

## Suggestion for a panel at the 2013 United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights

The BankTrack Network would like to propose a panel on “Private Sector Banks and the UN Guiding Principles” for the 2013 Forum on Business and Human Rights.

Private sector banks have special and differentiated responsibilities with regard to their human rights obligations: even though human rights impacts of private sector banks are clear and regular, banks are often invisible players to affected communities or victims on the ground, and “but for” their financial role, many human rights abuses would not happen.

The inverse is true as well: private sector banks can be powerful drivers of good practice to change corporate behavior on the ground. Their financial leverage can have a positive influence on the human rights impacts of their clients.

Through their activities private sector banks, can be involved in adverse Human Rights impacts that are “directly linked to an enterprise’s operations, products or services by its business relationships, but where the enterprise itself may not to have contributed to it.” Nevertheless there seems to be a lack of clarity about the responsibility to respect of private sector banks. A group of private sector banks, the so called [Thun group](#) is currently completing its work on a discussion document that focuses on Guiding Principles 16 - 21 (relating to the corporate responsibility to respect human rights) and suggests an approach to the assessment and the scope and depth of due diligence which may be undertaken.

The proposed panel aims at:

- Help to clarify the responsibility to respect of private sector banks, the corresponding due diligence requirements and how human rights due diligence should be integrated into existing due diligence processes of private sector banks.
- Discuss the proposals in the document that the Thun group is about to publish in spring 2013.
- Discuss the revisions to the [Equator Principles](#) focus on human rights.

The Panel should comprise of Bank representatives (such as the Thun group sponsors Barclays, Credit Suisse, UBS, Unicredit), Members of the Working Group or other experts that are closely involved in the promotion of the Guiding Principles and civil society (BankTrack would be happy to suggest civil society representatives that are active in the field of banks and Human Rights).

On behalf of the BankTrack Network

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