



International Organisation of Employers
Organisation Internationale des Employeurs
Organización Internacional de Empleadores
The Global Voice of Business

Statement of International Organisation of Employers (IOE)

09.03.2018

Item 3 - General debate

Thank you,

I deliver this statement on behalf of the International Organisation of Employers, which is the largest private sector network in the world.

Respecting and advancing human rights is a priority for the international business community and the IOE strongly argues for preserving the approach outlined by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

The IOE has participated actively in the three previous sessions of the Inter-Governmental Working Group.

We would like to re-state the strong opposition of the international business community to the "draft elements" paper and our concerns about this process moving forward. We have made two submissions on the "draft elements" paper which should be available on the IGWG website.

In short, we strongly believe that the proposals outlined in the "draft elements" are counterproductive and they jeopardise the crucial consensus achieved by the UN Guiding Principles. In addition, the "elements" raise many questions that were not satisfactorily addressed during the third session.

Looking ahead, the IOE would like to make the following points:

- First, we urge the IGWG not to deviate from the approach of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. While some claim that the IGWG is coherent with the UNGPs, the "elements" paper demonstrates a completely different approach that would seriously undermine these principles.
- Second, future work of the IGWG should focus on clarifying the many questions and re-considering the unhelpful proposals raised by the "elements" paper instead of rushing to develop a draft treaty. In our view, the IGWG should also return to the Human Rights Council to get clear terms of reference on its future sessions to make it transparent and inclusive.
- Third, the IGWG should strengthen its communication and engagement with all relevant stakeholders, including business, on the process and substance. The "draft elements" paper has raised many worrying questions. The IGWG should pause and carefully reflect upon the confusion and potential damage of its proposals and seek to better consult with those affected by this process, including business.

Thank you for your attention.