

SIDE EVENT

# Business, Human Rights and Conflict: Challenges and Good Practice

*from conflict prevention to operating in a conflict-affected area*

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Tuesday, 3 December  
13.30 — 15.00

Palais des Nations Room XI

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## SPEAKERS

- UN Global Compact
- The Constructive Engagement Group
- Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO)
- Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law

## KEY QUESTIONS

- Why is it important to identify conflict-affected or high-risk areas?
- How can businesses act in a way that prevents destructive and violent conflict?
- What are the challenges for businesses operating in a conflict-affected or high-risk environment, including through joint venture operations?
- What are the best ways for businesses to be held accountable in conflict-affected or high-risk areas?

*A light lunch will be provided  
by the Permanent Mission of Canada in Geneva*

*For more information: [lfinnegan@quno.ch](mailto:lfinnegan@quno.ch)  
2013 UN Forum on Business and Human Rights, Geneva*

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## THEME

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Businesses and foreign investors operating in conflict affected areas and high-risk areas (including areas of potential conflict) face significant practical challenges in ensuring respect for human rights. Yet the private sector can make a key contribution to human rights, peace and stability by taking measures to understand conflict dynamics and design conflict sensitive policies. These measures are relevant to preventing conflict, and to responding to high-risk, conflict-affected or post-conflict settings.

This side event aims to facilitate constructive discussion on the challenges businesses face in implementing the UN-GPs in conflict-affected areas, and provide a space for identifying and sharing good practice examples of how the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights can be effectively implemented. A particular focus will be on

- Development of criteria and indicators to identify conflict-affected and high-risk areas (in accordance with international humanitarian law)
- Effective engagement with local communities throughout the process of a business activity, from meaningful consultation during the planning stages, to facilitation of multi-stakeholder dialogues, ongoing feedback and the establishment of appropriate due diligence and grievance mechanisms.
- Particular challenges faced by companies operating in joint venture arrangements, either with state-owned enterprises where the host state has a negative human rights record or with private companies which do not abide by internationally-recognized standards.

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## CO-ORGANISERS

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### **The Constructive Engagement Group**

The Constructive Engagement Group is an informal network of like-minded organizations working on issues related to the role of business in human rights protection and peacebuilding. It is composed of international NGOs such as EIRIS Conflict Risk Network, swisspeace, International Alert and Danish Institute for Human Rights. It aims to facilitate networking, cross-learning and collaboration and to discuss trends in the field of constructive engagement with companies in conflict contexts.

### **The Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights**

The Geneva Academy aims to provide instruction, conduct and promote scientific research, organise training courses and expert meetings and provide legal expertise in the branches of international law relating to situations of armed conflicts. The Academy intends to contribute to a better understanding of the contemporary challenges facing the different branches of international law relating to its domain of expertise with the ultimate objective to engage in in-depth reflection, based on scientific methods, which is often missing in domains that are constantly evolving in response to current events and are subject to the political pressures.

### **UN Global Compact**

In September 2013 the UN Global Compact launched the Business for Peace leadership platform, which aims to assist companies in implementing responsible business practices that are aligned with the Global Compact principles in conflict-affected and high-risk areas. The platform will also catalyze collaborative practical action to advance peace by leveraging business influence on the workplace, marketplace and local communities.

### **Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO)**

QUNO's work on Natural Resources Conflict and Cooperation seeks to influence policy and practice to take account of the links between natural resource management, human rights and peacebuilding. We recognise that weak and inequitable governance of natural resources can lead to destructive conflict, exacerbating tensions between groups and in some cases escalating to violence. We encourage dialogue, cooperation and the constructive handling of conflicts. QUNO works with laws and guidelines from international frameworks that support inclusive decision making and equitable access to natural resources, while also bringing expertise and good practices from the local level to the international policy environment.

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