

United Nations Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum, Asia-Pacific

Anchoring Progress and Strengthening Regional
Leadership on Human Rights through Crisis

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Forum Proceedings



Organizers

The 2025 United Nations Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum was organized by the following agencies:

- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- United Nations Programme for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
- United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights (UNWG)

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UNITED NATIONS RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS FORUM 2025

Anchoring Progress and Strengthening Regional Leadership on Human Rights through Crisis

The 7th United Nations Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum took place amid intensifying economic, geopolitical, environmental, and social pressures across Asia-Pacific. Under the theme “Anchoring Progress and Strengthening Regional Leadership on Human Rights Through Crisis,” the Forum provided a platform for governments, businesses, civil society, Indigenous Peoples’ organizations, development partners, and youth to examine how these dynamics are reshaping expectations around responsible business conduct and human rights.

To give structure to these discussions, the Forum was organized around four thematic tracks: Policy Coherence and Regulatory Evolution; Markets, Finance and Supply Chains; Inclusion, Protection, and Participation; and Sustainability and Transitions. Across these tracks, discussions underscored a shared recognition that voluntary initiatives alone cannot address persistent labor, environmental, and governance challenges. Participants noted that global regulatory developments – together with emerging domestic frameworks – are raising expectations for more consistent implementation and accountability in the region.

The 2025 programme brought together over 150 partners delivering more than 90 sessions, ranging from policy dialogue and technical exchange to practical workshops and youth-led innovation. Recurring priorities included strengthening policy coherence, increasing the meaningful participation of workers, communities, and other rights holders, and improving access to remedy as a central measure of credible responsible business practice.

Overall, the Forum highlighted both progress and persisting gaps, pointing to the need for continued collaboration to ensure that responsible business commitments translate into tangible outcomes for people and communities affected by business activities.

THEMATIC TRACKS



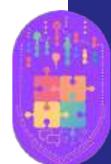
POLICY COHERENCE AND REGULATORY EVOLUTION

Emerging BHR policies and laws, including mHREDD, NAPs, and alignment across trade, investment, and UN mechanisms.



MARKETS, FINANCE AND SUPPLY CHAINS

How finance, ESG expectations, and buyer-supplier dynamics shape human rights outcomes across global and regional supply chains.



INCLUSION, PROTECTION, AND PARTICIPATION

Rights-holder experiences amid shrinking civic space, focusing on remedy, labor rights, gender justice, youth, and defender protection.



SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSITIONS

Human rights impacts of climate change, technological shifts, and economic transitions, including AI governance and just transition needs.

ANCHORING PROGRESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Progress in advancing business and human rights depends on partnerships – across institutions, sectors and countries – and the 2025 Forum served as a vehicle to bring those partnerships to life.

Contributions from more than 150 partners, including the co-organizers, development partners, and a diverse list of collaborating partners, were central to the Forum’s success. Together, they designed and delivered over 90 sessions – from sector-specific dialogues on finance, extractives, and garment supply chains to practical workshops on supply-chain transparency, grievance mechanisms, and worker voice. Partners also led dialogues on finance, migration, and climate transitions, drawing connections between business practice and human rights outcomes.

The diversity of partners – spanning business associations, national human rights institutions, universities, and Indigenous Peoples' organizations – ensured that the Forum programme captured the complexity of the BHR agenda in Asia-Pacific. By pooling expertise and convening power, partners turned the Forum into a platform for collective leadership in practice: strengthening coherence across the UN system, reinforcing regional solidarity, and deepening engagement with new actors in the business and human rights space.



2025 Collaborating Partners



Session Summaries

The following section presents summaries of Forum sessions organized by thematic track and chronological order. The four tracks are: Policy Coherence and Regulatory Evolution; Markets, Finance and Supply Chains; Inclusion, Protection and Participation; and Sustainability and Transitions.

Please note that only partner-submitted session summaries are featured in this section. A complete agenda, including all sessions and side events, is provided in the Annex.



Welcome, Keynote and Opening Plenary

The 2025 UN Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum opened in Bangkok with a clear call to consolidate Asia-Pacific's leadership on responsible business conduct amid compounding global crises. Under the theme "Anchoring Progress and Strengthening Regional Leadership on Human Rights Through Crisis," the plenary underscored the region's growing influence in shaping global business and human rights standards and translating them into concrete outcomes.

The opening discussions highlighted that the next phase of progress requires stronger policy coherence, alignment between prosperity and human rights, and an acceleration from voluntary commitments to mandatory standards. Across interventions, participants emphasized that inclusion – of Indigenous peoples, youth, workers, and civil society – is central to building resilience and ensuring that growth and development are grounded in dignity and justice.

The session also reaffirmed that responsible business is not only a moral or legal duty, but a strategic foundation for stability, competitiveness, and sustainable development. By linking accountability with leadership, the plenary set the tone for the following days of regional dialogue aimed at turning principles into practice and advancing collective action for people and planet.



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Systemic barriers have made it harder for young people to participate meaningfully in policymaking or business decisions – but we are already leading change.

Isaiah Emmanuel de la Cruz Sugitan
UNICEF EAP Young
People's Action Team

“

Our commitment has never been about choosing between competitiveness and human rights – it has focused on alignment where responsible trade and inclusive growth complement each other.

AnnaMaria Oltorp
Embassy of Sweden to Thailand



SPEAKERS

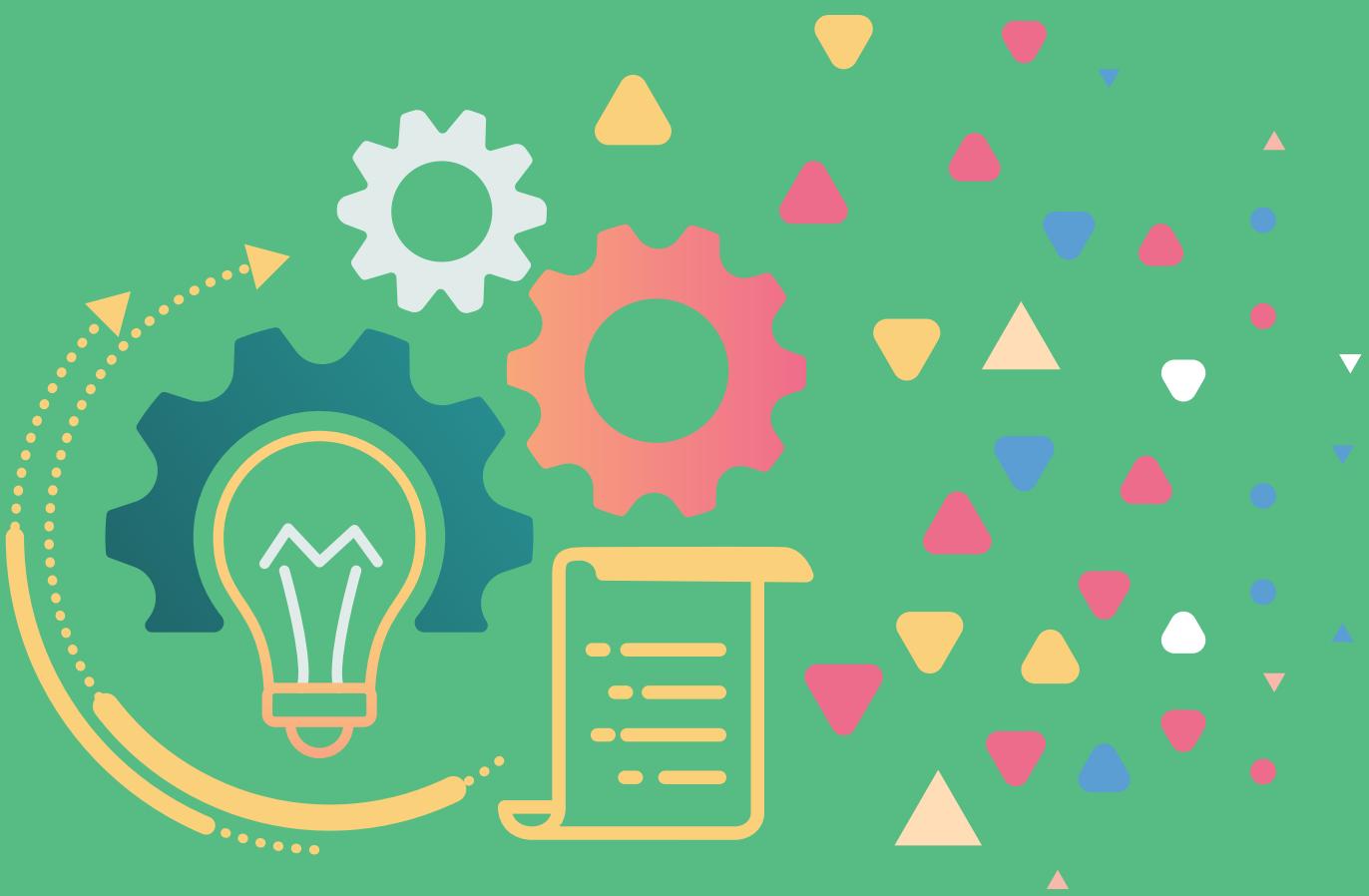
- **Aimon Siangyai**, Department of Rights and Liberties Protection, Ministry of Justice, Thailand (video address)
- **AnnaMaria Oltorp**, Embassy of Sweden to Thailand
- **Sara Rezogali**, Delegation of the European Union to Thailand
- **Andrew Egan**, Australian Embassy Thailand
- **Pichamon Yeophantong**, UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights
- **Tony Khaw**, NXP Semiconductors
- **Toni Chiran**, Asia Indigenous Youth Platform
- **Jung Hyang Suk**, Supporters for the Health and Rights of People in the Semiconductor Industry (SHARPS)
- **Isaiah Emmanuel de la Cruz Sugitan**, UNICEF EAP Young People's Action Team

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Asia-Pacific's Leadership Moment:** The region is emerging as a global leader in advancing responsible business conduct. The Forum underscored that leadership now means translating commitments into tangible progress and accountability.
- **From Voluntary to Binding Standards:** Across interventions, speakers called for moving beyond voluntary frameworks toward mandatory human rights due diligence, stronger enforcement, and greater alignment between prosperity and rights.
- **Inclusion as Resilience:** Indigenous Peoples, youth, workers, and civil society were recognized as central to shaping fairer economies and sustainable transitions—not as beneficiaries, but as co-architects of solutions.
- **Trust and Transparency as the New Currency:** Both governments and business representatives acknowledged that responsible business depends on public trust, open disclosure, and effective remedy mechanisms.
- **Responsible Business as Strategy:** The plenary emphasized that embedding human rights into business practice is not only ethical but essential for long-term stability, competitiveness, and regional prosperity.

TRACK ONE

Policy Coherence and Regulatory Evolution





Driving Responsible Business in ASEAN: Expectations for greater respect of rights and prosperity across value chains

SESSION PARTNERS

- United Nations Development Programme
- IDE-JETRO
- UN Global Compact Network Japan

SPEAKERS

- KIYA Masahiko, Mission of Japan to ASEAN
- Edmund Bon, Representative of Malaysia and Chair of AICHR
- Bhanubhatra Jittiang, Representative of Thailand to AICHR
- Miwa Yamada, Senior Research Fellow, Interdisciplinary Studies Center, Institute of Developing Economies, IDE-JETRO
- Sofia Alatas, Human Rights Program and Technical Assistance at Ministry of Law & Human Rights, Government of Indonesia
- Sugumari S.Shanmugam, ASEAN Economic Integration Division, Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry, Government of Malaysia
- Livio Sarandrea, Global Advisor on Business and Human Rights, UNDP



“

ASEAN is moving from talking about responsible business to strengthening the systems that protect people, across climate, migration, gender equality and beyond.

Edmund Bon

Representative of Malaysia and Chair of AICHR

The session underscored a clear strategic shift: responsible business conduct and human rights due diligence are becoming core expectations shaping trade, investment, and supply chain relationships in the region. With global regulatory trends accelerating and value chains deeply interconnected, ASEAN countries and their partners increasingly recognize that policy coherence is no longer optional, it is a competitiveness imperative.

Discussions highlighted how alignment on business and human rights frameworks across the region can reduce systemic risks, enhance investment confidence, and create more predictable operating environments for businesses. Strengthened peer learning, shared standards, and coordinated approaches were identified as critical to elevating both economic outcomes and human dignity across value chains.

The session also pointed to a broader evolution in ASEAN's engagement with responsible business, moving from awareness raising to a more protection-oriented agenda that integrates climate change, migration, gender equality, and access to remedy. Emerging regional workplans and strengthened mechanisms offer new entry points for collaboration and long-term capacity building.

Panel reflections emphasized that implementing human rights due diligence remains uneven across ASEAN, creating vulnerabilities for suppliers and investors alike. A strategic, people-centred approach –grounded in worker experience, practical tools, and multistakeholder engagement – was seen as essential to accelerating uptake, reducing compliance complexity, and building more resilient, future-ready supply chains.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ASEAN-Japan alignment on responsible business conduct is accelerating. Shared supply chains and a growing set of due-diligence regulations make policy coherence increasingly important for reducing risks and sustaining investment
- Human rights due diligence is becoming essential for competitiveness. While many companies have human rights policies, full HRDD implementation – especially among ASEAN suppliers – remains uneven and poses risks of exclusion from global markets
- Regulatory coherence benefits both governments and businesses. Harmonizing standards between Japan and ASEAN reduces compliance complexity, creates predictability, and supports responsible growth
- Peer learning and multistakeholder engagement are critical. Governments, businesses, civil society and workers must collaborate to localize HRDD, share models, and build capacity – especially in high-risk sectors

The Asia Way: Business perspectives on evolving human rights and environmental due diligence in East Asia and ASEAN

SESSION PARTNERS

- amfori
- Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)

SPEAKERS

- John Poon, Advocacy & Engagement Advisor, amfori
- Yoshitaka Watanabe, Manager on Legal Policy, ERIA
- Sammie Ho Dumas, Senior Director, Social Impact – Sustainability, Thai Union Group



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Reporting is only difficult when nothing has been done – focus on material issues, build small wins, and make grievance channels truly accessible through worker-led partners.

Sammie Ho Dumas
Thai Union Group

Using a business-centric lens, this session explored how East Asia and ASEAN are moving forward on human rights and environmental due diligence (HREDD). The discussion outlined recent legislative developments, covering both direct obligations to conduct due diligence and indirect requirements such as reporting duties. It was noted that these measures may generate extraterritorial impacts on Asian companies through global supply chains and that they will be phased in over the coming years, signaling a progressive tightening of due diligence expectations.

The session then highlighted regional developments, including Thailand's mHREDD initiative, ASEAN's work on common reporting standards, China's Corporate Sustainability Disclosure Standard and Environmental Code and Japan's layered model on national voluntary guidelines and sectoral standards. Building on this, the session reflected on how companies can respond effectively and efficiently to HREDD requirements from a practitioner's perspective. Suggested approaches included starting with material issues, pairing credible certification with worker-led grievance channels, and collaborating with suppliers beyond tier 1. The discussion also emphasized the need to make HREDD workable for SMEs, to address data gaps, and to avoid duplication of efforts through regional alignment, capacity building, and recognition of credible schemes.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Human rights and environmental due diligence and disclosure are getting stricter all around the world, and Asia is moving towards this trend
- The approach in East Asia and ASEAN that forms the Asia Way links due diligence to national development and trade strategies, with step-by-step rollout and alignment to international frameworks
- SMEs struggle most with awareness, data and resources. Scalable tools and shared platforms are needed
- Effective practice shifts efforts from pure monitoring to prevention and remediation, including worker-accessible grievance mechanisms and collaborations between buyers and suppliers
- Regional cooperation within the region can reduce fragmentation, support recognition of credible schemes and help suppliers in lower tiers participate

From Commitments to Impact: Strengthening leadership to advance elimination of forced labor

SESSION PARTNERS

- International Labour Organization
- The Remedy Project
- ERM

SPEAKERS

- Tomoya Obokata, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery
- Archana Kotecha, Founder and CEO of The Remedy Project and ReAct Asia
- Sofia Nazalya, Principal Consultant, ERM



“

Forced labor prevention isn't about ticking boxes in the name of compliance—it's about building resilience through prevention, worker voice, and remedy. Effective leadership means prioritising preventive practices so safeguards hold in times of crisis and harm does not recur.

Archana Kotecha
The Remedy Project

The session opened with Ms. Bharati Pflug (ILO) stressing that fundamental principles and rights at work are central to sustainable trade and development, and highlighting the need to align trade and labor agendas while supporting SMEs on due diligence and recruitment.

Mr. Poom Siraprapasiri (ERM), as moderator, steered the dialogue toward practical ways of moving from reactive compliance to proactive leadership, linking policy developments with operational realities.

Prof. Tomoya Obokata (UN Special Rapporteur) noted ASEAN progress in ratifying ILO conventions but emphasized persistent implementation gaps. He urged context-sensitive approaches in high-risk settings and cited Japan's guidelines on business and human rights as an example of heightened due diligence in conflict zones.

Ms. Archana Kotecha (The Remedy Project) called for embedding prevention, remedy and worker voice into business models, stressing that remedy must ensure harm does not recur. She urged outcome-focused measurement and regional leadership.

Ms. Sofia Nazalya (ERM) underlined the role of finance in driving accountability, pointing to sustainability-linked financing and investor stewardship, while warning against social-washing.

Speakers agreed that regional leadership, grounded in shared values and adapted to local realities, is vital to turning commitments into real impact for workers.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Lead beyond compliance: Shift from reactive box-ticking to proactive, resilient leadership that embeds prevention and remedy in business models, especially in high-risk and migrant-worker contexts.
- Standards to practice: ASEAN international labor standards ratifications are rising, but implementation gaps persist. Apply context-sensitive due diligence (incl. conflict-affected areas) and align trade and labor agendas.
- Worker voice & dialogue: Make meaningful worker participation central to risk identification, mitigation, and remedy; use multi-stakeholder coordination and social dialogue to sustain progress.
- Finance as a lever: Use sustainability-linked supply-chain financing and investor stewardship - grounded in credible data, transparency, and ongoing monitoring - while guarding against green/social-washing.
- Regional leadership: Asia need not wait for external mandates; lead with locally grounded solutions that advance prevention, remedy, and inclusion, turning commitments into measurable impact for workers.

Sustaining Momentum between Design and Implementation of BHR Policies: Experience sharing and peer exchange

SESSION PARTNERS

- United Nations Development Programme



The closed-door government exchange brought together senior officials from Asia and beyond to share strategies for sustaining momentum between the design and implementation of business and human rights (BHR) policies. Discussions underscored the accelerating global shift from voluntary commitments to binding human rights and environmental due diligence (HRDD) frameworks that are redefining corporate practice and market access.

Countries shared concrete progress: Thailand's second National Action Plan (NAP) advancing with new legislation and business incentives; Malaysia's recently launched NAP following extensive multistakeholder consultations; Indonesia's forthcoming decree on due diligence; Pakistan's phased transition from voluntary to mandatory measures; and South Korea's proposed due diligence bill shaped through civil society engagement. Participants from Africa and Europe highlighted shared challenges around policy coherence, SME inclusion, and institutional capacity.

The exchange affirmed Asia's growing leadership in translating the UN Guiding Principles into policy and practice, as governments increasingly integrate BHR into economic, social, and environmental planning. Participants emphasized that sustained progress depends on cross-regional peer learning, creative regulatory design, and strong collaboration among governments, business, and civil society to move from policy ambition to tangible results for people and planet.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The global transition from voluntary to mandatory BHR standards is accelerating, influencing trade and investment ecosystems.
- Asia has moved from late adoption to regional leadership in developing and implementing NAPs.
- Governments are embedding BHR within national economic, environmental, and social plans, creating cross-ministerial coordination.
- SMEs remain a persistent challenge, requiring tailored guidance, incentives, and capacity support.
- Peer learning and South–South exchange are driving adaptation of successful regional models.
- Integrating environmental, digital, and human rights agendas is critical to future policy coherence.

Are South Korea and Thailand Ready to Take the Lead on Mandatory Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence in Asia?

SESSION PARTNERS

- KTNC Watch
- FORUM-ASIA
- Manushya Foundation

SPEAKERS

- Ji Yoon Kang, Staff Attorney, GongGam Human Rights Law Foundation/KTNC Watch
- Phattharaphong Saengkrai, Lecturer, Faculty of Law Thammasat University, Senior legal advisor, Delegation of the European Union to Thailand
- Neila Mangin Maïza, Corporate Accountability Advisor, Manushya Foundation
- Nidhi Singh, Business & Human Rights Programme Officer, FORUM-ASIA



“ Asia’s rapid economic growth, fueled by extensive supply chains, foreign investment, and corporate expansion, often remains unchecked due to weak regulation, collusion of public and corporate interest and shrinking civic space. This is why mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence laws are essential: to hold companies accountable for the harm they cause to people and the planet, in their operations and supply chain.

Nidhi Singh
Business & Human Rights Programme Officer, FORUM-ASIA

At a time where the European Union is rolling back on the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive in the name of simplification and competition, South Korea and Thailand are taking steps to push for mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence legislation. South Korea’s recent reintroduction to Parliament of the 2023 Legislative Bill for the Act on the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment for Sustainable Business Management drafted by KTNC Watch and Thailand’s current study resulted in the draft Act for Promotion of Responsible Business Conduct B.E. are sending a positive message in this troubled time. The session explored South Korea’s and Thailand’s bills and their potential in driving change for communities negatively impacted by companies’ activities.

The discussion included an overview of the Asian business and human rights context with a focus on the rights of communities, human rights defenders and the environment (FORUM-ASIA), a presentation by the authors of the South Korean (KTNC Watch) and Thai (Phattharaphong Saengkrai) bills as well as recommendations on the steps Thailand should take in relation to mHREDD and beyond to guarantee corporate accountability and rights protection (Manushya Foundation).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Workers and communities across Asia face daily corporate abuses, from exploitative labor conditions to land grabbing and environmental contamination. Voluntary measures as well as National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights have been found ineffective to ensure corporate respect for human rights and effective access to remedy for affected rights holders.
- South Korea and Thailand are now moving toward binding legislation requiring human rights and environmental due diligence.
- Under the South Korean bill, large companies are required to conduct HREDD. The bill establishes a complaints-handling administrative body which has the authority to conduct investigations and to issue corrective orders. Rights holders are entitled to request information on HREDD from companies and in case of harm, if the affected individual proves the possibility that such harm is the result of the company’s activities, the bill recognises a presumption of causal relationship for civil liability.
- Similarly, the Thai bill imposes HREDD on large companies and establishes an oversight committee responsible for investigating violations, determining administrative fines and initiating litigation before court. Rights holders are entitled to request the disclosure of information for the purpose of consultation. The bill does not set civil liability.
- It is crucial that the Thai Government ensure transparency and meaningful participation and consultation of rights holders, in line with the OECD Recommendations on the role of governments in promoting responsible business conduct as corporate accountability cannot be achieved without meaningful participation of those who are first impacted by corporate abuses: workers and communities.

From Commitment to Practice: Reviewing national action plans on BHR in Southeast Asia

SESSION PARTNERS

- UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights
- OHCHR
- UNICEF

SPEAKERS

- Pichamon Yeophantong, UNWG-BHR Chair
- Edmund Bon, AICHR Chair
- Katia Chirizzi, OHCHR



This was the first regional consultation in the process of developing a Review of Progress on National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights (NAPs) in Southeast Asia, developed under the leadership of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights.

The consultation brought together over 120 participants, including members and alumni of UNICEF's Young People Action Team, as well as representatives from governments, civil society organizations, businesses, academia, and UN agencies.

Discussions highlighted persistent gaps in ensuring meaningful participation of vulnerable groups—including children—in NAP development and implementation.

Participants emphasized that while NAPs have helped position business and human rights as a national agenda, progress remains uneven across countries, with limited institutional mechanisms, weak monitoring frameworks, and scarce resources for implementation.

The consultation provided valuable insights to inform the upcoming regional review and foster stronger collaboration between governments, rights holders, and development partners.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Participation of vulnerable groups – including children – remains limited and often tokenistic in NAP development processes.
- NAPs have contributed to establishing BHR as a national agenda (Pilar 1 of the UNGP), but still fall short on effective institutional mechanisms (Pilar 2) and ensuring meaningful participation (Pilar 3)
- Monitoring and evaluation systems are generally weak, with limited budgets and accountability mechanisms.
- Progress across Southeast Asia is uneven: Thailand is advancing toward stronger regulation (e.g., mandatory HRDD), while others focus on foundational capacity building.
- Participants called for group-specific baselines, inclusive consultation processes, and evidence generation linked to (mandatory) human rights due diligence.
- Next steps: Findings from this consultation will feed into the regional NAP review led by UNWG-BHR, with support from OHCHR and UNICEF.

Enhancing the Human Rights Mindset: Interactive dialogue with businesses

SESSION PARTNERS

- GIZ Bangladesh
- Indo-German Chamber of Commerce (IGCC),
- German Agency for Business and Economic Development

SPEAKERS

- Sheikh HM Mustafiz Rahman, Cute Dress Ltd, Bangladesh
- Sheikh Shuchita Jahan Sneha, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)
- Peter Ford, Energylab Asia, Cambodia
- Sahil Jain, Hirschvogel India
- Roxana Hilloo (IGCC)
- Michael Klode (GIZ)



“

We want to become the first net-zero tier 1 facility in Bangladesh garments. We plan to use a 1 MW lithium battery container and that would allow us to proceed.

*Sheikh HM Mustafiz Rahman
Cute Dress Ltd, Bangladesh*

The discussions focused on the challenges around addressing the specific implementation of various processes: mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence, decarbonization and the path towards a more circular economy. In these fields, only the genuine engagement with challenges and contradictions can lead to results. Currently, the superficial engagement through contract clauses, checklists or other static elements are a big obstacle. Participants agreed to review the results of the session in 2026's edition.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

From the participants and the audience the relevant points were collected that will be monitored in the next 12 months and can be clustered around “awareness” and “specific internal business measures”:

- ESG Reports
- Validation of non-financial reports by local Human Rights Commission
- Make use of Due Diligence processes to identify skills in workforce or even community for addressing challenges
- Government to adopt regulations for mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence
- Connect annual bonus payments or performance targets with results in the human rights, sustainability or circularity realms
- Contract negotiations include buyers multiple teams



Regional Leadership in Action: NAPs as pathways to stronger standards

SESSION PARTNERS

- United Nations Development Programme

SPEAKERS

- Aparna Basnyat, Program Adviser - Rule of Law, Security and Human Rights, UNDP Asia-Pacific
- Abdul Khalique Shaikh, Secretary, Ministry of Human Rights, Government of Pakistan
- Punitha Silivarajoo, Deputy Director General, Legal Affairs Division, Prime Minister's Department, Government of Malaysia
- Jhumki Dutta, Programme Manager, Southern Voices
- Kuanruthai Siripatthanakosol, global Compact Network Thailand
- Fatrisia Ain, Human Rights Defender



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The NAP's progress is catalytic, not conclusive. It has excelled at legitimizing the conversation and creating a roadmap – but bridging the gap between commitments on paper and change on the ground remains essential.

Abdul Khalique Shaikh
Ministry of Human Rights, Government of
Pakistan

The session showcased Asia's growing leadership in advancing National Action Plans (NAPs) on Business and Human Rights as a foundation for stronger corporate accountability and movement toward mandatory human rights due diligence. Drawing on experiences from Malaysia, Pakistan, Thailand, Indonesia, and India, panelists emphasized that NAPs are catalytic, not conclusive – they create momentum and legitimacy but must translate into meaningful implementation and remedy for affected communities.

Speakers highlighted the importance of inclusive engagement, with Malaysia underscoring the value of sustained consultation even amid political and economic challenges. Pakistan reflected on how NAPs have strengthened awareness, coordination, and regulatory reform, while Thailand described NAPs as a “learning phase” helping businesses prepare for structured due diligence. Civil society perspectives from Indonesia and India called for moving beyond token consultation to genuine participation of rights holders, particularly women, Indigenous peoples, and informal workers, in shaping and monitoring implementation.

Panelists agreed that localization, multi-stakeholder ownership, and access to remedy are central to ensuring that NAPs and emerging due diligence laws lead to real-world impact. As one participant noted, the challenge now is “to bridge the gap between commendable commitments on paper and tangible change on the ground.”

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- NAPs are catalytic, not conclusive, with implementation being a key determiner of impact
- Inclusive and participatory processes build trust and legitimacy
- Localization and contextualization ensure practical, sustainable reforms
- Bridging voluntary and mandatory approaches strengthens accountability
- Remedy, enforcement, and protection of human rights defenders are essential safeguards

From Commitment to Action: Emerging fair and ethical recruitment frameworks in Asia

SESSION PARTNERS

- International Organization for Migration
- International Labour Organization

SPEAKERS

- Geertrui Lanneau (Regional Thematic Specialist for Labour Mobility and Social Inclusion, IOM Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific)
- Marja Paavilainen (Senior Programme Officer, TRIANGLE in ASEAN, ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific)
- Jerome A. Alcantara (Assistant Secretary for Licensing and Adjudication and Regional Operations for the Department of Migrant Workers, Government of the Philippines)
- Shishido Kenichi (Director of JP-MIRAI)
- Pranay Rai (Director, Compliance and Business, International Manpower Recruitment)

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It is great to see that governments are signing MOUs and bilateral agreements in certain migration corridors. But it is even better if it were applied on all of the corridors. These agreements need to spell out a clear definition of recruitment fees, set specific structures for each corridor, and most importantly, make it clear who is responsible for covering the costs. Migration would work much more smoothly if it was systematically aligned with internationally recognized definitions of recruitment fees under ethical recruitment standards.

*Pranay Rai
International Manpower Recruitment*

This panel session explored how fair and ethical recruitment principles and frameworks in Asia can help address challenges related to unethical recruitment practices, which often burden workers with excessive fees and increase their risk of exploitation. The panel opened with reflections on emerging international and regional standards on fair and ethical recruitment, including the ILO Fair Recruitment Principles and ASEAN Checklist on Fair Recruitment and Decent Employment Practices. Panelists noted that these frameworks help align national standards, guide employers and protect migrant workers from abusive practices. Drawing on experiences from Japan, the Philippines, and Nepal, they shared challenges and lessons learned and emphasized the need to strengthen employer accountability, post-arrival monitoring, cost regulation and the use of bilateral agreements to ensure migrant worker protection.

Looking ahead, panelists underscored the importance of harmonizing national recruitment standards with international frameworks, increasing transparency on recruitment fees, creating incentives for ethical conduct, and improving coordination among governments, employers, and workers. These efforts are essential to translate commitments into concrete actions that guarantee fair treatment and protection for migrant workers across Asia.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- There is growing momentum both on the international and regional level to promote and realize fair and ethical recruitment. Most recently, ASEAN developed a Checklist on Fair Recruitment and Decent Employment Practices, which assesses regulations, identifies gaps, and tracks progress surrounding fair and ethical recruitment practices in the region. These have also been benchmarked towards the ILO's fair recruitment principles.
- On the national level, many countries have also established best practices which realize ethical recruitment and protect migrant workers. Some examples discussed included the Philippines' active steps in regulating recruitment fees and establishing a national action plan for fair and ethical recruitment, and Japan's JP-MIRAI platform which assists migrant workers and guide employers to promote ethical and safe recruitment processes.
- Despite these efforts, panelists highlighted several persisting challenges, including excessive recruitment fees and related costs, weak accountability and compliance and limited monitoring and transparency.
- Panelists highlighted several recommendations, including the need to regulate and standardize recruitment fees and costs – aiming to reach the zero-cost principles, strengthen employer accountability, enhance transparency and monitoring – which itemizes costs and enable safe reporting and to further advance regional and bilateral cooperation to ensure consistency across all migration corridors.

Bridging the Policy Gap: China's consolidating ESG framework and corporate climate accountability

SESSION PARTNERS

- SynTao

SPEAKERS

- Zhuolun Li, Law School at Lanzhou University
- Xin Wang, SynTao Co., Ltd.
- Yingxia Tang, Center for the Study of Human Rights at Nankai University
- Xu Zhang, Law School at Lanzhou University
- Heping Dang, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen

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Although China does not explicitly use the terminology of ‘corporate climate due diligence,’ many of its existing rules and legal requirements are substantively consistent with this concept.

*Zhuolun Li
Law School of Lanzhou University*

Bringing together experts from academia, industry, (quasi-) government agencies, and other sectors, this session focused on how China has, in recent years, strengthened corporate climate accountability through the rapid development of its ESG policy and regulatory framework. Speakers addressed the evolution of China's ESG policies, the impact of international climate change litigation and advisory opinions on corporate climate accountability, regulatory practices related to Chinese enterprises' climate due diligence, and China's response to the EU's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive. From these multiple perspectives, they showcased the latest progress and practices in advancing corporate climate responsibility in China. During the subsequent Q&A session, participants and speakers engaged in in-depth discussions on how to enhance the implementation of existing policies, with particular attention to how these policies can be leveraged to ensure effective remedies for affected communities. A consensus was reached on the importance of stakeholder participation throughout the processes of policy formulation, implementation, evaluation, and improvement.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- China has made significant strides in enhancing corporate climate accountability through the rapid development and refinement of its ESG policy and regulatory framework; however, the effective implementation and enforcement of these measures still require further strengthening.
- The evolution of China's ESG policies reflects growing alignment with international trends and the increasing integration of climate-related considerations into corporate governance. However, while current ESG efforts in China overwhelmingly emphasize the environmental and climate dimensions, attention to the social and human rights dimensions is rising rapidly.
- International climate change litigation and advisory opinions are exerting notable influence on corporate climate accountability, shaping both domestic regulatory approaches and business practices in China. Increasingly, Chinese scholars are paying close attention to this trend, becoming an important driving force behind the development of climate due diligence (CDD) in China.
- Participants reached a consensus on the necessity of inclusive stakeholder participation across all stages of policymaking – formulation, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement – to ensure the effectiveness and legitimacy of climate governance.

Due Diligence in Southeast Asian Supply Chains: Perspectives on BHR as a transboundary issue

SESSION PARTNERS

- Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines

SPEAKERS

- Chairperson Richard P. Palpal-latoc, Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines
- Ms. Hansa Homhual, Secretary-General of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand
- Ms. Windi Arini, Country Director, Indonesia, Raoul Wallenberg Institute



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We see that States do not approach labor migration issues in the supply chain as a matter that transcends national boundaries, and thus tend to apply remedies only at the domestic level. [...] States, as primary duty-bearers of human rights obligations, should devise or allow a mechanism to address the imbalance brought about by the complications of [the] transboundary nature and character of the problem

Atty. Richard P. Palpal-latoc

Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines

National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), as independent institutions with mandates to ensure compliance with human rights standards, are in a unique position to assert and advocate for the protection of human rights at both the domestic and regional level and in the context of business operations with transboundary character.

The session focuses on the observance and implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, particularly operationalizing human rights due diligence within transnational supply chains, and on transboundary human rights issues, focusing on the abuse of migrant workers working in supply chains.

This session also builds on the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines' (CHRP) initiative to develop an Inter-National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) Inquiry Mechanism and explores opportunities for a regional-level NHRI collaboration or mechanism to look at BHR issues and identifying domestic and international remedies for affected persons.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Migrant workers within regional supply chains face unique difficulties in accessing remedies for human rights violations and abuses. These difficulties may be addressed through cooperation and collaboration among NHRIs in sending and receiving countries, or where any of the value chains may be situated. Such a mechanism may also address other transboundary human rights issues.
- However, as the mandates and powers of NHRIs may differ per country, there is a need to further define the extent and scope of the proposed Inter-NHRI Inquiry Mechanism.
- Some of the gaps in addressing human rights within labor migration in supply chains are in upholding due diligence in the recruitment practices from sending countries and in the provision of legal status to migrant workers in the receiving countries. Due diligence warrants that rights of migrant workers within this chain must be protected, from recruitment, to treatment, and ultimately return to their countries of origin.

ASEANs Leap to HRDD by Direct Worker Voice

SESSION PARTNERS

- Bluenumber,
- MillionMakers™
- DXN Holdings Bhd.

SPEAKERS

- Puvan J. Selvanathan, Bluenumber
- Fuzz Kitto, MillionMakers™
- Medhapan Sundaradeja, MillionMakers™ Thailand
- Mahmood Hisham, DXN Holdings Bhd.
- Sammie Ho Dumas, Thai Union

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Human rights due diligence cannot succeed if it's done about workers instead of with workers. Direct Worker Voice makes that possible, turning HRDD from compliance into conversation, from risk avoidance into resilience.

*Medhapan Sundaradeja
CEO of MillionMakers™ Thailand*

The session explored a comprehensive 360-degree framework for human rights due diligence (HRDD) enabled through the MillionMakers system, powered by Direct Worker Voice (DWV). This framework connects directly with workers anywhere in the world, capturing authentic, real-time insights that traditional methods often miss.

Panelists shared their experiences implementing the system across diverse industries, highlighting how DWV transformed data gathering into actionable insight. Through successful deployments, they demonstrated measurable progress in risk mitigation, worker engagement, and targeted remediation, closing the feedback loop between workforce realities and corporate accountability.

The discussion reinforced that ASEAN businesses have the capacity and responsibility to lead in developing innovative, technology-driven solutions to complex human rights challenges. With the growing urgency around modern slavery, supply chain transparency, and ethical business standards, the region can move beyond outdated western frameworks like social audits, which tend to produce opinions rather than verifiable, traceable evidence.

By embracing systems like MillionMakers, ASEAN enterprises can set a new global benchmark: where human rights data is not just collected but verified, quantified, and embedded in sustainable business performance.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Audits expand, harms persist. Despite massive spending and endless reports, traditional audits haven't reduced real risks. Modern slavery, unsafe work, and exploitation continue while time and money drain into repetitive compliance cycles.
- Shift from compliance to outcomes. Audit budgets should be redirected toward remediation, worker representation, and proactive inspections. Progress must be measured by tangible improvements, not audit volume.
- Direct Worker Voice (DWV) as early warning. DWV is not a grievance channel or survey but a continuous, data-driven system that identifies risks early, targets problem areas directly, and maintains live feedback between workers and employers without disrupting operations.
- MillionMakers™ drives scale and efficiency. The system deploys remotely, adapts to any workforce size, and cuts audit costs by replacing static checks with real-time engagement and verified data.
- Action defines due diligence. Real responsibility means acting on evidence, not just collecting it. The core principle: identify, engage, remediate, and improve continuously.
- From audits to accountability. This shift positions ASEAN businesses to lead globally by embedding ethical practice and worker wellbeing into performance standards, not as an afterthought.



Turning Compliance into Competitive Advantage: Why business and human rights is important for SMEs

SESSION PARTNERS

- International Labour Organization

SPEAKERS

- Josée Laporte, Responsible Business Conduct Specialist, ILO MULTI/RBC Unit
- Clare Middlemas, International Manager, Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)
- Jason Pegat-Toquet, Advisor, International Organisation of Employers (IOE)
- Viboon Supakarapongkul, Vice President, Thai Frozen Foods Association (video contribution)
- Prof. Tomoya Obokata, UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Slavery

The session explored how small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Asia and the Pacific can turn compliance with business and human rights (BHR), environmental, social and governance (ESG), and responsible business conduct (RBC) standards into a competitive advantage. Opening the discussion, Josée Laporte emphasized that while SMEs often face resource constraints, responsible business practices strengthen resilience, trust, and long-term sustainability. Clare Middlemas (ACTU) highlighted that voluntary measures alone are insufficient to protect workers, calling for mandatory due diligence laws and the active participation of trade unions in risk assessment and remediation. From the employer perspective, Jason Pegat-Toquet (IOE) underscored the need to raise awareness among SMEs about the UN Guiding Principles and adopt gradual, cost-effective steps toward compliance. Viboon Supakarapongkul showcased Thailand's "Seafood Good Labour Practice" programme as a model of voluntary self-compliance driving improved working conditions and export competitiveness. UN Special Rapporteur Tomoya Obokata emphasized that promoting due diligence, formalization, and occupational safety benefits both workers and businesses, urging governments to provide financial incentives, simplified regulations, and sectoral guidance to support SMEs.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- SMEs are central to regional economies and must be engaged in advancing decent work and responsible business conduct.
- Voluntary measures alone are insufficient; stronger laws mandating due diligence can drive real change.
- Awareness of BHR/ESG frameworks among SMEs remains low – capacity building and simplified guidance are crucial.
- Compliance can improve productivity, access to finance, and brand reputation, especially in export sectors.
- Governments should support SMEs through incentives, simplified tax systems, and sectoral guidance.
- Social dialogue and multi-stakeholder cooperation are vital to ensure credible, inclusive due diligence processes.



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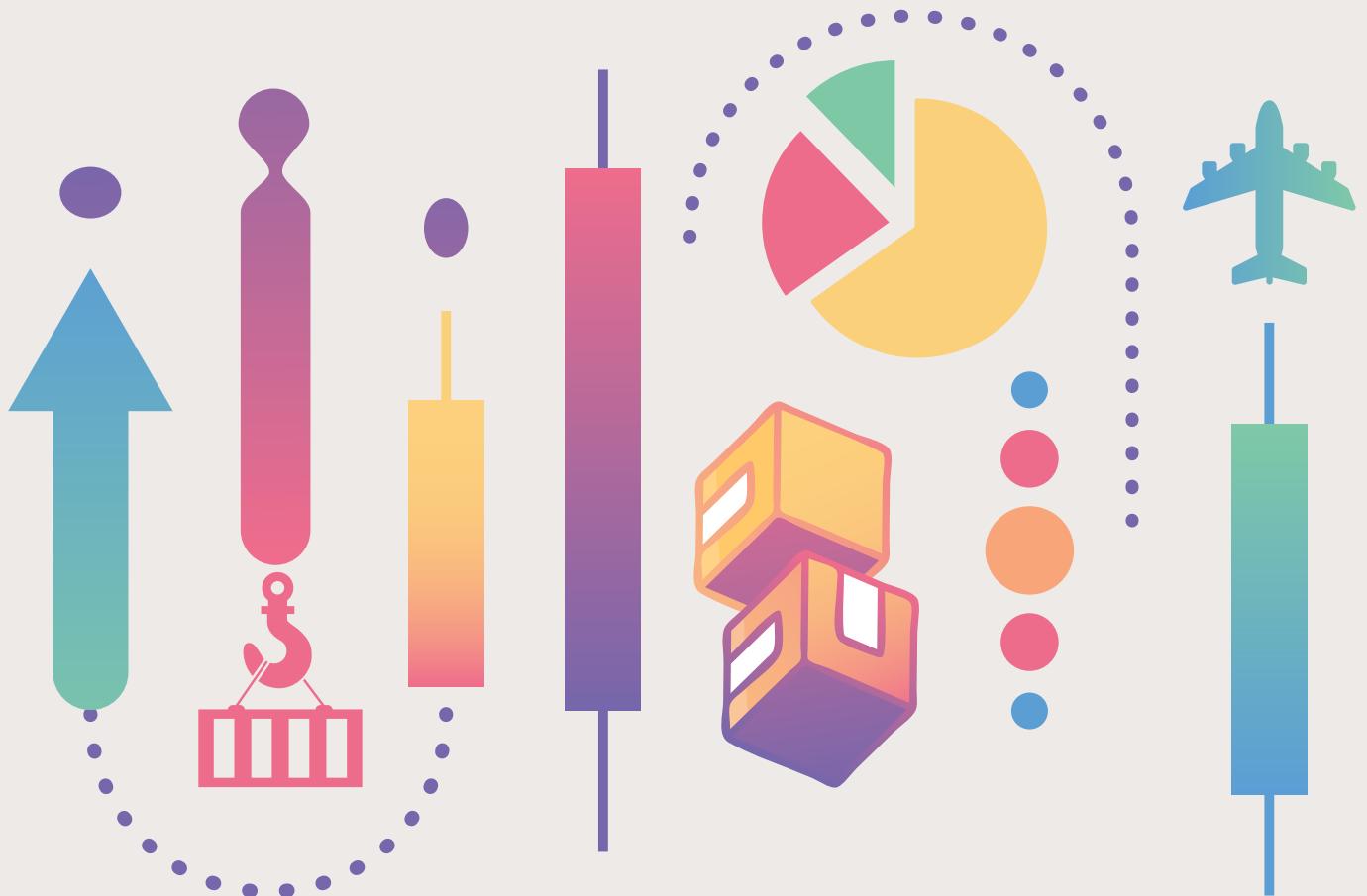
Turning compliance into an advantage starts with awareness – SMEs can't act on standards they don't know exist.

Jason Pegat-Toquet

International Organization of Employers

TRACK TWO

Markets, Finance and Supply Chains





Redesigning Recruitment Markets: Creating an ethical recruitment marketplace to embed human rights practices into global supply chains

SESSION PARTNERS

- The Consumer Goods Forum
- Woolworths Group

FACILITATORS

- Nawin Santikarn, Consultant, Consumer Goods Forum (moderator)
- Rachel Elliott, General Manager Sustainability – Impact Narrative & Human Rights, Woolworths Group
- Aarti Kapoor, Executive Director, Embode
- Catherine Parsons, Senior Advisor, Walk Free



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An ethical recruitment marketplace sounds like a no-brainer, but no one has actually talked about it as a marketplace until now. In a capitalist world, money makes the system turn – so changing the way trade operates is essential. Business and profit are not bad words. The challenge is to make profit ethically, to build a system that is both commercially viable and fair for workers..

Aarti Kapoor
Executive Director, Embode

This session explored how to redesign recruitment markets to eliminate exploitative practices and embed respect for migrant workers' rights. Recruitment fees and debt bondage continue to generate billions in illicit profits, while fragmented compliance efforts remain insufficient. Panelists stressed that remediation alone cannot address systemic issues—transformative change requires market-based solutions that are sustainable, competitive, and collaborative.

Woolworths Group shared lessons from addressing modern slavery cases in its supply chains and explained how these experiences led to the co-creation of the Ethical Recruitment Marketplace through the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF). This initiative seeks to align incentives across supply chains so that ethical recruitment becomes not only the right choice but also the more viable one.

Panelists highlighted the importance of engaging governments as co-designers of regulation, leveraging data and transparency, and ensuring incremental progress toward employer-pays principles. By prioritizing “progress over perfection,” brands, governments, and civil society can drive a just transition that creates fairer, safer, and more sustainable recruitment systems in Asia-Pacific and beyond.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Ethical recruitment must be commercially sustainable to displace exploitative models
- Remediation is insufficient—systemic, end-to-end interventions are needed to address the economic root causes and drivers of exploitative recruitment
- Effective collaboration across brands, governments, and civil society is essential to scale efforts
- Policy co-design with business ensures regulations are practical, enforceable, and reflect lessons learned from experience
- Harmonisation of standards reduces supplier compliance burdens
- Incremental, pragmatic progress is necessary to embed change



CLOSED-DOOR INDUSTRY ROUNDTABLE

Navigating Stakeholder Engagement in Asia's Agribusiness

SESSION PARTNERS

- United Nations Development Programme
- Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil
- Global Platform for Sustainable Natural Rubber



Asia's agribusiness sector sits at the centre of some of the region's most complex human rights and environmental challenges. This closed-door session convened leading producers, global buyers, smallholder platforms, and development partners to address a core question: how can companies move from transactional, compliance-driven engagement toward approaches that genuinely listen to and empower rights holders?

Against the backdrop of tightening global regulations and expanding National Action Plans, participants explored what meaningful engagement looks like in practice across palm oil, natural rubber, and broader agricultural value chains. The discussion underscored the realities of navigating deeply fragmented supply chains, overcoming structural barriers faced by smallholders, and shifting sector practices toward rights holder leadership, shared responsibility, and long-term resilience.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Rights holder engagement remains poorly understood: Many companies still default to broad "stakeholder engagement," which weakens attention to those most directly affected by business actions.
- Traceability challenges limit effective due diligence: Highly fragmented value chains and smallholder-dominated production hinder meaningful engagement and require long-term investment.
- Compliance approaches fall short: Top-down audits and regulatory responses often miss local context; companies need practical, locally grounded approaches that elevate vulnerable groups' voices.
- Smallholder incentives build trust: Immediate payments and financial support—piloted in markets such as Thailand—show strong potential to improve compliance and inclusion.
- Collaborative, sector-wide solutions are essential: No single actor can resolve price volatility, land pressures, or structural inequalities; joint action across buyers, producers, and regulators is necessary.
- Rights holder voices must directly inform HRDD design: Current feedback loops are weak; companies were encouraged to work through trusted intermediaries and ensure safe, inclusive consultation processes.



Deepening Due Diligence: Navigating human rights risks in extended supply chains

SESSION PARTNERS

- Pillar Two
- The Global Business Initiative on Human Rights

FACILITATORS

- Sarah McGrath, Pillar Two
- Alexander Coward, Pillar Two
- Sophia Areias, GBI

The workshop brought together participants from a wide range of sectors including consumer goods, IT, logistics, oil and gas, and manufacturing. Participants worked across various internal functions such as sustainability, legal, and procurement functions, each bringing a different perspective about how they would approach responding to the identified issues.

Participants discussed a fictional case study involving allegations in a retail chain store's garment and chocolate supply chains. Specifically, business practitioners discussed in small groups and in plenary:

- Steps to take when human rights incidents or allegations arise, including gathering additional information and assessing a company's level of involvement
- Approaches to building and using leverage in situations where there is not a direct contractual relationship
- Strategies for engaging external stakeholders to support remediation efforts

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Companies use a variety of tools to verify allegations received through grievance mechanisms or complaint channels and assess their involvement. Some companies engage with trusted civil society organisations (CSOs) to understand more about the nature of the complaint and open pathways to engage with those impacted.
- For issues deeper in the supply chain, the importance of engaging with the intermediary Tier 1 supplier was underscored. Tier 1 suppliers may have further information about the sub-supplier involved, including its operating context, and the issues raised.
- The nature and extent of leverage a buying company has over a Tier 1 supplier can depend on a range of factors, including contractual terms, the duration and scope of the contract, and the extent to which human right considerations were emphasised in initial contractual negotiations.
- Engaging meaningfully with stakeholders, particularly those who have been directly impacted by the company or its business partners, is essential for designing and delivering effective remediation for adverse human rights impacts.
- While companies should focus on remediating the immediate harm, preventing the recurrence of the harm by addressing the root causes of the impact is also important. Engagement in multistakeholder initiatives can assist companies to address root causes more holistically.



From Order to Outcome: Recap of responsible purchasing practices in Asia

SESSION PARTNERS

- ETI

SPEAKERS

- Melissa Karadana, Purchasing Practices Programme Lead at Ethical Trading Initiative
- Alok Singh, Asia Director at Ethical Trading Initiative
- Mansi Gupta, Principle Advisor at Colors Consulting
- Sanchita B Saxena, Professional Faculty at University of California, Berkeley/ Senior Advisor, Article One
- Rick Lambell, Founder and CEO of Beyond Sustainable Retail Group



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Responsible purchasing practices are not separate from HRDD; they are a critical lever within it. Any HRDD process that does not integrate RPP is incomplete.

Mansi Gupta
Principle Advisor at Colors Consulting

The session examined how purchasing practices – from cost negotiations to lead times – directly affect working conditions and workers' rights in Asia-Pacific supply chains. Drawing on ETI's Responsible Purchasing Practices (RPP) pilots in China, India, and Bangladesh, participants discussed how stronger retailer-supplier partnerships can reduce labor risks, improve worker well-being, and strengthen human rights due diligence (HRDD).

Concrete changes in buyer behaviour, such as adjusting order volumes, improving lead times, and embedding realistic pricing, were shown to deliver measurable improvements for workers – including reduced overtime, lower stress, and safer conditions – while also enhancing supplier relations and operational resilience.

Discussions highlighted how policy frameworks and regulatory incentives can scale RPP without shifting costs unfairly to suppliers or workers. Lessons underscored the value of cross-sector collaboration, internal alignment within companies, and practical tools for implementing responsible purchasing.

Overall, the session affirmed that aligning commercial behaviour with ethical standards is essential for sustainable supply chains, offering actionable strategies for companies, suppliers, and policymakers to embed RPP and advance fairer, more resilient workplaces in Asia-Pacific.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Purchasing Practices Shape Worker Outcomes: Brand decisions on lead times, pricing, and last-minute changes define work conditions. Poor practices undermine labor standards, driving stress, overtime, and safety risks.
- Stakeholder Engagement is Critical: Genuine partnerships create shared responsibility and realistic expectations, while unfair power dynamics hinder progress. Structured collaboration is key.
- Evidence from ETI's RPP Pilots: Operational improvements – such as accurate forecasting, timely payments, and technical support – reduced overtime, stabilised wages, improved safety, and created grievance channels, translating HRDD into real benefits.
- RPP and HRDD Are Interdependent: Responsible purchasing is central to HRDD; buyer behaviour directly affects human rights outcomes.
- Strengthening Accountability Through Regulation: Frameworks like CFRPP MI and the PP HRDD Framework guide action. Forthcoming rules such as the CSDDD will embed accountability in commercial decisions and reduce supply chain risks.
- Cross-Functional Collaboration: Embedding RPP demands bridging silos between sustainability and commercial teams and ensuring suppliers and workers can safely raise concerns.



Are We Listening? The unheard perspectives along our supply chain

SESSION PARTNERS

- Embode
- Verite
- Issara Institute

SPEAKERS

- Aarti Kapoor, Executive Director and Founder at Embode
- Lori Stamm, Senior Director of Supplier Assessment and Improvement Programs at Verite
- Mark Taylor, Senior Director, Strategy & Global Partnerships at Issara



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If we think about the workers and their communities, who is really going to impact their lives and their well-being? It's the businesses or the suppliers themselves who are in the role of employer, yet their voices are not being heard in the development and implementation of HRDD. At Embode, we conducted a consultation to understand the perspective of supply chain businesses and the challenges they face to embed HRDD in their operations.

Aarti Kapoor
Embode

As Asia remains central to global production, its supply chains face heightened risks — including forced labor, worker vulnerabilities, and growing regulatory scrutiny. Investors, regulators, and consumers are demanding greater accountability in line with human rights due diligence (HRDD) standards. Given the central role supply chain businesses play in recruiting and employing workers, their voice in shaping and implementing better standards is paramount.

Nevertheless, standards and requirements outlined in HRDD frameworks have not sufficiently engaged supply chain business in their development and implementation. This has led to the experience of supply chain businesses who supply major brands and multinational corporations being imposed upon in a “top-down” manner, instead of being an active partner. At the same time, other stakeholders such as worker representatives and civil society need to be engaged to ensure all perspectives are taken into account. As it stands now, there is a lack of adequate recognition of the centrality of the employer-worker relationship, and a lack of understanding of the barriers and challenges the employers face in implementing policies that protect workers rights. Furthermore, the standards and decisions that are being set are often based on datasets that don't truly represent the realities on the ground. Standard audit-based compliance models have proven inadequate for addressing systemic labor risks.

The session examined how systemic risks can only be addressed through equitable, co-invested partnerships between brands and suppliers, and how such partnerships can help meet evolving regulatory, buyer, and consumer expectations.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The current “top-down” audit and compliance model is failing. It excludes suppliers, creates audit fatigue, and does not adequately capture worker realities.
- Businesses must move beyond transactional relationships to build genuine, co-invested partnerships with suppliers, engaging in meaningful dialogue and providing consultative, capacity-building support.
- Human rights must be embedded in core commercial practices. Fair purchasing and costing models, such as using Verite's Recruitment Cost Calculator, are essential to ensure brands, not workers, bear recruitment costs.
- Robust and accessible worker voice channels, including formal grievance mechanisms, are a critical and non-negotiable component of human rights due diligence.
- Technology-driven, real-time worker voice systems, like Issara's Inclusive Labour Monitoring (ILM), offer a powerful alternative to ineffective audits, providing continuous and actionable data for improvement.
- Building supplier capability requires moving beyond one-size-fits-all audits to a collaborative, systems-building approach that provides context-specific support, as demonstrated by Embode's Ganapati Initiative.



Investors' HREDD Expectations about Company Engagement with Affected Stakeholders in Indonesia's Nickel Mining Industry

SESSION PARTNERS

- Rights CoLab
- ELSAM
- Institut Mosintuwu
- Perempuan Mahardhika
- Satya Bumi
- WALHI Sulawesi Tengah

SPEAKERS

- Edwin Rekosh, Rights CoLab
- Theresia Iwarini, Rights CoLab
- Andi Muttaqien, Satya Bumi
- Bejamin McCarron, Asia Research and Engagement Pte Ltd
- Matthew Kasdin, Impact Investment Exchange (IIX)



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NGOs produce hard hitting reports to get headlines, but if the information comes to investors in a form they perceive to be too one-sided, they will tend to disregard it.

Ben McCarron

Asia Research & Engagement (ARE)

Investors, who provide indispensable capital to the Indonesia nickel mining industry (which produces about half of the world's nickel), have significant potential to influence company behavior, and are eager for information about the environmental and human rights risks in the sector. The adverse impacts of Indonesian nickel mining are well documented, including pollution, deforestation, conflicts with Indigenous People, forced labor and occupational hazards, food insecurity, public health issues, economic inequality in mining and processing regions, and intimidation, criminalization, and retaliation against rights holders.

Investors have expressed frustration with distortions contained in the information they receive from public corporate filings, voluntary company disclosure, and audit reports. They appreciate that NGOs, community organizations, and labor unions possess valuable information that is a vital supplement to the other information they receive, providing unique perspectives from the affected stakeholders on the two-way communication with companies.

However, investors often struggle to make use of NGO reports because of their timeliness and digestibility for investor decision-making. This session provided a unique opportunity for investment professionals and NGOs with ties to local Indonesian communities to explore what types and forms of information investors consider most useful for encouraging investor action to influence company behavior positively.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- When companies say that they've consulted with communities, that often turns out to be very far from the reality on the ground, creating a lot of hidden risks for investors. To get the full picture, investors need trusted third party data that captures what communities are actually experiencing.
- Investors are receptive to information from NGOs on negative effects of companies on communities and the environment, but need to be able to trust the information and the sources.



Resilient Supply Chains and Equitable Growth in a Changing World of Work: Advancing Decent Work through Regional Cooperation in Asia

SESSION PARTNERS

- International Labour Organization

SPEAKERS

- Dan Rees, Director, Action Programme on Decent Work in Supply Chains, International Labour Organization
- Jerome T. Yanson, Technical Service Director, National Wages and Productivity Commission, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Philippines
- Tsevel Tongalang (Tonga), General Secretary, Confederation of Mongolian Trade Unions (CMTU)



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If we are serious about fair, resilient, and sustainable supply chains, we must put workers' rights, dialogue, and accountability at the center.

Seville Okon Tongalang
CMTU, Mongolia

This ILO-led session reflected on key outcomes from the Regional Policy Forum on Resilient Supply Chains and Equitable Growth, held in Bangkok on 15–16 September 2025. The discussion highlighted how collective action and policy coherence across government, employers, and workers can foster responsible supply chains and decent work in Asia and the Pacific.

Dan Rees summarized forum takeaways, including the region's strong consensus that resilient and equitable supply chains must be central to inclusive growth and that the Asia-Pacific can lead global progress on responsible business conduct. Panelists from the Philippines and Mongolia shared practical innovations: the Philippines' adoption of strategic compliance planning and tripartite collaboration in labor inspection, and Mongolia's efforts to improve worker rights and dialogue in supply chains such as coal transport. Real-world “Stories of Change” from Indonesia, Thailand, and Nepal showcased how data-driven inspections, worker participation, and improved OSH practices are driving formalization and competitiveness. The session concluded with calls to strengthen cooperation, extend social protection, and ensure youth inclusion amid technological and climate transitions.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Asia-Pacific region has momentum and capacity to lead on building resilient, equitable, and rights-based supply chains.
- Tripartite dialogue and regional cooperation are essential to sustaining decent work outcomes across supply chains.
- Strategic compliance planning and data-driven inspection approaches improve labor law compliance and formalization.
- Trade unions play a critical role in representing workers, monitoring rights, and promoting fair, sustainable industries.
- Extending social protection and formalization remains key to inclusive and competitive economies.
- Engagement of youth and adaptation to new technologies are vital for a just transition in a changing world of work.



Promoting Family-Friendly Policies to Protect Children and Their Families in the Context of Labor Migration

SESSION PARTNERS

- UNICEF
- UNWG
- OHCHR
- IOM

SPEAKERS

- Nadon Chanthathadawong, Baandek Foundation
- Yanig Rerg-o-past, T.Peeragrich Company Limited
- Anne Baltazar, Jurisdictional Approach for Sustainable Palm Oil Sabah
- Litea Meo-Sewabu, Western Sydney University
- Pichamon Yeophantong, Chair Wkgp BHR
- Geetru Lanneau & Rasika Jaysuria, IOM regional
- Myo-Zin Nyunt & Romain Sibille, UNICEF EAPRO



Responsible
Human Rights
Pacific

ANCHORING PROGRESS
REGIONAL LEADERSHIP ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The session examined the intersections between labor migration, child well-being, and family-friendly policies (FFPs) as key mechanisms to strengthen care, safeguarding, and child development. It convened stakeholders from governments, UN agencies, employers, and civil society to discuss sectoral realities in construction, agriculture, and labor mobility, and to exchange practical solutions for supporting migrant workers and their families.

Discussions revealed that subcontracting structures in construction often obscure accountability, leaving children of migrant workers vulnerable. In agriculture, especially seasonal work, migration disrupts education and caregiving arrangements. Civil society organizations presented good practices such as on-site childcare, safe housing, and scholarship programmes, while panellists highlighted the need to align FFPs with state-led care and child protection systems. The IOM showcased its reintegration tools, and UNICEF introduced its Family-Friendly Policies Toolkit as a resource for governments and companies to design and implement comprehensive support measures for workers with family responsibilities.

Overall, the discussion emphasized that in contexts of labor shortages and ageing populations, promoting FFPs for migrant workers is both a social imperative and an economic competitiveness strategy, requiring closer state–business collaboration to mitigate the social costs of migration on children and families.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Migration profoundly affects children's care, education, and well-being, particularly when parents migrate across borders.
- In the construction sector, subcontracting chains dilute employer accountability, leaving children at higher risk.
- In agriculture, seasonal migration interrupts education and care, underscoring the need for stronger social protection and continuity of services.
- State–business collaboration is crucial to address the social costs of migration, including the situation of children left behind, as illustrated in Pacific labor mobility models.
- Good practices include on-site childcare, safe worker housing, scholarship schemes, and family-centred assistance models that enhance both worker and child well-being.
- Family-Friendly Policies tailored to migrant workers contribute to economic resilience and competitiveness, complementing state efforts to strengthen care and protection systems.



Fair Trade, Fair Work: Rethinking human rights and labor migration in the context of global value chains

SESSION PARTNERS

- UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights

SPEAKERS

- Emiko Nagasawa, Senior Adviser, Labour Legislation Bureau, Keidanren (Japan Business Federation) (Japan)
- Lailani Tolentino-Rahon, Country Manager, The Mission to Seafarers Philippines
- Rejimon Kuttappan, Senior Reporter (Times of Oman) and migrant-rights journalist/analyst
- Pichamon Yeophantong, Chair, UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights



This session addressed the critical and often under-recognised role of migrant workers in global value chains, emphasising that labor migration is not a peripheral feature but a central component of many sectors (agriculture, construction, shipping, care work) and yet one where human rights risks remain acute.

It highlighted how migrant workers – whether land-based or sea-based – face elevated risks of forced labor, exploitative recruitment practices, wage theft and contract substitution, and how access to remedy remains limited, particularly for women and Indigenous workers.

The discussion probed how the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) should be applied with a migrant-responsive lens: how human rights due diligence must account for cross-border and supply-chain realities, and how governments, businesses and rights holders (including migrant workers themselves) can collaborate to establish safe and fair migration pathways.

Key questions explored include: how to rethink assumptions about migrant workers as central to global value chains; what migrant-responsive human rights due diligence looks like in practice (especially in cross-border and value-chain contexts); and how to ensure multi-stakeholder collaboration to deliver safe, orderly and rights-respecting labor migration.

In closing, the session underscored that migration-driven work must be integrated into human rights frameworks in supply chains not as an add-on but as a core element – requiring participatory design, transparency, accountability and remedy mechanisms tailored to the realities of migrant workers.



From Root Causes to Collective Action: Addressing GBVH in garment supply chains

SESSION PARTNERS

- RISE (Reimaging Industry to Support Equality)

SPEAKERS

- Smita Nimilita, Global Foundations Program Lead & Bangladesh Country Lead, RISE
- Shaonli Chakraborty, CEO, Upfront, India



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Our experience shows that tackling GBVH effectively requires collaboration across the value chain – between factories, brands, and women’s organizations – to ensure that women workers are protected, supported, and empowered to lead change from within.

Smita Nimilita

Global Foundations Program Lead & Bangladesh Country Lead, RISE

Gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) in global supply chains remains one of the most prevalent human rights violations and risks in the garment and footwear sector. To shed light on this issue, RISE organized a 30-minute session in a case study format that brought the topic to life through the voices and lived experiences of women workers from RISE program factories.

The session presented women’s stories alongside impact data from the RISE Respect program – RISE’s GBVH prevention and redressal initiative – highlighting how RISE fosters collaboration within businesses and with external stakeholders, including women’s organizations and other rights holders, to address GBVH in a holistic manner.

Speakers from India and Bangladesh shared their on-the-ground experiences of working directly with women workers and factories, reflecting both the challenges and the progress made toward creating safer, more equitable workplaces. During the question-and-answer segment, audience members engaged by sharing their own examples and ideas on GBVH prevention – for instance, how increasing women’s representation in leadership positions could play a key role in prevention efforts.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- GBVH remains a widespread challenge in the garment and footwear sector, posing serious human rights risks across global supply chains.
- Women workers’ voices are central to understanding the everyday realities of GBVH and informing effective prevention and redressal strategies.
- The RISE Respect program demonstrates how collaborative action between businesses, women’s organizations, and rights holders can create safer and more equitable workplaces.
- Experience sharing from India and Bangladesh highlighted both progress made and persistent gaps in workplace systems to prevent and respond to GBVH.
- Collective learning and dialogue – such as audience reflections during the session – underscore the importance of engaging diverse stakeholders in identifying practical prevention measures.



Send Lawyers, Media and Allies: Transnational Strategic Litigation's role in safeguarding human rights, upholding human dignity and providing access to justice in asymmetric and crisis laden regulatory frameworks

SESSION PARTNERS

- LawAid International
- M.Ravi

SPEAKERS

- Craig Tuck, LawAid International
- M. Ravi, M. Ravi Law

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Human dignity is the soul of modern law and business – its not just a good idea, its law and with it comes the superpower of collaboration (diversity) to leverage outcome.

*Craig Tuck
LawAid International*

Overview of a working strategic litigation model – collaboration and capacity building with specialist lawyers and experts who explored components of the model – advocacy, education, audit and strategy – with human dignity at its heart.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Human dignity is not just a good idea – its law (UN Declaration of Human Rights – inherent worth of person and equal dignity and rights)
- All business activities, from procurement, recruitment to manufacture, service and supply chains are governed by domestic and international laws - that have explicit (or implicit) human dignity requirements.
- For businesses and individuals who violate these laws, the ultimate consequence



From Critique to Constructive Use: The Role of social audits in BHR

SESSION PARTNERS

- Sedex
- TATWIN

SPEAKERS

- Azusa Yamamoto, Sedex
- Keelong Foo, TATWIN

This session explored how businesses can effectively leverage social audits to strengthen human rights due diligence (HRDD) amid global concerns about forced labor, child labor, unsafe working conditions, and other human rights and environmental risks across supply chains. Drawing on insights from over 100,000 Sedex supplier worksites and the experience of Thailand-based supplier, TATWIN, the discussion highlighted the role, strengths, and limitations of social audits. Sedex shared fact-based insights to clarify common misconceptions and demonstrated how audit data can drive practical improvements in responsible sourcing. TATWIN provided the supplier perspective, outlining on-the-ground challenges and realities of implementing audit findings. Audience discussions included sensitive issues such as harassment, child-sensitive approaches, and concerns around audits in certain industries. While social audits are valuable for identifying gaps, educating stakeholders, and providing actionable insights, we reminded ourselves that there is no single magical, perfect tool that resolves everything, especially for complex risks. The session reinforced that we should continue seeking better ways to detect and address human rights issues.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Social audits are one of the important tools, not solutions: They provide actionable insights and help assess supplier practices, but they do not fully resolve all risks on their own.
- Strengths of social audits: They identify gaps, educate stakeholders, and drive improvements in responsible sourcing.
- Limitations of social audits: Audits offer a snapshot in time, may be difficult to find complex issues, and cannot replace legal protections or robust HRDD processes.
- Common misconceptions clarified: Audits are sometimes misunderstood as a “complete solution,” but real impact comes from follow-up actions and integration into broader HRDD strategies.
- Effective use of audits: Companies should analyze audit data holistically, track post-audit actions, and collaborate with suppliers, workers, and other stakeholders to ensure meaningful improvements.
- Complementary approaches are essential: Combining audits with worker voice tools, engagements with worker, training, and others enhances detection and response to human rights issues, supporting sustainable improvements across supply chains.



Making the Business Case for Upholding Information Integrity: Building a big tent

SESSION PARTNERS

- OHCHR
- Conscious Advertising Network (CAN)

SPEAKERS

- Genevieve Sauberli, OHCHR
- Jake Dubbins, Conscious Advertising Network
- Chris Hajecki, Overtone
- Hannah Storey, Amnesty International
- Rupen Desai, Una Terra & The Shed 28



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We need to radically reimagine what the internet could look like, what a rights-respecting internet could look like.

Hannah Soreya

Advocacy and Policy Adviser on Big Tech Accountability, Amnesty International

The session explored the intersections of digital advertising with hate speech, misinformation and disinformation, and how human rights can guide relevant stakeholders to collectively protect the integrity of information ecosystems. Speakers explained the lack of transparency in advertising technology (AdTech) which can result in businesses inadvertently funding harmful content online, with examples such as a hateful post against the Rohingyas, climate disinformation, and trafficking in human beings into cyber scam operations as well as scams themselves. The panel also unpacked the relationship between AdTech and decline in advertising revenues for news media, which is further impacted by generative AI and “zero-click” internet trends, as internet users increasingly do not visit news websites but only read AI-generated search overviews. The session highlighted human rights concerns caused by the surveillance-based business models of tech giants, dominant actors in the digital advertising market, particularly undermining of privacy and amplification of harmful content. Experts recommended human rights due diligence in advertising supply chains, accompanied by stronger data protection laws and mandatory transparency in ad libraries. The “big tent” approach was proposed to collectively address these challenges and promote responsible advertising.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Not only information integrity is a human rights issue, but also it is a business issue such as their brand values, trust, growth and efficiency. There are existing examples of better business performance by placing ads in quality news and websites where transparency is ensured and do not host harmful content.
- While AI-generated content and search overviews pose risks to information integrity, AI can also be a force for good. Contextual AI offers opportunities to optimize ad investments in news websites while helping to curve ad spend on misinformation, disinformation and hate.
- Strong data protection regulations, mandatory transparency and human rights due diligence in advertising supply chains are needed to protect human rights and tackle the amplification of hate speech and mis/disinformation.
- There is an urgent need to build a “big tent” of stakeholders across sectors – bringing together brands, advertisers, civil society, news media, governments, the UN and other stakeholders – to collectively tackle hate speech, misinformation and disinformation and protect human rights, in line with the UN Global Principles for Information Integrity.



Global Footprints, Shared Responsibilities & the Social Contract: An Asia-Africa dialogue

SESSION PARTNERS

- United Nations Development Programme

SPEAKERS

- Sofia Alatas, Human Rights Program and Technical Assistance at Ministry of Law & Human Rights, Government of Indonesia
- Pwadumdi John Okoh (Mary Nathan), Deputy Director Legal, National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria
- Baiboon Sakulkarunaarree, ASEAN Regional Human Rights and Sustainable Supply Chain Manager, Reckitt Benckiser
- Gerd Trogemeann, Manager, Regional Programme and Global Policy Network, Bangkok Regional Hub, UNDP
- Rana Alok Singh, Regional Director, South Asia for Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) UK



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Companies must come with clean hands, show us a roadmap for human rights before they operate.

Pwadumdi John Okoh (Mary Nathan)
Deputy Director Legal, National Human Rights Commission of Nigeria

The session explored the expanding footprint of Asian investment in Africa and its human rights implications. With trade and investment ties growing rapidly, speakers called for a renewed social contract between States, businesses, and communities – one grounded in accountability, transparency, and shared benefit.

Panellists from government, civil society, and the private sector discussed the diverse drivers of Asian business expansion, from market access and resource availability to supply chain diversification and cost competitiveness. Alongside these opportunities, they identified serious risks, including environmental degradation, land dispossession, labor exploitation, and gender-based discrimination, particularly in high-risk sectors such as mining, infrastructure, and agriculture.

The dialogue emphasized the importance of conflict-sensitive due diligence, meaningful stakeholder engagement, and ensuring that worker voice and community perspectives shape business operations. Governments were recognized as key to setting clear regulatory expectations and ensuring access to remedy, while companies were urged to decentralize governance and engage local actors in human rights due diligence.

Reflections from the floor highlighted the potential of stronger South–South cooperation and experience-sharing to close governance gaps and align economic growth with human rights and sustainable development objectives.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Asian investment in Africa is rising rapidly and must be matched by responsible practices
- Environmental harm, displacement, and discrimination remain major risks
- Governments play a central role in setting and enforcing mandatory human rights standards
- Companies must decentralize governance and strengthen local engagement and worker voice
- Access to remedy remains weak; South–South cooperation can help close governance gaps



What Does 'Good' Look Like? Mainstreaming HRDD with transformative business practices

SESSION PARTNERS

- Australian Human Rights Institute, UNSW Sydney
- Global Compact Network Thailand

SPEAKERS

- Justine Nolan (Australian Human Rights Institute, UNSW) Moderator
- Tony Khaw, NXP (Singapore)
- Hyunjun Yang (Korean TNC Watch) South Korea
- Sanchita Saxena (Article One, UC Berkeley)



In order to develop sustainable business practices we need to better interrogate business models that can align profit with purpose. Globally there are countervailing forces - some encouraging greater and faster progress on mainstreaming human rights and environmental standards into business operations, with others working to dismantle DEI and ESG programs. Asia is the natural epicentre of business and human rights activities and has the opportunity to step into this governance gap and lead with innovative practice.

This session focused on identifying and interrogating replicable business practices that are demonstrating effective human rights and environmental due diligence (HREDD) with a focus on corporate practices in Asia.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A desire from all stakeholders to better understand what 'meaningful engagement' is both in theory and practice.
- An understanding the corporate business models can look different from the traditional approach which deprioritizes community and workers.
- The emergence in Asia of HRDD bills (Korea, Thailand and forthcoming in Indonesia) and whether these should or will look the same as the EU approach or whether contextually they should be framed differently.



Equitable Sourcing: Financial and non-financial incentives

SESSION PARTNERS

- Business Social Responsibility
- Fair Wear Foundation

SPEAKERS

- Alexander Kohnstamm, Director of External Affairs, Fair Wear Foundation
- Cynthia Wang, Associate Director, Business and Social Responsibility
- Suhasini Singh, Head of Supply Chain Engagement, Fair Wear Foundation (moderator)



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Responsible purchasing, responsible contracting and meaningful stakeholder engagement – it's all connected if we want to see more balanced power dynamics in supply chains.

Alexander Kohnstamm
Fair Wear Foundation

The panel session explored how global brands and suppliers can use responsible contracting and targeted incentives to advance human rights in the supply chain and cover case studies from the garment and other industries to demonstrate how buyers, suppliers, and sustainability professionals can partner on fair pricing, long-term commitments, and incentive structures that drive sustainable sourcing. Panelists shared their perspectives on how responsible purchasing and contracting practices, alongside non-financial incentives, can help rebalance buyer-supplier relations and improve labor conditions.

The panel conversations underscored that responsible purchasing practices, paired with meaningful participation of all stakeholders and shared responsibility, are key to driving systemic change in the global supply chains.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- In global supply chains, sourcing relationships are often marked by deep power imbalances, short-termism, and a lack of accountability, leaving suppliers to bear the brunt of financial, operational, and reputational risks. That's why shared responsibility between buyers and suppliers is essential for meaningful human rights due diligence.
- Responsibility cannot stop at compliance checklists. Real progress only happens when buyers and suppliers:
 - Embed human rights into everyday business decisions, not treat them as an afterthought
 - Share the costs and accountability of improving labor conditions, instead of shifting the burden up the chain.
- Short lead times and low prices continue to pressure suppliers in Asia. Without fair cost-sharing or other meaningful incentives, systemic change is difficult to take root. These incentives create real drivers for suppliers to invest in better practices while holding buyers accountable to do their part.



Understanding the Changing Landscape of Human Rights Due Diligence and Its Impact on Various Asian Supply Chains

SESSION PARTNERS

- Change Alliance

SPEAKERS

- Archana Shukla Mukherjee, CEO and Executive Director, Change Alliance
- Chitranya Banerjee, Manager, Gender, Diversity and Inclusion, Change Alliance



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Human rights due diligence must move beyond audit-driven checklists to incorporate approaches such as narrative-based assessments that capture the lived realities of workers. Existing checklists and tools need to be reviewed to ensure they include critical Decent Work indicators. Many organizations have begun integrating a Decent Work lens into the audits they conduct. The analysis of these findings should feed into programmes designed and implemented with workers at the forefront, to ensure dignity, access, fairness, and genuine business responsibility.

Archana Shukla Mukherjee
CEO & Executive Director, Change Alliance
Pvt. Ltd

The session, organized by Change Alliance, a social impact consultancy firm specializing in labor rights and responsible business, explored the evolving landscape of human rights due diligence (HRDD) in Asian supply chains such as garments, automotive, sugarcane, and agriculture. With global frameworks like the EU CSDDD, France's Duty of Vigilance, and Germany's Supply Chain Act making HRDD a legal requirement, suppliers in Asia, especially in India's garment sector, face growing compliance pressures alongside persistent challenges such as informality, weak grievance systems, and limited awareness.

To address these challenges, Change Alliance presented few tools designed to operationalize HRDD and strengthen Decent Work outcomes. The Living Income Benchmarking Tool, based on the Anker methodology, calculates the real cost of living applied across 14 mandals in Andhra Pradesh to guide fair wage discussions. The Helpline Tool provides workers direct access to remedy and grievance redressal. Training Tool builds awareness on gender equality and prevention of sexual harassment, fostering safer and more inclusive workplaces. The Risk Assessment Tool helps identify and prioritize labor-related risks such as forced labor, wage theft, and unsafe conditions, using a colour-coded matrix and actionable management plans. The Social Return on Investment (SROI) Tool quantifies social impact by linking workplace improvements to measurable outcomes like reduced medical costs, enhanced productivity, and stronger community well-being.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Drawing on worker narratives and field evidence, the discussion highlighted persistent challenges such as unsafe workplaces, denial of entitlements, gender-based risks, and weak grievance systems. Dr. Archana Shukla Mukherjee contextualized these issues through case studies of unfair dismissals, occupational injuries, harassment, and systemic gaps in social protection, particularly in the Indian context. Chitranya Banerjee examined how HRDD is shifting from voluntary frameworks to binding legal mandates under global due diligence laws like the EU CSDDD and Germany's Supply Chain Act, shaping supplier responsibilities across Asia.

- Worker narratives expose systemic gaps in fair wages, safety, and social protection, demanding localized HRDD solutions.
- HRDD is becoming a binding global obligation, requiring capacity-building and practical support for suppliers.
- Integrating gender and inclusion principles enhances accountability and productivity across supply chains.
- Embedding HRDD into business operations ensures ethical, resilient, and worker-centred supply chains.
- Independent third-party run helplines and grievance redress mechanisms can institutionalize unbiased access to remedy and strengthens worker voice.
- Risk Assessment and SROI tools quantify social and economic value, making risks and interventions measurable and credible.



Supply Chain and Multinational Corporation Accountability from a Trade Union and Worker Rights Perspective: Issues, deficiencies and what's needed

SESSION PARTNERS

- Solidarity Center Thailand

SPEAKERS

- David John Welsh, Country Director, Solidarity Center Thailand



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No current supply chain due diligence mechanism in the world goes far enough in forcing true accountability on multinational corporations profiting off the work of the world's poor. The current situation for workers and unions would be intolerable in any other context involving contracts between transnational corporate actors or governments. Binding, impactful labor and human rights due diligence mechanisms must be the future of international labor law and would have a galvanizing effect on MNC actors to take serious, proactive steps to clean up their supply chains.

David John Welsh

Country Director Solidarity Center Thailand

Thailand is at a crucial and potentially 'game changing' moment which could serve to significantly expand worker and trade union rights in international supply chains. Currently, there is no reliable or binding legal mechanism for workers in global supply chains to hold multinationals accountable for rampant violations across a myriad of industries. However, as a supply chain hub where recent record setting victories for workers reclaiming millions in wage and severance theft; where the Thai -EU Free Trade Agreement with HRDD mechanisms is in the offing, with Thailand's application to the OECD (and exposure to the OECD complaint mechanisms system) and its decision to enact the first domestic HRDD law in the region, the country is well poised to provide multiple avenues for workers and trade unions to hold multinational actors accountable for supply chain abuses.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The current MNC supply chain system is deliberately set up to prevent affording trade unions and workers any formal, legal mechanism to hold supply chain actors accountable for labor rights abuses; This is true in Thailand, regionally and globally
- Such an arrangement would be unimaginable in a business to business or government to business contractual arrangement. It is only the dynamic between supply chain workers/trade unions and multinationals where there is no binding mechanism to seek redress for labor rights abuses. All current systems are either voluntary and/or allow MNCs to elude responsibility
- Supply chain victories for workers and unions, on a large scale, are possible as evidenced by recent successes in Thailand
- What is needed is the political will to expose MNCs to civil and criminal liability for wrongdoing in their supply chains. This would have a galvanizing effect on the willingness and urgency of MNC actors to seriously police and prevent current systematic labor rights abuses. Governments in sourcing and producing countries can and must act collaboratively to establish legal mechanisms to enforce regulations transnationally.



Impact and Innovation: Reshaping human rights due diligence at scale

SESSION PARTNERS

- Supply Unchained

SPEAKERS

- Nayantara Sriram, Supply Unchained



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There can be no greater revelation than when a human being recognises their responsibility to the world.

Nayantara Sriram

Founder & CEO, Supply Unchained

Supply Unchained delivered a spotlight session on Reshaping Human Rights Due Diligence at Scale. The core message emphasised a crucial shift from a compliance mindset to one of collective responsibility, recognising that “there can be no greater revelation than when a human being recognises their responsibility to the world”. This shift is essential given the scale of the problem: 50 million human beings are in modern slavery.

The session highlighted that traditional methods – spreadsheets and one-day audits – are failing to capture real risks, especially in complex supply chains in the Asia-Pacific region. To combat this broken system, Supply Unchained presented its expert-led, harms-based framework and technology.

A demonstration of the technology featured a global tech company navigating risks across its physical supply chain (e.g., child labor in mining) and its digital platform (e.g., AI bias and hate speech). The platform provides dynamic dashboards and AI-enabled vetting, moving the company from a manual, reactive stance to a proactive one by identifying and prioritising the most significant harms.

Case studies across engineering, retail, and pharmaceutical industries were shared, along with the catastrophic costs of inaction, including fines up to 5% of annual global turnover and market capital losses of £1 billion. The final call was to “think anew, and act anew” and “unchain your supply” to eradicate human rights abuses.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Scale of the Problem: 50 million people are currently in modern slavery, making human rights due diligence a global imperative.
- The Failing Status Quo: Traditional compliance methods (spreadsheets, simple audits) are “broken” and fail to provide the necessary granular visibility, leaving supply chains vulnerable.
- The Crucial Shift: The core message is the need to move from passive compliance to collective responsibility – to “think anew, and act anew.”
- Harms-Based Framework: Supply Unchained presented its expert-led, harms-based framework which prioritises preventing the most severe human rights abuses (salience).
- Proactive Technology: The platform utilises dynamic dashboards and AI-enabled vetting to transition companies from a reactive to a proactive risk stance.
- Business Value: The framework mitigates catastrophic risks, including potential fines up to 5% of annual global turnover, and increases operational efficiency (e.g., automating complex reports).
- Human Rights Impact: The focus on severe harms achieves profound impact by protecting the vulnerable, by driving systemic change.



CLOSED-DOOR INDUSTRY ROUNDTABLE

Advancing Human Rights Due Diligence in Asia's Digital Transformation: Practical approaches, peer exchange and strategic preparedness

SESSION PARTNERS

- United Nations Development Programme
- OHCHR B-Tech

Asia's accelerating digital transformation is reshaping economies while intensifying governance, regulatory, and human rights challenges. In this closed-door roundtable, senior leaders from major technology companies and AI innovators examined how HRDD is being embedded across diverse business models amid political sensitivities, fragmented regulations, and rapidly evolving risks such as AI misuse, cyber fraud, and surveillance.

Discussions highlighted the need to translate global standards into practical, locally relevant approaches – simplifying human rights language, engaging engineers and product teams, and supporting SMEs through collaborative rather than punitive supplier engagement. Participants emphasized that individual companies cannot meet rising expectations alone; coherent standards, shared tools, and sector-level cooperation are essential. The UNGPs remain the region's most reliable anchor, but effective implementation will require continued peer learning and collective action across Asia's digital ecosystem.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Regional HRDD approaches are fragmented, with businesses navigating diverse political contexts, regulatory expectations, and emerging risks such as AI misuse, cyber fraud, and surveillance.
- Translating global standards into practice remains a major gap, requiring clearer, simplified human rights language and tools that resonate with suppliers, SMEs, and technical teams.
- Engineering and product teams are central to responsible innovation, yet remain under-engaged; building their human rights capacity is critical for upstream and downstream risk management.
- Supportive, collaborative supplier engagement is more effective than punitive approaches, especially for SMEs that lack capacity for audits or certification schemes.
- Sector-wide cooperation is essential – companies increasingly recognize the need for shared solutions, aligned expectations, and peer learning to meet rising due diligence demands.



Food Systems Impacts on Children's Rights

SESSION PARTNERS

- UNICEF

SPEAKERS

- Sameea Sheikh - Access To Nutrition initiative,
- Cassidy Huang - World Benchmark Alliance,
- Petch Rawdaree - NCD Alliance Thailand,
- Adrian Cameron - Deakin
- University/RE-FRESH,
- Isaiah Suguitan UNICEF Fix My Food
- Alison Feeley UNICEF EAP-RO



This session marked the first-ever Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum dialogue directly connecting food environments and children's rights, building on UNICEF's recent "Feeding Profits" report (Feeding Profit | UNICEF). The discussion brought together experts and stakeholders from UNICEF, the Access to Nutrition Initiative (ATNI), the World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA), the NCD Alliance, and Deakin University, alongside youth representatives, to address the growing crisis of child overweight and obesity in the Asia-Pacific region.

UNICEF highlighted that, for the first time globally and regionally, child overweight now exceeds underweight, with private sector practices playing a major role in shaping unhealthy food environments.

Youth representatives called for junk food advertising bans, stronger school food policies, and child-centred nutrition governance. Deakin University emphasized the role of retail environments in influencing food choices, offering regulatory and decision-making tools for governments and businesses, and NCD Alliance presented evidence from Thailand showing the economic costs of unhealthy diets.

ATNI underlined the continued lack of strong corporate commitments and transparent disclosure, while WBA demonstrated how benchmarking mobilizes investors to drive accountability, but with yet limited influence on food systems stakeholders.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The child overweight crisis is rapidly escalating across the region, surpassing undernutrition in many countries.
- The private sector plays a central role in shaping food environments, through production, distribution, and marketing that often promote unhealthy products to children.
- Voluntary corporate measures are insufficient to curb the marketing and availability of unhealthy foods.
- The panel altogether reiterated a strong call for governments to adopt comprehensive, mandatory regulations governing food systems and their drivers, in particular private actors and companies.
- Regulations should cover the entire value chain - from production to distribution and advertising - to uphold children's rights to healthy nutrition.
- Collaboration among governments, investors, businesses, and youth is essential to create healthier, more accountable food systems.



From Fields to Fairness: Gender and migrant labor rights in climate-vulnerable agrifood systems

SESSION PARTNERS

- The Centre for Child Rights and Business
- IOM
- Global Human Rights Centre

SPEAKERS

- Gayang Ho, Director of Research, The Centre for Child Rights and Business;
- Amit Choudhury, National Officer, IOM;
- Professor Engobo Emeseh, Aberystwyth University;
- Marcio Castro de Souza, UN FAO Senior Fishery Officer
- Dr Cynthia C. Umezulike, President of Global Human Rights Centre and human rights lawyer;



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When corporates are working in high contextual risks of child labor, it is inevitable children workers are in their supply chain. Instead of blindly implementing zero-tolerance policies, we ask corporates to think about how to ensure young workers can work safely and legally in their supply chain.

Gayang Ho

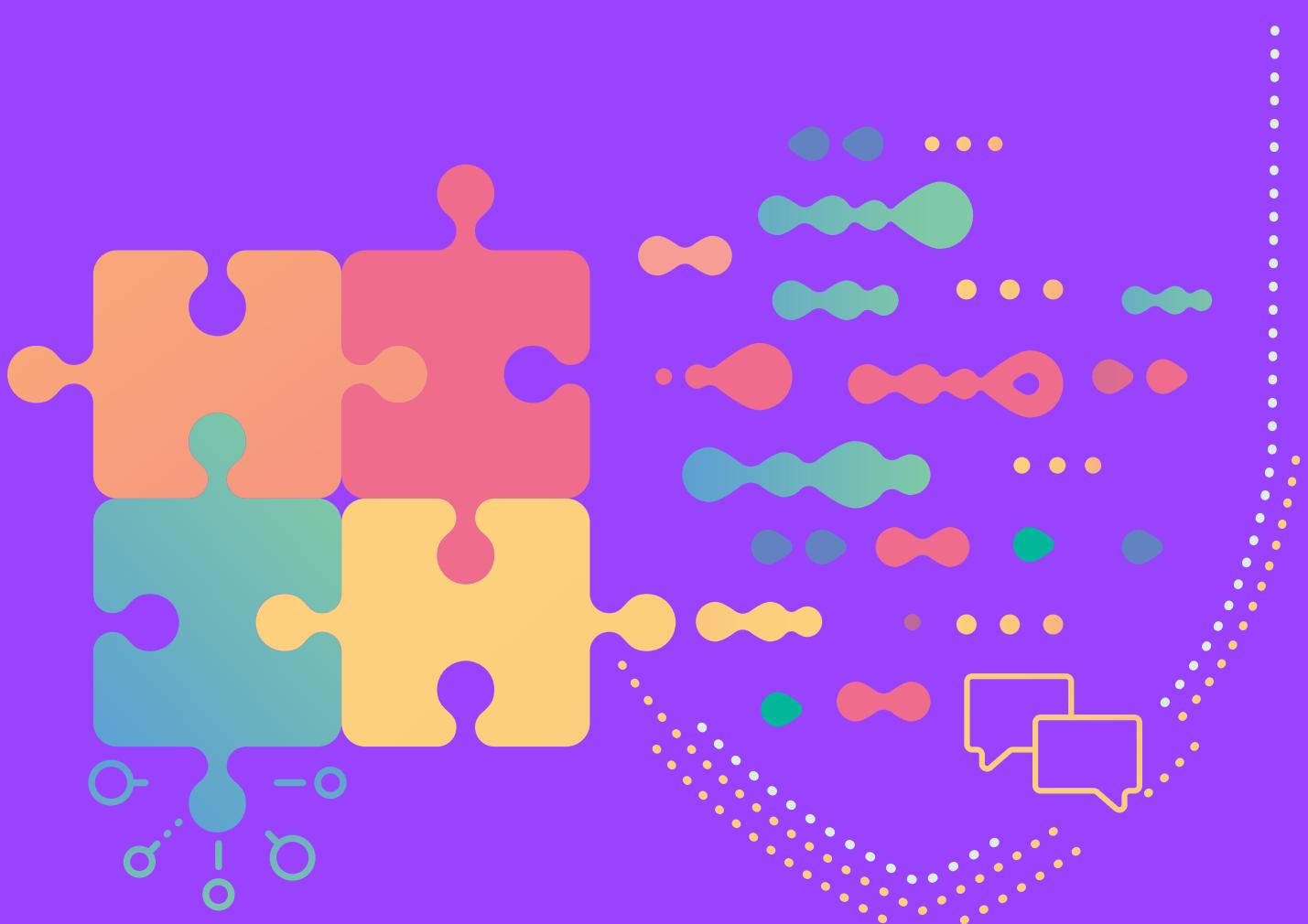
The Centre for Child Rights and Business

The session explored practical and transformative solutions to make agrifood supply chains engines of equity and sustainability. It highlighted how strengthening human rights due diligence (HRDD) practices tailored to the realities of rural women and internal migrant workers can help address entrenched exploitation, promote decent work, and respond to climate vulnerabilities. Through real-world examples and multi-stakeholder dialogue, the discussion showcased inclusive, gender-responsive, and climate-conscious HRDD models that have delivered tangible progress in the agricultural sector.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Migrant workers and their children remain among the most vulnerable in global agri-food supply chains, often missing out on education and falling into cycles of poverty and child labor. Real progress depends on building trust among brands, suppliers and local actors, investing in capacity building, and grounding initiatives – like farmer workshops or youth employment programmes – in local realities.,
- As agrifood systems face increasing climate disruption, rural women and migrant workers are disproportionately affected. Human rights due diligence must therefore be climate-just, gender-responsive and inclusive, focusing on fair remedy pathways and models that uphold dignity, equity and accountability.
- In aquatic food systems, small-scale fishers, aquaculture producers, women, migrants and Indigenous peoples must be central to the shift toward sustainability. Inclusive governance, equitable benefit-sharing and recognition of traditional knowledge are key to ensure these efforts strengthen, rather than exclude, vulnerable communities.
- Finally, comprehensive legal and institutional reforms are needed to secure women's access to justice in cases of rights violations and losses. Gender-responsive legal frameworks and accountability mechanisms are essential to ensure that women, particularly in marginalised and climate-affected communities, can access fair remedies and fully participate with dignity and equality.

Inclusion, Protection and Participation





Bridging the GAP between Reality and HRDD Practices: How to include right holders voices through dialogue

SESSION PARTNERS

- WE Program
- Tchibo

SPEAKERS

- Moon Mukherjee, WE Program India
- Doan Huan Nguyen, WE Program Viet Nam
- Fatima Chowdhury, Tchibo
- Gladys Tang, WE Program Hong Kong China
- Sang Chea, WE Program Cambodia
- Khuyen Nguyen Truong Bao, WE Program Viet Nam



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Human rights risks are not abstract, they are deeply human, and they show up most clearly in moments of crisis.

Moon Mukherjee
WE Program

The session explored how dialogue-based approach can strengthen business respect for human rights across global supply chains, moving beyond compliance-driven audits. Drawing on the WE Program's experience in the APAC region and beyond, our facilitators emphasized how creating safe spaces allows workers, supervisors, managers and key stakeholders to engage openly on sensitive issues such as wages, overtime, gender equity, and workplace culture. Instead of relying on bureaucratic grievance systems that workers often fear to use, the WE Program facilitates conversations where concerns surface naturally, building trust and ownership at the factory level.

The workshop highlighted that aligning with global frameworks is only the start; what matters is how it percolates to the workers and communities on the ground. Brands must also invest in prevention, remediation, and resilience through participatory methods that bring worker voices into the heart of due diligence. Practical examples included the use of theatre, storytelling, and experiential activities in the room that transform technical issues like wage entitlements into shared human concerns. Participants agreed that these approaches not only meet regulatory expectations but also create meaningful, lasting change for people in supply chains.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Traditional grievance systems often remain unused due to fear, stigma, and bureaucracy.
- Safe, participatory spaces enable workers to share concerns openly and without fear of reprisal.
- Dialogue-based approach complements due diligence frameworks by grounding them in lived experience.
- Creative methods (theatre, games, storytelling) make abstract rights tangible and relatable.
- Co-creation with suppliers and workers builds resilience and trust beyond audit cycles.
- Embedding these practices helps companies meet both regulatory and ethical expectations.



NextGen BHR: Youth Innovation Hackathon

SESSION PARTNERS

- United Nations Development Programme
- Sasin School of Management
- Business School Network of Thailand
- UN PRME ASEAN Chapter
- Global Business School Network
- HEC Paris
- BIAS Inc.

THEMES AND CHALLENGES

Theme 1: Environment & Climate Justice

How can high-impact sectors reduce environmental harm while improving the position of small producers who are often most exposed to climate and market risks?

Theme 2: Labor Rights & DEI

Worker-voice mechanisms remain weak, especially where technology is used in ways that prioritise efficiency over agency. How can companies gather information ethically while protecting the people who provide it?

Theme 3 : Supply Chain Transparency & Responsible Production

Many recycling and circularity programmes fail due to low participation and weak incentives. How can everyday consumers be engaged in a simple and verifiable way?

Theme 4: Technology & Human Rights

Gig workers often face opaque pay systems, limited access to protections, and intrusive monitoring. What small but meaningful reforms can improve fairness without overhauling entire business models?

Theme 5: Community Case Impact

Companies often struggle to engage Indigenous Peoples meaningfully, particularly when projects carry both risks and potential economic benefits. How can decisions be made with – not just about – affected communities?

The first NextGen BHR Youth Hackathon brought together 75 students from 15 universities across six countries for a practical introduction to how BHR challenges are analysed in real institutional settings. The hackathon created a structured environment where students from business, law, and related disciplines could work through real constraints, test assumptions, and prototype solutions that speak to current shifts in global regulation and public expectations. The programme combined a short grounding in core BHR frameworks with behavioural insights tools, enabling participants to move past broad problem statements and interrogate underlying drivers. Through guided exercises, teams practiced framing issues systemically, identifying points of leverage, and translating standards such as the UNGPs into workable ideas.

Over the course of two days, teams developed solutions to “wicked problems” across five themes and presented their concepts to expert juries. The strongest ideas demonstrated an ability to balance rights considerations with operational realities, moving beyond compliance language toward models that reimagine how businesses engage with workers, communities, and the environment.

WINNING SOLUTIONS

Theme 1: A partnership-based model for palm oil production that replaces extractive supply relationships with a self-sustaining pump system run jointly with farmers. The approach strengthens producer independence, stabilises livelihoods, and offers a scalable structure for more equitable value chains.

Theme 2: A secure worker-voice platform that uses private cloud storage and token IDs to ensure that workers retain full ownership and control of their data. The model positions technology as a tool for protection rather than surveillance and offers a portable, rights-respecting alternative to conventional reporting channels.

Theme 3: A “scan-and-reward” system where recycled bottles generate unique codes that can be exchanged for incentives. The approach links consumer behaviour, traceability, and community engagement, making circularity practical for both companies and users.

Theme 4:

Solution 1 – A three-pillar model that treats gig workers as partners, supported by transparent AI-based order allocation and incentives aligned with fair practice.

Solution 2 – A set of targeted improvements, including clearer pay systems, easier access to social protection schemes, and event-based (rather than constant) monitoring, to reduce vulnerability and improve trust.

Theme 5: A community-first engagement model built on informed dialogue, shared assessment of risks, and willingness to adjust business plans, including relocating operations when necessary. The approach reframes communities as partners in long-term value creation rather than stakeholders to be managed.



Leading by Example: Effective grievance mechanisms centering rights holders in Asia

SESSION PARTNERS

- Article One
- Fair Labor Association

SPEAKERS

- Sanchita Saxena, Article One
- Rakesh Narayana, People's Courage International
- Veronique Rochet, PUMA Group
- Sif Thorgeirsson, Fair Labor Association



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If we are being aspirational about the efficacy of the grievance mechanisms being set up, we need to ask ourselves two questions. 1) How likely is it for the workers with the least voice and least power to use this mechanism? and 2) How well does this grievance mechanisms set up for the factory floor compare with the one in the corporate office?

Rakesh Narayana
People's Courage International

Article One in partnership with the Fair Labor Association (FLA) organized a workshop, *Leading by Example: Effective Grievance Mechanisms Centering Rights Holders in Asia*, showcasing how rights holders can shape and strengthen the Business and Human Rights (BHR) agenda, particularly in contexts where civic space is shrinking and accountability gaps persist. Recent mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence (mHREDD) legislation requires companies to implement effective grievance mechanisms (GMs) in their supply chains. These mechanisms are vital for detecting and addressing risks before violations occur and for ensuring remediation in line with the UN Guiding Principles. Our workshop highlighted examples of two successful GMs that go beyond “check the box” solutions and that are grounded in the lived experiences of rights holders in Asia. We focused on the FLA grievance process and the GM that is part of the Dindigul Agreement (an Enforceable Brand Agreement with three apparel brands and the Tamil Nadu Textile and Common Labour Union as signatories). The workshop also provided audience members the opportunity to participate in interactive breakout groups and role-playing exercises to foster multi-stakeholder dialogue on challenges and opportunities in implementing such mechanisms. Participants shared reflections and co-developed concrete action plans using a provided template.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Grievance mechanisms are essential because they can tilt the balance of power slightly in favor of workers.
- Effective grievance mechanisms must include: 1) Clear standards that are communicated to workers; b) Mechanisms to ensure there is no backlash or retaliation; and c) The involvement of unions or other forms of worker representation.
- A grievance mechanism that does not receive any grievances is a failure. The mechanism should be receiving complaints from workers. What would be a failure is if grievances go unresolved or if the root causes of the grievances are not addressed and the same problems arises repeatedly.
- For a mechanism to be successful, the workers need to know about it, know how to use it, trust it, and receive a response to any complaint filed.



Developing BHR Regional Leadership in ASEAN: Anchoring migrant workers' rights protection

SESSION PARTNERS

- ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking Program (AACT)
- ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) Thailand
- Global Compact Network Thailand (GCNT)
- Migrant Forum in Asia (MFA)
- Sedex

SPEAKERS

- H.E. Asst Prof Dr Bhanubhatra Jittiang, Representative of Thailand to AICHR
- Dr Kuanruthai Siripatthanakosol, Deputy Secretary General, Global Compact Network Thailand
- William Gois, Regional Coordinator, Migrant Forum Asia
- Walter Lin, Sedex, Managing Director for Asia
- Dr Lucia Pietropaoli, Team Leader, ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking



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AICHR provides a platform for meaningful multi-stakeholder engagement, laying the groundwork for practical tools to strengthen mechanisms that advance the protection of the rights of (migrant) workers.

Bhanubhatra Jittiang
AICHR Thailand

ASEAN-ACT, in collaboration with AICHR Thailand, convened a session on “Developing Business and Human Rights (B&HR) Regional Leadership in ASEAN: Anchoring Migrant Workers’ Rights Protection”, joined by Global Compact Network Thailand, Sedex, and Migrant Forum Asia.

Migrant workers remain among the most vulnerable groups in Southeast Asia, facing heightened risks of exploitation and abuse. They are over-represented among victims of trafficking for forced labor, driven by structural gaps, particularly in the private sector.

Regional leaders from human rights, business, and civil society shared perspectives on the urgent need to strengthen collaboration to advance human rights due diligence and embed B&HR principles into corporate and policy frameworks. The dialogue underscored the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement in driving responsible business practices that safeguard migrant workers’ rights.

The session also highlighted the value of sustained regional policy dialogue, collective expertise, and cross-sector collaboration to build on existing progress. Participants agreed that coordinated action among governments, businesses, and civil society is essential for ensuring more robust protection of migrant workers across and beyond ASEAN.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- AICHR is showing leadership in progressing protection of migrant workers rights in the context of B&HR in the region. There is discussion on reviewing AICHR’s TOR at present and also how to make a nascent complaints’ mechanism effective.
- Business leaders recognize the need for standards and engagement in policy development. While larger companies can more easily engage in policy development and implement HRDD, MSMEs face challenges. Collective efforts are needed to provide incentives, capacity-building, and enforcement. To prevent buyers from shifting to cheaper markets, multi-stakeholder dialogues using capital market case studies should be convened
- Civil society urge greater progress in the region and ASEAN to demonstrate leadership, and engaging organized labor. While companies have increasingly engaged NGOs when significant cases of exploitation are brought to light, this is not systematic, whereas engaging with and supporting trade unions and similar workers’ representatives could be more so.
- Stakeholders highlighted the importance of enhancing leadership and collaboration for responsible business and the protection of migrant workers in the region, and encouraged ASEAN governments to build on existing guidelines and declarations by developing practical tools to further advance business and human rights.



Grounding Human Rights in Community Realities: NGO-led inclusion and protection of rights holders amid regional crises

SESSION PARTNERS

- Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association
- Medicare Mental Health Centre

SPEAKERS

- Sera Yilmaz, Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association
- Shannon Said, Medicare Mental Health Centre



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[Stories like Mei's in] this case study offer a replicable blueprint for anchoring human rights in everyday systems, ensuring those most affected by intersecting crises become active agents of systemic change.

This presentation offered a case study based on a real-world client, exploring their experience of accessing MDAA and MMHC. The presentation provided a background of the pervasiveness of disability and mental health impacts around the world, alongside some of the unique barriers, opportunities and best-practice approaches that organisations like MDAA and MMHC currently engage in to promote service users' human rights and civic space. Key points of reflection included:

- How do we mainstream safeguards for CaLD people with disabilities?
- Are our policies truly co-designed with those who hold lived experience?
- What practical actions can reduce exploitation in corporate practices? i.e. banking processes for people with disability
- How can NGOs remain effective advocates as civic spaces shrink during situations like the pandemic?
- How do systems address the dual impact of mental health and exploitation?
- Are supports person-centred and anti-oppressive, reflecting cultural realities and challenge stigma?
- Are they accessible, affordable, and designed with community insight?
- How have advocates adapted the UN Guiding Principles to local contexts?

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The changing nature of socio-economic and political contexts shape and impact how human rights and civic spaces are preserved, changed and / or diminished
- Ongoing negotiation and advocacy are therefore required to ensure human rights and civic spaces are preserved within ever-changing and intersectional contexts
- The role of the third sector (NGOs) provides an essential and not optional community and civic space for advocacy of human rights, that resist neoliberal and globalist/ expansionist agendas, and forefront the concerns of service users over business profiteering.
- Collaboration with likeminded organisations is essential to buffer against the pressures of hypercapitalism and globalization
- Ongoing scrutiny of current measures of 'success' in the third sector is required to combat the creep of neoliberal-based KPIs that threaten to trivialize the lived experiences like the case study shared in this presentation

Private Sector Leadership in Crisis: Advancing gender-responsive humanitarian action

SESSION PARTNERS

- Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)
- Connecting Business Initiative (CBI)
- UN Women Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (ROAP)

SPEAKERS

- Veronica T. Gabaldon, Executive Director, The Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation
- Yasangi Muditha Randeni, Group Chief Sustainability Officer and Assistant Vice President for Corporate Strategy & Sustainability, Aitken Spence Corporate Services (Private) Limited
- Maria Holtsberg, Deputy Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Women
- Kilian Murphy, Program Specialist, Research and Private Sector Engagement, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center



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Building resilience begins with including everyone – especially women and girls. Gender equality in disaster response isn't optional; it's essential for survival.

Veronica Gabaldon
Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation

The session “Private Sector Leadership in Crisis: Advancing Gender-Responsive Humanitarian Action” at the United Nations Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum, Asia-Pacific, was organized by the OCHA-UNDP Connecting Business initiative and UN Women, with support from ADPC. Moderated by Kilian Murphy, it brought together Veronica T. Gabaldon (Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation), Yasangi Muditha Randeni (Aitken Spence PLC, Sri Lanka), and Maria Holtsberg (UN Women Asia and the Pacific) to discuss the evolving role of the private sector in humanitarian action.

Panelists highlighted that businesses are not only critical funders but also strategic partners in preparedness, recovery, and resilience. Veronica Gabaldon shared the Philippine experience of institutionalizing private sector coordination through the PDRF Operations Center, emphasizing gender mainstreaming across response activities. Yasangi Randeni reflected on Sri Lanka's private sector response during the economic crisis, stressing the need to link inclusion with long-term resilience. Maria Holtsberg underscored the importance of integrating gender analysis in humanitarian planning, referencing tools such as the Women's Empowerment Principles and UN Women's “WeRespond” initiative.

The discussion emphasized that inclusive, gender-responsive collaboration strengthens community recovery. Participants agreed that businesses must embed gender equality and accountability in their crisis strategies while working alongside governments, civil society, and humanitarian actors. The session concluded with a collective call to “build better before,” ensuring preparedness and strategic partnerships drive equitable humanitarian responses.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Inclusion strengthens resilience: Gender equality is vital to crisis preparedness and recovery. Involving women, youth, and marginalized groups in decisions strengthens community and business resilience.
- Strategic private sector engagement: Businesses must move beyond donations, embedding long-term approaches in operations, infrastructure, and workforce policies for sustainable response.
- Empowering local women leaders and MSMEs: Women-led initiatives and small businesses are key to recovery. Capacity-building, leadership, and inclusive innovation drive equitable outcomes.
- Data-driven and pre-crisis planning: Gender-sensitive data and tools like the Women's Empowerment Principles and UN Women's “WeRespond” database enable targeted action.
- Multi-stakeholder collaboration: Partnerships among business, government, and women's groups build shared ownership, accountability, and inclusion.
- Build better before crises: Early investment in preparedness – through policy, training, and infrastructure – reduces rebuilding needs and ensures equitable, gender-responsive strategies.



Fixing It or Faking It? How grievance mechanisms can deliver real remedies

SESSION PARTNERS

- UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights
- OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)

SPEAKERS

- Pichamon Yeophantong, Chair, UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights
- Hansa Homhual, Secretary-General of the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand
- Kate Wilson, OECD Centre for Responsible Business Conduct
- Junya Tanaka, Japanese creator-artist



his session tackled the critical gap between the existence of grievance and remedy mechanisms and their effective use in business-related human rights contexts. The session opened by emphasising that access to remedy is a foundational component of responsible business conduct – embedded in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct and the ILO MNE Declaration.

Speakers then examined how, in the Asia-Pacific region, mechanisms for redress – from national human rights institutions to industry-level grievance frameworks – are available but often fall short in delivering truly meaningful outcomes for rights holders.

The dialogue explored what constitutes an “effective” remedy: not simply the presence of a mechanism, but outcomes such as restitution, rehabilitation, compensation, sanctions, and guarantees of non-repetition.

Key challenges were unpacked: rights holders’ difficulties engaging mechanisms (especially operational-level grievance mechanisms), and businesses’ barriers in cooperating or providing for remediation. The session also debated how remedy processes can build trust between businesses and rights holders, rather than function as a tick-box exercise.

From the fireside chat format, the speakers shared practical examples of both success and shortfall in the region, identified the “essential ingredients” for credible remediation (such as transparency, stakeholder participation, independence, and follow-through), and flagged common pitfalls (such as paper-based compliance, lack of transparency, poor stakeholder engagement).

In closing, the session called for innovation, commitment and stronger collaboration across business, civil society, regulators and investors to push remediation from rhetoric to reality. The intention was to leave participants with clearer guidance on how businesses can meaningfully cooperate in remedy processes, and how grievance mechanisms can be structured or improved to deliver real change.

Business Innovation for Inclusion and Transformation to Advance Gender Equality

SESSION PARTNERS

- UN Women

SPEAKERS

- Musarat Jabeen, Executive Director/ Head of Department - Policy, Regulation & Development, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP)
- Nurul Hasanah Ahamed, Chief Sustainability Officer, FGV Holdings BHD
- Kate Lazarus, Senior Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) Advisory Lead for Asia Pacific, IFC
- Katja Freiwald, Lead for Women's Economic Empowerment & Migration, UN Women ROAP



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The change happens when the corporate sector themselves consider ESG not as a compliance burden but as a strategic opportunity, to improve on their risk management, to enhance investor confidence and to attract sustainability linked capital.

Musarat Jabeen

Executive Director/Head of Department - Policy, Regulation & Development, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP)

This panel session explored how business innovation and cross-sector collaboration can foster inclusion, resilience, and transformative progress on gender equality: not only as a human rights imperative, but also as the foundation for sustainable growth across the region. Bringing together diverse yet complementary perspectives, from IFC, regulators and the private sector, the discussion was grounded by remarks from moderator Katja Freiwald, outlining UN Women's work with the private sector through the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) and recently launched innovation platform Gender Action Lab. She emphasized the pressing need to move from commitment to action on gender equality across value chains.

Panelists discussed the strategic importance of gender equality for business performance and resilience, the ways in which regulators can play an influential role towards systemic change, and examples of good-practice, including women's leadership pathways, mentoring and training, family- and care-friendly workplaces, supply-chain diversity, and board representation. They highlighted the need to bridge the divide between commitment and action, for increased transparency and accountability through reporting and capacity building, and the importance of collaboration and a whole-ecosystem approach to progress.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Awareness and commitment are rising, as seen in the 3,000+ WEPs signatories, yet the implementation gap remains significant.
- There is a clear business and ESG case for gender equality: more diverse leadership improves performance, sustainability outcomes, and investor confidence.
- Private sector innovation can catalyse transformation, positioning businesses as key drivers of progress.
- Transparency and reporting are essential: gender-disaggregated data, improved guidelines, and consistent frameworks help close the commitment-outcome gap and ensure accountability.
- Cross-cutting collaboration — across ecosystems and within companies — enables momentum, peer learning, and systemic progress.
- Market intermediaries and regulators are key enablers through policy, governance codes, and capacity building, but long-term impact requires strong stakeholder buy-in across the ecosystem, underscoring the need for a whole-ecosystem approach.



Beyond Crisis: Innovating Community-Led Approaches for Remedy and Corporate Accountability

SESSION PARTNERS

- Oxfam in Asia
- Sal Forest
- Association of Professional Social Workers & Development Practitioners (APSWDP) India

SPEAKERS

- Raweeporn Dokmai, Field Coordinator, Maesot Labour Law Clinic, HRDF
- Rajeev Kumar, Hon. Director, APSWDP India
- Rapatsa Trirath, Private Sector Programme Manager, Oxfam in Asia
- Hyun-Pil Na, Executive Director, Korean House for International Solidarity (KHIS)
- Ponpakin Phruettiwongwanit, Sal Forest



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While the NCP process is non-judicial and often falls short of delivering true remedy, it remains a critical avenue for campaign visibility and government engagement.

Hyun-Pil Na

Executive Director, Korean House for International Solidarity (KHIS)

The session “Beyond Crisis: Innovating Community-Led Approaches for Remedy and Corporate Accountability” spotlighted grassroots-led models that challenge top-down business and human rights (BHR) approaches. Hosted by Oxfam in Asia, Sal Forest, and APSWDP India, the discussion highlighted real-world innovations led by communities and civil society in seeking justice and corporate accountability.

Panelists shared powerful examples – from Myanmar migrant workers suing a UK retailer for labor rights abuses, to India’s Samta Nyay Kendra providing legal aid to transgender people, to Oxfam’s COBHRA model enabling communities to lead human rights assessments, and Korea’s experience with the OECD National Contact Point (NCP) mechanism.

The interactive format fostered collaboration between practitioners and participants through roundtable discussions on enabling policy environments, rights holder engagement, and effective grievance mechanisms. The dialogue underscored that advancing BHR requires shifting power and resources to affected communities, embedding inclusion, and co-creating long-term accountability frameworks.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Community-driven accountability works. Grassroots and civil society actors are pioneering models that center rights holders in designing and implementing remedy mechanisms.
- Legal empowerment creates lasting change. The Samta Nyay Kendra model in India shows how community-based legal aid can institutionalize justice and inspire policy replication
- COBHRAs rebalance power. Community-led human rights impact assessments foster transparency, inclusivity, and equitable participation between companies and communities
- Global mechanisms remain essential yet limited. The OECD NCP offers visibility and dialogue but still lacks enforcement power – highlighting the need for stronger national frameworks
- Cross-border solidarity amplifies justice. The Tesco/Mae Sot case shows how collaboration among NGOs and workers can drive corporate accountability beyond national boundaries
- Moving from consultation to co-governance. Sustainable change requires institutionalizing community leadership and ensuring access to remedy backed by law, finance, and policy commitment



From Guidance to Solutions: Practical solutions to include local remedies in supply chains

SESSION PARTNERS

- STITCH
- INNO
- ERI

SPEAKERS

- Alexander Kohnstamm – Chair of STITCH; Director of External Affairs, Fair Wear (moderator)
- Alok Singh – Regional Director, South Asia, ETI
- Dee Lee – Founder, Inno; Fellow of Asia Society; Human rights defender in Asia
- Dimitri Kessler – Founder, Economic Rights Institute
- Femke Blickman – Strategic Lead and Project Management Advisor, Fair Wear
- Ice Huang – Director, Inno China



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If you don't think worker's voice is important, you have already lost the battle of risk management of your supply chain.

*Ice Huang
Inno*

This session has spotlighted how to accelerate access to effective remedies for vulnerable groups within the garment supply chain. During the session, STITCH launched the Technical Guidance on Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement, which offers a practical roadmap mainly for brands, but also for factories, governments, and CSOs, seeking to involve all supply chain stakeholders in shaping human rights due diligence. They spotlighted how vulnerable groups can move from the margins to the centre of business and policy decision-making.

Ice, Dimitri and Dee campaigned for the localised remedies matters more than the decision making totally dependent on advisories and paper works. They identified practical strategies and models for implementing effective, context-specific remedy mechanisms that genuinely empower affected communities. They also discussed why workers' voices matter when it comes down to the real solution. PR shows orchestrated by agencies with empty promises will eventually make international buyers bite the dust.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- By launching the MSE Technical Guidance, brands have practical guidance on how to meaningfully engage with the right stakeholders, spotlighting rights holders to the centre of business and decision-making
- Putting rights holders in the centre of decision making is crucial to change the systems. Include local grassroots initiatives, community-based grievance mechanisms, and culturally sensitive dispute resolution processes to ensure doing it in accordance with the principles outlined in the MSE Technical Guidance.
- When doing business in a supply chain, include Multi-stakeholder Engagement: To foster a dialogue among businesses, governments, and civil society on how to collaboratively build more inclusive, protective, and participatory ways of engagement
- A localised grievance mechanism is open-sourced to the audience with 10 fruitful case studies by Inno. This is by far the most cost-effective way to improve the human rights condition in the supply chain.



A Rights-Holder Led Approach to Corporate Accountability: Lessons from grassroots movements in India and Indonesia

SESSION PARTNERS

- Coalition for Human Rights in Development
- Posco- Jindal Pratirodh Sangram Samiti (Anti POSCO and Anti Jindal People's Movement)
- Forum Petani Plasma Buol

SPEAKERS

- Prashant Paikray: Community Leader & Spokesperson, Anti-Jindal Movement (India)
- Fatrisia Ain: Community Leaders & Spokesperson, Forum Petani Plasma Buol (Indonesia)
- Bhoomika Choudhury: Moderator



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The strength of this movement is not contingent on funding or global media attention; it is fueled by our commitment to our future, carrying the fight for the generations to come.

This session centered the decades-long struggles of rights holders in India (anti-Jindal/steel) and Indonesia (anti-PT. Hardaya/palm oil) to demonstrate how community-led resistance serves as the primary anchor for accountability in Asia. The session unpacked the sophisticated, coordinated tactics employed by grassroots movements, particularly women and Indigenous leaders, who navigate severe challenges like SLAPPs, arrests, and criminalization to push back against corporate impunity and extractivist development.

Speakers provided first-hand accounts that highlighted the limitations of existing national and international grievance mechanisms (like OECD, NCPs and courts) when facing extreme power imbalances. The discussion critically examined the urgent need for legally binding mandatory human rights due diligence (mHRDD) legislation and robust state obligations to protect human rights defenders. By drawing comparative lessons from the two contexts, the panel fostered regional cooperation, advocating for system-wide solutions rooted in equity, participation, and the absolute requirement of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) for affected communities. The core message was the indispensable power of transnational solidarity in forcing corporate and state actors to strengthen protections and ensure access to effective remedy.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Grassroots resilience is key: Community-led movements, often sustained by women and Indigenous leaders, provide the most enduring form of accountability against corporate impunity in Asia.
- Urgent need for mHRDD: Existing national laws and voluntary international mechanisms are insufficient; mandatory human rights due diligence legislation is essential to shift accountability from reactive remedy to proactive prevention.
- Civic space under attack: State and corporate actors frequently use legal tactics (SLAPPs, criminalization) to repress legitimate protest, requiring stronger national and regional protective measures for Human Rights Defenders (HRDs).
- Strategic use of international levers: Effective campaigns combine local litigation with UN Special Procedures and International Financial Institution (IFI) grievance mechanisms to create necessary pressure.
- FPIC as a non-negotiable standard: True sustainability and successful transitions in the extractives and agribusiness sectors must be predicated on genuine Free, Prior, and Informed Consent from affected communities.

Red Light or Green Light: A gamified workshop on gender-sensitive child safety in business

SESSION PARTNERS

- ECPAT International (Down to Zero Alliance)
- Anti-Slavery Australia

SPEAKERS

- Satara Uthayakumaran, Australia's 2025 Youth Representative to the United Nations
- Lauren Dale, Policy Officer, Anti-Slavery Australia
- Cassandra Bourke, Project Lead - Seeking Freedom, Anti-Slavery Australia
- Francesco Cecon, Head of the Global Boys Initiative, ECPAT International

This interactive, gamified workshop challenged participants to step into the shoes of business decision-makers preparing to launch a fictional tech product. At each development stage - policy, safeguards, and remedy - participants were asked to "greenlight" or "halt" the project in response to new dilemmas and information about risks to children. Through facilitated discussion, the exercise revealed how easily child exploitation, gender bias, and unsafe design can become embedded in business systems when these considerations are left to the end of a process rather than the beginning.

Drawing from the joint expertise of ECPAT International and Anti-Slavery Australia, through discussion, debate, and simulation, participants learned to identify the blind spots that enable exploitation, explore pathways for remedy, and integrate child rights and gender sensitivity as central pillars of responsible innovation.

The workshop demonstrated that meaningful change comes not only from stronger due diligence frameworks but also from reshaping the culture of decision-making towards one that recognises children as rights holders, innovators, and key stakeholders in a just digital future, while proactively challenging rigid gender biases and stereotypes.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Children remain among the most overlooked stakeholders in business decisions and gender biases and stereotypes still affect how policies and products are designed.
- Human rights due diligence must integrate child-specific and gender-responsive risk analysis from design through to remedy.
- Digital systems can reproduce or amplify bias and exploitation without intentional safeguards.
- Cross-sector partnerships between business, civil society, and youth advocates are pivotal to sustainable change.
- Effective prevention depends on early design choices and inclusive consultation.
- Understand the importance of applying a rights-based and gender lens to decision-making that connects business practice with child protection outcomes.

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Children don't sit in boardrooms, but the decisions made there shape their lives. Responsible business means carrying that awareness into every choice.

Cassandra Bourke

Project Lead - Seeking Freedom, Anti-Slavery Australia





Colorless, Odorless": Workers' stories, highlighting women and migrants, facing invisible hazards in Asia's semiconductor and display industries

SESSION PARTNERS

- SHARPS (Supporters for Health And Rights of People in Semiconductor industry)
- KTNC Watch (Korean Transnational Corporations Watch)
- ANROEV (Asian Network for the Rights Of Occupational and Environmental Victims)
- AMRC (Asia Monitor Resource Centre)

SPEAKERS

- Jung Hyang suk, SHARPS
- Kwon Young Eun, SHARPS
- Lau Yin Yu Nina, AMRC



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Women workers endured risks and inequalities in their workplaces. Even after being diagnosed with rare diseases, I was denied recognition of occupational illness because I couldn't prove the causation. It was deeply frustrating and unjust to be told to prove something that workers themselves could never know.

Jung Hyang Suk
SHARPS

Since the death of a Samsung Electronics semiconductor worker from acute leukemia in 2007, a social movement in South Korea has actively called for corporate accountability for occupational diseases in the semiconductor industry. Nearly two decades later, occupational health issues in so-called "high-tech" industries – such as semiconductors and displays – continue to emerge not only in South Korea but also across Asia.

The documentary film "Colorless, Odorless" explores shared occupational health risks faced by workers – particularly migrant workers, women, and young vocational trainees – in the semiconductor and display sectors throughout Asia.

This session included a screening of the film, followed by commentary and a Q&A session with activists from SHARPS, who have long advocated for victims of occupational diseases and accidents in the electronics industry and also appear in the film.

The discussion addressed workers' right to know about chemical substances used in their workplaces, gender-based inequalities in the electronics industry, and the importance of human rights due diligence legislation. Through this, the session aimed to underscore the need to strengthen rights holders' participation and regional solidarity amid growing human rights challenges in global supply chains.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Occupational safety and health (OSH) issues – including diseases caused by chemical exposure – persist across "high-tech" industries and supply chains throughout Asia, even in economically advanced regions.
- The 'right to know' is vital for protecting workers' health and safety. Workers must be guaranteed access to information about the chemicals used and potential health risks in their workplaces.
- Workers' access to remedy remains limited; some are denied recognition of occupational diseases even after being diagnosed with rare diseases, due to the burden of proving causation.
- In the electronics industry, gender inequality continues: young women from rural or small-town backgrounds are often placed in repetitive production tasks, face wage and promotion discrimination, and are excluded from safety information shared only with male engineers.
- The voices of women and migrant workers, who directly face workplace risks, are essential. Listening to their lived experiences is key to safeguarding health and safety.
- Corporate human rights violations related to chemical exposure are transnational issues. As companies outsource production, they also outsource risk. Breaking this cycle requires mandatory human rights due diligence legislation and stronger regional solidarity.



Amplifying Leadership Through Solidarity: Migrant voices shaping responsible business practices

SESSION PARTNERS

- International Organization for Migration
- Amazon
- International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF)
- Global Migrant Workers Network

SPEAKERS

- Christian Chandran, Head of the Global Engagement Team, Amazon
- Bariyah, Program Officer for the Asia Region, International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF)
- Jason Quizon, Global Migrant Workers Network Leadership, Global Migrant Workers Network
- Peppi Tuulikki KIVINIEMI-SIDDIQ, Senior Regional Migration Protection and Assistance Specialist, IOM



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We believe that organising domestic workers and building leadership is at the core, where we are starting to open up a safe space for them to meet, to have an exchange about their rights, their situation.

Bariyah

Program Officer, International Domestic Workers Federation

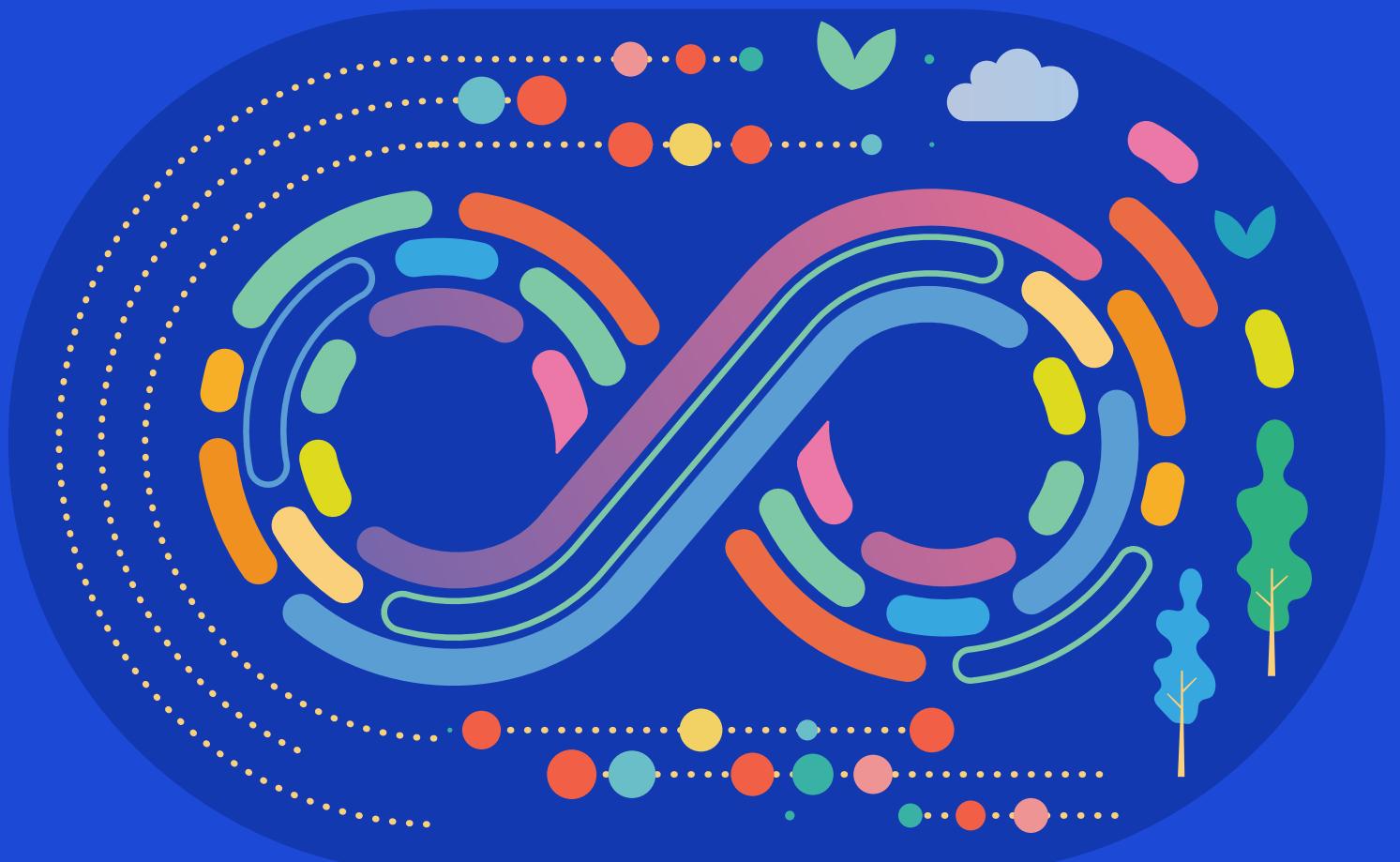
The session covered structural barriers that hinder migrant worker empowerment, such as exclusion from trade unions, threats of immigration enforcement, and language or cultural isolation. It also explored regional and industry-specific challenges, including issues faced by migrant workers in Qatar's construction sector, domestic workers in Malaysia and Thailand, and supply chain workers. Additionally, the session focused on designing inclusive participatory mechanisms and grievance systems for migrant workers, promoting ethical recruitment practices that end worker-paid agency fees, defining the roles of different stakeholders in protecting migrant workers, and ensuring internal migrants are included in human rights due diligence processes. The panel highlighted how community organising and civil society representation drives engagement and trust in HRDD systems and create pathways to meaningful remedy and systems change.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Shared Focus Areas:** Speakers highlighted migrant workers' invisibility and unequal protection. A concern underscored is that migrant workers are excluded from labor laws, formal grievance mechanisms, and decision-making processes, receiving less support than national workforces. Speakers also emphasized trust issues in advocacy, the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration, and the importance of ethical recruitment to end worker-paid fees.
- **Key Challenges Identified:** Speakers pointed out key challenges faced by migrant workers, including existing legal barriers, the lack of pathways to permanent residency, and the fear of employers' retaliation. Legal barriers are exemplified by Qatar banning formal migrant worker groups and Malaysia excluding domestic workers from basic labor laws. Lacking pathways to obtain residency and the enforcement gaps, compounded by the potential retaliation from employers, silence migrant workers and pose significant barriers for them to advocate for their own rights. Limited resources and capacities of existing agencies and duplication of grievance mechanisms further reduce the effectiveness of the support system.
- **Future Actions Needed:** The speakers appealed for efforts from governments to enforce labor reforms, ban worker-paid recruitment fees, and align policies via regional platforms. Speakers also called for businesses to scale localized grievance mechanisms and join industry collaborations. Civil society's role was emphasized, citing the needs to expand safe spaces for isolated workers. Overall, speakers agreed that all stakeholders should boost cross-sector work that centers migrant voices.

TRACK FOUR

Sustainability and Transitions





The Cost of Asia's Digital Transformation: Pathways for stronger accountability and rights-based approaches

SESSION PARTNERS

- Fair Finance Asia (FFA)
- Oxfam in Asia
- Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
- Digital Rights Nepal (DRN)
- Digital Rights Foundation (DRF)

SPEAKERS

- Prarthana Rao, FORUM-ASIA (moderator)
- Santosh Sigdel, Digital Rights Nepal
- Seerat Khan, Digital Rights Foundation
- Dulanjaya Mahagamage, Hashtag Generation
- Lorenzo Urbinati, Oxfam in Asia
- Kyle Cruz, Fair Finance Asia



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Pakistan's digital transformation is unfolding at the cost of rights and safety, where gendered disinformation, censorship, and unchecked surveillance silence the vulnerable. Without accountability and safeguards, technology risks entrenching inequality instead of enabling empowerment.

Seerat Khan

Digital Rights Foundation

This session highlighted the rapid acceleration of Asia's digital transformation, evidenced by the growing popularity of digital and social media platforms, surge in state engagement with technology platforms, and increased investments into digital public infrastructure (i.e. national digital IDs) being advanced by Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) like Asian Development Bank and World Bank.

Panelists from national and regional civil society organizations (CSOs) iterated that platforms and digital infrastructure investments have brought opportunities, but also significant human and environmental risks and impacts, especially for local communities, Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), and marginalized communities.

The panel discussion and audience Q&A explored pathways for different actors – governments, platforms, MDBs/financiers, communities, and civil society – to advance rights-based approaches, strengthen accountability, and expand civic space, amidst Asia's digital transformation.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Urgent reforms are needed to counter gendered disinformation, censorship, surveillance, and data gaps in South Asia, by pushing for platform accountability, inclusive digital governance, and regional solidarity to safeguard the rights and civic space of marginalized communities in the region.
- Digital transformation must be firmly rooted in human rights principles and standards to ensure it benefits everyone equitably. As societies increasingly rely on digital technologies, it is essential to address structural inequalities that can deepen existing social, gender, and economic divides. Access to digital tools and services must be inclusive, ensuring marginalized communities are not left behind. Equity in digital transformation also requires recognizing and respecting individual autonomy, particularly through informed consent in data collection and usage.
- CSOs and communities play a key role in advancing rights-based approaches in Asia's digital transformation by critically assessing the policies, practices, and impacts of MDBs and financial institutions involved in Asia's digital transformation and calling on them to strengthen human and environmental rights due diligence (HERDD) in their digital investments. They should also leverage their lending and investment power to require clients, borrowers, and investees involved in digital value chains to strengthen rights-based approaches and HERDD. Financial institutions must also take accountability for implementing and monitoring their due diligence initiatives instead of relying on secondary reports.



Workforce, Worker-Voice Data and Collaborative Safety Measures: Enhancing Worker Resilience through Systemic Change

SESSION PARTNERS

- Thomson Reuters Foundation
- Life and Building Safety (LABS) Initiative

SPEAKERS

- Archana Kotecha, CEO and Founder, The Remedy Project (moderator)
- Albert Han | Video Producer, Context, Thomson Reuters Foundation
- Hang Phan | Country Manager, Life and Building Safety (LABS) Initiative Vietnam
- Mark Taylor | Senior Director, Strategy & Global Partnerships, Issara Institute
- Anithra Varia | Labour Rights Researcher, Business and Human Rights Resource Centre
- Ammar Suratwala | Associate Portfolio Manager, Quantum Advisors India



The event spotlighted the critical challenges facing workers in the global garment and fashion industries, with a focus on Bangladesh and Southeast Asia.

It began with TRF documentary “Zara’s Owner Promised to be Sustainable. Its Tactics Say Otherwise,” which exposed the stark realities and labor violations within the industry. This set the stage for an insightful panel discussion that delved into systemic issues impacting workers’ rights and the strategic use of workforce and safety data to cultivate a responsible business environment.

The panel underscored the vital role of Worker-Voice data in shaping decision-making processes and demonstrated how workforce data could drive investment behavior and policy changes. Through real-world case studies and innovative tools, the panel illustrated effective strategies for enhancing workplace safety and safeguarding workers’ rights, striving to build an inclusive and equitable industry.

By embedding workforce data into financial markets and supply chains, the event aimed to transform investment and policy landscapes, advocating for systemic reforms to bolster supply chain resilience and uphold human rights. Key objectives included exposing labor violations, leveraging workforce data, and influencing policy.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Ecosystem Perspective:** Advancing the business and human rights agenda requires breaking down traditional divides between business, people, and planet risks. By adopting an ecosystem perspective, we can uncover their interconnectedness and drive systemic change.
- **Role of Media:** The session began with the TRF documentary highlighting the impact of fast fashion on workers and the environment. This underscores the essential role of journalists and media in capturing real-life stories, raising awareness, and establishing accountability.
- **Community-Driven Approach:** Emphasizing the power of a community-driven approach, the discussions highlighted the importance of amplifying workers’ voices to capture labor violations. Collaborations with NGOs and trade unions are vital for businesses to understand workers’ realities and ensure accountability.
- **Balanced Use of Technology:** While technology can be a valuable tool, it should not replace collective efforts. It must be used thoughtfully, with informed consent, and in conjunction with human networks to accurately reflect and respond to workers’ needs.
- **Investor Engagement:** Encouraging transparency and voluntary disclosure, especially among SMEs, is crucial. Addressing gaps in global standards around materiality can boost investor confidence and foster a resilient business environment.



Bridging the Connection between Businesses and Local Communities: Translating sustainability into actions in Southeast Asia

SESSION PARTNERS

- Give to Nature
- Accountability Counsel
- UN Global Compact Network Thailand

SPEAKERS

- Douangchan Lopaying, Oxfam Lao
- Wang Diangang, Pioneer Wood (Lao) Import-Export Sole Co., Ltd.
- Akihiro Ueda, Japan Center for Engagement and Remedy (JaCER)
- Sutharee Wannasiri, Accountability Counsel
- Dollada Kasarn, UN Global Compact Network Thailand



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Communities also played a bridging role between the business and local government, helping to build trust and cooperation that ultimately benefited local people.

Wang Diangang
Pioneer Wood (Lao) Import-Export
Sole Co., Ltd.

The session was held with the aim to provide a constructive platform for stakeholders to exchange expertise and insights in mitigating risks and overcoming implementation barriers related to environmental and human rights safeguards and to highlight good business practices that demonstrate how meaningful stakeholder engagement and effective Grievance Redress and Accountability Mechanisms (GRAMs) can strengthen human rights due diligence and sustainability practices.

Collectively, the panelists agreed that businesses can create a positive impact for communities, but businesses must work to build trust and provide transparency for all stakeholders including local communities. Moreover, businesses should set up grievance mechanisms which can reduce risks, provide early warnings, and offer problem-solving solutions while engaging stakeholders. Another solution discussed was the neutral third party mechanism whereby an independent committee or mediator is involved in cases where direct dialogue becomes difficult, as the independent committee can make assessment in regards to human rights standards.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Trust is the most critical element, repeatedly emphasized by all sectors. Businesses must engage communities directly, respectfully, and inclusively. It is important to find mutual benefits. Businesses should understand local needs and contexts, while communities should appreciate the value of cooperation.
- The key challenges to bridging businesses and communities are a lack of trust, information and power imbalances, structural and procedural barriers and emotional and logistical hurdles.
- Currently, the tools and strategies for improvement include effective Grievance Mechanisms, the participation of neutral third parties, proactive business practices, and a focus on mutual benefits.

From Marginalized to Recognized: Responsible sourcing pathways and a just transition for workers in material production and recycling supply chains

SESSION PARTNERS

- BBC Media Action
- HomeNet International
- The Circulate Initiative
- The International Alliance of Waste Pickers

SPEAKERS

- Sarbani Kattel, Programme Coordinator, HomeNet International
- Sushila Sable, Vice President of the International Alliance of Waste Pickers
- Santwana Sneha, Impact Lead, The Circulate Initiative
- Narisa Siamchai, Global Supplier Monitoring Manager, HP Inc.
- Swaroop K V R, Head - Waste Management, Sustainability & EPR, Srichakra Polyplast
- Tej Prakash Yadav, Head of Project, PRIDE, BBC Media Action
- Varinder Kaur Gambhir, Country Director, BBC Media Action



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Waste pickers are already fulfilling EPR mandates, it's just that we often aren't recognized or paid for such services

Sushila

International Alliance of Waste Pickers

Informal workers power global material production and recycling, yet remain undervalued and unprotected. The session examined why brands rely on homeworkers and waste pickers, the rights risks they face, and how to finance a just transition through accountable due diligence and remedy pathways.

Speakers discussed how brands benefit from low-cost, flexible labor while distancing themselves from responsibility. Homeworkers – mostly women – produce for global markets without contracts, social protection or safe working conditions. Waste pickers sustain recycling systems and already fulfil key parts of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), yet remain unrecognised, underpaid and stigmatised.

Examples such as Thailand's Homeworkers Protection Act and India's NAMASTE scheme showed how legal recognition and brand engagement can shift power, while South Africa's inclusive EPR model demonstrated progress toward formal integration. BBC Media Action's case study from Bengaluru illustrated how storytelling by waste pickers reframed them from “invisible labor” to essential recyclers, sparking public support and cleaner waste streams.

The session concluded that just transition isn't a principle – it's a price tag. Brands and governments must finance and formalise inclusion rather than outsource responsibility. Worker voice is not optional; it drives fairer systems.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- An estimated 40 million waste pickers and 49 million homeworkers globally face common challenges – low wages, lack of recognition, unsafe work, and no social protection. Brands depend on their skill and flexibility while avoiding formal responsibilities, leaving millions contributing real value without fair pay.
- Despite these challenges, progress is emerging. India's NAMASTE (National Action for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem) scheme supports formalization and benefits, while Thailand's Homeworkers Protection Act 2010 provides health and pension coverage. Informal workers are also central to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) systems: South Africa leads by formally integrating waste pickers and ensuring financial benefits.
- Governments and companies must back just transitions with financing – responsibility talk alone won't suffice. Evidence from Thailand, Pakistan, and India shows that when homeworkers and waste pickers are recognized, directly contracted, and organized, power shifts and outcomes improve. Worker voice drives fair systems.
- Businesses cannot tackle human rights issues in supply chains alone; multistakeholder action is essential, especially when distance or multiple buyers obscure accountability.
- Media and communications also play a catalytic role – as shown in Bengaluru, where storytelling by informal workers reshaped public attitudes, influenced policymakers, and spurred systemic change.



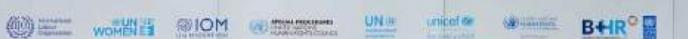
Systemic Risks, Systemic Solutions: From inequality to regenerative business models

SESSION PARTNERS

- Oxfam in Asia
- Fair Finance Asia
- The Taskforce on Inequality and Social-related Financial Disclosures (TISFD)
- Sal Forest Co. Ltd
- The Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE)

SPEAKERS

- Windy Massabni, Oxfam Novib
- Namit Agarwal, Taskforce on Inequality and Social-related Financial Disclosures (TISFD) and World Benchmarking Alliance
- Rapatsa Trirath, Oxfam in Asia
- Monika Nowaczyk, Cambodia Knits
- Sarinee Achavanuntakul, SalForest



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The first step of coming about looking at transformation is having enough information out there, having enough transparency so that as stakeholders we can, first of all, see: What is the issue? Where is the baseline? And that is where disclosures are absolutely important.

Namit Agarwal

Taskforce on Inequality and Social-related Financial Disclosures (TISFD)

The session Systemic Risks, Systemic Solutions: From Inequality to Regenerative Business Models explored the pressing need to move beyond sustainability towards a regenerative and distributive economic model.

The core concept introduced by Windy Massabni, the moderator, was Doughnut Economy, an example of the alternative economic model which advocates for a business model that meets social needs without crossing ecological limits.

Namit Agarwal stressed about the role of financial disclosures and the imperative to make social reporting consistent worldwide and applicable across industries. To drive real systemic change, disclosures should go beyond data to trigger transparency and measurable progress.

Rapatsa Trirath recognized the crucial roles of corporations in affecting changes in their supply chains, and the need for them to step up with practices like profit sharing, care support program and worker participation.

Monika Nowaczyk reminded that, however small, SMEs' business model can change the planet and the society for the better, showing how her enterprise creates dignified work while reducing impacts on the environment.

Sarinee Achavanuntakul offered research as a tool to build evidence base, to ultimately create transparency and push companies and financial institutions toward more sustainable practices.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Businesses should shift from reducing harm to actively restoring equity, resilience, and ecological balance.
- Relying on sustainability and inclusion is insufficient. There must be proactive efforts to tackle the root causes of social and environmental issues, not just incremental or compliance-driven approaches.
- Power must be distributed more fairly across workers, suppliers, and communities to push business models towards profit-sharing and stronger workplace standards.
- Achieving real accountability requires integrating regenerative and inclusive practices into governance, incentives, ownership, and performance metrics.
- Collective solutions such as mindsets shifting, experiential training, and collaboration between communities, entrepreneurs, and financiers are some enablers for system-wide transformation.



Closing Plenary

SPEAKERS

- Ma Anima Ba, Indigenous Person
- Jumpei Nagaoka, Nishimura & Asahi
- Teddy Wakum, Legal Aid Papua Merauke
- Khaola Batool, Ministry of Human Rights, Government of Pakistan
- Yasangi Muditha Randeni, Aitken Spence Corporate Services Pvt. Ltd
- Pichamon Yeophantong, UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights
- Georgie Lloyd, UNEP
- Amy Baum, UN Women
- Aparna Basnyat, UNDP

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Governments are not only interested in introducing laws and policies... but are also very keen to engage in prior consultations.

Khaola Batool

Ministry of Human Rights, Government of Pakistan

The Forum's final session captured the collective momentum that had built throughout the week – a shared recognition that advancing business and human rights requires genuine collaboration grounded in rights holder leadership.

The Indigenous Peoples' Caucus called for stronger accountability and binding protections, emphasizing that voluntary measures alone remain insufficient. Government representatives reflected on recent policy reforms and the importance of meaningful consultation to ensure effective implementation, while business leaders spoke of the need to continually learn, strengthen due diligence and grievance systems, and ensure that environmental transitions do not replicate existing inequities.

Practitioners warned that the intersecting crises of climate change, inequality, and conflict demand urgent and coordinated action. Regulatory tools such as due diligence laws and audits must reinforce – not replace – the fundamental responsibilities of States and businesses.

Youth, migrant, and community voices underscored the importance of solidarity, inclusion, and anticipatory governance, urging stronger engagement from financial and private-sector actors. The session closed with a collective recommitment to evidence-based policymaking, capacity building, and dialogue that transforms principles into practice, carrying forward the Forum's call to anchor progress through shared responsibility.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Rights holder leadership and FPIC must be non-negotiable.
- Voluntary measures are not enough; align policy with binding accountability.
- Implementation gaps persist despite available tools and frameworks.
- Companies should strengthen due diligence, grievance, and supplier collaboration.
- Finance and investors must be at the table for just transitions.
- Youth, migrants, and communities demand solidarity and action, not rhetoric.

2025 UNRBHR Programme

Below is the full agenda of the 2025 UNRBHR Forum. Summaries have been included for sessions where partners provided inputs. Sessions without submitted summaries appear in the agenda only.

16 SEPTEMBER

09:00–10:00 | From Commitments to Impact: Strengthening Leadership to Advance Elimination of Forced Labour | International Labour Organization; The Remedy Project; Environmental Resources Management

09:00–10:00 | The Asia Way: Business Perspectives on Evolving Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence in East Asia and ASEAN | ERIA; amfori

09:00–10:00 | Bridging the GAP between Reality and HRDD Practices: How to include right holders' voices through dialogue | WE Program; Tchibo Gmbh

09:00–10:00 | Intro Session | NextGen BHR: Youth Innovation Hackathon | UNDP; Sasin School of Management; Business School Network of Thailand; UN PRME ASEAN Chapter; Global Business School Network; HEC Paris; BIAS Inc.

09:00–10:15 | Driving Responsible Business in ASEAN: Expectations for Greater Respect of Rights and Great Prosperity across Value Chains | UNDP; IDE-JETRO; UN Global Compact Network Japan

10:30–11:00 | Advancing Human Rights Through Open Source and Open Data: Collaborative Environmental Innovation in Action | UNICEF EAPRO; AirGradient Ltd.

10:30–11:30 | Are we listening? The unheard perspectives along the supply chain | Embode; Issara Institute; Verité

10:30–11:30 | Reimagining CSDDD Compliance Frameworks: Global South Perspectives on Challenges and Opportunities | Southern Voices for Global Development

10:30–12:00 | Turning Law into Justice: Leveraging Due Diligence for Worker Remedy | Worker Rights Consortium

10:30–12:00 | Sustaining Momentum between Design and Implementation of BHR Policies: Experience Sharing and Peer Exchange | UNDP

11:30–12:00 | Breaking Barriers: Gender Equality in Business for Nature | Women4Biodiversity

12:45–13:45 | Redesigning Recruitment Markets: Creating an ethical recruitment marketplace to embed human rights practices into global supply chains | Woolworths Group; The Consumer Goods Forum

12:45–13:45 | Are South Korea and Thailand Ready to Take the Lead on Mandatory Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence in Asia? | Manushya; KTNC Watch; FORUM-ASIA

12:45–13:45 | BHR Regional Leadership in ASEAN: Anchoring migrant workers' rights protection | ASEAN-Australia Counter Trafficking; AICHR-Thailand

12:45–13:45 | Investor-facing HREDD in Indonesia's Nickel Mining Industry: What do investors want to know about company engagement with affected stakeholders? | Rights CoLab; ELSAM; Institut Mosintuwu; Perempuan Mahardhika; Satya Bumi; WALHI Sulawesi Tengah

14:00–15:30 | From Commitment to Practice: Reviewing National Action Plans on BHR in Southeast Asia | UN Working Group on BHR; UN OHCHR

14:00–15:00 | The Cost of Asia's Digital Transformation and Pathways for Stronger Accountability and Rights-Based Approaches | Fair Finance Asia; FORUM-ASIA; Oxfam in Asia; Digital Rights Nepal; Digital Rights Foundation

14:00–15:30 | Navigating Stakeholder Engagement in Asia's Agribusiness | UNDP; Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil; Global Platform for Sustainable Natural Rubber

14:00–15:30 | Leading by Example: Effective Grievance Mechanisms Centering Rights Holders in Asia | Fair Labor Association; Article One

15:15–15:45 | Grounding Human Rights in Community Realities: NGO-Led Inclusion and Protection of Rights Holders Amid Regional Crises | Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association NSW; Medicare Mental Health Centre

15:15–15:45 | Defending Rights and Challenging Corporate Harm: Stories from the Frontline | FORUM-ASIA; KTNC Watch; Asia-Pacific Gathering on Human Rights and Extractives; Alyansa Tigil Mina

15:45–17:00 | Deepening Due Diligence: Navigating human rights risks in extended supply chains | Pillar Two; Global Business Initiative on Human Rights

16:00–17:00 | Enhancing the Human Rights Mindset: Interactive Dialogue with Businesses | Indo-German Chamber of Commerce; GIZ Bangladesh; Agency for Business and Economic Development

16:00–17:00 | Human Rights Due Diligence and Accountability for Indigenous Communities in Asia | Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact

16:00–17:00 | From Deck to Dialogue: Enhancing Regional Leadership to Facilitate Migrant Fishers-Led Advocacy for Rights-Based Protection in ASEAN under the Global Seafood Supply Chain | Greenpeace Southeast Asia; Environmental Justice Foundation

16:00–17:00 | Who Programs Whom? Advancing Business & Human Rights in Crisis-Affected and Marginalized Communities | International Youth Training Centre; Access Now; Article19 Asia

17 SEPTEMBER

09:00–10:00 | Anchoring Progress and Strengthening Regional Leadership on Human Rights through Crisis — Formal Opening Ceremony | –

10:30–11:45 | Regional Leadership in Action: NAPs as Pathways to Stronger Standards | UN Development Programme

10:30–11:45 | Private Sector Leadership in Crisis: Advancing Gender-Responsive Humanitarian Action | UN Women; UN OCHA; UN Global Compact

10:30–11:45 | Beyond Extraction, Towards Self-Determination: Indigenous Pathways to a Just Energy Transition | Business & Human Rights Resource Centre; Right Energy Partnership with Indigenous Peoples; Indigenous Peoples' Rights International; Zero Tolerance

2025 UNRBHR Programme (continued)

Initiative; Asia Indigenous Peoples Network on Extractive Industries and Energy; Lawyers' Association for Human Rights of Nepalese Indigenous Peoples; Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact; Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Defenders Network; Association of Defenders of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago; Fair Finance Asia; Indigenous Peoples' Rights International

10:30–11:45 | From Order to Outcome: Unpacking Responsible Purchasing Practices' Impact on Workers in Asia | ETI

12:00–12:30 | From Minimum to Living Wages: Three implementation levers for real change | Global Rights Compliance

12:00–12:30 | New Dawn for Sustainable Environment and Development in ASEAN? | AICHR Malaysia; AICHR Thailand; Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development

12:00–12:30 | From Exclusion to Inclusion: Busting Fashion Just Transition Myth | Business & Human Rights Resource Centre

13:15–14:30 | From Commitment to Action: Emerging Fair and Ethical Recruitment Frameworks in Asia | International Organization for Migration; International Labour Organization

13:15–14:30 | Beyond the Seal: Strengthening Accountability in Certification and Audit Schemes | UN Human Rights; Asia Indigenous Peoples Network on Extractive Industries and Energy; Right Energy Partnership with Indigenous Peoples; Forest Peoples Programme; Business & Human Rights Resource Centre; Heinrich Böll Stiftung Southeast Asia

13:15–14:30 | Deep Dive in Human Rights at Sea: Fostering Cross-Regional Collaboration in the East & Southeast Asian Fishery Sector | BEBESEA; Greenpeace; Human Rights Now; Indonesia Ocean Justice Initiative

13:15–13:45 | Due Diligence in Southeast Asian Supply Chains: Perspectives on BHR as a Transboundary Issue | Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines

14:00–14:30 | From Critique to Constructive Use: The Role of Social Audits in BHR | Sedex; TATWIN Latex

14:45–15:45 | Resilient Supply Chains and Equitable Growth in a Changing World of Work: Advancing Decent Work through Regional Cooperation in Asia | International Labour Organization

14:45–15:45 | Fixing it or faking it? How grievance mechanisms can deliver real remedies | UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights

14:45–15:45 | Scaling Worker Protection: How Business Can Advance Parametric Insurance for Climate Resilience | People's Courage International

14:45–15:45 | From Marginalized to Recognized: Responsible Sourcing Pathways and a Just Transition for Workers in Material Production and Recycling Supply Chains | BBC Media Action; HomeNet International; The Circulate Initiative; The International Alliance of Waste Pickers

16:15–17:30 | Promoting Family-Friendly Policies to Protect Children and Their Families in the Context of Labour Migration | UNICEF; International Organization for Migration; OHCHR; UN Working

Group on Business and Human Rights

16:15–17:30 | Advancing the Human Right to a Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment through Corporate Responsibility | UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre

16:15–17:30 | ASEAN's Leap to HRDD by Direct Worker Voice | Bluenumber; MillionMakers; DXN Global

16:15–17:30 | Beyond Crisis: Innovating Community-Led Approaches for Remedy and Corporate Accountability | Oxfam in Asia; APSWDP India; Sal Forest

18 SEPTEMBER

09:00–10:15 | Fair Trade, Fair Work: Rethinking human rights and labour migration in the context of global value chains | UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights

09:00–10:15 | Turning Compliance into Competitive Advantage: Why Business and Human Rights is Important for SMEs | International Labour Organization

09:00–10:15 | Advancing Human Rights Due Diligence in Asia's Digital Transformation: Practical Approaches, Peer Exchange & Strategic Preparedness | UN Human Rights B-Tech; UN Development Programme

09:00–10:15 | From Guidance to Solutions: Practical solutions to include local remedies in garment supply chains | STITCH Partnership; The Inno

10:30–11:00 | Send Lawyers, Media and Allies: Transnational Strategic Litigation's role in safeguarding human rights, upholding human dignity and providing access to justice | LawAid International

10:30–11:00 | From Root Causes to Collective Action: Addressing GBVH in garment supply chains | RISE

10:30–11:00 | From Regulatory Twilight Zone to Algorithmic Equality: Advancing International Law, Corporate Responsibility and Women's Rights in the Digital and AI Era | International Commission of Jurists; Danish Institute for Human Rights; Rights & Innovation

11:30–12:30 | Making the Business Case for Upholding Information Integrity: Building a Big Tent | UN Human Rights; Conscious Advertising Network

11:30–12:30 | Global Footprints, Shared Responsibilities and the Social Contract: An Asia–Africa Dialogue | UN Development Programme

11:30–12:30 | Centering Worker Voices in Supply Chain Due Diligence and Remedy in Southeast Asia | Avina Foundation; Business & Human Rights Resource Centre; Forum Silaturahmi Pelaut Indonesia; The New Factory; Perkumpulan Sembada Bersama Indonesia

11:30–12:30 | Indigenous Navigator: Environmental and Human Rights Due Diligence with a focus on Indigenous Peoples | Tebtebba; Danish Institute for Human Rights; Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact

13:15–14:15 | Business Innovation for Inclusion and Transformation | UN Women

2025 UNRBHR Programme (continued)

13:15–14:15 | Dilemmas in High-Risk Contexts: Practicing Heightened Human Rights Due Diligence in Times of Crisis | BSR

13:15–14:30 | “Colorless, Odorless”: Workers’ Stories of Invisible Hazards in Asia’s Semiconductor and Display Industries | SHRPSI; KTNC Watch; ANROEV; Asia Monitor Resource Centre

13:15–14:15 | Climate Change and Sustainable Development: From Paper to Practice in ASEAN | Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development; AICHR Malaysia; AICHR Thailand

13:15–14:15 | A Global Severance Guarantee Fund is the Solution to the Fashion Industry ‘Cut & Run’ Business Model | Clean Clothes Campaign

14:30–15:00 | Rights and Remedies as Non-Negotiables: From Energy and Extractive Project Sites to Development Bank Headquarters – Human Rights Defenders Speak Out | International Rivers; Coalition for Human Rights in Development; FORUM-ASIA; Asia Pacific Network of Environmental Defenders; Asia Indigenous Peoples Network on Extractive Industries and Energy; Right Energy Partnership; International Accountability Project; NGO Forum on ADB; Accountability Counsel; Mekong Watch; Alternative Law Group

14:30–15:00 | A Rights-Holder Led Approach to Corporate Accountability: Lessons from grassroots movements in India and Indonesia | Coalition for Human Rights in Development; Posco-Jindal Pratirodh Sangram Samiti; Forum Petani Plasma Buol

14:30–15:00 | Supply Chain and Multinational Corporation Accountability: Issues, Deficiencies and What’s Needed (Trade Union Perspective) | Solidarity Center Thailand

14:30–15:00 | Understanding the Changing Landscape of HRDD and Its Impact on Supply Chains in Asia | Change Alliance

15:15–17:15 | Focus on Employers’ Experience and Lessons on Responsible Exit in the Asia-Pacific Region | International Organisation of Employers

15:30–16:00 | Impact and Innovation: Reshaping Human Rights Due Diligence at Scale | Supply Unchained

15:30–16:00 | Mind the Gap: A Data Dive into Asian Business Performance | World Benchmarking Alliance

15:30–16:00 | How Can Engagement with Rights Holders Help Close Accountability Gaps? | Japan Center for Engagement & Remedy on BHR; Global Compact Network Japan

15:30–16:00 | Resilience We Should All Practice in Difficult Times: Lessons from Garment Workers in Bangladesh and Myanmar | Clean Clothes Campaign

15:30–16:45 | Workforce, Worker-Voice Data and Collaborative Safety Measures: Enhancing Worker Resilience Through Systemic Change | Thomson Reuters Foundation; LABS Initiative

16:15–17:15 | Equitable Sourcing: Financial and Non-Financial Incentives | Fairwear; BSR

16:15–17:15 | Bridging the Policy Gap: China’s Consolidating ESG Framework and Corporate Climate Accountability | SynTao

16:15–17:15 | What Does ‘Good’ Look Like? Mainstreaming HRDD with Transformative Business Practices | Australian Human Rights Institute (UNSW); Global Compact Network Australia

16:15–17:15 | Red Light or Green Light: A Gamified Workshop on Gender-Sensitive Child Safety in Business | ECPAT International (Down to Zero Alliance); Anti-Slavery Australia

19 SEPTEMBER

09:00–10:00 | Food Systems Impacts on Children’s Rights | UNICEF

09:00–10:00 | Amplifying Leadership Through Solidarity: Migrant Voices Shaping Responsible Business Practices | International Organization for Migration

09:00–10:00 | Keeping Human Rights Front and Center in the Sustainable Debt Market | LRQA; Impact Investment Exchange (IIX)

09:00–10:00 | Centering Frontline Communities in the “Green Transition” and Responses to Environmental Harms | Asia Indigenous Peoples Network on Extractive Industries and Energy; Extraterritorial Obligation Watch Coalition; Community Resources Centre Foundation; EarthRights International; The Mekong Butterfly; International Rivers; Accountability Counsel; Fair Finance Thailand; UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights; International Accountability Project; Verrha Research; Alternative Law Collective; Community Empowerment and Social Justice Network; Darya-e-Swat Bachao Tehreek

10:30–11:30 | Bridge to Action: Making Grievance Mechanisms Work on the Shopfloor | Good Business Lab

10:30–12:00 | Systemic Risks, Systemic Solutions: From Inequality to Regenerative Business Models | Oxfam in Asia; Fair Finance Asia; Taskforce on Inequality and Social-related Financial Disclosures; Sal Forest Co. Ltd; Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs

10:30–11:30 | Bridging the Connection between Businesses and Local Communities: Translating Sustainability into Actions in Southeast Asia | Give2Nature; Accountability Counsel; UN Global Compact Thailand

12:30–13:30 | Partnerships for Progress: Upholding Labour Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Asia-Pacific | International Labour Organization; UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights; UN ESCAP

13:45–14:45 | Fields to Fairness: Gender and Migrant Labour Rights in Climate-Vulnerable Agrifood Systems | Global Human Rights Centre; The Centre for Child Rights and Business; International Organization for Migration

13:45–14:45 | Safeguarding Human Rights in the Energy Transition | Foundation for International Human Rights Reporting Standards; Environmental Resources Management; LRQA

13:45–14:45 | Business and Human Rights in the Global South: Challenges and Pathways for Collaboration | Global Compact Network Nepal

15:00–16:00 | Closing Plenary | UNRBHR Forum Co-organizers and partners

2025 UNRBHR Forum Partners

Co-organizers

- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
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- United Nations Programme for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
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- Asia Indigenous Peoples Network on Extractive Industries and Energy (AIPNEE)
- Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)
- Asia Pacific Network of Environmental Defenders
- Australian Human Rights Institute, UNSW Sydney
- Avina Foundation
- BBC Media Action
- BEBESEA (Better Engagement Between East and Southeast Asia)
- BIAS Inc.
- Bluenumber
- BSR (Business for Social Responsibility)
- Business & Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC)
- Business School Network of Thailand (BSNT)
- Change Alliance
- Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC)
- CNV
- Coalition for Human Rights in Development
- Community Empowerment and Social Justice Network (CEMSOJ)
- Community Resources Centre Foundation (CRC)
- Conscious Advertising Network (CAN)
- Crime Control & Social Development Organization, India
- Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR)
- Darya-e-Swat Bachao Tehreek (Protect River Swat Movement)
- Digital Rights Foundation (DRF)
- Digital Rights Nepal (DRN)
- DXN Global
- EarthRights International
- ECPAT International (Down to Zero
- Alliance)
- ELSAM
- Embode
- ERIA
- ERM (Environmental Resources Management)
- ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific)
- ETI (Ethical Trading Initiative)
- Extraterritorial Obligation Watch Coalition (ETO Watch)
- Fair Finance Asia (FFA)
- Fair Finance Thailand
- Fair Labor Association (FLA)
- Fair Wear
- Forest Peoples Programme (FPP)
- Forum Petani Plasma Buol
- Forum Silaturahmi Pelaut Indonesia (FOSPI)
- FORUM-ASIA (Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development)
- Foundation for International Human Rights Reporting Standards (FIHRRST)
- Give to Nature
- GIZ Bangladesh
- Global Business Initiative (GBI)
- Global Business School Network (GBSN)
- Global Compact Network Australia

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- Global Compact Network Japan
- Global Human Rights Centre
- Global Rights Compliance
- Good Business Lab
- Greenpeace
- Greenpeace Southeast Asia
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- HomeNet International
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- Human Rights Now
- ICJ (International Commission of Jurists)
- IDE-JETRO
- Impact Investment Exchange (IIX)
- Indigenous Peoples Human Rights Defenders (IPHRD) Network
- Indigenous Peoples' Rights International (IPRI)
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- International Youth Training Centre (IYTC)
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- IOM (International Organization for Migration)
- Issara Institute
- KTNC Watch (Korean Transnational Corporations Watch)
- LABS Initiative
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- Lawyers' Association for Human Rights of Nepalese Indigenous Peoples (LAHURNIP)
- Leigh Day
- LRQA
- M. Ravi Law
- Manushya Foundation
- Map Foundation
- Medicare Mental Health Centre (MMHC)
- Mekong Watch
- MillionMakers
- NGO Forum on ADB
- OCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs)
- OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights)
- Oxfam in Asia
- People's Courage International
- Perempuan Mahardhika
- Perkumpulan Sembada Bersama Indonesia
- Pillar Two
- Posco-Jindal Pratirodh Sangram Samiti (Anti-POSCO and Anti-Jindal People's Movement)
- PPMAN (The Association of Defenders of Indigenous Peoples of the Archipelago)
- Raks Thai Foundation
- Right Energy Partnership with Indigenous Peoples (REP/IPs)
- Rights CoLab
- RSPO (Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil)
- Sal Forest
- Sasin School of Management
- Satya Bumi
- Sedex
- SHARPS (Supporters for Health and Rights of People in Semiconductor Industry)
- Solidarity Center Thailand
- Southern Voices for Global Development
- Special Rapporteur on the Right to Development
- STITCH Partnership
- Supply Unchained
- Tchibo
- Tebtebba
- The Centre for Child Rights and Business
- The Circulate Initiative
- The Consumer Goods Forum
- The Eco-Factory Foundation, India
- The Inno
- The International Alliance of Waste Pickers
- The Mekong Butterfly
- The Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association NSW (MDAA)
- The New Factory (Textile Recycling Cooperative)
- The Remedy Project (TRP)
- The Taskforce on Inequality and Social-related Financial Disclosures (TISFD)
- Thomson Reuters Foundation
- UN Global Compact (UNGC)
- UN Global Compact Thailand
- UN Human Rights B-Tech
- UN PRME ASEAN Chapter
- UN Women
- UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)
- UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme)
- UNICEF
- UNWG (UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights)
- Verité
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- WALHI Sulawesi Tengah
- Walk Free
- WE Program
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- Woolworths Group
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- World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA)
- Zero Tolerance Initiative

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