



Statement to the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights Follow up From the UN Annual Forum

IPIECA thanks the UN Working Group for the opportunity to participate in the 2013 Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights. Following on from our participation in the 2012 Annual Forum, we appreciate the platform to share the progress the oil and gas industry is making on implementation of the UN Guiding Principles (UNGPs), and to participate in dialogues where robust and diverse views are shared.

IPIECA's body of work and its publications are founded on the realities of the industry's operating contexts and provide practical guidance for members to build their human rights activities. We have been actively working on human rights across the industry since 2002. The strong attendance and voice of the oil and gas industry at the Forum indicated the seriousness with which the industry takes advancing the business and human rights agenda, and IPIECA's work demonstrates how we are addressing key human rights issues.

We were pleased that we could continue this precedent by launching at the 2013 Annual Forum our guide on [Integrating Human Rights into Environmental, Social and Health Impact Assessments](#). The guide – produced in collaboration with the Danish Institute on Human Rights (DIHR) provides practical considerations and actions to integrate human rights into environmental, social and health impact assessments (ESHIA) in the project environment. It was developed jointly by impact assessment practitioners from IPIECA members and human rights experts from DIHR. The guide aims to bridge the gaps in terminology, processes and approaches between the ESHIA and human rights impact assessment processes.

The Forum also provided the platform to share progress in other areas: namely, our Grievance Mechanisms and Responsible Security Programmes.

Our Grievance Mechanisms Programme, which is based on a series of seven pilot projects sponsored by member companies and facilitated by independent consultants. It has resulted in the creation of the first guide, the [IPIECA Good Practice Survey](#) (2012). Further learning from the pilots to be incorporated in a practical toolkit and a final guidance document are scheduled for release in 2014.

IPIECA is also facilitating a coordinated industry effort targeting the practical, on-the-ground elements of security and human rights, and promote greater stakeholder awareness of industry's approach towards responsible security operations. This includes holding member-driven workshops to exchange good practices and create a forum for collaborative learning at a practical level, producing practical guidance and tools for the industry on responsible security operations, and communicating efforts to external stakeholders on responsible security operations.

Based on our experience developing practical guidance for the industry we used the opportunity of the Forum to share our recommendations in implementation of business and human rights initiatives:

- IPIECA supports a balanced approach to implementation of human rights initiatives, placing due emphasis on the State Duty to Protect as well as the corporate Responsibility to Respect and Access to Remedy. We encourage strengthening the capacity of host governments to exercise their Duty to Protect so as to reinforce the differentiated, but complementary responsibilities of states and business.
- IPIECA welcomes discussion on how to enhance leverage on host governments through home governments. Home governments can support the industry's position when attempting to advocate enhancement of host government security arrangements, local labour standards and enforcement or regulatory capacity in host countries.
- IPIECA believes progress is best achieved through voluntary approaches which enable cross company learning and allow fit for purpose solutions.
- IPIECA supports an efficient approach of the business and human rights initiatives, which allows companies to integrate human rights into existing management systems and consideration for the practical human rights context on the ground.
- Human rights challenges vary widely depending on location and context. To this end, IPIECA supports constructive local level dialogues involving a range of local stakeholders, in order to address human rights issues that businesses regularly encounter, particularly in complex operating environments. Leveraging the experience and learning that come out of existing sector initiatives on human rights practical and identifying practical solutions are central to this approach.
- The IPIECA project on operational grievance mechanisms is showing that the majority of impacts in the oil and gas industry are operational local impacts, which are readily identified and mitigated. The vast majority of community complaints relate to operational impacts and other issues that in most cases are easily resolvable, before they escalate. This finding underscores the power of grievance mechanisms to improve stakeholder engagement and operational social performance.

As reflected by Mr. Puvan Selvanatham in the closing session of the Forum, the success of the UNGPs rests on the continued participation of all three pillars, and implementation of UNGPs needs collective cooperation between states, business and civil society. IPIECA and its members will continue engagement with the UNGPs in order to advance the practical implementation of the business and human rights agenda.