

UN experts welcome mining industry organization requirement for members to respect human rights

GENEVA (5 December 2018) – A UN expert group has welcomed the move by the International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM) to make it a mandatory requirement for its members to prevent and address adverse human rights impacts in mining operations worldwide.

ICMM involves 27 of the world’s largest mining corporations. It is the first global industry association in the mining sector to introduce a performance standard explicitly based on the corporate responsibility to respect human rights as set out in UN [Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#).

“Mining is among the sectors with the highest risk of negative impacts on people. All too often, communities, workers and indigenous peoples in all world regions suffer human rights abuses in the context of mining; and individuals speaking up against such abuse are being targeted by governments and companies”, said Dante Pesce, who chairs the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights.

“By requiring its members to implement the Guiding Principles, ICMM is setting an example for other industry associations to follow”, he added.

Moreover, Mr. Pesce drew attention to the involvement of company CEOs in ICMM’s initiative to promote responsible business conduct in the sector.

“Leadership from the top is critical for making the corporate responsibility to respect human rights part of everyday business practice, and we look forward to seeing the next steps taken by ICMM and its members to implement the commitment and validate compliance”, he concluded.

ICMM presented the new performance standard and plans for how its member companies should put it into practice at last week’s [UN Forum on Business and Human Rights](#).

The UN Forum held in Geneva under the theme of “Business respect for human rights – building on what works”, centred around the findings in a recent [report](#) by the Working Group on the state of play of corporate “human rights due diligence” – the requirement that companies identify risks of negative impacts of human rights abuse in their operations and by business partners, and take steps to address them.*

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* See also [executive summary of the report](#)

The UN [Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#), unanimously endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011 (resolution 17/4), provide the authoritative global standard for action to safeguard human rights in a business context, clarifying what is expected by governments and companies to prevent and address impacts on human rights arising from business activity.

The UN [Working Group on human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises](#) (known as the Working Group on Business and Human Rights) was established by the UN Human Rights Council in June 2011 to promote worldwide dissemination and implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The Working Group is composed of five independent experts, of balanced geographical representation. Its current members are: **Mr. Dante Pesce** (Chairperson), **Mr. Surya Deva** (Vice-Chairperson), **Ms. Elżbieta Karska**, **Mr. Githu Muigai**, and **Ms. Anita Ramasastry**. The Working Group and Special Rapporteurs are part of what is known as the [Special Procedures](#) of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights system, is the general name of the Council's independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world.

For further information and **media requests**, please write to wg-business@ohchr.org or contact Ulrik Halsteen (+41 22 917 93 23).

This year, 2018, is the **70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, adopted by the UN on 10 December 1948. The Universal Declaration – translated into a world record 500 languages – is rooted in the principle that “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” It remains relevant to everyone, every day. In honour of the 70th anniversary of this extraordinarily influential document, and to prevent its vital principles from being eroded, we are urging people everywhere to **Stand Up for Human Rights**: www.standup4humanrights.org.