

UNITED NATIONS GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS



The UNGPs ensure human rights
is everyone's business

WHAT ARE THE UNGPs?

In 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council unanimously endorsed the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). The UNGPs are the world's most authoritative, normative framework guiding responsible business conduct and addressing human rights abuses in business operations and global supply chains.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNGPs

States and businesses have distinct but complementary responsibilities under the UNGPs. These principles apply to all States, and all businesses regardless of their size, sector, location, ownership and structure.

Though new international law obligations are not created by the UNGPs, they do provide a blueprint for action, defining parameters within which States and businesses should develop policies, rules and processes based on their respective roles and circumstances. The UNGPs constitute a global standard against which the conduct of both States and companies can be assessed.



THE PILLARS OF THE UNGPs

Comprising 31 principles, the UNGPs are organized under 3 pillars—Protect, Respect and Remedy. The three pillars define the duties of States and businesses to protect human rights. Each pillar provides a set of actionable steps to ensure the protection of human rights within the context of business operations.



Pillar 1: Protect (Principles 1 to 10)

THE STATE'S DUTY TO PROTECT

Pillar 1 specifies the state's duty to protect human rights in the context of business operations. This requires States to set clear expectations for companies by enacting effective policies, legislation, and regulations. In doing so, States establish that appropriate steps are in place to prevent, investigate, punish and redress adverse human rights impacts.



Pillar 2: Respect (Principles 11 to 24)

THE CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPECT

Pillar 2 outlines how businesses can identify their negative human rights impact and demonstrate that they have adequate policies and procedures to address them. Businesses should institute a policy commitment to meet this responsibility. Businesses should also undertake ongoing human rights due diligence to identify, prevent and mitigate human rights abuses. Finally, businesses should enable remediation mechanisms for the negative impacts they have caused or contributed to.



Pillar 3: Remedy (Principles 25 to 31)

ACCESS TO REMEDY

Pillar 3 stipulates that when a right is violated, victims must have access to effective remedies which are legitimate, accessible, predictable, equitable, transparent and rights compatible. Pillar 3 sets out criteria for effectiveness of judicial and non-judicial grievance mechanisms implemented by both States and businesses. Further, Pillar 3 underlines the expectation that operational-level mechanisms should be based on genuine engagement and dialogue with the stakeholder groups whose rights they seek to remedy.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING THE UNGPs?

For States

Consolidated efforts to prevent and mitigate human rights abuses in business operations

Greater awareness of laws and regulations (or gaps in such) to promote, protect and safeguard human rights

Fostering relationships and creating integrated cooperation networks with all sectors

Boosting trust among investors and trading partners, thereby stimulating the economy.



For Businesses



Protect and promote a brand's reputation and values

Maintain current and expand potential customer base

Foster a good relationship between the company and surrounding communities

Decrease the risk of lawsuits

Attract domestic and international investors

Reduces the risks of internal and external disruptions affecting the organisation

Promote the company's ethics and values.

For Civil Society

Whole-of-society approach to human rights protection that is increasingly inclusive and comprehensive

Increasing business accountability for human rights abuses through a concise and transparent framework

Strengthening the ability of civil society to counteract harmful business practices

Using the UNGPs, as a platform for engagement with others to forestall harmful operational practices of some businesses





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