

Business and Human Rights: What? Why? Issues?

Respect for human rights as the
cornerstone of SDG contribution

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23 October 2018

SDG-FORUM
B E L G I U M



DANISH INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

- National Human Rights Institution
- Established by Parliament in 1987
- 120+ staff
- International mandate
- Work in +30 countries
- Works with governments, civil society and businesses
- Human Rights and Business since 1999



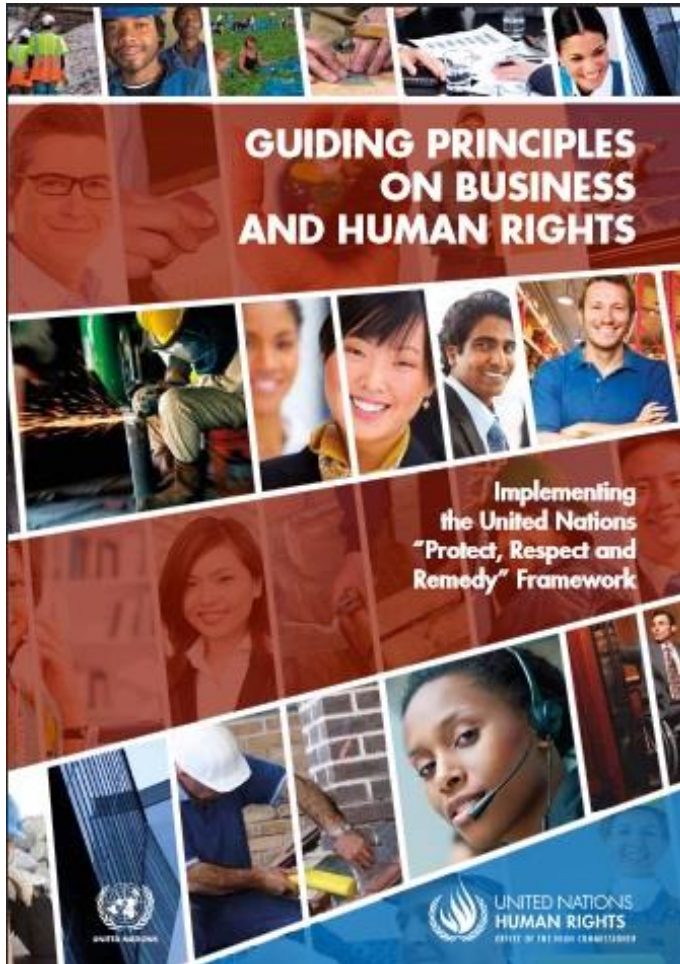
OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

- ❖ What is business and human rights?
- ❖ Why is it relevant?
- ❖ How does it relate to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

WHAT IS BUSINESS
AND HUMAN
RIGHTS?

UNITED NATIONS
GUIDING PRINCIPLES
ON BUSINESS
& HUMAN RIGHTS

UNGP PILLAR II: FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE



UNGP 11: Business enterprises should respect human rights

Companies should:

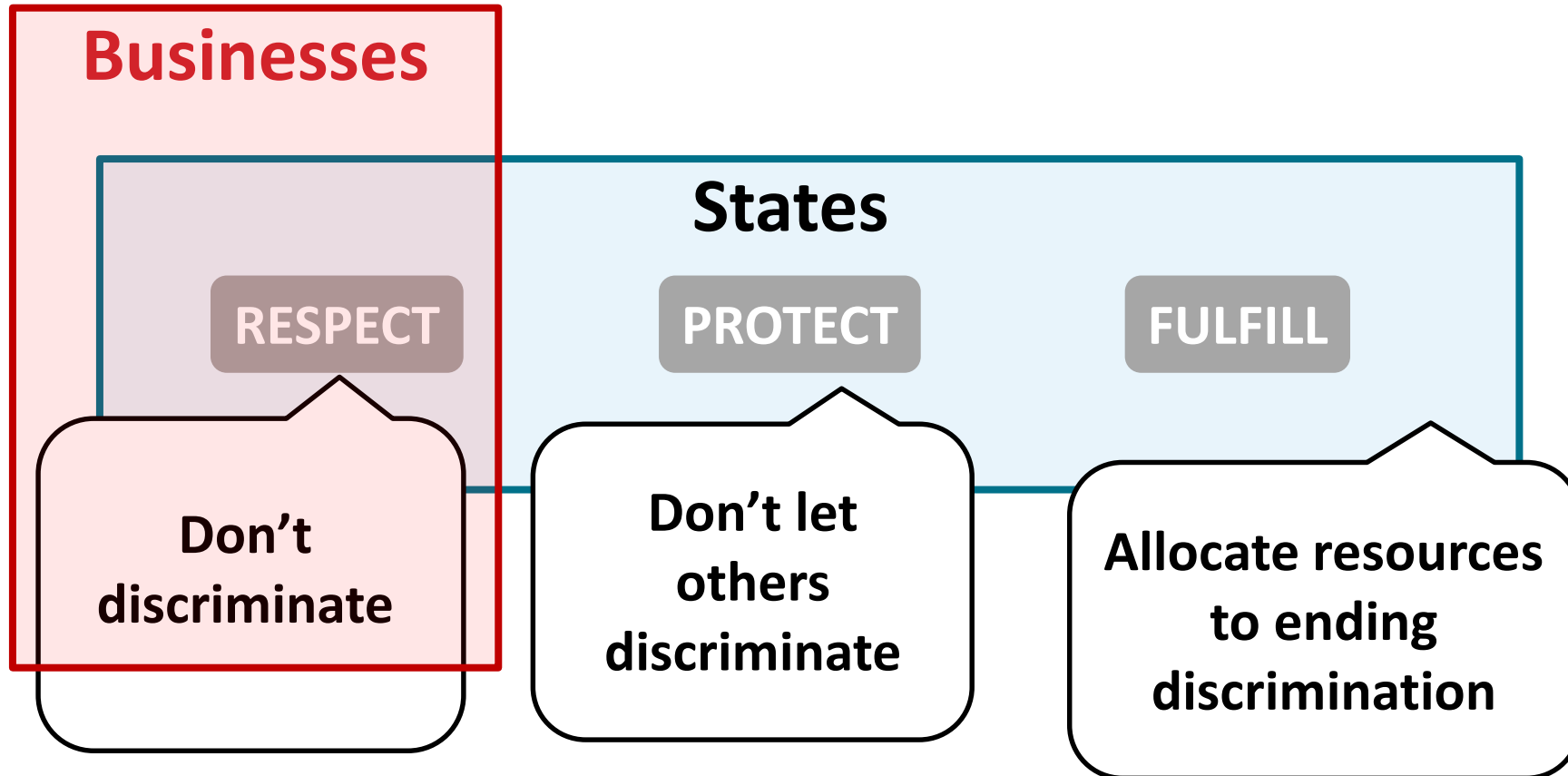
- avoid infringing on the human rights of others, and
- address adverse human rights impacts
- with which they are involved

A companies involvement concerns:

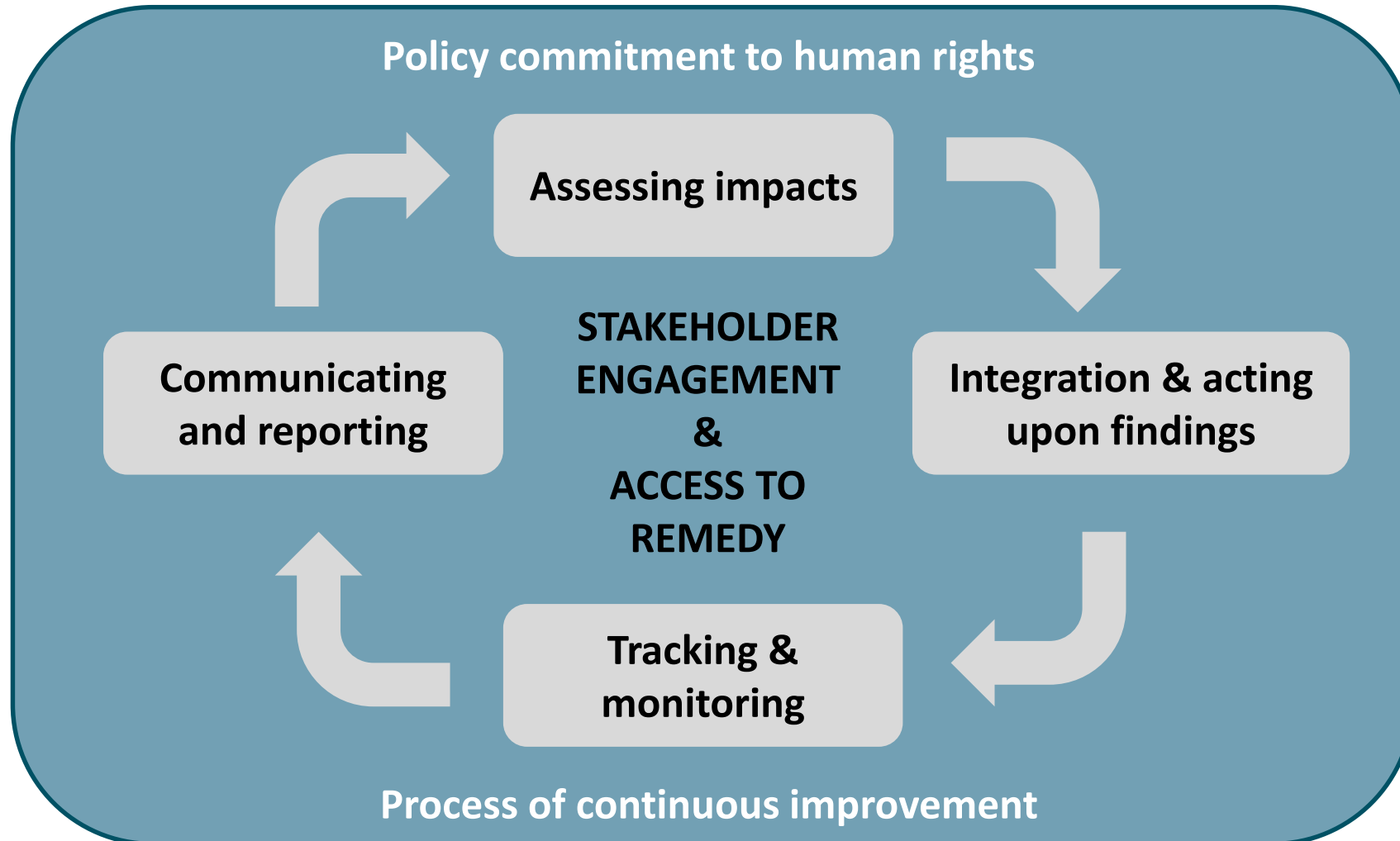
- **causing** negative impacts
- **contributing to** negative impacts, and
- being **directly linked to** negative impacts

➤ **UNG 12:** The responsibility of business enterprises to respect human rights refers to **internationally recognized human rights**

THE HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS OF DUTY-BEARERS



HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE



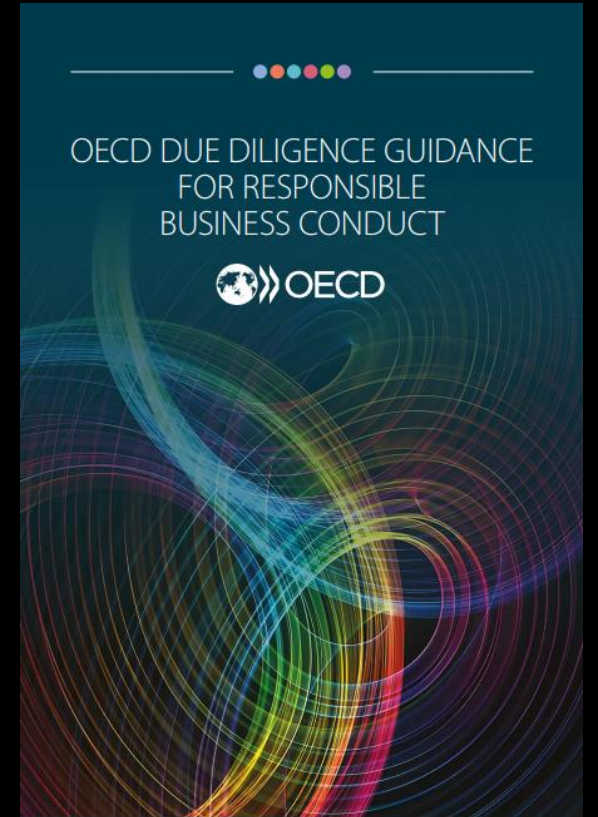
THE NEED FOR BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS





DEVELOPMENTS IN BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- National governments
- EU
- OECD
- Intern. Financial Institutions
- Industry Associations
- Individual businesses
- Hybrid governance standards
- Civil Society Organisations
- Technical standards



SDGS & BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS



- The SDGs “seek realize the human rights of all”
- UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) feature in the 2030 Agenda
- The UNGPs “set the tone for the social components of the SDGs to which business is expected to contribute”
- The UNGPs are “the global authoritative standard, providing a blueprint for the steps all states and businesses should take to uphold human rights”
- **92%** of 169 SDG targets have linkages to HR instruments

UNGPs as the
cornerstone for
engagement with
the SDGs

OPPORTUNITIES

2030 Agenda and
the SDGs provide
motivation and
sense of urgency

Businesses wanting to
be part of a
transformative agenda

BUSINESS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE SDGs

Difficulty to
navigate multiple
frameworks

SDG “Cherry-
picking” /
washing

False dichotomy: “do
no harm” vs. “do
good”

RISKS

A PROPOSED WAY FORWARD



Reminders

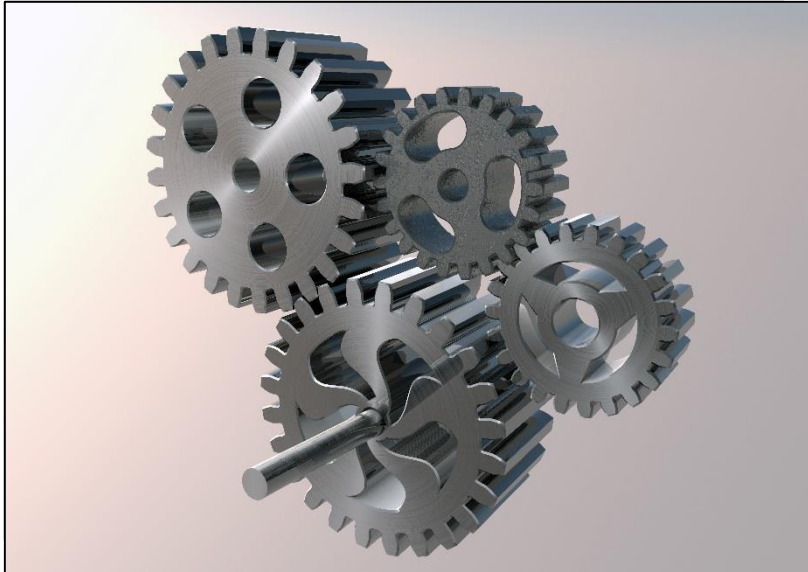
- Companies are responsible for all human rights
- Companies cannot offset negative human rights impacts
- All companies are concerned

Companies must:

- Put respect for human rights at the heart of how business gets done
- Be transparent and be accountable, and
- Engage in collaborative initiatives to tackle systemic challenges

➤ **Current DIHR project**

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS CONDUCT IMPLIES CONTRIBUTION TO THE SDGs



- Conduct human rights due diligence, and identify salient human rights issues
- Address the identified issues
- ...and in doing so, companies can in a sustainable way contribute to the SDGs

Business, Human Rights and the Sustainable Development Goals

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