

Note: There is a three-minute limit and speakers must sign up on the speaker sign up sheets in the room before the session begins. It will also be possible to submit the interventions in written form for posting on the Forum page.

Check Against Delivery

**Priorities for Action and Collaboration with National Human Rights Institutions:
Statement during Closing Session of UN Forum on Business and Human Rights**

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Chair, International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions

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Mr. Chairperson and Working Group Members,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As Chairperson of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, I wish to congratulate the United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights for facilitating this invaluable exchange of a diverse range of perspectives and experiences on Business and Human Rights at this Forum.

The Forum has refocused attention on the timely topic of Business and Human Rights, the challenges for implementation, strategies for advancing the Business and Human Rights agenda within our various capacities; nationally and internationally, while many questions still remain open.

As nationally established human rights institutions across Africa, the Americas, Asia Pacific and Europe, guided by international human rights principles, the UN Paris Principles, NHRIs have a unique role to play in bringing international, regional and national perspectives to the critical issue of Business and Human Rights. They are ideally placed to bridge the gap between international human rights norms and standards and their implementation on the ground. This has been recognized in multiple resolutions of the United Nations' General Assembly and Human Rights Council.

As most of you are aware, Paris Principles-compliant NHRIs have been engaging States, business enterprises, and civil society for many years in the task of promoting and protecting human rights at the national level.

The unique role and expertise of NHRIs with respect to business and human rights has been refined through the 2010 *Edinburgh Declaration on Business and Human Rights* adopted at the 10th International Conference of NHRIs, which serves as a critical tool and guideline for NHRIs in promoting and protecting Business and Human Rights.

Contributions by NHRIs, the ICC Working Group on Business and Human Rights and the ICC to the work of former UN Special Representative John Ruggie, and more recently to the UN Working Group in January and May 2012, demonstrate our collective and continued interest in and intent to work constructively with others to achieve common goals. To this effect the *Edinburgh Declaration and UN Guiding Principles* serve as key sources of reference.

Due to time constraints I cannot elaborate further but encourage everyone to pick up additional information about the mandate, role and actions of NHRIs in the area of business and human rights which is available at the 'marketplace' outside room XX and on the ICC website.

My key message today is that, in accordance with the Paris Principles, *Edinburgh Declaration and UN Guiding Principles on Human Rights*, **NHRIs remain committed to working on business and human rights issues with all stakeholders at the international, regional and national levels.**

- NHRIs will continue to work with all stakeholders and all rights-holders to remove or lower the barriers to remedies and to encourage effective, creative, credible and equitable resolution of complaints and grievances; and to ensure policy coherence on human rights between governments and business enterprises, at the domestic level and in multilateral institutions.
- NHRIs will continue to exercise their unique role as a bridge between governments, civil society and business enterprises in holding all concerned stakeholders to the highest level of accountability in terms of ensuring respect for Human Rights by Businesses; to work with businesses to help them understand domestic and international human rights laws and policies; to address emerging and systematic issues; and to provide tools for enhancing risk, compliance and impact assessments and on-going due diligence processes.

In the Forum's sessions and side events, we have also presented some of our ideas and priorities for future actions, including for a comprehensive capacity-building agenda.

Over the coming year, we hope that we will forge new partnerships and tackle the existing challenges related to corporate conduct with renewed energy and with a steadfast commitment to human rights for all.