



## About the Forum

The UN annual Forum on Business and Human Rights is the global platform for stock-taking and lesson-sharing on efforts to move the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) from paper to practice. As the world's foremost gathering in this area, it provides a unique space for dialogue between governments, business, civil society, affected groups and international organizations on trends, challenges and good practices in preventing and addressing business-related human rights impacts. Each year it brings together more than 2,000 experts, practitioners and leaders for three days of an action- and solution-oriented dialogue.

## 2018 focus

Seven years on from the launch of the Guiding Principles, there has been a flurry of activities among States, businesses and civil society actors to make the "Protect, Respect, Remedy" framework part of everyday business and government practice. Under the central theme of "*Business respect for human rights – building on what works*", the 2018 Forum aims to drill down on what has been working to date in terms of government, civil society and business practice, but also on what is not working and where current efforts are falling short, and how to fill the gaps. A key concept and tool is corporate human rights due diligence, which will be a major focus of the 2018 event. The Forum will examine both emerging practice and enabling factors for corporate human rights due diligence, addressing not only current business practice, but also government action to lead by example in its role as economic actor and to incentivize good business practice, as well as innovations from civil society and rights holders.

The Forum may cover issues such as:

- Emerging practice and challenges in relation to **key components of human rights due diligence** (assessing risks and impacts, integration, tracking, and communication).
- **Sector-focused challenges and practice** (including sectors that have received less attention in business and human rights debates to date).
- Human rights due diligence in **conflict and post-conflict contexts**.
- Approaches for **meaningful engagement with affected stakeholders**, including groups at particular risk (e.g. women, children, human rights defenders, worker representatives, persons with disability, indigenous peoples, minorities, migrants, refugees, LGBTI etc.)
- Experiences in addressing **human rights abuses prevalent across different sectors** (e.g. modern slavery, child labour, sexual harassment, discrimination, and freedom of association).

- **Government practice of incentivizing and enabling** corporate human rights due diligence (what good practice should be incentivized and how).
- **Government protection at a local level** (protection of workers, communities, human rights defenders, individuals and groups in situations of vulnerability).
- **Policy coherence** at both international and national levels, addressing issues such as convergence in how human rights due diligence is applied in global governance frameworks and progress in ensuring policy coherence in State policies and practice.
- **The role of key stakeholders** (e.g. investors, stock exchanges, business associations, multi-stakeholder initiatives, civil society organizations and national human rights institutions) in promoting good practice.
- **How to measure impact** and assessing what works in terms of both business and government practice.
- **The relationship between human rights due diligence and access to remedy**– addressing the respective roles and responsibilities of both States and business.

The Forum will also address various **issues in focus**. These may include “standing items” for the Forum agenda, such as:

- Corporate engagement on the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- Human rights defenders, civic freedoms and the role of business
- Gender, business and human rights
- Indigenous peoples rights and impacts of business activities

They may also include emerging or systemic issues that confront the business and human rights agenda, such as:

- Climate change and human rights – and the transition to a green economy
- Corruption, tax, inequality, and human rights
- Technology, the fourth industrial revolution and human rights
- The role of business in standing up for human rights

## Call for proposals

The Forum Secretariat and the [UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights](#) would like to inform all participants that the call for proposals is now closed.

A tentative Forum programme is expected in July. Registration will open in August. The UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights that guides and chairs the Forum plans to launch a blog platform later in the year to facilitate “pre-Forum” dialogue and exchanges (similar to the [2017 Forum blog series](#)).

Stay posted on updates by following us on Twitter: [@WGBizHRs](#)

The number of stakeholder submissions to the Forum has grown exponentially since the first Forum in 2012. Given the growth in the number of submissions, it will not be possible to accommodate all proposals. Only organizations that are invited to organize parallel sessions will be contacted.

There is no space for accommodating externally organized “side event” requests. Parties wishing to organize “side events” in Geneva before or after the Forum are encouraged to explore options outside of the UN premises and keep the Forum organizers informed via [forumbhr@ohchr.org](mailto:forumbhr@ohchr.org).

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.

### **Forum mandate and information about the organizers**

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, paragraph 12).

The Forum is guided and chaired by the [UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights](#) (Human Rights Council resolution 35/7) and organized by its Secretariat at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).