

# UN Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum

## Pre-Forum Consultation: Briefing Note

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### Register here:

- **Civil Society Consultation** – 28 May 2025, 1:30-3:00 ICT

Register: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/22YHP0wdT8CKBteePXXo9w>

- **Business Consultation** – 29 May 2025, 11:00-12:30 ICT

Register: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/PvkBnouKQqmCrzH8mtg9Dw>

### Background

The **UN Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum - Asia-Pacific** (RBHR) is a key annual regional platform convening governments, businesses, civil society, and other key stakeholders to advance the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) and promote responsible business conduct across the region.

The theme of the **7th RBHR Forum in 2025, “Anchoring Progress and Strengthening Regional Leadership on Human Rights through Crisis,”** reflects the current global and regional context. Geopolitical tensions, shifting regulatory approaches, and opposition to Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) and human rights standards are reshaping the landscape, illustrated by struggles in the EU to maintain momentum on corporate accountability through the Omnibus Directive, and the U.S. scaling back on business commitments to social and environmental goals.

Amid this shifting context, Asia continues to demonstrate progress in advancing the business and human rights (BHR) agenda, with several countries developing and implementing National Action Plans on BHR, early signs of a shift from voluntary to mandatory measures in some, and growing demand from businesses for guidance on sustainability and ESG. Yet, the region continues to navigate ongoing deep and persistent challenges: climate impacts, rising inequality, digital disruptions, and restrictions on civic space – all of which disproportionately affect rightsholders and marginalized communities. These realities underscore the importance of regional leadership. The Forum offers an opportunity to take stock, centre the voices of the most impacted, align on priorities, and identify practical ways forward. It also creates space for businesses to engage more meaningfully with evolving expectations, and for governments to strengthen regulatory and policy responses that uphold rights while enabling inclusive and sustainable development.

The theme also aligns with the UN Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights, which recognizes the urgency of translating commitments and highlights the need for stronger policy coherence, accountability, and cross-regional collaboration to tackle shared challenges and advance rights-respecting business practices.

Building on the success and feedback received from the 2024 Forum, the co-organizers would like the 2025 Forum to incorporate input from those driving change across the region. **That's why we are inviting civil society, businesses and others to join us in shaping the Forum's agenda, structure, and outcomes** so that it remains grounded in lived realities and moves us toward something more substantial, more equitable, and more aligned with the future we need.

To support this, we will be organizing consultations seeking input from stakeholders in the design of the Forum.

### **Objectives**

1. **Gather stakeholder feedback** to inform the development of the Forum's concept note and agenda and selection of priority themes.
2. **Facilitate the collection of input to guide the design of session structures** that enable meaningful, solution-oriented dialogue across diverse stakeholders.
3. **Identify opportunities for collaboration** with civil society, businesses, governments, and other partners in shaping and contributing to the Forum.

### **Key Guiding Questions**

- What are the most pressing business and human rights issues in the Asia Pacific region that should be prioritized at the 2025 Forum, especially in light of current global and regional developments?
- Where are the gaps in the implementation of existing commitments and frameworks (e.g., due diligence, access to remedy, just transition), and how can the Forum meaningfully address these gaps?
- Under this year's main theme, "Anchoring Progress and Strengthening Regional Leadership on Human Rights through Crisis", what specific themes, case examples, or sectors should be spotlighted to generate practical insights and regional relevance?
- What session formats or approaches (e.g., roundtables, peer exchange, deep dives, clinics) would allow for more open, inclusive, and solutions-focused dialogue?
- What would make the Forum more useful or impactful for your work? Are there any practices from past forums we should change, improve, or drop?
- How can we better use Day Zero space, which brings together different stakeholder groups for focused, closed-door dialogues and training workshops?
- What formats or approaches would maximize its value? What are your thoughts on a shared regional set of recommendations or a Forum declaration? What purpose could it serve, and how can it reflect diverse stakeholder perspectives meaningfully?
- What risks or challenges have participants, particularly human rights defenders or marginalized groups, faced in past Forums (e.g., security, data protection, logistics), and what adjustments could be made to ensure safer and more inclusive participation in 2025?

**Feel free to send more questions and suggestions at the Forum secretariat:**  
[unrbhrforum@undp.org](mailto:unrbhrforum@undp.org)

#### **Format**

- **Virtual consultation** via Zoom
- **Duration:** 90 minutes
- **Language:** English
- **Dates:**
  - **Civil Society Consultation** – 28 May 1:30-3:00 ICT
  - **Business Consultation** – 29 May, 11:00-12:30 ICT
- **Participants:**
  - Civil society organizations, networks, and defenders active in BHR, ESG, or rights-based development 28 May 1:30-3:00 ICT.
  - Businesses, industry associations, investors, and supply chain actors engaged in responsible business 29 May, 11:00-12:30 ICT.

#### **Expected Outcomes**

- A co-developed list of high-priority issues, challenges, and session themes
- Suggested formats and modalities that promote inclusive, solution-oriented dialogue
- Identification of potential speakers, case studies, and collaborators
- Inputs that shape the Forum concept note and agenda structure