

Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises

Multi-stakeholder Consultation on “Corporate Influence in the Political and Regulatory Sphere”

**5 May 2022, 16:15 – 17:15 CET
Room XXVI, Palais des Nations, Geneva**

The [UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights](#) (“the Working Group”) decided to devote the next annual thematic report to the 77th session of the General Assembly (October 2022) to the examination of links between corporate political engagement practices and responsible business conduct.

The Working Group had previously planned to issue a short information note on this topic and issued [a call for inputs](#) in this regard with deadline for submission in November 2021. Inputs received in that context will be posted on the page in due course. Subsequently, the Working Group decided to further develop its work on this topic in the form of its annual thematic report to the 77th session of the General Assembly. The report will explore, among other topics, how to encourage responsible political engagement, how to prevent what constitutes undue political influence by businesses— sometimes termed “corporate capture”—and how such activities may undermine and be inconsistent with the corporate responsibility to respect human rights set out by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (“the Guiding Principles”).

The report aims to address how businesses should account for this responsibility and exercise human rights due diligence (HRDD) when engaging in a variety of activities in the political and regulatory sphere – from lobbying to political donations and to decisions about whether to speak publicly about policy debates that may impact their employees and other members of their community. The report will focus on how HRDD can identify negative impacts for people and planet resulting from corporate influence activities and good practices in terms of how to prevent and mitigate such impacts. The report also aims to create greater coherence between businesses’ commitments to respect human rights and their political and lobbying activities, which are not always in alignment.

In order to guide the discussions, the Working Group would like to invite participants to provide their views on any of the following questions:

1. What is your understanding of undue corporate influence in policy and regulatory matters? What challenges have you observed? Could you think of any concrete examples in activities or operations of your organization?



2. Do you think there is a kind of political engagement by businesses that could be defined as appropriate or necessary? Could you please share concrete examples?
3. What measures could States take to prevent and address corporate political activities that may undermine the State's ability to protect human rights and businesses' responsibility to respect human rights?
4. What are good practices that business could implement to avoid undue political influence or engaging in political activities that negatively impact human rights?
5. What are the specific human rights risks posed by corporate influence in the political and regulatory sphere to groups in most vulnerable situations such as women and girls, indigenous communities, human rights defenders, persons with disabilities, persons with different sexual orientation or gender identity or migrant workers?
6. How does corporate influence in the political and regulatory sphere impact the ability of victims of business-related human rights abuses to seek access to effective remedies? What specific challenges do rightsholders face in accessing effective remedy?
7. What recommendations on this topic would you like the Working Group to include in its report?

Moreover, the Working Group welcomes any written submissions in response to the questions above, which should be sent to ohchr-wg-business@un.org by **29 May 2022**. (Please indicate "written input– Corporate influence in the political and regulatory sphere – [name of the organization]" in the subject line.)

Unless indicated otherwise, OHCHR will post the responses received on the Working Group's website.

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