



Corporate Respect for Human Rights and the SDGs: Understanding and Unleashing a Powerful Relationship

Parallel session

27 November

15:00-18:00

Organized by Shift and the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights

Background: The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are setting a new and increasingly accepted basis for companies to stake out a position on how they are responsible and sustainable. Yet with 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 related targets, there is a risk that companies simply repackage what they already do in the wrapping of the SDGs, or focus on certain SDGs based on the ease, rather than the impact, of those choices. The sheer number of targets risks a return to traditional and partial philanthropic approaches on the part of business that fail to take into consideration the social and environmental impact of a company's core operations and value chain.

Human rights are embedded throughout the SDGs. Yet many organizations that are telling business how to think about this – and many leaders in business itself – are failing to understand the place of respect for human rights in this broader framework. Respect for human rights tends to be seen as something necessary but basic, from which leading companies have already moved on to more innovative, leadership-oriented, collaborative initiatives. (This vastly overestimates progress on human rights within the business community.) Moreover, because respect for human rights is an expectation of all companies, it is often seen as merely a matter of compliance and risk management, and distinct from initiatives that are characterized as transformative.

These pervasive assumptions fail to understand:

- a) that implementing respect for human rights is an integral part of doing business, not something you do and then move on from;
- b) that implementing respect for human rights is not just a matter of compliance to be achieved simply through audit and data tracking, but instead requires capacity building, innovation, collaboration and leadership;
- c) that respect for human rights is not just a “do no harm” proposition, but drives positive change in people’s lives, with many positive outcomes for sustainable development;

- d) that this positive impact of respecting human rights can drive transformative change at scale, in particular through collaborative uses of leverage across value chains that have the power to improve the lives of millions of workers and community members;
- e) that respect for human rights must also permeate any and all other initiatives a company undertakes to contribute to the SDGs, from philanthropy to shared value initiatives, environmental projects to innovative financing, and workforce engagement to anti-corruption efforts;
- f) that respect for human rights by business is the essential key to unlock achievement of many SDGs, and without which they cannot be achieved.

Session objectives:

- To open up thinking about the ways in which initiatives to advance respect for human rights in business operations and value chains can deliver transformative positive outcomes for people;
- To inspire participants to unleash the potential of these initiatives to help deliver the SDGs.

Key questions:

- How can companies (and those working with them) take a holistic approach to their SDG strategies that integrates respect for human rights, and allocates resources, leadership and innovation effort to tackling human rights risks in ways that maximize positive outcomes for people?
- In what ways do we see this connection between respect for human rights and contributions to sustainable development playing out in practice today?
- What kinds of innovation and leadership will be needed going forward?

Speakers part 1:¹

- Introduction: The nexus between respect for human rights and business contributions to the SDGs.
 - **Caroline Rees**, President, Shift
- Case study 1: Nestlé – Forced Labour
 - **Benjamin Ware**, Global Head of Responsible Sourcing, Nestlé
 - **Shawn Macdonald**, CEO Verité
- Case study 2: Malawi Tea 2020 – Living Wage
 - **Sarah Roberts**, Executive Director, Ethical Tea Partnership
 - **Elizabeth Kabaghe**, Programme Coordinator, Oxfam
- Case study 3: Chile Government Procurement – Integrating Human Rights and SDGs
 - **Trinidad Inostroza**, Director, ChileCompra
 - **Veronica Zubia Pinto**, legal adviser at the Human Rights Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chile
 - **Elin Wrzoncki**, Senior Advisor Human Rights and Development, Danish Institute for Human Rights

¹ Further information on speakers provided in Annex

Speakers part 2: ²

- **Anita Ramasastry**, UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights (**Moderator**)
- **Uwe Gneiting**, Research and Policy Advisor, Private Sector Department, Oxfam America
- **Richard Howitt**, CEO, International Integrated Reporting Council
- **Vanessa Zimmerman**, Group Advisor on Human Rights, Rio Tinto
- **Fiona Reynolds**, Managing Director, Principles for Responsible Investment

Session format and content: This session will focus around 3 or 4 case studies that help demonstrate the connection between respect for human rights and contributions to sustainable development in practice and provide a basis for discussion of the lessons they offer for further innovation, leadership and scaling up of positive outcomes for people.

The session will consist of:

- **Brief opening presentation** on how corporate respect for human rights extends beyond ‘doing no harm’ and holds the power to transform lives and help meet SDG targets.
- **3-4 case studies** that help exemplify how interventions that tackle human rights risks linked to one or more companies’ operations or value chain can drive positive change for people in line with SDGs. These will each be conveyed through a dialogue between one of the lead actors in the initiative and a third party.
 - Case studies will include an individual company initiative, a multi-stakeholder initiative, and a government-led initiative. They will include examples from Africa, Latin America and Asia, and are likely to focus on forced labor, living wages, human rights in procurement and gender-based violence.
 - Each 20-minute case study will look at what the human rights risks were and how they were connected with the company/ies concerned; what the intervention involves; how progress has been assessed; what change has been achieved; and what SDG targets this relates to.
 - There will be audience discussion following the case study presentations.
- **Panel conversation** in which panellists from different perspectives will reflect back on the case studies and draw out some broader lessons and conclusions. The conversation will involve 3 panellists from investor, NGO, and business association backgrounds. It will be moderated by Professor Anita Ramasastry of the UN Working Group.

Background material

- An open letter to United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and United Nations Private Sector Forum 2017 Participants: <https://business-humanrights.org/sites/default/files/documents/SDGs-businesshumanrights-openletterSept2017.pdf>

² Further information on speakers provided in Annex

- Shift: “Respect for Human Rights: Creating a Holistic Framework for Business Contributions to the SDGs”, <https://www.shiftproject.org/resources/viewpoints/holistic-framework-business-respect-human-rights-sdgs/>
- UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights: Embedding “Protect, Respect and Remedy” in SDGs implementation – 10 key recommendations, http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Business/Session18/InfoNoteWGBHR_SDGRecommendations.pdf

ANNEX. SPEAKERS SHORT BIOS.

Caroline Rees

President, Shift

Caroline Rees is the President and Co-Founder of the non-profit Shift, where she leads strategic development and drives thought leadership work on key challenges and opportunities in advancing corporate respect for business and human rights. Prior to founding Shift, Caroline was a lead advisor to Professor John Ruggie during his work to develop the UN Guiding Principles as Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General. From 2009 to 2011 she was Director of the Governance and Accountability Program at the Harvard Kennedy School's Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative, before which she spent 14 years as a British diplomat.

Benjamin Ware

Global Head of Responsible Sourcing

Benjamin Ware is Global Head of Responsible Sourcing at Nestlé. Since 2005, as part of Nestle, he acquired hands-on experience in leading farm and supplier assessment and development in China, India and Brazil. In 2010 Benjamin joined corporate procurement at the Nestle international head office in Switzerland to kick off Responsible Sourcing. After 3 years of successful implementation of Nestle Responsible Sourcing ambitions with tier 1 suppliers, Benjamin is now in charge of the overall Responsible Sourcing activities for the group including both audit and traceability efforts upstream: Together with a small team around the world he is looking at innovative sourcing practices to implement sustainability in end to end supply chains.

Shawn MacDonald

CEO, Verité

Shawn MacDonald is CEO of Verité, a civil society organization that promotes workers' rights in global supply chains through research, consulting, training, assessments, and policy advocacy. Shawn has broad experience in labor rights, corporate social responsibility, social entrepreneurship, workplace health, and multi-sector partnerships. Before joining Verité, he was Director of Accreditation at the Fair Labor Association, Vice President of Ashoka, Senior Advisor at Meridian Group International, and co-founder of the Development and Employment Policy Project. Additionally, he worked for a variety of civil society organizations in Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe. He holds a Ph.D. from George Mason University's School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and an AB in History from Harvard University.

Sarah Roberts***Executive Director, Ethical Tea Partnership***

Sarah Roberts is Executive Director of the Ethical Tea Partnership (ETP), the international not for profit organisation improving the lives of tea workers, farmers and their environment. ETP works with the tea industry and other partners to catalyse progress on sustainability in the tea sector helping it to go further faster.

Elizabeth Magombo Kabaghe***Programme Coordinator, Oxfam***

Elizabeth Magombo Kabaghe a development agent working with Oxfam in Malawi as the Program Coordinator for the Malawi 2020 Tea Revitalisation Program and mainly support achievement of the living wage pillar of the program. Elizabeth is passionate about contributing to the growth and development of rural economies in poor countries through empowering of agricultural workers and smallholder farmers to increase the significance of their contributions in their economies. She holds a Master of Science degree in Agricultural and Applied Economics from the University of Malawi and was previously awarded the fellowship of the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development.

Trinidad Inostroza Castro***Director, ChileCompra***

Trinidad Inostroza Casto is the Director of ChileCompra. From 2015 to 2017 she was also the President of the Interamerican Network on Government Procurement. For 8 years, she was the Head of the Legal Department of Chile Compra. Prior to that, she worked as the Attorney for Economic Crimes at the Public Prosecutor Office in Santiago, and as the Head of Legal Areas at the Ministry of Mining, Ministry of Social Development and the National Police Direction.

She is also a lecturer of post graduate courses of the Diploma of Public Procurement at the Pontificia Universidad Católica of Chile.

Veronica Zubia Pinto***Legal adviser at the Human Rights Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Chile***

Veronica Zubia Pinto is a legal adviser at the Human Rights Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where she has worked for the last six years. She was in charge of the Indigenous Affairs Unit for three years, and since 2014 has been in charge of the Business and Human Rights Unit. In this regard, she was responsible for coordinating Chile's first National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights in August 2017.

Elin Wrzoncki***Senior Advisor Human Rights and Development, Danish Institute for Human Rights***

Elin Wrzoncki is a Senior Adviser on Human Rights and Business at the Danish Institute for Human Rights. She is supporting the development of tools and methods for state actors, including National human rights institutions, on the implementation of business and human rights frameworks in particular through National Action Plans. She is leading DIHR's contribution to the Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business. Before joining DIHR in 2014, she was the Head of the Globalization and Human Rights Desk at the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), where she was in particular supporting human rights NGOs to document business impacts on human rights and advocating for corporate accountability. She holds a Master's Degree in Political Sciences from Sciences-Po in Paris and from Uppsala University in Sweden.

Richard Howitt***CEO, International Integrated Reporting Council***

Richard Howitt is spearheading the adoption of Integrated Reporting globally and is a major thought-leader in international debates on good corporate governance, shifting investment to the long-term and inclusive capitalism. Richard was involved in the evolution of Integrated Reporting from the outset. Before being appointed as CEO in November 2016 served as an elected Member of the European Parliament for over twenty years, and is a member of the B20 group of international business leaders.

Fiona Reynolds***Managing Director, Principles for Responsible Investment***

Fiona Reynolds is the managing director of the UN-supported Principles for Responsible Investment. Prior to this, Fiona was CEO of the Australian Institute of Superannuation Trustees (AIST) for seven years. Fiona serves on the board of the UN Global Compact, the Council of the International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC), the Global Advisory Council on Stranded Assets at Oxford University, the UN Business for Peace Steering Committee and the Steering Committee for Investors on Climate Change.

Uwe Gneiting***Research and Policy Advisor, Private Sector Department, Oxfam America***

Uwe Gneiting works as Research Advisor at Oxfam's Private Sector Department. He co-leads Oxfam's work on shaping the role of business in the SDGs. He is co-author of Oxfam's Raising the Bar report, which makes the case for greater emphasis on human rights in business' SDG engagement. He has researched and written about the business' sector evolving approach to embracing human rights and sustainability issues. Prior to joining Oxfam, he worked on a multi-year research project on the effectiveness of NGO advocacy. A political scientist by training, he holds a PhD from the Freie Universität of Berlin, Germany.

Vanessa Zimmerman

Group Advisor on Human Rights, Rio Tinto

Vanessa Zimmerman is a recognized global and domestic corporate sustainability expert, focusing on the area of business and human rights. Originally an anti-trust lawyer in Australia's pre-eminent law firm King & Wood Mallesons, Vanessa then worked for 5 years as a Legal Advisor to the UN Special Representative on Business and Human Rights, Harvard Professor John Ruggie, including being part of the core team drafting the internationally recognized UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). Vanessa has advised other key business and human rights initiatives such as the Institute for Human Rights and Business, the UN Global Compact and the Global Business Initiative on Human Rights. She has also worked with Australian business from a variety of sectors and civil society. For the past 6 years Vanessa has managed implementation of the human rights strategy at Rio Tinto, one of the world's largest mining companies.