



Summary Report: Business & Human Rights in Brazil

24 November 2014

Your Excellency President Mrs Dilma Rousseff:

Congratulations for being re-elected President of Brazil. It is a remarkable achievement that bestows upon you both enormous rights and responsibilities. As stated in our previous report ([available in Portuguese](#)), 2014 has been a particularly important year for Brazil, with the presidential elections and the FIFA World Cup. The aim of this new report is to introduce to you the subject of business and human rights, and make some recommendations about future challenges and opportunities in this area. This subject is increasingly important globally, and in Brazil in particular, concerning and impacting the lives of almost all Brazilians. Your next presidency from 2015 to 2019 presents an opportunity to address these concerns by adopting some important measures in the Government.

Main concerns about essential business and human rights issues that should be a priority on the agenda of the President of Brazil:

- The right to land and housing rights
- Impact on indigenous peoples and *Quilombolas*; free, prior and informed consent/consultation
- Abuses of labour rights, including slave-like labour
- Environmental contamination with impacts on people's health and access to water
- Information technology and the right to privacy
- Public procurement and monitoring of supply chains
- Impacts of public works related to the 2016 Rio Olympics

International framework on business and human rights:

Still not well known in Brazil, the [United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) (UNGPs) were adopted by consensus by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011 with the aim of offering parameters to prevent and deal with negative human rights impacts related to business activities. Also in 2011, a UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights was created. Civil society organizations and companies in Brazil have started to implement the UNGPs into their work and this trend will only increase in the future.

Recommendations to the President of Brazil:

I. Comply with and implement laws that contribute to sustainable growth while at the same time respect and promote human rights.

II. Ensure the rights of communities affected by business activities; promote dialogue and transparency.

III. Ensure international human rights standards are met in project finance, procurement and taxation policy.

Considering that in the coming years Brazil will continue expanding a long list of development projects, works and events, with significant social and environmental impacts, it is very important that you enact and implement, as early as possible in your new presidency term, policies and specific actions that deal with these issues that are crucial to the country.

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Authors:

- [Business & Human Rights Resource Centre](#) brings information on companies' human rights impacts, positive and negative, to a global audience. Its website also provides tools & guidance for implementation of companies' human rights responsibilities, including a portal on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Our International Advisory Network is chaired by Mary Robinson, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights & President of Ireland. More information is available [here and in](#) a profile of our work by the *Financial Times* entitled "[A fair approach to human rights](#)". The Resource Centre was recently named as recipient of the [2013 Dodd Prize in International Justice and Human Rights](#).
- [Repórter Brasil](#) was founded in 2001 by journalists, social scientists and educators with the aim to foster reflection and action about fundamental human rights of peoples and workers in Brazil. Because of its important work, it has become one of the most important sources of information about forced labour in the country. Its news, investigations, researches and educational methodology have been used by leaders in the government, companies and also civil society organizations as tools to advance the protection of human rights.