



A United Nations expert body charged with the promotion of respect for human rights by business of all sizes, in all sectors, and in all countries, today called on States and business enterprises to address the heightened risk of vulnerability, discrimination and marginalization of groups and communities whose human rights are affected by business activities across the world.

These groups include children, older persons, indigenous women and men, workers with precarious employment conditions, migrant workers, journalists, human rights defenders, community activists and leaders who protest against or raise allegations concerning the impact of business activities, and marginalized rural and urban communities, as well as minorities that are subject to discrimination and marginalization.

“Significant challenges remain, and scaled-up efforts from all stakeholders are required to prevent, reduce and address adverse impacts on human rights linked to business activities,” urged Puvan Selvanathan, who currently heads the UN Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, during the presentation of the Group’s annual report to the UN General Assembly.

“States and business enterprises should adopt clear objectives, with measurable outcomes for implementation, and learn from the experiences of their peers,” Mr. Selvanathan stressed, urging them to scale up their efforts to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (see below), the global standard for preventing and addressing the risk of adverse impacts on human rights linked to business activity.

In its report, the Working Group urges business organizations in sectors that have not yet engaged with business and human rights issues to identify sector-specific human rights issues and take measures to raise awareness, build capacity and implement the Principles within each sector, in dialogue with other stakeholders.

“Regional organisations and private standard setting and governance frameworks should also engage with the Working Group to include business and human rights in the work of their organisation, and to ensure coherence and alignment with the Guiding Principles,” Mr. Selvanathan noted, while welcoming initiatives which are being undertaken to implement the Principles and to embed them into global governance frameworks.

For the expert body, the adoption of the Guiding Principles will also be important for the post-2015 development Agenda, “particularly after the missed opportunity at Rio+20, where the outcome document failed to adequately address business respect for human rights in the drive to a green economy and sustainable development.”

“The first annual Forum on Business and Human Rights on 4-5 December 2012 will be an opportunity for all stakeholders to discuss challenges in the implementation of the Guiding Principles, in particular sectors, in operational environments and in relation to specific rights and groups, and to identify good practices and opportunities for dialogue and cooperation toward solutions,” Mr. Selvanathan added. “We invite all stakeholders to register and attend.”

#### **Additional links:**

- [United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) (OHCHR) 



- Read the [report of the Working Group to the General Assembly](#)
- Read the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#)
- Learn more about and register for the 2012 [Forum on Business and Human Rights](#)
- The **Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises** was established by the UN Human Rights Council

in June 2011 to support efforts to prevent and address adverse impacts on human rights arising from business activities, using the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The five members are Mr. Michael Addo, Ms. Alexandra Guáqueta, Ms. Margaret Jungk, Mr. Puvan Selvanathan (current Chairperson-Rapporteur) and Mr. Pavel Sulyandziga. The Working Group is independent from any government or organization. It reports to the Human Rights Council and to the UN General Assembly. Learn more, visit:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Business/Pages/WGHRandtransnationalcorporationsandotherbusiness.aspx>