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**CONSULTATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
“PROTECT, RESPECT AND REMEDY” FRAMEWORK**

**11-12 October, 2010  
Geneva, Palais des Nations, Room XI**

Opening remarks

by

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OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR  
HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. Irene Khan,  
Mr. Special Representative,  
Distinguished Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this consultation for civil society representatives convened by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in support of the Special Representative for Business and Human Rights, Professor Ruggie. The aim of the consultation is to discuss issues that could or should be included in the Guiding Principles for implementation of the “Protect, Respect and Remedy” framework which the Special Representative is currently developing, and to receive your input on follow-up to the mandate of the Special Representative when it expires in 2011.

The consultation is one step in a comprehensive consultative process involving a broad range of relevant stakeholders to inform the Special Representative on what issues human rights defenders and other representatives of civil society would like to see included in the Guiding Principles for the implementation of the framework.

Since the establishment of the business and human rights mandate in 2005, this work on the roles and responsibilities of business with regard to human rights has evolved significantly. The Special Representative’s intention of presenting guiding principles to the Human Rights Council for the Council’s

consideration at its session in June next year – and the positive interest expressed by Council delegates to his plans – reflect the broadly-held determination to move the agenda forward to better ensure the protection of human rights in the context of business activities.

Civil society has played an important role in advancing the agenda of business and human rights. Advocacy and campaigning undertaken by non-governmental organizations, trade unions and other civil society actors have contributed to placing the issue of business and human rights firmly on the agenda of the Human Rights Council. Moreover, civil society representatives have been key contributors to the Special Representative’s process, including through submissions and participation in the wide range of consultations convened by the Special Representative and his team, which also have included States and representatives of the business community. These contributions have informed the development of the “Protect, Respect and Remedy” framework, and will now play an important role in informing the forthcoming Guiding Principles.

Your suggestions on how to continue moving the issue forward when Professor Ruggie’s mandate expires in June next year, will provide equally valuable input to the Special Representative. That discussion will feed into his intended paper to outline options and recommendations for how the Council might follow up on the business and human rights agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Office of the High Commissioner has actively assisted the Special Representative's work since the beginning of his mandate in 2005, and the High Commissioner has expressed support for the progress achieved thus far in clarifying the responsibilities of business with regard to human rights.

I am pleased to see the number of civil society representatives who have joined us today. I am aware that many of you come from far afield to participate in the meeting, and on behalf of the Office of the High Commissioner, I would like to extend our warm welcome to all of you.

Your presence is evidence of the importance that you attach to these issues, and your own recognition of the impact of private sector-activity on the realization of human rights.

It is also with great pleasure I have the opportunity of welcoming Irene Khan. Her contribution to the international human rights movement is well-known to all of us, and we are lucky to have her with us today.

Let me also express the Office of the High Commissioner's appreciation for the work of the Special Representative. Professor Ruggie, I am confident that this consultation will provide much valuable input to you for the drafting of the Guiding Principles and elaborating on how the human rights and business agenda may continue to move forward.

This is an important moment in the process. The substantive and critical engagement of civil society is essential to ensuring that we reach our goal of adopting a framework that is firmly rooted in international human rights

standards and principles, and that will advance the accountability of all actors in global efforts to guarantee freedom from fear and freedom from want.

I thank you.