

# ESTABLISHING EFFECTIVE HELPDESKS ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

WEDNESDAY 26 JUNE 2024, 14:00 – 15:00

PALAIS DES NATIONS, ROOM XXII, UNITED NATIONS, GENEVA

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) were unanimously endorsed by the Human Rights Council in 2011. They have since been recognized as providing the globally-accepted, authoritative framework for what States and businesses are expected to do to respectively protect and respect the full range of human rights across all business contexts. Regulatory measures developed at the national and regional levels are increasingly inspired by or based on the UNGPs. However, the growing success and use of the UNGPs has increased the need for capacity-building measures that can ensure consistent implementation and interpretation, including to avoid fragmentation in the understanding of the normative content of the UNGPs.



In their roadmap for the next decade of business and human rights and report on building capacity for the implementation of the UNGPs, the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights has called for the establishment of global and national helpdesks to help ensure the realization of the UNGPs. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has since began work to establish a Helpdesk on Business and Human Rights at the global level, the primary aim of which is to provide uniform interpretative advice and capacity-building regarding the UNGPs. The proposed helpdesk would provide a single point of entry for States, businesses, civil society and other actors to seek advice from business and human rights experts at OHCHR. At the national level, few helpdesk initiatives exist, though one key example is the German Helpdesk on Business and Human Rights, which, since 2017, has supported companies on the implementation of effective human rights and environmental due diligence in line with the UNGPs.

In the context of growing developments on business and human rights worldwide, the provision of such helpdesks can make a significant positive impact on corporate respect for human rights and the effective implementation of relevant legal requirements. At the same time, in order for such helpdesks to meet the capacity-building needs in the field, harmonize interpretation and implementation of the UNGPs, and respond adequately to requests received from stakeholders, important practical questions will need to be answered, including regarding how best to ensure the complementarity of such initiatives.

Drawing from the research brief Parameters for a Global Helpdesk on Business and Human Rights published by the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Geneva office, this panel discussion – co-organised by the Geneva Human Rights Platform, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Geneva office, and OHCHR - aims to discuss how to establish effective helpdesks on business and human rights that can overcome the practical challenges such initiatives may face and work together to strengthen the understanding and implementation of the UNGPs.

## WELCOME

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### **Nada Al-Nashif**

United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights

## MODERATION

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### **Robert McCorquodale**

Chairperson, UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights

## PANEL

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### **Jenny Ohme**

Coordinator, German Helpdesk on Business and Human Rights

### **Stefania Di Stefano**

Project Officer, Geneva Human Rights Platform

### **Ben Shea**

Human Rights Officer, Business and Human Rights Section, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

### **Matthias Thorns**

Global Labor Relations & Human Rights Director, Samsung Electronics

## REGISTRATION

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Register via the form on our website to attend:

<https://bit.ly/4bJQ9XD>

