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BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS: TOWARDS A COMMON AGENDA FOR ACTION

Conference by Finland's Presidency of the Council of the EU

Brussels, Monday 2 December 2019
Final Agenda



FINNISH
GOVERNMENT

Shift

08:30-09:00

Welcome Coffee/Tea

09:00-09:30

Welcome and Opening Statements

Statements Statements from

- Timo Harakka, Minister of Employment, Finland
- Tiina Astola, Director-General, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST), European Commission

09:30-10:00

Keynote by Professor John Ruggie

Keynote by Professor John Ruggie, Harvard Kennedy School, Chair of Shift, and former Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Business and Human Rights

10.00-11:15

I. Promoting Human Rights Due Diligence through State Financing

A critical way for states to incentivise businesses to respect human rights is through the provision of public financing for private sector investments abroad through development finance, export credit and other forms of support. This discussion will explore the importance of leadership by individual state-based financial institutions and by government in this area.

Moderator: Tyler Gillard, Head of Sector Projects, Responsible Business Conduct Unit, Investment Division, OECD

Discussants:

- Mairead Lavery, CEO, Export Development Canada
- Jaakko Kangasniemi, CEO, Finnfund
- Dante Pesce, Member, UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights
- Joseph Wilde-Ramsing, Coordinator, OECD Watch network, and Senior Researcher, Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO)

Following discussion, brief comments from:

- Lina Sandström, Sustainability Analyst, Andra AP-Fonden / AP2
- Margaret Wachenfeld, Corporate Human Rights Benchmark

Questions are likely to include:

- Where do we see leadership by state-based financial institutions in integrating human rights due diligence into their existing environmental and social risk management approaches, and what does this change in practice?
- How can severe risks to human rights defenders in high-risk contexts be better addressed through enhanced due diligence?
- How can governments play a greater part in bringing greater policy coherence to this area?
- What are appropriate roles for individual Member States in driving this part of the agenda forwards? What are appropriate roles for different EU institutions?

11:15-11:45

Coffee/Tea

11:45-13:30

II. The Role of Regulation in a Mix of Measures to Foster Responsible Business Conduct

From non-financial reporting requirements to supply chain traceability to comprehensive human rights due diligence legislation, we see a range of approaches to incentivise or require business respect for human rights being adopted or debated at the Member State and EU level. This discussion will explore the role of regulatory measures in the “smart mix” of approaches that the UN Guiding Principles call on governments to adopt.

Moderator: Rachel Davis, Vice President, Shift

Discussants:

- Björn Böhning, State Secretary, German Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
- Salla Saastamoinen, Director for Civil and Commercial Justice, DG JUST
- Nina Norjama, Director, Social Responsibility, UPM
- Filip Gregor, Head of Responsible Companies Section, Frank Bold
- Virginie Mahin, Global Social Sustainability and Human Rights Lead, Mondelez

Following discussion, brief comments from:

- Alexandra Kuxova, Policy Officer, Enterprise Europe Network and Internationalisation of SMEs, Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW), European Commission
- Tom Dodd, Policy Officer, Non-Financial Reporting, Directorate-General for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union (DG FISMA), European Commission
- Isabelle Schömann, Confederal Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation
- Rebekah Smith, Deputy Director for Social Affairs, BusinessEurope
- Claire Methven O'Brien, Strategic Adviser, Danish Institute for Human Rights

Questions are likely to include:

- What are the aims of the different mandatory initiatives that we see emerging – such as greater transparency, better prevention of negative impacts, enhanced access to remedy?
- What lessons can we learn from what has already been tried? What is needed to ensure the effectiveness of regulatory measures in practice, both in changing company behaviour and in leading to better outcomes for people on the ground?
- What do businesses see when they look at this landscape – what opportunities do they see to move to a level playing field and what concerns do they have?
- What are appropriate roles for individual Member States in driving this part of the agenda forwards? What are appropriate roles for different EU institutions?

13:30-14:30

Networking and Lunch

Music performance by Miritza Lundberg and Jyrki Myllärinen.

14:30-15:45

III. Using Collective Leverage and Cooperation to Improve Human Rights Outcomes

To address systemic human rights harms deep in global supply chains, we need creative and collaborative approaches to using leverage, involving business, government, international organizations, civil society and others. What have we learnt about what makes cooperation effective between different stakeholders in addressing human rights risks, including in contexts where labour rights are not respected and/or where there are severe risks to human rights defenders?

Moderator: John Morrison, Executive Director, Institute for Human Rights and Business

Discussants:

- Cecilia Tibblad Berntsson, Social Sustainability Manager, H&M
- Jenny Holdcroft, Assistant General Secretary, IndustriALL Global Union
- Madelaine Tuininga, Head of Unit, Trade and Sustainable Development, Generalised System of Preferences, Directorate-General for Trade (DG TRADE), European Commission
- Michael Ineichen, Programme Director, International Service for Human Rights

Following discussion, brief comments from:

- Guus Houttuin, Senior Adviser Trade Issues and MSG Chair, European External Action Service
- Andy Hall, Migrant worker rights specialist

Questions are likely to include:

- How can businesses help ensure respect for human rights defenders, especially in high risk countries or countries with weak rule of law?
- What role can human rights (including labor rights) provisions in free trade agreements play, and how can we support more effective implementation of these provisions?
- What steps can governments take to participate in and support these kinds of collective efforts? What about intergovernmental organisations?
- What are appropriate roles for individual Member States in driving this part of the agenda forwards? What are appropriate roles for different EU institutions?

Music performance by Miritza Lundberg and Jyrki Myllärinen.

15:45-17:00

Plenary Discussion: Towards A Common Agenda for Action

The moderator will facilitate an armchair-style conversation on key components of an agenda for action on the three areas discussed in the conference, and more broadly, to accelerate implementation of the UN Guiding Principles at Member State and EU level

Moderator: Rachel Davis, Vice President, Shift

Discussants:

- Michaela Spaeth, Director for Energy and Climate Policy, Business and Human Rights, International Employee Rights and Employee Issues, German Foreign Ministry
- Heidi Hautala, Vice President, European Parliament
- Christian Ewert, President, amfori
- Lene Wendland, Chief, Business and Human Rights, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Githa Roelans, Head, Multinational Enterprises and Enterprise Engagement Unit, International Labour Organization
- Phil Bloomer, Executive Director, Business and Human Rights Resource Centre
- Christine Kaufman, Chair, Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
- Questions for discussion are likely to include:
- How can we best advance the implementation of a truly 'smart mix' of measures, including government support to business, voluntary measures by business, and regulation, at both Member State and EU levels?
- How can we best enhance implementation of existing regulation in countries with weak governance at both Member State and EU levels?

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- How can we best enhance implementation of existing regulation in countries with weak governance at both Member State and EU levels?
- How can we ensure attention and effort is directed to addressing impacts on those who are most vulnerable to harm, including human rights defenders?

17:00-17:45

Launch of an Agenda for Action and Discussion

- Presentation by Minister Harakka of an "Agenda for Action" on Business and Human Rights
- Discussion with Johanna Sumuvuori, State Secretary, Finnish Foreign Ministry and Professor John Ruggie

Formal closing of conference.

