



A powerful
and balanced
voice for business



International
Organisation of
Employers (IOE)
Pledge to mark the
75th anniversary of
Universal Declaration
of Human Rights
(UDHR)

On behalf of 151 employers' organisations, representing more than 50 million companies worldwide, the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) marks the 75th anniversary of the UDHR by reaffirming the global employers' community's commitment to further advance the respect and promotion of human rights worldwide.

In an era when companies of all sizes and from across the globe are working hard to implement and align themselves with the ever-evolving business and human rights landscape laid out by the United Nations Guiding Principles (UNGPs) embedding the principles and spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the need for clarity and actionable guidance has never been more pressing.

The corporate world, with its vast diversity, is constantly working towards being a positive economic and social influence. Businesses around the world are increasingly interested in learning more about what they are expected to do when it comes to human rights – and how they can meet those expectations. Responsible for creating 9 out of 10 jobs worldwide, private enterprises are fundamental to reducing poverty levels, ensuring economic growth, and supporting social stability. In addition, as efforts to meet the targets of Agenda 2030 accelerate, the international community needs to pursue responsible business conduct together with helping businesses to thrive.

Employers' organisations play an important role in supporting business to understand key standards, strengthen their practical approach to managing human rights risks and engage more confidently with human rights related legal and policy developments.

Multinational enterprises, given their vast scale and cross-border reach, find themselves navigating a complex labyrinth of regulations. Not only are they required to adapt to shifting legal landscapes in various nations, but they must also address the complexities arising from their operations or partnerships in regions marked by social and environmental challenges, as well as governance weaknesses.

Conversely, **micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises** (MSMEs) are faced with unique hurdles in the realm of Human Rights Due Diligence (HRDD). Frequently operating under the radar of the broader Business and Human Rights discourse, they grapple with limited resources and capabilities, even though they play pivotal roles in complex value chains. These champions of commerce require specialised support and engagement to effectively align with evolving human rights standards.

To maintain their role as significant contributors to society, business needs more practical guidance on how to effectively incorporate the UNGPs into their operations and systems.



...the need for clarity
and actionable
guidance has never
been more pressing.”

Seven Pledges

In the pursuit of this vision, IOE makes seven pledges based upon over a decade of action and leading by example on the promotion of business and human rights and working towards effective implementation of the UNGPs. These are:

- 1 Continue to develop** the IOE Centre of Excellence for Human Rights and Responsible Business Conduct by creating a dedicated platform for its members and network to support them in their journey to promote responsible business conduct and diffuse best practices.
- 2 Build capacities** through comprehensive regional training programmes on business and human rights.
- 3 Disseminate**, using digital tools, insights and analysis into the latest national, regional, and global trends related to business and human rights, sustainability reporting, and responsible business conduct.
- 4 Raise awareness** of the core international instruments, initiatives, and policies that impact companies, such as the UNGPs, the ILO MNE Declaration, and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.
- 5 Equip** companies with a practical, step-by-step guide to implementing the UNGPs and embarking on sustainability reporting.
- 6 Assist** employers' organisations in formulating policy strategies and service offerings in the areas of human rights, sustainability reporting, and responsible business conduct.
- 7 Connecting** businesses with multilateral institutions and other relevant stakeholders to collectively uphold and promote human rights.



A powerful
and balanced
voice for business



In commemorating the 75th anniversary of the UDHR, IOE pledges to continue to be a leading advocate, vigorously supporting and promoting well-established instruments including the UNGPs and the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (ILO MNE Declaration), among other international guidelines. Notably, IOE, serving as the global representative of employers, is equally committed to equipping employers and businesses with the knowledge and capacities needed to navigate newer instruments like the future EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D).

With this pledge, IOE reaffirms its global mission to empower companies of all sizes to integrate business and human rights into their operations.

Signed on behalf of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE),

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Suarez Santos', written over a horizontal line.

Roberto Suarez Santos
IOE Secretary-General