

Global Compact Network Netherlands' publication on how to do business with respect for human rights inspired by the "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework

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The Global Compact Network Netherlands (GCNL) has issued a publication presenting common insights gained from the analysis it performed of the human rights agendas of ten leading Dutch companies. GCNL initiated the "Business & Human Rights Initiative" to assess how companies can meet their responsibility to respect human rights. It was inspired by the United Nations "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework presented by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Business and Human Rights, Professor John Ruggie, and welcomed by the Human Rights Council in 2008.

The participating companies— ABN Amro (formerly: Fortis Bank Nederland), AkzoNobel, Essent, KLM, Philips, Rabobank, Randstad, Shell, TNT, and Unilever—found that in many ways they are already doing a great deal to meet their responsibility to respect human rights, often without naming human rights explicitly. At the same time, the U.N. "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework and the process of human rights due diligence that it includes provides a practical and attainable approach for companies.

The final publication 'How to Do Business with Respect for Human Rights: A Guidance Tool for Companies,' was issued this summer and presented during the Global Compact Leaders Summit in New York to John Ruggie, Georg Kell (Executive Director of the Global Compact) and Mary Robinson (former High Commissioner for Human Rights and Chair of the Global Compact Human Rights Working Group). The guidance points and lessons learned in the publication are intended to encourage, guide and support companies to meet their responsibility to respect human rights, which is part of their responsibilities as signatories to the Global Compact, as well as contribute to the final phase of the Special Representative's mandate, in which he is developing practical guidance to 'operationalize' the Framework.

André van Heemstra, Chair of GCNL and former board member of Unilever, said about the publication: "Respect for human rights is a core component of corporate social responsibility. Increasingly, international society demands that companies demonstrate that they have the systems in place to respect human rights. This publication provides hands on advice."

Marga Edens, Corporate Responsibility Manager, Essent: "Global sourcing creates global responsibility. "Protect, Respect and Remedy" offers us a practical framework to help shape that responsibility, and the publication of the Business & Human Rights Initiative provides us with useful guidance."

Sieto de Leeuw, Managing Director Social and Legal Affairs, Randstad Group Netherlands: "We have learned much from engaging in the Business & Human Rights Initiative and considering the work of the Special Representative. For a company like ours—with people at the very core of our business—it is not only the right thing to do, but critically important to ensure respect for human rights in order to attract the best talent and to be able to offer high quality workers to our customers."

Miguel Veiga-Pestana, Vice-President Global External Affairs, Unilever: "Being part of the Business & Human Rights Initiative has helped us to better understand how human rights can be further integrated into our overall approach to sustainability. Our participation has helped to better understand the "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework and the implications for our business. This was also a contributory factor in our recent decision to become a member of the Global Business Initiative on Human Rights."

Andrew Vickers, Vice President Policy and External Relations, Shell International B.V.: "This new publication is easy-to-read, practical and offers business leaders clear guidance on how to implement good practises in the area of business and human rights. Areas addressed range from policy through to performance tracking and putting in place grievance mechanisms."

Françoise Rost Van Tonningen, Manager Ethics Office, Rabobank: "Learning from and considering the "Protect, Respect and Remedy" Framework has provided us with useful guidance on human rights, which for a financial institution operating in many sectors and countries is not easy to obtain. The Framework is

also fit for purpose in that it allows to align our human rights commitment to an international framework, which for a long time has been absent. Besides gathering new insights by participating in the Business & Human Rights Initiative we are also engaging with stakeholders on this issue. As result, we took our responsibility by acknowledging that our Human Rights Policy from 2007 needed an update based on the latest developments in the field of human rights policy making, which we have recently started.”

The publication can be downloaded for free from: www.gcnetherlands.nl

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