

Suggestions from Social Accountability International (SAI) on the work agenda of the UN Working Group on Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises

Social Accountability International (SAI) is a non-governmental, international, multi-stakeholder organization dedicated to improving workplaces and communities by developing and implementing socially responsible standards.

SAI recognizes the value of the UN Working Group's mandate to promote respect for human rights by business of all sizes, as the implementation of core labour standards in company supply chains is central to SAI's own work.

SAI notes that the UN Working Group emphasizes in its invitation for proposals from relevant actors and stakeholders, the importance it places not only on promoting the Guiding Principles but also and especially on their *effective implementation....resulting in improved outcomes*. SAI would support this as key and, therefore, has teamed up with the Netherlands-based ICCO (Interchurch Organization for Development) to produce a **Handbook on How To Respect Human Rights in the International Supply Chain** to assist leading companies in the practical implementation of the Ruggie recommendations. SAI will also be offering classes and training to support use of the Handbook.

SAI will target the Handbook not just at companies based in Western economies but also at those in emerging countries such as Brazil and India that have a growing influence on the world's economy and whose burgeoning base of small and medium companies are moving forward in both readiness, capacity and interest in managing their impact on human rights. SAI has long term relationships working with businesses in India and Brazil, where national companies have earned SA8000 certification and where training has been provided on implementing human rights at work to numerous businesses of all sizes.

This is SAI's latest Handbook having recently produced for the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a practical Handbook for companies on how to improve their compliance in relation to labour and working conditions for IFC Performance Standard 2. As with that Handbook, SAI's Handbook on Human Rights will create a management systems-based approach to the implementation of the Guiding Principles to allow for continual improvement as well as guidance on policy commitment, human rights due diligence and remediation. In addition, the Handbook will detail steps businesses should follow in order to realize the Guiding Principles' advice for non-state based grievance mechanisms. The Handbook will provide tools and case studies in order to make it as practical as possible.

SAI would encourage the UN Working Group to consider the usefulness of such a business Handbook in reaching a major goal of the Guiding Principles which is effective impact through implementation. As the Principles detail, the responsibility to respect human rights is a global standard of expected conduct for all businesses wherever they operate – their 'Social Norm' - that provides a 'Social License to

Operate'. SAI has considerable experience providing supply chain management and CSR training to people around the world, including factory managers, workers, brand compliance officers, auditors, labor inspectors, trade union representatives and other worker rights advocates. SAI would be happy to share the Handbook which will be completed early next year, with the UN Working Group as it begins its session in 2012.

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