

Third Annual United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights

SIDE EVENT organised by:



FAIR PLAY
HUMAN RIGHTS CONSULTING

Geneva, 3 December 2014, 8:00-9:30am

Embedding the corporate responsibility to respect human rights: trends and challenges in the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles towards the promotion of a multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation

Background information

There are numerous good tools and guides on Business and Human Rights already in circulation. We believe the time has come to move *beyond* developing and distributing guides, to a next phase to *build capacity*. This phase should be about providing *practical* support to companies who have started to address the challenges, dilemmas and gaps they face when trying to embed respect for human rights in their operations.

Companies now ask themselves: “*How to get it right?*” While there is no unequivocal answer to this question, it is possible to highlight trends and identify good practices to build upon in order to accelerate the pace of implementing the UN Guiding Principles (UNGPs) in business.

In the framework of the European Hub on Business & Human Rights, CSR Europe has engaged with member companies and national partner organisations to building capacities on how to **effectively embed respect for human rights across business operations**.

Two of the perspectives taken into account:

- The key elements of embedding the respect for human rights and how to cascade messages and approaches to company divisions and affiliates
- The key aspects of embedding and how to adapt it to the local context in local country operations

Fair Play Human Rights Consulting has built partnerships to engage with corporate actors as they work to address their human rights impacts. Noting that this process differs vastly from one company to the next, the true test of practical implementation and embedding of human rights lies in narrowly tailoring individual solutions for companies whilst simultaneously, drawing broadly on best practices, industry benchmarks, and international guidelines.

Focus:

Embedding the respect for human rights within companies: Experience and challenges in making respect for human rights part of everyday business.

Organisers:

CSR Europe:

- The leading European business network for corporate social responsibility
- Convener of the European Hub on Business and Human Rights organised in partnership with 12 National Partner Organisations across Europe
- Speaker in the Second UN Forum (2013) on the topic of Assessing the effectiveness of company-level grievance mechanisms; presented findings on CSR Europe's work on a practical tool for [Management of Complaints Assessment \(MOC-A\)](#).

Fair Play Human Rights Consulting:

- Boutique consulting practice specialising in rights-based analysis and recommendations for companies
- Working in partnership with other legal and consulting firms to mobilise teams of appropriate specialists
- Founding member of Lawyers in Business and Human Rights

Session Objectives:

It is our objective for this side event to:

- (1) Facilitate a dialogue among peer companies and other stakeholders by addressing key challenges of embedding the respect for human rights within their operations
- (2) Discuss how companies can effectively coordinate – also involving several functions
- (3) Discuss how the public policy dimension plays an important role in this dialogue, providing an additional driver for companies to put human rights higher on their business agendas
- (4) Share insights, gathered in the framework of the activities carried out by the organisers.

Participants (speakers):

- **One moderator: Jan Noterdaeme, Senior Advisor on External Relations, CSR Europe**
To introduce the wider context of the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles, facilitate the panel and stimulate active involvement of the audience in the discussion.
To explain how the European Commission promotes a global level playing field on human rights and the integration into key public policy areas such as external relations, trade, development and industry
- **One expert: Mary Johnson, Human Rights expert and founder at Fair Play Human Rights Consulting**
To make the link with the wider implementation of the UN Guiding Principles and give insights on company practice in general.
- **Four business speakers (from CSR Europe's members and non members):**
 - **Monica Bowen-Schrire, Senior Advisor-Corporate Sustainability & Environment, Vattenfall AB**
 - **Sibylle Baumgartner, Project Manager Corporate Responsibility, Kuoni Travel Holding**
 - **Yves Nissim, VP, head of Transformation and operation in CSR, Orange**
 - **Enel representative**To share their experiences as globally operating companies, focusing on:
 - Their overall approach to human rights, highlighting some key example of practices
 - Challenges and lessons learned
- **One NGO: Jana Heinze, Project Manager at econsense**
To outline a wider perspective on trends and insights of implementation of UNGPs (based on a survey with 40 companies) and foster a multi-stakeholder engagement process

Format:

Moderated panel discussion (**90 min**):

- Each speaker is invited to give a 3-min presentation of their organisation and the relevance of the topic for their work

- Speakers enter into a moderated discussion around key topics: (1) expectations towards companies (contained in the UNGPs) on embedding human rights and trends in company practice; (2) challenges, gaps and opportunities; (3) importance of multi-stakeholder dialogue and engagement.
- To ensure an interactive session, audience participation is encouraged throughout the discussion (questions for and from the audience),

Target Audience:

This side event is open to the participation of all Forum participants.

We believe this panel is of particular interest for:

- a) business representatives: multinationals, SMEs, and other business enterprises
- b) bodies and specialised agencies and intergovernmental organisations, regional organisations and mechanisms in the field of human rights
- c) national and transnational human rights institutions
- d) transnational corporations
- e) business associations and labour unions
- f) academics and experts in the field of business and human rights.