

UN GLOBAL COMPACT HUMAN RIGHTS WORKING GROUP (HRWG)
TERMS OF REFERENCE
JUNE 2011

Objectives:

Consistent with the UN Global Compact's voluntary character and emphasis on practical solutions and its human rights principles which commit businesses to respect and support human rights:

The overarching objectives of the HRWG are:

- *To advance the business and human rights agenda within the framework of the Global Compact and the UN Guiding Principles on business and human rights*
- *To identify obstacles to business implementing the Global Compact human rights principles/key dilemmas faced and advise on practical ways of overcoming them*
- *To provide advice to the Global Compact Office on business and human rights*
- *To support Local Networks and their efforts to promote respect and support of human rights in business context*
- *With a special focus on the UN Guiding Principles on business and human rights, enhance synergies and cooperation, and avoid duplication, with other initiatives on business and human rights*
- *To make recommendations to Global Compact participants and businesses generally on topics relevant to business and human rights*
- *To act as a platform for collective action on business and human rights*

Activities to be undertaken by the HRWG may include:

(1) General advice:

- *Advise on ways to improve implementation of the Global Compact's human rights principles by participants (both MNEs and SMEs), in particular through alignment with the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights*
- *Help scope opportunities and advise on priorities for the Global Compact's Human Rights programme*
- *Act as a standing group from whom advice can be sought on business and human rights*
- *Where the demand exists among Global Compact participants, advise on the merits of sector specific approaches to advancing business and human rights*

(2) Tools and guidance materials

- *Advise on methodologies for improving the uptake of human rights tools and guidance materials by Global Compact participants, with a particular focus on the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights*
- *Advise on the existence of other tools and guidance documents that the UN Global Compact should recommend and promote*
- *Help identify the need for new tools and other guidance documents on business and human rights*

- *Help source examples and other material for tools and other guidance documents on business and human rights*
- *Trial business and human rights tools and provide a platform for the exchange of experiences in doing so*
- *Act as a forum for identifying good business practice in implementing the Global Compact human rights principles through a rigorous multi-stakeholder and peer-reviewed process*

(3) Peer review function

- *Employ and advise on the use of peer review approaches in efforts to advise business and human rights*
- *Assess and advise on the implementation of Global Compact LEAD as it relates to implementation of the human rights principles, including how LEAD companies incorporate the human rights into their COPs or other forms of action*

(4) Collective action

- *Advise on possible types of human rights related collective action that Global Compact participants and other stakeholders or the Human Rights Working Group itself can engage in to advance human rights*

(5) Local action

- *Suggest opportunities for Local Networks to advance business and human rights*
- *Where possible, including through National Human Rights Institutions and other organizations focused on business and human rights, support Local Networks interested in conducting business and human rights activities*

(6) UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

- *Contribute to wider dissemination of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to GC participants*
- *Advise on and contribute to the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights by Global Compact participants*
- *Advise non-corporate participants in the Global Compact on engagement with corporate participants on the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*
- *Advise on how Global Compact Local Networks can contribute to the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights among its members*

Chairing of the HRWG:

The HRWG will be co-chaired by the civil society representative for human rights on the Global Compact Board and a business representative of the Global Compact Board.

The role of the Chairs will be to chair the meetings of the HRWG and oversee its functioning. The Chairs are also the liaison between the Global Compact Board and the Human Rights Working Group, and share with the Board the HRWG's progress at Board meetings.

The Chairs may elect to nominate another person from within their own or another organization as an intermediary with whom the GCO and OHCHR may interact with between meetings for planning purposes.

Membership of the Global Compact Human Rights Working Group (HRWG):

The HRWG is a multi-stakeholder group comprised of companies participating in the Global Compact; Global Compact Local Network representatives with a particular interest in business and human rights; individuals from international organizations; civil society organizations active on business and human rights; trade union representatives; academics with relevant expertise; and relevant business networks.

The HRWG can consist of up to 30 members, 2/3 of whom should represent participating companies, Local Network representatives, or business networks

The Global Compact Office and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) are *ex officio* members of the HRWG as well as its Secretariat.

Membership of the HRWG will be confirmed by the Co-Chairs on the advice of the Global Compact Office and OHCHR and take into account the need for regional representation and diversity of organisation as well as an organisation's interest and activity in the Working Group.

Members are represented by their organizational affiliation, not in their individual capacity.

Terms of participation

Each member of the HRWG commits to:

- at a minimum, participate in an annual planning and stocktaking meeting of the HRWG (through tele/video conferencing or webinar, if physical presence is not possible, though physical presence is strongly preferred), and in any additional meetings where possible.
- contribute actively to at least one of the HRWG's workstreams or initiatives per year
- actively participate in review of at least one tool or guidance document presented to the HRWG for its approval or endorsement.
- participate in any other activities decided by the HRWG to the extent possible.

Members are encouraged to identify an alternate from their organization in the event that they are not able to participate in meetings or other activities.

Every two years, HRWG members must renew their commitment to continued participation by expressing their interest. Continued membership is subject to the review by the Chair(s) on the advice of the Global Compact Office and OHCHR, on the basis of a proven record of commitment to active participation, learning and knowledge-sharing initiatives.

For company HRWG members also participating in Global Compact LEAD, a higher level of commitment and active participation are required for continued membership in the HRWG.

In order to enhance accountability of HRWG members, each member is expected to submit a brief summary of their contributions to the HRWG to the Chairs (through the Secretariat) in advance of the main annual meeting of the HRWG (see below). A template will be provided for this and a reminder will be sent.

The Chairs and the Secretariat may decide, in their sole discretion, to allow observers to participate in some or all meetings of the HRWG.

Methods of working:

The HRWG will convene an annual meeting to serve as an annual planning and stock-taking meeting for the activities of the HRWG. All members are expected to participate in this meeting, if need be through tele/video conferencing, webinar or their alternate.

Beyond the annual meeting, the HRWG will convene meetings as and when the need and opportunity arises. To be cost and carbon effective, it is expected that most additional meetings will be in the form of tele/video conferences and/or webinars.

During the annual meeting, or at any other time a new activity is initiated, sub-committees or sub-groups of HRWG members may be formed to lead each activity. Such sub-committees are expected to provide quarterly updates to the HRWG through the Secretariat and Chairs about progress of the work. The sub-committees should strive to have a multi-stakeholder composition. The sub-committees will develop their own program of work as required by the particular activity. Members of the sub-committees are expected to participate actively in any activity required to meet the objective of their respective sub-committees.

A sub-committee can request the Chairs (through the Secretariat) to convene a conference call with the HRWG to discuss a particular issue or to update the HRWG on progress.

HRWG endorsement or approval of an initiative, tool or other activity can take place either during the annual meeting or during any other HRWG meeting, including tele/video conferences and/or webinars. A quorum of at least 18 members of the HRWG will usually be needed to make active endorsements or approvals. However, at the discretion of the Chairs, written procedures may be used to finalize documents provided at least two weeks notice is granted.

Funding

Members of the HRWG are expected to cover their own costs of participation, including travel, where relevant. Limited funding may be available to cover participants' travel or other costs in cases of hardship. Priority will be given to participants from developing economies and/or members of civil society organizations that have made a significant contribution to the HRWG. Requests must be made in writing in advance.
