



2017 UN Forum: Focus, aims and context

The UN Forum on Business and Human Rights is the global platform for yearly stock-taking and lesson-sharing on efforts to move the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) from paper to practice. As the world's largest gathering on the topic of business and human rights, it provides a unique space for dialogue between governments, business, civil society, affected individuals and communities and international organizations on major human rights issues in the global economy.

The central theme of the 2017 UN Forum is *“Realizing Access to Effective Remedy”*. The Forum will address the critical issue of access to remedy by examining systemic flaws and shortcomings in existing efforts and reviewing emerging good practices and innovations, with a view to achieving greater coherence and committed action in the service of human rights and rights-holders. Discussions will include the full range of mechanisms covered by the third pillar of the Guiding Principles: from State-based judicial and non-judicial mechanisms to non-State-based remediation and grievance mechanisms involving companies, industry bodies, multi-stakeholder initiatives and regional and international institutions. For list of non-exhaustive list of topics [click here](#).

As a starting point, a constructive dialogue among all stakeholders, featuring new ideas and practice-based perspectives to address current gaps and their root causes, is essential for building greater understanding of challenges and delivering coherent solutions. Such dialogue needs to be action-oriented and aimed at identifying concrete commitments from actors in positions to advance change and overcome existing barriers to remedies. Moreover, such dialogue needs to involve victims, human rights defenders, community and workers' organizations, civil society from all regions, governments, national human rights institutions, business associations, companies, lawyers and investors. The 2017 Forum provides a unique opportunity to bring these various groups together to examine recent initiatives and explore common ground and practical solutions for ensuring more effective access to remedy.

Further background, pre-Forum dialogue and agenda

Further explanation of the focus, aims, context and key considerations for the 2017 Forum is outlined in a background note by the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights. In order to facilitate pre-Forum dialogue around the themes and topics of the 2017 Forum, the Forum organizers will soon launch a blog series platform. All stakeholder groups are encouraged to take part.

The Forum Secretariat is currently undertaking a mapping of ongoing research and projects linked to access to remedy in the area of business and human rights. All stakeholders are encouraged to submit brief information about ongoing or planned research and projects for 2017-18 related to this issue. The information should be submitted [via this online form](#).



Tentative list of topics for the 2017 Forum programme

Forum sessions will cover a wide range of topics and issues. Discussions linked to the remedy theme – reflecting the complexity and breadth of issues related to implementation of the Guiding Principles’ third pillar – will include topics such as:

- *Mapping the landscape of grievance mechanisms*
- *Trends and challenges in seeking access to remedy in different regions*
- *Exploring elements of effective remedy, including through the perspectives of victims*
- *Experiences of indigenous peoples in seeking access to remedy*
- *Trends in supply chain related regulation and litigation*
- *Global governance frameworks trends and innovations for leveraging more effective access to remedy*
- *Exploring collaborative approaches in industry and multi-stakeholder initiatives to strengthen access to remedy*
- *Using leverage to advance access to remedy through business relationships by exploring innovations of the ILO MNE Declaration*
- *National action plans (NAPs) and access to remedy*
- *Access to remedy and the proposed legally binding instrument*
- *The State-business nexus and access to remedy*
- *The international investment regime and access to remedy*
- *Improving effectiveness of State-based judicial and non-judicial mechanisms*
- *Lessons from cross-border cases and efforts to strengthen cross-border law enforcement collaboration*
- *Lessons from State-based peer review processes for strengthening access to non-judicial remedy*
- *How to make operational-level grievance mechanisms work*
- *The power of stakeholder dialogue and company-community-government engagement to achieve access to remedy for victims*
- *Remedy in post-conflict and transition contexts*
- *Addressing access to remedy in the digital age*
- *Technology platforms and access to remedy in complex supply chains*
- *Exploring pro bono legal support to affected stakeholders*
- *Role of benchmarks in driving access to remedy*
- *The role of investors in driving better remediation in supply chains*
- *Access to remedy and the corporate board room*
- *The role of corporate counsel in the context of human rights disputes*
- *Roles and perspectives of human rights defenders*
- *Migrant workers and access to remedy*
- *Children at risk and access to remedy*
- *Access to remedy for women affected by large-scale investments*
- *Access to remedy for women affected by sexual abuse in the workplace*
- *Compensation for victims of industrial supply chain accidents*



- *Access to remedy and efforts to address modern slavery in supply chains*
- *Role of mediation in achieving effective access to remedy*
- *Independent accountability mechanisms as forums to achieve effective remedy*
- *The role of regional human rights systems*

The Forum plenary and other sessions will also address broader policy trends and consider the role of the business and human rights movement in today's political and social contexts. In doing so, the Forum will explore how the business and human rights lens can help tackle some of today's greatest human rights challenges, whether linked to the workplace, global supply chains, domestic economies or particular sectors; and provide a transformative vision of the role of the business sector in achieving sustainable development. This includes exploring strategies and forging coalitions between stakeholders to defend human rights and implement the Guiding Principles.

The 2017 Forum aims to facilitate broad stock-taking of developments in the area business and human rights, by also addressing issues such as:

- Where is State action on business and human rights heading?
- What is the state of play of business implementation of the responsibility to respect, including across supply chains and among smaller and medium sized enterprises?
- What is needed to ensure that respect for human rights becomes the bedrock for the private sector contributions to the SDGs?
- How can we ensure that human rights defenders working on corporate accountability issues are protected and supported and how can business play a positive role in this regard?

Moreover, the Forum will feature sessions for newcomers to become familiarized with the Guiding Principles – including an introduction to the “landscape” of remedy mechanisms – and how the Guiding Principles intersect with the SDGs.

[Back](#)

Mandate and information about the organizers

The Forum was established by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011 “to discuss trends and challenges in the implementation of the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) and promote dialogue and cooperation on issues linked to business and human rights, including challenges faced in particular sectors, operational environments or in relation to specific rights or groups, as well as identifying good practices” (resolution 17/4, paragraph 12).

The Forum is guided and chaired by the [UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights](#) and organized by its Secretariat at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).