



Invitation to stakeholders to submit proposals for parallel sessions

The UN Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises (“UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights”) invites all relevant stakeholders **to submit proposals for parallel sessions to be included in the programme of [the fifth annual UN Forum on Business and Human Rights](#)**, which takes place from 14 to 16 November 2016 in Geneva.

The Working Group is pleased that the Forum continues to grow in size and attract more participants every year. Parallel sessions, led by external organizations, are an important part of the event’s success. At the same time, the Working Group also received feedback that the 2016 Forum should seek even greater coherence and focus with less crowded panels and more time for group discussion. To facilitate this, the Working Group will prioritize session proposals that reflect the criteria and information listed below.

2016 UN Forum on Business and Human Rights

Date: 14-16 November 2016

Location: Palais des Nations, Geneva (Switzerland)

Enquiries: forumbhr@ohchr.org

Overall Forum title: *[“Leadership and Leverage: Embedding human rights in the rules and relationships that drive the global economy”](#)*

Criteria for submission proposals:

- Clear and simple title
- 1x moderator
- 3-4x speakers (maximum)
- Demonstrate how the session reflects the overall Forum title (see explanation below)
- Demonstrate ways to make sessions interactive and engage with the audience (with a “workshop feel”)
- The session(s) should explore concrete ways to overcome specific challenges; reflect the Forum’s multi-stakeholder dimension where appropriate; and identify leading practices.

Please note:

1. Due to limited space available and the need to focus, the organizers will not be able to accommodate all session proposals.
2. In addition, no one organization should speak in and/or be the lead organizer of more than 2x sessions. However, organizations are welcome to offer support to / co-sponsor different sessions (as appropriate).
3. The organizers are pleased to discuss session/speaker ideas at any point (email: forumbhr@ohchr.org).
4. The organizers may suggest adjustments to proposals as necessary to ensure coherence and balance.

Submission process

Deadline: 31 July 2016 (email: forumbhr@ohchr.org)

- 1) Complete this [online form](#) by indicating: organization name; session title; how the session reflects the overall Forum title; brief description of focus and objectives; type of session (choose from options in the form); relevant contact person(s) and contact details.
- 2) Separately, please submit a concept note* to: forumbhr@ohchr.org with the following information that can be made public (2x pages max):
 - Name of organizer(s) and relevant contact details
 - Clear and simple session title
 - How the session reflects the overall Forum title
 - Potential moderator and speakers (max 5 in total)
 - Proposed ways of engaging with participants during the session (*innovative formats such as role play, hypothetical case study/dilemma discussions, and other participatory approaches are encouraged*).
 - Aims and objectives
 - Key discussion question(s).

*Please use the following subject line in the email: "2016 Forum session proposal_ Name of Organization".

Explanation of the 2016 Forum title

The Working Group is putting the two complementary concepts of "**leadership**" and "**leverage**" centre stage during the 2016 Forum. Both concepts encapsulate the pull-push factors needed to implement the three pillars of the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) and are applicable to Governments and business in multiple contexts. For example:

- **States** need to demonstrate greater leadership in protecting the human rights of those who suffer business-related abuse and in providing an effective remedy when harms occur. Similarly, as powerful economic actors they should "lead by example" in their procurement activities and in the conduct of entities they own, control and/or support, including State-owned enterprises, export credit agencies, development finance institutions and sovereign wealth funds. States can also exercise significant leverage in their dealings with other Governments and in multilateral fora; across their own Government departments and agencies; and in their relationships with private businesses and others.
- **Businesses** need to better understand and exercise leadership and leverage across their supply and value chains and in their relationships with various stakeholders to ensure that they fully respect human rights and also manage risk.
- **In addition**, international and regional bodies; finance, industry and trade organisations; employer federations; business associations; lawyers; consultants; affected communities and other civil society actors play an important role in promoting leadership and ensuring that leverage is exercised for the benefit of human rights.

Related to this, the Working Group would like the Forum to more closely examine the relationship between "**the supply of money and financial markets**" and business and human rights. This includes a deeper look at financial incentives and penalties; financial and non-financial tools and risk analysis; the role of financial regulators, investors, banks and finance institutions; public financing and procurement activities; trade and investment; corruption; and tax regimes.

The Working Group welcomes proposals from stakeholders that will tease out the concepts of "leadership" and "leverage", as well as sessions that examine the role of "money", across different contexts.

Practical information

- The 2016 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.
- The programme will include a mix of:
 - High-level plenaries
 - Case study discussions
 - Dialogue on “dilemmas” and “practical implementation challenges”
 - Training sessions
 - Panel discussions on new tools/initiatives and salient issues.
- Each session 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. Use of an overhead projector can be arranged.
- Video recording / live-streaming will only be done for the Opening and Closing Plenaries and for the sessions held in Room XX.
- The United Nations is not in a position to provide interpretation or cover travel or other costs of session participants.
- The Forum Secretariat (forumbhr@ohchr.org) is, however, able to put organisers in touch with UNOG conference services so that they can arrange interpretation during their session or provide refreshments before or afterwards (at their own costs).
- For clarification of expectations of session organizers and moderators, kindly refer to the following [guidance document](#).

Mandate and vision

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, para. 12).

The Working Group’s underlying vision is that the Forum identifies ways to speed and scale up implementation of the Guiding Principles by States and companies globally. As the world’s largest annual gathering on business and human rights, the Forum plays a unique role in highlighting the importance of collaboration and partnership with international and regional bodies, States, companies and civil society organizations. A key objective is to ensure coherence between the Guiding Principles and key platforms such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the decisions of the G7 and the G20; and other fora including the International Labour Conference, the OECD’s Forum on Responsible Business Conduct and the World Investment Forum.