

## 47th session of the Human Rights Council

### Panel discussion on the tenth anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

*Concept note (as of 4 June 2021)*

- Date and venue:** Tuesday, 29 June 2021, 4 to 6 p.m.  
Room XVIII, Palais des Nations, Geneva, and online platform (Zoom)  
*(will be broadcast live and archived on <http://webtv.un.org>)*
- Objectives:** The panel discussion aims to take stock of progress made over the first 10 years since the endorsement of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and to discuss possible further steps to improve their future implementation by all stakeholders.
- Chair:** H.E. Ms. Nazhat Shameem Khan, President of the Human Rights Council
- Opening statements:**
- Ms. Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights *(video message)*
  - Mr. John Ruggie, Former Special Representative of the Secretary-General on human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises *(video message)*
- Panellists:**
- Mr. Dante Pesce, Chair of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises
  - Ms. Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation *(video message)*
  - Ms. María Fernanda Garza, First Vice Chair of the International Chamber of Commerce *(video message)*
  - Ms. Joan Carling, Global Director of Indigenous Peoples Rights International *(video message)*
- Outcome:** The expected outcomes of this thematic discussion are:
- A better understanding of key achievements and challenges in the implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights by States and business since their endorsement in 2011.
  - Increased recognition of what areas should be focused on going forward to increase the pace of the implementation and uptake of the Guiding Principles.
  - A renewed commitment to the Guiding Principles by States and other relevant stakeholders with goals for realizing their effective implementation over the coming decade.
- Mandate:** In [resolution 44/15](#), the Human Rights Council decided, in the context of the tenth anniversary of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in 2021, to hold a panel discussion during its forty-seventh session with the participation of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises (also referred to as the Working Group on Business and Human Rights).
- Format:** The panel discussion will be limited to two hours. After opening statements and initial presentations by the panellists, there will be two segments of interventions, followed by conclusions from the panellists.
- A maximum of one hour will be set aside for the podium, which will cover opening statements, panellists' presentations, and their responses to questions and concluding remarks. The remaining hour will be reserved for two segments of interventions from the

floor, with each segment consisting of interventions from 12 States or observers, 1 national human rights institution and 2 non-governmental organizations. Each speaker will have two minutes to raise issues and to ask panellists questions.

The list of speakers for the discussion will be established through the online inscription system and, as per practice, statements by high-level dignitaries and groups of States will be moved to the beginning of the list. Delegates who have not been able to take the floor due to time constraints will be able to upload their statements on the online system to be posted on the HRC Extranet.

**Background:** Following decades of unsuccessful attempts to develop a consensus around how business enterprises fit within the international human rights system, in 2005, the Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations to appoint a Special Representative with a mandate to, among other tasks, identify and clarify standards of corporate responsibility and accountability with regard to human rights. This sparked a six-year process resulting in the development of a framework outlining the respective duties and responsibilities of States and business enterprises as regards preventing and addressing adverse human rights impacts involving business activities, culminating in the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which were meant to operationalize that framework.

On 16 June 2011, the Human Rights Council unanimously endorsed the Guiding Principles in its [resolution 17/4](#), and the Guiding Principles were also welcomed by a wide range of other stakeholders. The Guiding Principles became the authoritative global framework for business and human rights, providing a globally agreed-upon standard and an authoritative baseline for what States and businesses should do to respectively protect and respect the full range of human rights across all business contexts.

June 2021 marks the tenth anniversary of the Human Rights Council's endorsement of the Guiding Principles. This provides an important opportunity to assess progress to date and to explore opportunities to increase the pace of implementation, ultimately to better ensure that rights holders are not subject to business-related human rights harms and that any such harms that do take place are remedied. This panel discussion will allow relevant stakeholders to reflect upon these issues and provide an opportunity for States in particular to renew their commitment to furthering the business and human rights agenda through the implementation of the Guiding Principles and set ambitious goals and targets for realizing the Guiding Principles over the next decade. The Working Group on Business and Human Rights will make a key contribution to the panel by sharing their findings from the [UNGPs 10+ project](#), which is meant to take stock of the first ten years of the Guiding Principles and to develop a "roadmap for the next decade" of their implementation.

**Background documents:**

- Human Rights Council resolutions [44/15 of 17 July 2020](#) (decision to hold the panel discussion) and [17/4 of 16 June 2011](#) (endorsement of the Guiding Principles);
- Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights:  
[العربية](#) | [中文](#) | [English](#) | [Français](#) | [Русский](#) | [Español](#)
- Frequently Asked Questions on the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights:  
[العربية](#) | [中文](#) | [English](#) | [Français](#) | [Русский](#) | [Español](#)
- UNGPs 10+ Project page: <https://www.ohchr.org/UNGPsBizHRsnext10>