

Business Community Affirms that Respect for Human Rights is a Key Contribution to Sustainable Development

Statement in Support of UN Guiding Principles and Sustainable Development Goals

The historic adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) this year put people at the centre of sustainable development and issued a global call to action to build a more just, more equitable and more sustainable future for all.

The SDGs acknowledge the critical role business can play in driving economic growth and development, and call on business to apply creativity and innovation to help solve global sustainable development challenges. Private sector financing, economic activities and innovation can be major drivers of productivity, inclusive economic growth and poverty alleviation. Core to the SDGs' vision is better protection of, and respect for, human rights and basic freedoms in the economic sphere. However, governance gaps within and between countries at times allow investment and commerce to contribute enormously to economic growth while also having unintended impacts on the rights of the vulnerable. Related, while responsible businesses can be a force for good, business activities that do not respect human rights undermine sustainable development.

This makes the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights a powerful and critical companion to the SDGs. Indeed, the UN General Assembly resolution that adopted the SDGs (A/RES/70/1) explicitly references the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the labour standards of the International Labour Organization. Since their unanimous endorsement by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011, the Guiding Principles have become a global reference point for the respective roles, duties and responsibilities of States and businesses with regard to business-related human rights impacts.

We, the undersigned organizations, reaffirm our commitment to the UN Guiding Principles and to continuing to promote their implementation among our business networks (including at the national level) and the global business community. We urge companies everywhere to scale up their efforts to respect universally accepted human rights throughout their operations, value chains and business relationships. Meeting the corporate responsibility to respect human rights is a key contribution and vehicle through which business can help achieve the broader vision of peaceful and inclusive societies embraced by the SDGs.



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