



**HUMAN RIGHTS
DUE DILIGENCE
AND COVID-19:
A RAPID SELF-ASSESSMENT
FOR BUSINESS**

Overview of the Rapid Self-Assessment

The socio-economic shocks resulting from the global spread of COVID-19 comes at a time of acute inequality and ecological fragility. The pandemic is hitting vulnerable and marginalized groups particularly hard, with fewer resources to protect themselves from health risks, to access healthcare, or to pay for essential goods. Unless business, government and civil society come together to take timely and proactive measures, the COVID-19 pandemic may unwind much of the progress made towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Businesses are facing bankruptcy at an unprecedented scale, resulting in job losses for millions. In this context, confidence in the durability of the global economy, and by extension the norms and institutions that support it, are being tested like never before. How businesses respond to the crisis—especially those firms who receive state support to continue operations—will shape public attitudes towards the private sector for years to come.

In fact, many businesses have risen to the challenge posed by COVID-19 contributing medical supplies, implementing worker well-being initiatives, and offering support to impacted communities. In some cases, manufacturers are switching production to produce lifesaving masks and ventilators in short supply. These companies deserve abundant praise, and indeed, this document is inspired in part by actual commitments and actions by businesses. However, leading companies also know that they must go beyond contributions to the public good and address any negative impacts recent changes in their operations may be having on society and the environment. These companies understand that demonstrating respect for human rights, especially in the midst of harsh economic circumstances, is a strong reflection on their core values. They understand that preventing, mitigating and addressing adverse human rights impacts is key to maintaining trust—with clients, consumers, employees, shareholders, and communities—long after the crisis has passed.

For this reason, UNDP has designed a simple and accessible tool, **Human Rights Due Diligence and COVID-19: Rapid Self-Assessment for Business (C19 Rapid Self-Assessment)**, to help businesses consider and manage the human rights impacts of their operations. This non-exhaustive list of potential actions allows for rapid but continuous reflection on the human rights risks and impacts common to many industries. This C19 Rapid Self-Assessment is inspired and guided in part by the wider UNDP COVID-19 Integrated Response Offer. Through the 'Prepare, Respond and Recover' framework, UNDP is actively supporting the procurement and supply of essential health products, strengthening crisis management and response capacities, and addressing critical social and economic impacts.

Importantly, the C19 Rapid Self-Assessment is not to be misunderstood as a comprehensive human rights due diligence tool as outlined under the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). Instead, this assessment is offered to companies as a partial but informative view of human rights actions in the specific context of COVID-19. The listed actions are based on relevant provisions of UN Human Rights Treaties, the ILO Fundamental Conventions, and the UNGPs. It is organized to present key actions or considerations along three stages of the COVID-19 crisis period: Prepare, Respond and Recover. While this assessment provides initial guidance, UNDP recommends that all companies consider immediate steps towards a fully-fledged human rights impact assessment, in response to Covid-19's immediate and long-term effect on human rights in their operations and supply chains. Some of these actions may be more feasible for larger companies than smaller, however businesses of all size have a responsibility to respect human rights under the UNGPs. For companies without a human rights policy, this may also be an opportune time to explore the feasibility of a written, public commitment to prevent, mitigate and addressing adverse human rights impacts.

COVID-19 RAPID SELF-ASSESSMENT

Occupational Health & Safety

Actions	Stages		
	Prepare	Respond	Recover
Design, test, initiate an effective emergency preparedness plan that incorporates COVID-19 response protocols ⁱ	X		
Ensure that access to health care and medical supplies including protective material such as facemasks are provided to all workers without any discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, language, nationality, disability, migrant status, sexual orientation, gender identity or membership in a social group facing marginalization/stigma ⁱⁱ	X	X	
Regularly clean and disinfect <i>all</i> workplace environments and public spaces, bathrooms, dormitories, cafeterias to ensure health and safety of all workers and consumers ⁱⁱⁱ	X		
Provide for use by all personnel, access to clean toilet facilities, soap, access to portable water, and where applicable, sanitary facilities for food storage ^{iv}	X	X	X
Provide health and safety equipment that meets relevant OHS standards including masks and protective equipment in hospitals and clinics ^v	X	X	
Provide women with proper safety equipment tailored to their needs (for example, protective gear in women’s sizes) and ensure access to hygiene products and gender-sensitive facilities ^{vi}	X	X	
Prevent workers—particularly elderly workers, pregnant workers, or workers with pre-existing medical conditions—from exposure to unsafe or harmful working environments, including areas where risk is high for COVID-19 exposure ^{vii}	X	X	
Conduct risk assessments and begin initiatives to remove or reduce occupational risks to new and expectant mothers, including exposure to infection of COVID-19 ^{viii}	X	X	

Allow employees to contact family and friends in native towns/cities and ensure workers are not otherwise isolated from their support network ^{ix}			
Monitor measures to ensure young workers and others limited in their ability to give informed consent, are not engaged in hazardous working conditions, including where exposure to infection of COVID-19 is likely ^x			
For pharmaceutical or medical equipment companies, ensure that medicines and medical equipment remain publicly available and financially accessible to vulnerable groups ^{xi}			
Ensure that work premises and any employee housing facilities provided by the company allow for workers to practice social distancing ^{xii}			
Ensure that all reasonable steps taken to remove or reduce risks to employees are conducted in consultation with employees, including recommendations made by workers and/or health and safety committees (or representatives) during the COVID-19 crisis. If possible, consult with trade unions, CSOs, NHRIs and other stakeholders ^{xiii}	X	X	
Provide regular awareness raising and training on Occupational Health and Safety policies and practices related to COVID-19 for all employees, including contractual labour and gig economy workers ^{xiv}	X	X	

Labour Rights

Actions	Stages		
	Prepare	Respond	Recover
Prepare a plan to ensure that workers are not dismissed. If workers must be dismissed, ensure that they are not dismissed without compensation and without procedural safeguards, particularly daily wage workers ^{xv}	X		
Ensure that during and after the COVID-19 crisis period, workers are paid pursuant to the terms of their contract, and paid overtime as required, under terms consistent with local and international labour standards and when applicable in connection to government stimulus plans ^{xvi}	X	X	X

When business operations scale up again, consider rehiring workers who were laid off during the crisis, of if hiring new workers, ensure that they are not discriminated against on the basis of sex, race, religion, language, nationality, disability, migrant status, sexual orientation, gender identity or membership in a social group facing marginalization/stigma ^{xvii}			X
Ensure that workers found to have been infected by COVID-19 during period of unemployment or illness are not discriminated against during the recruitment period ^{xviii}			X
Pay daily wage employees throughout the crisis, at reduced rates if necessary, even after a reduction or cessation in operations ^{xix}		X	
Pay employees during periods while they are ill and unable to go to work, including during self-quarantine periods. ^{xx}		X	
Ensure that deductions from wages or salary for treatment of COVID-19 or related illness are not made without the employee’s knowledge and consent to avoid conditions conducive to debt bondage ^{xxi}		X	X
Prevent salary deductions for testing and treatment of COVID-19 or related illness without the employee’s knowledge and consent ^{xxii}		X	
Ensure that women receive equal pay for equal work both during the COVID-19 crisis and in the post-crisis environment ^{xxiii}		X	X
Recognize women as unpaid caregivers and accommodate their needs with flexible work or part -time work when ramping up production ^{xxiv}	X	X	X
Ensure flexibility for work from home arrangements for parents with children or for other employees to ensure safety and compliance with social distancing regulations ^{xxv}		X	
Prevent child labour from being used to fill gaps resulting from the absence or reduction in the number of a healthy adult workers available due to COVID-19 circumstances ^{xxvi}		X	X

Provide people with disabilities who have also suffered COVID-19 with special considerations to ensure their entry or re-entry into the workforce ^{xxvii}			X
Ensure that employee identification, travel papers and/or other documents are not withheld. Allow for employees to return home, as permitted by national laws, decrees or public health/emergency measures ^{xxviii}	X	X	

Environmental & Community Impacts

Actions	Stages		
	Prepare	Respond	Recover
Take precautionary measures to ensure that the health of consumers or the general public is not further endangered by business operations ^{xxix}	X		
Ensure that relevant information on the risks of COVID-19, potentially arising from business operations, are shared with consumers and the general public, enabling them to take the necessary precautionary measures ^{xxx}	X		
Ensure all environmental protocols are followed in the discharge of toxic and hazardous materials, including facemasks, PPE, and gloves; communicate to workers that improper disposal remains a priority even in times of crisis ^{xxxi}	X	X	
Conduct post-crisis assessment on how communities have been impacted by redundancies and take mitigating or remedial action as required ^{xxxii}			X
Ensure that property rights and property interest of surrounding communities not violated during the COVID-19 crisis period ^{xxxiii}			X

Safeguarding Privacy

Actions	Stages		
	Prepare	Respond	Recover
Disclose private information of consumers or the general public to Governments, for example through telecommunications or health care provision, only when used for the purposes of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with relevant legal frameworks. Disclosed information should be limited in scope and time-bound in relation to COVID-19. ^{xxxiv}		X	
Develop policies to ensure that names and contact information of workers found to have been infected by COVID-19 are not revealed to the workforce or the public at large, unless the worker consents or is required by the government as per applicable laws ^{xxxv}	X	X	X
Train or provide refresher trainings of private security staff on respect for human rights in standard operating procedures, especially for those staff involved in COVID-19 screening procedures ^{xxxvi}		X	

Preventing Stigma & Discrimination

Actions	Stages		
	Prepare	Respond	Recover
Ensure that when employees are permitted to return to the workplace, they are not subject to discriminatory treatment or otherwise stigmatized ^{xxxvii}			X
Establish procedures to counter the spread of false or misleading information so as to prevent fear and prejudice towards marginalized groups in the workforce ^{xxxviii}	X		
Ensure that employees are aware of responsible use of social media, to counter the spread of misinformation, fear, and prejudice in the workplace ^{xxxix}	X	X	
Ensure minorities, migrants or other vulnerable groups are not negatively affiliated with COVID-19 in advertising, marketing campaigns or corporate communications, to prevent the promotion of stereotypes, misinformation or stigma against marginalized groups ^{xl}		X	X

Corporate Policy & Management Considerations

Actions	Stages		
	Prepare	Respond	Recover
Make a public commitment to respect human rights on corporate website or in communication materials ^{xli}	X	X	
Draft a human rights policy and ensure that commitment to the human rights policy is communicated to internal and external stakeholders ^{xlii}			X
Communicate regularly and promote transparency around corporate decisions and information related to COVID-19 to employees ^{xliii}	X	X	X
Provide immediate and adequate compensation through effective grievance mechanisms for business related human rights abuses arising from COVID-19 crisis ^{xliv}			X
Establish an accessible grievance mechanism and/or ensure existing accessible grievance mechanisms such as hotlines, have options for reporting issues that arise out of COVID-19 and are available to all employees and consumers ^{xlv}	X		
Make timely payments and/or extend credit to small and medium-sized suppliers and retailers to ensure their viability through the COVID-19 crisis in line with applicable government stimulus policies ^{xlvi}		X	
Retain contracts with suppliers, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises whenever possible ^{xlvii}		X	
Conduct human rights due diligence on any new suppliers in the supply chain ^{xlviii}			X

Contact

The C19 Rapid Self-Assessment is a living document as COVID-19 is an ongoing crisis and the nature and extent of risks are still to be identified fully. If you have feedback or contributions for future reiterations, please let us know.

The B+HR Asia Team is available for further guidance and tools. Please direct any question or request of further assistance to: Sophia Areias, Responsible Business Engagement Specialist, sophia.areias@undp.org.

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- ⁱ ILO Occupational Safety and Healthy Convention (No. 155), 1951
- ⁱⁱ International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 1976, Article 7; ILO, Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111); ILO Occupational Safety and Healthy Convention (No. 155), 1951
- ⁱⁱⁱ International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 1976, Article 7; ILO Occupational Safety and Healthy Convention (No. 155), 1951
- ^{iv} International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 1976, Article 7; ILO Occupational Safety and Healthy Convention (No. 155), 1951
- ^v International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 1976, Article 7; ILO Occupational Safety and Healthy Convention (No. 155), 1951
- ^{vi} International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 1976, Article 7; ILO Occupational Safety and Healthy Convention (No. 155), 1951
- ^{vii} International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 1976, Article 7; ILO Occupational Safety and Healthy Convention (No. 155), 1951; Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 18 December 1979.
- ^{viii} International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 1976, Article 7; ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, 1998;
- ^{ix} ILO Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Forced or Compulsory Labour (105), 1957
- ^x ILO, Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (NO 138); ILO, Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1951 (No. 100); ILO, Improving the Safety and Health of Young Workers, 28 April 2018, [available here](#)
- ^{xi} International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 1976, Art. 12; OHCHR, Human Rights Guidelines for Pharmaceutical Companies in relation to Access to Medicines, 27 July 2015.
- ^{xii} International Convention of the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 19 December 1990
- ^{xiii} ILO Occupational Safety and Healthy Convention (No. 155), 1951
- ^{xiv} ILO Occupational Safety and Healthy Convention (No. 155), 1951
- ^{xv} ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, 1998; ILO, Fundamental Conventions, 2003, [available here](#).
- ^{xvi} ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, 1998; ILO, Fundamental Conventions, 2003, [available here](#).
- ^{xvii} ILO, Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)
- ^{xviii} ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, 1998; ILO, Fundamental Conventions, 2003, [available here](#).
- ^{xix} ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, 1998; ILO, Fundamental Conventions, 2003, [available here](#).
- ^{xx} ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, 1998; ILO, Fundamental Conventions, 2003, [available here](#).
- ^{xxi} ILO Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Forced or Compulsory Labour (105), 1957
- ^{xxii} ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, 1998; ILO, Fundamental Conventions, 2003, [available here](#).
- ^{xxiii} International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 1976, Article 7; ILO, Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)
- ^{xxiv} Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, 18 December 1979.
- ^{xxv} ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, 1998; ILO, Fundamental Conventions, 2003, [available here](#); International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 1976, Article 7
- ^{xxvi} ILO, Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (NO 138); ILO, Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1951 (No. 100)
- ^{xxvii} Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2008
- ^{xxviii} International Convention of the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 19 December 1990; ILO Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Forced or Compulsory Labour (105), 1957
- ^{xxix} UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 2011
- ^{xxx} UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 2011
- ^{xxxi} ILO Occupational Safety and Healthy Convention (No. 155), 1951; International Convention of the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, 19 December 1990

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- ^{xxxii} UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 2011
- ^{xxxiii} Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 17; Protocol to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 1952, Article 1.
- ^{xxxiv} ILO, Protection of Workers' personal data, An ILO Code of Practice, 1997, [available here](#).
- ^{xxxv} ILO, Protection of Workers' personal data, An ILO Code of Practice, 1997, [available here](#).
- ^{xxxvi} UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 2011; ILO, Protection of Workers' personal data, An ILO Code of Practice, 1997, [available here](#).
- ^{xxxvii} ILO, Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)
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- ^{xxxix} ILO, Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111);
- ^{xl} ILO, Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111);
- ^{xli} UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 2011
- ^{xlii} UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 2011
- ^{xliii} UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 2011
- ^{xliv} UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 2011
- ^{xlv} UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 2011
- ^{xlvi} UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 2011
- ^{xlvii} UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 2011
- ^{xlviii} UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, 2011