UN Global Compact Annual Local Networks Forum

Summary report of knowledge-sharing session

Partnering for human rights: case studies and best practices

19 May 2011, Copenhagen

As Chair of the Working Group on Business and Human Rights of the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) assisted the UN Global Compact Network Germany in holding a knowledge-sharing session at the 2011 UN Global Compact Annual Local Networks Forum (ALNF), focusing on opportunities for UNGC Local Networks and NHRIs to cooperate to promote business adherence to the UNGC’s human rights principles:

- **Principle 1**: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights

- **Principle 2**: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

The Annual Forum provides an opportunity for UN Global Compact Local Networks to engage with each other to exchange information, ideas and knowledge on a yearly basis.

The 2011 knowledge-sharing session comprised two parts. Part I considered approaches taken by UNGC Local Networks around the world to promoting UNGC Principles 1 and 2 above.

Part II, to which this summary report relates, was titled Partnering for human rights: Case studies and best practices. The session included three presentations providing cases studies of recent cooperation and initiatives between NHRIs and UNGC Local Networks from across world regions.

The case studies will be included in an Information Note for NHRIs and UNGC Local Networks, highlighting opportunities for cooperation, to be published in 2011.
The session was facilitated by Pierre Sainé, Chair of the UN Global Compact (UNGC) Human Rights Working Group. Presentations from NHRI and UNGC local network representatives were followed by a Question and Answer session.

For further information:

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UNGC Local Network Germany: http://www.globalcompact.de/index.php?id=30

UNGC Local Networks:
http://www.unglobalcompact.org/NetworksAroundTheWorld/index.html

UNGC Human Rights Working Group:

**Australia**

Rosemary Sainty, Global Compact Network Australia (GCNA) described ongoing cooperation underway between the GCNA and the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC), Australia’s NHRI.

In 2010, the GCNA launched a Business and Human Rights Working Group, which has become the focal point of its activities on business and human rights.

From inputs obtained at Business and Human rights Working Group meetings, the GCNA has been able to more clearly identify the types of information and support required by business participants to engage with and effectively address human rights issues in practical ways.

The AHRC had already produced user-friendly education materials for businesses in Australia that explain the scope of corporate responsibility for human rights in various business sectors, including the extractive and financial services industries.

The launch of GCNA’s Business and Human Rights working group was supported by the AHRC, and the two organisations are now collaborating on various projects, including updating of the AHRC’s Fact Sheets on business and human rights (see http://www.hreoc.gov.au/human_rights/corporate_social_responsibility/index.html ).
Ms Sainty identified a number of benefits of collaboration between the Australian GC Local Network and AHRC. From GCNA’s perspective, the collaboration gave a valuable opportunity to access AHRC’s human rights expertise, network and media experience. For the AHRC, the cooperation provided a useful platform to engage directly in dialogue on human rights issues with the GCNA’s business participants. Ms Sainty further noted that the GCNA took an open and informal approach to its early discussions with the AHRC, which enabled the two organisations to identify synergies and opportunities organically through a dialogue approach.

### Republic of Korea

Chul-ki Ju of the Global Compact Network Korea (GCNK) started by providing some background information about the Korean national context, including recent advances in legal recognition of labour rights, and how this has influenced its strategy and approach.

GCNK established a Working Group on Human Rights in 2010, as a platform for dialogue with government, companies, NGOs, media and other civil society actors in Korea. GCNK has found that the Working Group is a good medium for highlighting global trends in human rights and business out to GCNK participating companies, and also for disseminating best practices of Korean companies, e.g. regarding supply chains.

GCNK also launched a *Forum on Business and Human Rights* in September 2010. This initiative is was co-organised with the National Human Rights Commission of Korea, Korea’s NHRI, and the Korea Human Rights Foundation. The *Forum* held four meetings in 2010, which included presentations on the human rights activities of Korean companies. The *Forum* has also published a joint report, “Understanding Human Rights Management” in May 2011.

In addition, GCNK has participated in a number of regional and international events, enabling it to extend its network to include a broad range of bodies relevant
to building understanding and appropriate management practices of business and human rights issues of GCNK participants.

Finally, the National Human Rights Commission of Korea and GCNK, along with the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions (ICC), UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and International Organisation of Migration (IOM) will jointly sponsor the Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop on Business Human Rights. This Workshop will be held on 11-13 October 2011 in Seoul. The Workshop will develop a Regional Action Plan on business and human rights for the Asia Pacific Region and promote capacity building of NHRIs in the Asia Pacific region on business and human rights, including through development of customised training kits.

| Global Compact Network Korea: | http://www.unglobalcompact.kr/ |

**Denmark**

Allen Lerberg Jørgensen, Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) and Christine Lohmann, of Danish Industry (DI) informed the meeting of a collaborative project between various stakeholders, including DIHR and DI, to produce the UN Global Compact Self Assessment Tool (http://www.globalcompactselfassessment.org/). This tool enables companies to undertake self-assessment of their implementation of the ten UNGC Principles across the four ‘areas’ of environment, labour, corruption and human rights.

In the tool development process, DIHR, which is Denmark’s NHRI, contributed expertise on human rights and business, acquired through its development of tools and methodologies for companies in assessing their human rights risks and impacts.
UNGC Local Networks in Bangladesh, Vietnam and Kenya were then involved in road-testing the tool, helping to improve its user-friendliness and value-added for businesses, and in considering local and regional context issues.

Danish Institute for Human Rights: http://www.humanrightsbusiness.org/
Danish Industry: http://di.dk/English/Pages/English.aspx