

## Outcome Note

### The thirty-fourth session of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises

- I. The Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises (the Working Group) held its **thirty-fourth session from 6 to 10 February 2023 in Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland**. The Session was attended by: Ms. Pichamon Yeophantong (chairperson), Mr. Damilola S. Olawuyi (Vice-Chairperson), Ms. Fernanda Hopenhaym, and Mr. Robert McCorquodale.
- II. During the session, the Working Group met with representatives from different stakeholder groups, including UN agencies such as the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Development Programme (UNDP) and International Labour Organization (ILO), international organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as representatives of UN Member States, businesses, and civil society.
- III. During the session, the Working Group discussed a wide range of issues, such as priority themes and activities for the year 2023 and beyond. These included:

#### A. Thematic Reports

1. Updates were provided on the preparation of the Working Group's upcoming thematic report to the Human Rights Council (53<sup>rd</sup> HRC session), on development finance institutions (DFIs) and human rights. The call for inputs is available [here](#) with deadline for contributions by 3 March 2023. Consultations on this topic were held on 9 – 10 February, with States, CSOs, DFIs and businesses;
2. A decision was made that the 2023 thematic report to the General Assembly (78<sup>th</sup> session) will focus on the extractive industries, just transition, and human rights. A call for inputs will be issued in due course;
3. The thematic report to the 56<sup>th</sup> HRC session in June 2024 will likely focus on the role of investors, standards for Environmental, Social, and Governance, and human rights.

#### B. Country Visits

1. The Working Group will be visiting Argentina from 16 to 28 February 2023;
2. The Working Group received invitations from Tunisia and Japan: exchanges on dates with both Governments are ongoing;
3. The Working Group has engaged with several other representatives of Member States to discuss the possibility of country visits in the coming years.

#### C. The Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights

1. The Working Group discussed lessons learned from the 2022 11<sup>th</sup> session of the Annual Forum, and priority actions to be taken in relation to the preparations for the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum scheduled to take place from 27 to 29 November 2023 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. Discussions included:
  - i. The theme and concept note for the upcoming Forum, which will then be chaired by Damilola Olawuyi, currently the Vice-Chair of the WG. This year's theme will be 'Towards Effective Change in Implementing Obligations, Responsibilities and Remedies';

- ii. A call for submissions for sessions, with clear guidelines for submission, will also be forthcoming;
- iii. A report on the 2022 Annual Forum will be presented at the 53<sup>rd</sup> session of the HRC.

#### **D. Regional Forums**

1. The Working Group discussed members' involvement in upcoming regional forums, including:
  - i. The 4th edition of the South Asia Forum, 20-22 March 2023, organized jointly with UNDP-Asia Pacific, OHCHR, and IOM. Information available [here](#);
  - ii. The Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum in Asia Pacific, 6-9 June 2023;
  - iii. The Africa Regional Forum, dates TBC;
  - iv. Possible involvement in events in Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and the Pacific.
2. The Working Group discussed the work done under the Responsible Business Conduct in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) project, including:
  - i. The 8th LAC Regional Forum, to be held on 27-29 September 2023. Information on the project available [here](#);
  - ii. Upcoming information note on human rights and public procurement in LAC;
  - iii. Upcoming information note on State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and human rights in LAC; and,
  - iv. Upcoming information note on the implementation of UNGPs with regard to the banking sector in LAC.

#### **E. Communications procedure**

1. The Working Group discussed the communications procedure (more information available [here](#)), including:
  - i. Deciding **to continue giving priority to** communications, with a focus on regional balance when possible;
  - ii. Welcoming the idea of trainings to be delivered by the Secretariat to the other mandates within Special Procedures Branch on how to address the private sector in the context of communications.

#### **F. Other projects and knowledge products:**

1. The Working Group discussed finalizing its upcoming information note on climate change;
2. The Working Group discussed finalizing its upcoming report on capacity-building, to be presented at the 53<sup>rd</sup> HRC Session as an addendum.

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