Greetings,

With the launch of the last paper in our foundational paper series, B-Tech has set out its framework on how to apply the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) to address the key human rights risks from digital technologies. Only by effectively addressing such risks can we fully reap the benefits, including for human rights, of these technologies.

To make the foundational papers "lived documents", we will be intensifying our outreach and consultative efforts in the upcoming months, across different geographies and stakeholder groups.

Please note that in the light of the recent security concerns related to Constant Contact, B-Tech is sending out this newsletter by email instead of using a mailing service provider.

Thank you for your understanding.

Updates from the B-Tech Project

Foundational paper on Key Characteristics of the State Duty to Protect

This paper is part of the UN Human Rights B-Tech Project foundational paper series. The series is being released to frame discussions on the implementation of the UNGPs in the technology sector. Access the paper **here.**

The paper explores State action in the following areas:

• States implementing a "smart-mix" of policy and regulatory measures, both nationally and where relevant, via international approaches.

• Potential opportunities created by trends towards mandatory human rights due diligence which would apply to a large number of technology companies.

• Situations where States contract with, partner with, license from or support technology companies ("State-Business Nexus").

• How to increase State capacity and internal policy coherence to address the complexity, scale and fast evolving nature of the technology industry.

New blog by Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions

The blog highlights the need for greater policy coherence between State action on digital technologies and their duty to protect human rights. It explores the essential role national human rights institutions (NHRIs) play in ensuring public policy affecting digital technology companies effectively protects human rights in line with the standards laid out in the

UNGPs. This is especially important at a time that State action to drive rights-respecting conduct among technology companies is increasingly pressing. No matter in which policy field States take action, it should be in alignment across different portfolios and NHRIs should assist in advising and reviewing alignment. Access the blog post by the Global Alliance of NHRIs **here**.

Launch of the B-Tech Community of Practice

The Community of Practice (COP) consists of a small cohort of tech company representatives with the purpose of advancing business respect for human rights in the technology industry. Over the course of a year of Core Sessions and Special Briefings, B-Tech staff and external experts will offer participants the opportunity to discuss the implementation and operationalization of B-Tech project guidance and recommendations made within the framework of the UNPGs. The sessions are confidential in nature and B-Tech will produce public communications distilling key themes and concepts emerging from the sessions. Read more about tech company involvement in B-Tech **here**.

Upcoming Events

RightsCon 2021: Sessions involving B-Tech

At RightsCon's tenth anniversary edition, B-Tech will be involved in the following sessions:

- *How can company-led grievance mechanisms address human rights concerns of rightsholders? Lessons from the B-tech papers on Access to Remedy* (with Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs)
- *Digital Technologies, Human Rights Due Diligence, and the State-Business Nexus* (with GNI)
- *Are We in This Together? COVID19 and Digital Rights in the MENA Region* (with SMEX)
- *"Give a Smile, Get a Smile!" The Human Rights Impacts of Emotion Recognition in the Workplace* (with ECNL)

Further details will soon be released via RightsCon.

Save the date!

Our office's teams working on B-Tech and the Accountability and Remedy Project will host a **two-day conference on 23-24 September 2021 on Access to Remedy** in the Technology Sector**.** The conference will likely be held in a hybrid format consisting of in-person and online participation. More information will be released when it is available.

Past events

Expert consultation with Geneva Academy on the State Duty to Protect

In February 2021, the UN B-Tech project and the Geneva Academy co-organized a virtual dialogue on bridging governance gaps in the age of technology, with a focus on the State duty to protect human rights. This consultation included over 30 experts, from government, national human rights institutions, civil society and other relevant stakeholders. The purpose of this discussion was to assess the key features of the UNGPs' State Duty to Protect pillar, as well as to provide comments on the draft foundational paper for B-Tech Project Focus Area 4. For further information about the consultation, please read our summary note, as well as the agenda and concept note.

B-Tech at WEF Global Governance Technology Summit

B-Tech participated in a panel discussion on countering harmful content. Panellists discussed how businesses and governments can design and enforce more effective policies for content accountability and transparency. B-Tech emphasized the importance of the international human rights framework as the underlying principles for how to navigate content governance. Read more here.

Webinar Digital Technology Companies– Investments and Human Rights

On 17 May, the PRI and B-Tech co-hosted a webinar on how to advance respect for human rights among technology companies by activating investors to operate responsibly. The Swedish Council of Ethics, NEI Investments, and B-Tech explored how institutional investors across asset classes can align their investment activities with the expectations laid out in the UNGPs and thereby ensure that their investments in the technology sector avoid negative impacts.