

Thank you for the invitation to speak.

My name is Katharina Hermann, I run the German NAP Helpdesk on Business and Human Rights. I will present to you briefly the structure of the NAP Helpdesk, as well as some observations.

According to the German National Action Plan, the NAP Helpdesk is to support companies through initial consultation and referral services as well as through sensitization on business and human rights.

The NAP Helpdesk was officially installed within the Agency for Business and Economic Development in October 2017. It is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and is operated by the German Development Finance Institution DEG and by GIZ, the German organisation for international development.

First and foremost, the NAP Helpdesk offers free of charge and confidential advisory services. So far, we have received around 260 queries predominantly from companies and business associations. Queries often concern the German NAP monitoring process or specific company challenges related, for example, to grievance mechanisms, risk management, or leverage.

Second, we help companies find the right partners for their specific needs such as trainings. Thirdly, we offer support when companies are looking to find the right funding for their sustainability projects, for example within public private partnerships.

Fourth, the NAP Helpdesk offers events and online information. The *NAP Helpdesk Breakfast* series facilitates the dialogue between companies and government. A workshop series for companies and NGOs focusses on partnerships to tackle supply chain issues. Online information includes the German version of the CSR Risk Check by MVO Netherlands as well as Questions and Answers on the NAP. As next steps, we will focus on good practices and sector specific advisory services.

What are observations and lessons learned?

- 1) **The NAP Helpdesk is a translator between companies and policy makers.** From our experience, companies, especially SMEs, still feel left out of the conversation or lost in translation. However, there are learnings for both sides. The NAP Helpdesk is thus an

opportunity for companies and the government to align approaches by fostering an open dialogue.

2) The NAP Helpdesk is a convener - because it provides pathways for implementation.

NAP Helpdesk support for forming public private partnerships is relevant for many companies contacting us. Government support of company efforts is important to incentivize the coherent implementation of NAPs.

3) Policy coherence is a challenge and a necessity: To ensure that the Guiding Principles are applied in a coherent manner worldwide, it is important to offer coherent advisory services, and, for example provide national language versions of existing tools. I thus commend the Working Group for initiating the conversation on policy coherence and strongly recommend the creation of an international network of NAP support services.

Thank you for your attention!