

Input for The UN Working Group on Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises

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The UN Framework and Guiding Principles on business and human rights outline what States and business enterprises should do to ensure that human rights are respected by business, and to ensure access to effective remedies for those whose rights have been adversely affected by business activity.

Besides promoting and disseminating these Guiding Principles, the Working Group must ensure that they are effectively implemented by both governments and business, and that they result in improved outcomes for individuals and groups around the world whose rights have been affected by business activity. How best to achieve this complex task?

Dear All,

Here are some ideas for the UN Working group on H**R*** and transnational corporations, for key issues to be addressed. I am working as a consultant at the Center for International Business Ethics here in Beijing China, a research Institute on Chinese and International CSR, and I would like to contribute some ideas on this issue: Our Center encourages us as staff to take these opportunities.

Key issues for the working group:

Geographical note : Now its BRICs time:

A strong focus on what emerging countries and businesses can do and aspire to do on these issues; more research (case studies,. best practice exchange) on these emerging countries and their local adaptation of universal guidelines.

A Comment on Content of Key issues: double emphasis on rights and duties

An emphasis in communication that employers and stakeholders not only have rights, but also the duty to bring on rights to others; The CSR rights discussion with otherwise be 'captured' by the idea of the employer and stakeholder as a kind of consumer (or victim of the lack) of rights, and governments and industries as sole providers of rights (or the lack of that, in some opinion) . The double emphasis on rights and duties to all parties involved, will help:

- Enlarge the notion of personal responsibility and accountability to enforce the Global Compact business principles for employers and stakeholders, and minimizing the idea of collective ' victimizing' of the employers and stakeholders. The latter makes employers and stakeholders not individually responsible of their part in the CSR process.
- Giving wider perspective to all industries and all stakeholders to the bigger notion of

searching what is best for all (Holistic instead of dualistic approach)

Communication methods in promoting the guidelines

1. Research and exchange of best practices on worldwide access of effective ways for employers and businesses to complain on violation on Global Compact guidelines: research in possibilities of social media, and esp sms, for the input of complaints.

2. On analphabet-ism

- Stimulating the access of employers of their rights and duties in their local language/ mother tongue,
- and more practical, visual guidelines on the working place for those who cannot read! The right and duty to be able to understand the rights and duties of employers is just as important as to having access to the written documents.

3. National Industry Associations as key focal point for CSR

Just as an example:

China has more than 30 million local Companies, and 650.000 Foreign Companies. To reach to them and discuss with them on the topic of CSR, can most effectively be done by contacting the different Industry Associations and Chambers of Commerce; they have direct access to all their peers and can discuss the matter of the guidelines the most effectively. They can also set 'soft' sanctions/ controls, and rewards for those companies who implement guidelines well; they can be a change agent in setting standards of negotiation in a positive way. Government officials, Academia and NGOs (representing stakeholders) should be involved in the primary discussions on implementing the guidelines for each branch of industry, to make it more tangible.

I hope that some of my thoughts can be of help, I enjoyed thinking about these issues from a Dutch/Chinese perspective,

I hope to hear your reaction soon,

Kind regards,

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