

FIHRRST ASSISTING INDONESIAN MINISTRIES TO ESTABLISH INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS BASED STANDARDS

By: Marzuki Darusman (Chair of FIHRRST)

While the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights define the respective roles of government and business in ensuring business entities respect human rights throughout their operations, dissemination and implementation of the Guiding Principles falls under the mandate of national governments. That this may not currently be at the forefront of State policy can perhaps be gleaned from the fact that only 18 of the 193 UN Member States took it upon themselves to respond to the UN Working Group's 2015 survey of their efforts to implement the Guiding Principles in business enterprises where the State itself is an economic actor.¹

There are many reasons for this, not least the Guiding Principles being relatively new and many governments, and state-owned enterprises, having yet to entirely come to grips with what compliance really entails. This is something of which the Association For International Human Rights Reporting Standards (FIHRRST) is well aware. An international not-for-profit association established in Belgium, FIHRRST was specifically set up to promote and disseminate human rights ideals. Part of its work in this field is the development and promotion of standards by which adherence to human rights principles can be demonstrated. For if something is important enough to be warrant consideration then it should certainly be reported.

Moreover, with over five years having passed since the Guiding Principles were adopted, the time for their implementation is now. Thus to demonstrate the effectiveness and adaptability of its standards based on the Business and Human Rights international Standard for Certification (BHRISC 2011), FIHRRST is working with government at both national and city level in Indonesia to develop human rights based certification standards in line with the Guiding Principles that will be applicable to the Indonesian environment.

In its cooperation with the Ministry of Industry, FIHRRST is conducting training exercises to socialize the Guiding Principles and the advantages their implementation brings, together with those of certification of compliance to standards based on these principles. More importantly, it is also working with the Ministry to develop an Indonesian standard based on BHRISC 2011 that will prove suitable for implementation across Indonesian industry, including state-owned enterprises.

Similar cooperation is being carried out with the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries to develop a rights-based Indonesian fisheries standard based on the FIHRRST Fisheries BHRISC standard (FHRISC). This will form the basis for tackling illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing and replacing it by a

¹ 13 Nov 2015 http://business-humanrights.org/en/2015-un-working-group-survey-on-states-as-economic-actors?utm_source=Business+%26+human+rights+-+Weekly+Update&utm_campaign=0b6eb798e4-Weekly+Update+18+November+201511+17+2015&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_3a0b8cd0d0-0b6eb798e4-181893777

certified human rights system to provide customers with certainty of product untainted by slavery or other human rights abuses.

In both cases the resultant Indonesian standard will be held by the respective ministry, who will also be responsible for accreditation of suitably qualified certification bodies to carry out compliance audit, which in the case of fisheries, for example, is likely to form part of the licensing process.

Meanwhile, the work continues with the city government of Bandung as first reported in late April,² based on the FIHRRST Government BHRISC standard (GHRISC). The Bandung Charter of a Human Rights City will be officially launched on 10 December, International Human Rights Day, a particularly fitting date this year as it marks the commencement of a year-long campaign to mark the 50th anniversary of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which were adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1966.

Sharing the belief that observance of respect for human rights begins at the individual community level, several other cities in Indonesia have already approached FIHRRST to assist them in undertaking a similar approach to transparency of governance. The movement is growing.

Although for convenience sake, FIHRRST's initial operations have been based out of its Indonesian office, it is ready to engage with governments elsewhere and others who wish to know more. Further details on this and FIHRRST's work overall can be found on its website (<http://www.fihrrst.org>).

² 30 Apr 2015 <http://business-humanrights.org/en/indonesian-mayor-declares-bandung-human-rights-city-business-human-rights-tools-used-for-audit-checks>