



## Assemblée générale

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### Conseil des droits de l'homme

#### Vingtième session

Point 3 de l'ordre du jour

**Promotion et protection de tous les droits de l'homme,  
civils, politiques, économiques, sociaux et culturels,  
y compris le droit au développement**

### **Informations communiquées par la Commission de l'égalité et des droits de l'homme du Royaume-Uni de Grande- Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord\***

#### **Note du secrétariat**

Le secrétariat du Conseil des droits de l'homme fait tenir ci-joint la communication présentée par la Commission de l'égalité et des droits de l'homme du Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord\*\*, reproduite ci-après conformément à l'article 7 b) du Règlement intérieur figurant dans l'annexe de la résolution 5/1 du Conseil des droits de l'homme, qui dispose que la participation des institutions nationales des droits de l'homme s'exerce selon les modalités et les pratiques convenues par la Commission des droits de l'homme, notamment la résolution 2005/74 du 20 avril 2005.

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\* Institution nationale des droits de l'homme à laquelle le Comité international de coordination des institutions nationales pour la promotion et la protection des droits de l'homme a accordé le statut d'accréditation «A».

\*\* L'annexe est reproduite telle qu'elle a été reçue, dans la langue originale seulement.

## Annexe

*[English only]*

In this statement the Equality and Human Rights Commission (hereafter the Commission) wishes to welcome the report of the Working Group as well as international, regional and national developments on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises. The Commission also wishes to provide information on the work it is carrying out in this field in line with the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions Working Group on Business and Human Rights Action Plan.

The Commission supports, in line with the statement of the ICC Working Group on Business and Human Rights, the strategy outlined in the report. Specifically, the Commission supports:

- using the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: Implementing the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework (hereafter Guiding Principles) as a common reference point in a rapidly developing field;
- using the Guiding Principles to promote accountability;
- building an environment that is receptive of the Guiding Principles.

We welcome the report’s acknowledgment of the role and contributions of National Human Rights Institutions in promoting and implementing the Guiding Principles as well as providing protection and remedy for victims of violations. We concur with the ICC Working Group Statement that NHRIs are ideally placed to provide support to the implementation of the business and human rights agenda at national, regional and international level, in cooperation with business, governments, regional organisations, the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions and the United Nations.

At the regional level we welcome the European Union plans to develop sector specific guidance on the corporate responsibility to protect human rights in employment and recruitment, ICT and telecommunications as well as oil and gas.

On the national level we welcome the commitment of the United Kingdom Government to implementing the Guiding Principles as well as promoting international compliance with the Principles. We welcome the Government’s strategy on business and human rights and its commitment to involving and consulting NHRIs and civil society in developing and implementing further plans. We also welcome the publication of a toolkit designed to help UK overseas missions promote good conduct by UK companies operating overseas and the Overseas Business Risk (OBR) service, which in conjunction with UK Trade and Investment the alerts companies to the possible risks of operating in certain overseas markets and which included human rights issues.

To implement the action plan of the ICC Working Group on Business and Human Rights, the Commission has engaged in a series of activities to:

**(a) Provide guidance and tools to national institutions on business and human rights**

The Commission is developing practical guidance for smaller and medium-sized business operating in Britain and elsewhere. It is doing this in partnership with businesses and with the business and human rights community. The guidance will make the business case for human rights in business, outline the UN guiding principles and the importance of human

rights due diligence, and explain human rights impacts in seven key areas: customers, communities, discrimination, labour rights, human trafficking, privacy and transparency.

This guidance is underpinned by research commissioned from the University of Middlesex to map and evaluate existing guidance on business and human rights.

**(b) Engage with stakeholders on human rights and the role of national institutions in implementing international and regional initiatives on business and human rights**

In October 2010, the Commission set up a Working Group on Business and Human Rights with the aim of facilitating dialogue and encouraging businesses to integrate human rights into their business practices. It is primarily made up of UK businesses and also includes representatives from trade bodies, unions, government and civil society.

The main focus of the group is business activities and human rights within the UK's borders; however, it recognises that the policy framework established by the Government and UK corporate headquarters strongly influences UK business' actions overseas.

**(c) Produce and deliver awareness and outreach activities and products**

Last year, the Commission supported 'Countdown to 2011'; a series of events bringing together businesses and other key stakeholders in the business and human rights field to debate the John Ruggie framework. The events, in association with a leading law firm Clifford Chance, the International Business Leaders Forum and Amnesty International UK, considered the practical challenges of adopting the 'Protect, Respect and Remedy' framework. Following the events we produced a short film in which business leaders share their views on key questions. The film can be viewed on our website. <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/here-for-business/human-rights-matter-to-business/>

**(d) To develop, pilot, implement and evaluate regional training and tools in collaboration with regional networks**

An important aspect of the planned publication of guidance for SMEs, later this year, will be to evaluate its reach and impact across the SME sector.

We will be exploring synergies with the European Commission on guidance for SMEs. We will continue to cooperate with Commissions in Scotland and Northern Ireland and ICC partners.

We encourage the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises to continue to engage with the International Coordinating Committee, consulting on the implementation of the strategy, clarifying expectations of National Human Rights Institution and providing expert guidance on effective tools to promote dissemination and implementation of the Guiding Principles.