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

REFERENCE: SPB/SHD/MCS/ff

**Open Consultation on the strategic elements of National Action Plans in the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights**

**Thursday 20 February 2014 - 15:00 to 18:00  
Room XVIII, Palais des Nations**

**National Actions Plans and global uptake of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights**

In its first report to the Human Rights Council in 2012 the Working Group on Business and Human Rights called on States to consider the adoption of National Action Plans in the implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. This call has been reiterated in subsequent discussions with States, including in 2013 when the Working Group met with States for a pre-annual Forum session on National Action Plans. This meeting resulted in a first round of peer learning and it identified a number of early achievements, opportunities for further policy formulation and regulatory reform, as well as the challenges faced around the world.

The Working Group considers National Action Plans one key instrument in the global implementation of the Guiding Principles. For starters, they enable coordination among government agencies at the domestic level; they provide a platform for dialogue among civil society, businesses and States; they encourage the identification of short, medium and long-term action in the regulatory and policy domains; and they provide a process by which adjustments can be made to respond to emerging needs. National Action Plans also provide transparency on the steps that States intend to take to implement the Guiding Principles. As much as the Guiding Principles are an important and useful policy tool for international organizations, translating these standards into concrete action and solutions on the ground requires passing through national government processes. Today's debate on business and human rights includes calls from stakeholders for clearer commitments and results. National Action Plans help ensure that States turn the Guiding Principles into practice, with local and global implications.

**Objective of the Open Consultation**

At its sixth session in November 2013, the Working Group resolved to devote its 2014 report to the General Assembly to the subject of National Action Plans. In this regard, it is hosting a three hour Open Consultation, which is open to all stakeholders, to explore the key issues of National Action Plans. The outcomes from the Open Consultation will feed into the Working Group's general work and, specifically, its 2014 report to the UN General Assembly. The Open Consultation is one of the methods used to consult views and gather information for the report. Further research and meetings will take place. The Working Group will keep stakeholders informed on this.

The aim of the Open Consultation is to solicit and explore the views of all stakeholders on the strategic elements of National Action Plans, with particular attention to:

- The role of different stakeholders in the development of National Action Plans;
- Key substantive content for National Action Plans, such as policy guidance on reporting, procurement, capacity building and regulatory reform;
- The implementation and periodicity of review of National Action Plans;
- The importance of National Action Plans in the Global South and the challenges facing their development across this wide region.

### **Open Consultation Format**

The panel will start with opening remarks from Mr Michael Addo, Vice-Chairperson of the Working Group on Business and Human Rights.

Moderator Ms Alexandra Guáqueta, Chair of the UN Working Group, will then call on the invited panellists to present their perspectives on the strategic elements of National Action Plans in the implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Each round of presentations will be followed by an open debate and comments from the floor. All speakers from the floor are asked to keep their interventions short, dialogue-focused and specific to the topic, with a maximum speaking time of 2 minutes. There will not be a list of speakers.

### **Registration and practical information**

The Open Consultation is open all stakeholders.

All participants are invited to register for the consultation before 18 February. Registration is mandatory for all participants who do not hold a badge for the Palais des Nations.

More information about the Open Consultation, including the registration form, is available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Business/Pages/WGSessions.aspx>. For any registration queries please contact: [registrationwgbusiness@ohchr.org](mailto:registrationwgbusiness@ohchr.org)

A listen-in number will be established to allow those who cannot attend in person to dial in and listen to the exchange. Stakeholders who are unable to attend may also submit their input to the Open Consultation in writing to: [wg-business@ohchr.org](mailto:wg-business@ohchr.org)