

UN Forum on Business and Human Rights 2017

“National Action Plans and access to remedy”

29 November 2017

Statement by Marc BICHLER, Ambassador-at-Large for Human Rights, Luxembourg

Mr. Chairman,

It is my privilege to take the floor here this morning on behalf of Luxembourg and on the topic of National Action Plans to implement the United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGP) on Business and Human Rights, including of the very important topic of access to remedy.

Luxembourg is on the record for being a staunch supporter of the multilateral system, not least through its ongoing Official Development Assistance of 1 percent of Gross National Income, its non permanent membership in the UN Security Council from 2013 to 2014 and its participation in international peacekeeping missions. Obviously the respect of human rights is the third important pillar of our commitment to multilateralism.

Luxembourg has applied for membership in the Human Rights Council for the period 2022 to 2024 and we would be greatly honored to serve on that body, were member states to entrust us with that mission at the elections in 2021. In order to prepare for that important task, we consider that candidates do well in doing their internal national homework on all human rights topics, including promoting and implementing the UNGP on Business and Human Rights, in their three aspects, namely the duty of states to protect human rights, the responsibility of businesses to respect them and the provision of access to remedy, as adopted, at the HRC, in 2011. In that regard, we also welcome the cross-reference to human rights in Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Luxembourg, as a member state of the European Union, has committed to producing its National Action Plan before the end of this year, and I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, that efforts to do so are in full swing. In that regard, contacts with your office have greatly helped in structuring our internal works.

In Luxembourg, we are in the lucky position to have one single entry point – called the *Union des Entreprises luxembourgeoises* – through which we can reach out to all private sector businesses and, on the basis of their already existing efforts in Corporate Social Responsibility, step up sensitization efforts on the topic of business and human rights. We will make good use of that facility in the months to come, and intend – on the basis of our contacts and discussions – to associate the private sector, as well as civil society, closer with the government’s own efforts in a more formal way, with concrete practical commitments attached to it for the prevention and mitigation of human rights violations, adequate policies, due diligence, and remediation mechanisms. This – we hope – will ease the process of implementation which should of course be assessed through appropriate channels.

On this background, we would welcome the visit of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises in Luxembourg. We are convinced that the dialogue we would have on that occasion would be of great help to uphold the efforts by both government and the private sector in the field of business and human rights over the long haul.

Mr. Chairman,

In concluding, let me thank you once again for the opportunity to present my country's perspective and its efforts on this important endeavor, not without congratulating the conveners of this year's UN Forum for the undeniable success of the event. I am looking forward to continuing our exchanges and will report on it to the government's inter-ministerial committee on human rights no later than Thursday next week.