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Portuguese version, see below

Brazil: UN expert group to assess impact of business activities on human rights

GENEVA (7 December 2015) – The United Nations Working Group on business and human rights today started its first official visit to Brazil to examine the adverse impact of business activities on human rights.

The visit, from 7 to 16 December, takes place against the backdrop of a serious environmental disaster, caused by the collapse on 5 November of a mining tailing dam in Mariana, State of Minas Gerais, and of a range of ongoing and planned large-scale development projects, including those related to the Rio 2016 Olympics.

“As the seventh largest economy in the world, Brazil is playing a leading role both in the region and globally, and we look forward to learning about the steps taken in the country to prevent and address business-related human rights harm,” said human rights expert Pavel Sulyandziga, one of the members of the two-strong delegation.

The experts are looking at how the Government and businesses are implementing their respective human rights obligations and responsibilities, in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*.

The principles, unanimously endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011, offer clarity and guidance for authorities and companies to prevent and address adverse impacts of business activities on human rights. They re-affirm States’ existing obligations to protect against human rights abuse by businesses. They also clarify the corporate responsibility to respect human rights, and the need to ensure that victims have access to effective remedy.

“As well as meeting with the government authorities and a number of companies, we will talk with civil society organizations, trade unions and other stakeholders, and we look forward to learning from their experience,” said Dante Pesce, the other Working Group member taking part in the visit.

The experts, who are visiting the country at the invitation of the Government of Brazil, will hold meetings in Brasília, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Mariana, Altamira, and Belém.

They will hold a **press conference** to share with the media preliminary observations from their visit at 12:00 on Wednesday 16 December 2015 at the UN building, room

Carlos Costa (LCC), Setor de Embaixadas Norte Quadra 802, Bloco C, Lote 17, in Brasília. Access to the press conference is strictly limited to journalists.

Findings from the country visit and recommendations will be included in an official report to be presented to the Human Rights Council in June 2016.

(*) Read the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Business/Pages/Tools.aspx>

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The Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises was established by the UN Human Rights Council in June 2011. The five members are Mr. Michael Addo (Ghana), Ms. Alexandra Guáqueta Colombia), Ms. Margaret Jungk (USA), Mr. Puvan Selvanathan (Malaysia) and Mr. Pavel Sulyandziga (Russian Federation).

The Working Groups are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms. The Working Groups report to the Human Rights Council and to the UN General Assembly. Special Procedures mandate-holders are independent human rights experts appointed by the Human Rights Council to address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world. The experts are not UN staff and are independent from any government or organization. They serve in their individual capacity and do not receive a salary for their work. Learn more, visit:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Business/Pages/WGHRandtransnationalcorporationsandotherbusiness.aspx>

UN Human Rights, country page – Brazil:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/countries/LACRegion/Pages/BRIndex.aspx>

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