

Outcome note

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

The present outcome note summarizes the key items discussed at the 35th session.

Present: P. Yeophantong, Chair (remotely), D. Olawuyi, Vice-Chair (remotely), F. Hoppenhaym, E. Karska and R. McCorquodale.

- I. The Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises (the Working Group) held its **thirty-fifth session from 1 to 5 May 2023 in Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland.**
- II. During the session it met with representatives of different stakeholders, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNDP, OECD, and ILO, representatives of Member States, businesses, and civil society actors.
- III. During the session, the Working Group discussed a wide range of issues such as priority activities and projects for the year 2023 and beyond. This included:

A. Thematic Reports

1. The Working Group's upcoming thematic reports to the Human Rights Council (HRC) and General Assembly (GA);
 - a) The following reports will be presented at the 53rd session of the HRC in June 2023: "Building Capacity for the Implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights", with addendums on Development Financial Institutions and human rights, on country visits to Liberia, Luxembourg and Argentina, and on the 2022 regional Forum on Latin America and the Caribbean. The report on the eleventh Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights will also be presented at the same session;
 - b) The Vice Chair provided an update on the preparations for the upcoming report to the General Assembly on the extractive industries, just transition, and human rights, to be presented at the 78th session in October 2023. [A call for inputs](#) was issued with deadline for inputs extended to 29 May 2023. Consultations on this topic were held during the session with States, civil society and businesses;
 - c) The report to the HRC by the Working Group in 2024 will likely focus on Environmental, Social, and Governance standards, and the role of investors and human rights.

B. Country Visits

1. The Working Group's country visits for 2023 and beyond:
 - a) From 16 to 28 February 2023 the Working Group visited Argentina; it will conduct a visit to Japan from 24 July to 4 August 2023;
 - b) The Working Group received invitations from Tunisia and Colombia: exchanges on dates with both Governments are ongoing;
 - c) The Working Group has engaged with several other representatives of Member States to discuss the possibility of visits in coming years.

C. The Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights

The Working Group discussed preparations for the 12th Annual Forum scheduled to take place in hybrid format from 27 to 29 November 2023 at Palais des Nations in Geneva, under the theme “Towards Effective Change in Implementing Obligations, Responsibilities and Remedies”. More specifically it started examining the proposals for sessions received following the call for submissions which closed on 21 April 2023. The concept note is available at [Forum web page](#), and a tentative Forum agenda will be issued in July 2023. The tentative agenda will be posted on the dedicated website by the end of September 2023, and all relevant information, including on registration for the Forum will be available at the dedicated webpage in due course.

D. Regional Forums on business and human rights

1. The Working Group discussed members’ involvement and engagement in regional forums in 2023, including:
 - a) A debrief took place on the 4th edition of the South Asia Forum on Business and Human Rights, 20-22 March 2023, organized jointly with UNDP-Asia Pacific, OHCHR, and IOM. Information available [here](#);
 - b) The preparations for the Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum for Asia Pacific, 6-9 June 2023, organized jointly with UNDP-Asia Pacific, OHCHR, and IOM, among others. Information available [here](#);
 - c) The Africa Regional Forum, to be held from 5 to 7 September in Addis Ababa (with 5 September dedicated to side events);
 - d) Dates and modalities for events in Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and the Pacific, still TBD.
2. The Working Group discussed the work done under the Responsible Business Conduct in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) project, including:
 - a) Preparations for the 8th LAC Regional Forum, to be held from 10 to 12 October 2023 - Information on the project available [here](#);
 - b) The information note on human rights and public procurement in LAC available [here](#);
 - c) The information note on State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and human rights in LAC available [here](#); and,
 - d) The upcoming information note on the implementation of UNGPs with regard to the banking sector in LAC expected to be finalized shortly.

E. Communications procedure

The Working Group discussed the communications procedure (more information [here](#)) and decided to **continue to give priority to** communications, with a focus on regional balance when possible.
