives

Tuesday 16 September

14:00 – 17:30

Today, there are a growing number of pressures – from regulators, stock exchanges, investors, civil society and others – for companies to report on their human rights performance. Many emerging regulations point to the UN Guiding Principles as a key reference point for reporting. Furthermore, companies are increasingly taking their own initiative to explore how they can better demonstrate their alignment with the Guiding Principles, including a number operating in Africa, in the extractive and other sectors.

This accelerating trend in requirements and requests for reporting on human rights is clear. This special session will explore the question of what good corporate human rights reporting looks like in the African context.

The session will discuss lessons learned and challenges regarding human rights reporting, both from the business and the readers' perspective. It will then discuss the Reporting and Assurance Frameworks Initiative (RAFI), an international multi-stakeholder consultative process relating to human rights reporting and assurance. The human rights reporting framework which is being developed through this process will provide guidance to companies on information to disclose to demonstrate efforts made toward alignment with the UN Guiding Principles. The reporting framework resulting from RAFI is intended to be relevant to, and viable for all companies in any region, and will be non-proprietary and publicly available to all companies and other organizations to use in their work. It will dovetail with existing reporting initiatives.

This special session will be the first RAFI consultation in Africa. With the reporting framework now in the initial stages of drafting, it will provide an opportunity for participants to hear more about the approaches being adopted and to provide input for their further evolution.

The session will be facilitated by Shift, a non-profit centre for business and human rights practice and one of RAFI's project team members (with Mazars, a global audit and advisory services firm). The UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights has expressed its firm support for RAFI and is engaging with this project as part of its mandate to promote implementation of the Guiding Principles.

Further information on RAFI can be found here: <http://www.business-humanrights.org/Documents/RAFI>.