

Multi-stakeholder Asia consultation on applying a gender lens to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

Parallel Session B | Concept Note

Tipping the scale against sexual harassment:
How businesses can respond to #MeToo movement

Day: 21 February 2018

Time: 1400 - 1530

Session Concept

In March 2011 the United Nations' Guiding Principles on Business and Human rights (UNGPs) were endorsed by the Human Rights Council (HRC). The UNGPs take stock of existing human rights obligations, regulations and policies, multi-governance initiatives, good practices and challenges, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) developments within the field of human rights and business. They provide for a well-structured presentation of relevant issues in the form of guiding principles. Based on the "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework for business and human rights, they enhance and unpack the distinction that exists between the state duty to protect human rights and the corporate responsibility to respect human rights. The UN Guiding Principles detail that States should: 'Provide effective guidance to business enterprises on how to respect human rights throughout their operations'. Even though the UNGPs is not a legally-binding instrument, it refers to a number of actual human rights obligations that business must respect.

One of the widespread human rights violations that occurs in the workplace across global supply chains is that of the gender-based violence. Gender-based and sexual violence in the workplace is a threat to the health and well-being of everyone. It impacts not only workers, employers and the brands that sell the products, but also families, communities, economies and society as a whole. Moreover, many types of violence in the world of work – sexual harassment, bullying, intimate partner violence – affect women disproportionately. However, gender-based violence can be committed by or against both women and men, such as violence against non-gender conforming men, including men who are or who are perceived to be gay, bisexual or trans. This is an issue which affects men and women across all workplace– from farm to factories to modern offices, all categories – unpaid, casual, apprentices, paid, and across all level – frontline workers to top executives. In this session, we will look at some of the trends and causes of gender-based violence and remedies that business are adopting as per their obligations to 'respect human rights' in the workplace. We will identify some of the gaps and recommendations for addressing these gaps in business response to gender based violence in the workplace.

Moderator

Sudarsana Kundu, Interim Director – Gender at Work Global.

Panelists

The panel will consist of speakers from across the spectrum. Speakers:

1. Sutapa Banerjee : Independent Director - JSW, iL&FS, Oxfam and Visiting Faculty IIM-A.
2. Sreela Dasgupta: Vice President and Head of Diversity and Inclusion at TCS.
3. Rekha Chakravarthi, Cividep
4. Anindit Roy Chowdhury, Programme Manager, Gender Justice and Human Rights, C&A Foundation (tbc)