

Regional Implementation of the Guiding Principles: Lessons from Asia and Europe

Side-Event at the United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights

11:30 – 13:00 pm, 3rd December 2014

Room XI, Palais des Nations

With the 2011 adoption of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, significant headway has been made in implementing the Guiding Principles across the five UN regions. At the regional level, the European Union's (EU) 2012 action plan to implement the new *EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy* supports the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (Art. 25). In Southeast Asia, CSR has been incorporated in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' (ASEAN's) 2009 *Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint* as part of its aim to engage the private sector in the development of the ASEAN community. CSR is also included in the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights' (AICHR's) five-year work plans.

However, challenges remain - not just at the regional level but also at the national level where policy coherence on business practice and human rights protection remains to be achieved; the concerns and needs of vulnerable groups are yet to be suitably addressed; and the involvement of the different actors (government, NHRIs, private sector, NGOs) needs to be properly framed. This is particularly true for Asia where the lack of institutional frameworks and protection mechanisms makes coordination and implementation problematic.

Objectives

Based on the outcomes from the 14th Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights and Businesses¹, the objectives of the panel session are to:

- Provide the current state-of-play on the advances made across Asia and Europe to promote the UN Guiding Principles;
- Exchange lessons learnt and best practices for better implementation of the UN Guiding Principles
- Identify opportunities for promoting multi-stakeholder cooperation on business and human rights, both within and between the two regions.

Panel:

Chair: **Rolf RING** (Raoul Wallenberg Institute)

- *Findings from the ASEM Seminar on Human Rights and Businesses/UNGPs implementation in Europe* - **Claire METHVEN O'BRIEN** (Danish Institute for Human Rights)
- *Understanding the South Asia perspective* - **Shahamin ZAMAN** (The CSR Center)
- *CSR and Human Rights in ASEAN* - **Thomas THOMAS** (ASEAN CSR Network)
- *Implementation of the UNGPs in China: context, policy and practice* - **Malin OUD** (Tracktwo & Institute for Human Rights and Business) and **LIANG Xiaohui** (China National Textile and Apparel Council & Peking University International Law Institute)

Presentations will be followed by a Q&A session.

¹ The **Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)** is an intergovernmental forum for dialogue and cooperation established in 1996 to deepen relations between Asia and Europe, which addresses political, economic and socio-cultural issues of common concern. ASEM brings together 51 member states (30 European and 21 Asian countries), the ASEAN Secretariat, and the European Union.

The 14th Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights was organised by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the Raoul Wallenberg Institute (RWI) and the French and Philippine ministries of foreign affairs. The Seminar is the only human rights dialogue to take place at the ASEM level. For more information, visit www.asef.org
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