

THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME FOR STRENGTHENING THE RULE OF LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND SECURITY FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

PHASE IV (2022-2025)



BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS



The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) have been expressly recognized as a means of working toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Responsible businesses promote and provide equal opportunities, decent working conditions and environmental protection; champion women's empowerment and ensure respect for rights of indigenous people. Harmful business practices such as forced labor, discrimination, privacy breaches and disregard for environmental protection undermine development efforts. On the other hand, when businesses respect human rights, progress is galvanized towards achieving the 2030 Agenda.

What we do

- Engage with companies to help them meet their responsibilities under the UNGPs, including carrying out human rights due diligence ([UNDP Human Rights Due Diligence Training Facilitation Guide and Toolkit.](#))
- Work with National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), judiciaries and civil society organizations (CSOs) to ensure remedies for victims and accountability for corporations responsible for human rights violations and environmental abuses.
- Promote gender considerations in business operations to strengthen respect for women's rights.
- Promote a just and green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic by ensuring businesses carry out Environmental and Human Rights Due Diligence in their supply chains.
- Support the development of National Action Plans (NAPs) on Business and Human Rights (B+HR) and similar policies. UNDP provides support to 10 contexts globally to adopt or implement NAPs.
- Support businesses in [managing heightened risks and impact on both human rights and peace when operating in conflict-affected areas.](#)

- Promote peer-learning and leadership in responsible business by organizing multi-stakeholder forums on Business and Human Rights for the Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the Africa regions.
- Support businesses in meeting their obligations during the rapid onset of crisis. For example, in March 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic began, UNDP developed [Human Rights Due Diligence and COVID-19: A Rapid Self-Assessment for Business.](#)

Challenges we face

- Many stakeholders lack awareness of the UNGPs, including businesses, governments, and some civil society groups.
- The notion of a 'favourable business climate' is misused when governments attract foreign direct investment at the cost of weakening labour and environmental protections, both of which have negative implications for human rights.
- Applying a human rights-based approach through the UNGPs is often seen as a luxury, rather than an obligation, especially as many businesses still measure success through their bottom-line only.

Our policy framework

- [The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights \(UNGPs\)](#) adopted unanimously by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011 are a set of concrete guidelines for States and companies to prevent, address and remedy human rights abuses committed in business operations. Over the past decade, they have become the authoritative international framework on business and human rights.¹
- As an integral part of UNDP's overall Human Rights offer, B+HR is guided by such key framework documents as Secretary-General's [Call to Action for Human Rights](#), the UN Human Rights-Based Approach, the UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy, UNSDG Human Rights Mainstreaming Mechanism, and others.
- [UNDP Strategic Plan \(2022-2025\)](#)

- UNDP cooperates with various chapters of the UN Global Compact Network and several other business associations, including the International Organization of Employers (IOE), amfori and the Global Business Initiative on Human Rights (GBI) in holding peer-learning and training for representatives of the public sector.

Country and regional examples

- In Asia, UNDP has become the leading convener of regional stakeholders on business and human rights and the principal organiser of annual forums in South Asia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Regional forums on business and human rights have grown from 120 participants in 2016 to over 6,500 in 2021.
- In Tunisia, UNDP is building the capacities of the authorities and of businesses to combat human rights abuses, such as forced labour and lack of health and safety, in the country's fishing industry.
- In Sri Lanka, Indonesia and India, UNDP trained companies on how to conduct Human Rights Due Diligence during the COVID-19 pandemic, by rolling out the use of a dedicated self-assessment toolkit that was developed at the onset of the pandemic.
- In Viet Nam, UNDP worked with business schools to include Business and Human Rights in their curricula and instil respect for human rights and promote responsible business practices with the future generation of business leaders.
- In Sierra Leone, UNDP empowered women to become active participants in decision-making through awareness raising and training.

Our partnerships

- Joint activities and regular coordination with the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights.
- With support from our partners, UNDP is engaged in supporting implementation of the UNGPs in 25 countries across the globe.
- UNDP partners with OHCHR, ILO, UNICEF, IOM, UNWOMEN, OECD and other multilateral agencies in organising regional forums on Business and Human Rights in Asia, South Asia, and Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

¹ Note: The term 'Authoritative standard' is the phrase used by the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights

About the Global Programme

The Global Programme uniquely combines rule of law, justice, security, and human rights within an overarching umbrella framework, focused on preventing and responding to crisis, conflict and fragility through quality programming, knowledge brokerage and thought leadership, and policy support. The Global Programme's Phase IV commenced in 2022 and is guided by and aligned to the UNDP Strategic Plan for 2022-2025. The programme promotes people-centred and human rights-based approaches to addressing the drivers and symptoms of inequality, exclusion, injustice and insecurity, and accelerating progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

To learn more:

Katy Thompson, Head of Rule of Law, Security and Human Rights, UNDP Crisis Bureau:
katy.thompson@undp.org

Livio Sarandrea, Crisis Prevention and Rule of Law Specialist, Rule of Law, Security, and Human Rights Team, UNDP Crisis Bureau: livio.sarandrea@undp.org

