
FACT SHEET

BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

CENTRE FOR
RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS
(CRB)

10th year
2011-2020
CRB CENTRE for
RESPONSIBLE
BUSINESS
Enabling Change for Impact

INITIATIVES ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights – adopted on 10 December 1948 – stipulates that ‘every organ of society’ shall strive to promote respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. While this formulation already includes the private sector, the corporate responsibility to respect human rights was clearly established with the adoption of the UN Guiding Principles (UNGPs) for Business and Human Rights in 2011. Today, this responsibility is undisputable, yet numerous implementation challenges remain. The UNGPs - universally acknowledged as the most important framework for States and companies to prevent, address and remedy business-related human rights issues – consists of three pillars: the State duty to **protect** individuals from human rights abuses, the business responsibility to **respect** human rights, and the role States and business play in ensuring people have access to **remedy** when business operations and relationships result in

negative impacts.

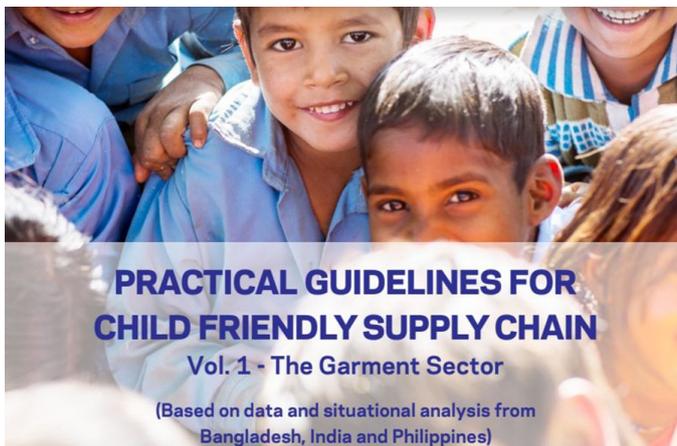
The pandemic has put at risk and reversed progress made in previous years towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Some groups, particularly, women, children and workers in the informal workers have been hit hard. It is then important that governments and businesses ensure that efforts to build back better take into consideration the most vulnerable with emphasis on making their supply chains more resilient to the shocks of the pandemic. As the UNGPs approach its 10th anniversary in 2021, the Centre for Responsible Business (CRB) believes that it is not only important to look back and take stock of the challenges and trends in its adoption and implementation but also, to look into the future and understand how human rights can be key to a sustainable future.

OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

- **National Action Plan (NAP) on Business & Human Rights:** The National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights is an evolving policy strategy developed by a state to protect against adverse human rights impacts by business enterprises in conformity with the UNGPs. As a signatory to the UNGPs, India is obligated to develop a NAP that is aligned to the UNGPs (i.e., based on the Protect-Respect-Remedy framework) and premised on the local business contexts and needs. Since January 2020, CRB has been actively supporting the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MoCA) in the process of developing the National Action Plan. CRB’s role in supporting the Ministry in taking the NAP development forward has been multi-fold ranging from providing research support & technical inputs, facilitating multi-stakeholder consultations and meetings and offering secretarial support.
- **Rights & Responsibilities of Women Textiles Workers:** This Rights and Responsibilities (R&R) program was co-developed by leading apparel and textiles brands/buyers who source from Indian suppliers, many of who are SMEs. The aim of this intervention led by CRB, has been to help owners and managers of apparel factories understand the importance of protecting the rights of women workers, from the perspective



- of ensuring long-term business relations with these brands. The Program employs five short films on key worker-centric issues – Health & Safety, Misconduct, Good Working Environment, Overtime, Worker Representation, as the primary training tool, and further provides the necessary reading & communication supporting material (in the form of a training manual and posters) and implementation support (virtual and in person) to equip and enable suppliers to effectively use these films to train factory workers, thereby driving increased awareness on their (worker) rights and responsibilities.
- **Child-Friendly Supply Chains in The Garment Sector:** CRB partnered with Global March Against Child Labour (Global March) to develop a Practical Guideline for Child Friendly Supply Chains - for The Garment Sector. This Guideline has been developed to identify and mitigate human trafficking, particularly of children, girls and young women in the supply chain of the garments sector, especially for Dutch Companies with its production network in India and other developing economies. The Guidelines relies on the framework advanced by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) and evidences/experiences of Global March and CRB on supply chain sustainability and human rights issues in the garment supply chain.



- **Human Rights Due Diligence:** CRB undertook a detailed human rights due diligence (HRDD) exercise to assess human rights risks associated with the engagement of a large MNC energy company with contract workers and communities across its various portfolios in India. CRB has developed a detailed and robust methodology to undertake HRDD exercise, based on international tools/methods for assisting businesses to understand current/potential human rights risks, using the UNGPs framework. A HRDD exercise is a first step

to initiate actions to address human rights problems related to business operations.

- **High Level Panel Discussion:** As part of CRB's 7th flagship Annual Conference - 'India and Sustainability Standards' scheduled between October 28 to October 30, with the theme of 'Sustainability a Key to Business Resilience in an Uncertain World', CRB, in partnership with FNF, curated a high-level panel discussion on Responsible Business particularly in the light of the recently notified disclosure and reporting guidelines (BRS) and an impending NAP. The panel attempted to weigh in on some of the ways and approaches in which professional bodies will help businesses understand and adopt the responsible practices and understand good practices adopted by progressive companies and discuss the business case for responsible conduct.
- **Quarterly Webinars Series:** As part of a joint initiative, three partner organisations; Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF), CRB and IGCC (Indo-German Chamber of Commerce), are working together to organize a series of quarterly webinars on a range of topics focusing on the different aspects of Business and Human Rights from a practitioner's standpoint. The overall objective of the webinar series will be to provide businesses practical guidance on enhancing the adoption and integration of business and human rights in policy and practice. The series will also endeavour to build on the existing understanding of national frameworks that promote Business and Human Rights. The series was kickstarted on the International Human Rights Day, i.e., December 10, 2020 with a focus on understanding of the UNGPs, introduction to NAP and aligning India's journey with the substantive aspects of Pillar 2 of the UNGPs (Corporate Responsibility to Respect). This webinar is available for viewing [here](#)
- **Short Videos:** CRB is producing media material for Business and Human Rights in India, that can be used across various communication platforms to further the agenda of responsible business. View the first video [here](#)
- **Multi-Country Tea Origins Supply Chain Risk Review:** In partnership with the Committee on Sustainability Assessment (COSA), CRB studied the human rights risks and impacts in tea value chains in India and Sri Lanka through engagement with relevant industry stakeholders

and ecosystem actors. CRB will also be developing a remediation framework listing all the relevant human rights risks and impacts, potential remediation measures and priority interventions in both countries

PARTNERSHIPS

CRB is looking to explore partnerships that share our vision of advancing the discourse on BHR in India and globally.

WAY FORWARD.

The business and human rights form the cornerstone of all the work undertaken by the Centre for Responsible Business, it cuts across the different thematic and operational works areas. Going forward, our endeavour will be to strengthen and diversify the vertical to include various other aspects of business and human rights. Through our work in the field, we would strive to further the understanding and application of BHR. This will be achieved through a collaborative and multi-pronged approach, which will entail consolidation of the work undertaken thus far, working with partners to design and develop frameworks, tools, trainings that enable adoption of BHR by enterprises, raise awareness through the creation of multi-stakeholder platforms, undertaken policy research and advocacy to advance the discourse on BHR. Some of the concrete activities planned in this direction include the following:

- Developing a roadmap for regional economic integration among South Asian countries with focus on business and human rights issues.
- Awarenessraising through capacity development measures

and multi-stakeholder dialogues on relevant topics (supply chain transparency, HRDD, risk and impact assessment) with eminent experts and practitioners

- Design, develop and implement industry and sector specific interventions on business and human rights, including human rights due diligence. Some of the sectors CRB has been actively engaged include mining, tea, apparel and textile, forestry, palm oil. The BHR issues investigated and worked on include child rights, worker rights, vulnerable and marginal community rights, women rights etc.
- Use the on-ground experience and knowledge to undertake evidenced based policy research and advocacy work. The CRB has been actively contributing to the ministries to push for the business and sustainability and BHR agenda. CRB continues to work with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to develop India National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights by providing research and technical support.

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