

# NAVIGATING THE GUIDE

*There are few if any internationally recognized rights business cannot impact - or be perceived to impact - in some manner. Therefore, companies should consider all such rights.*

– **Professor John Ruggie**

**UN Secretary-General's Special Representative  
on Business and Human Rights, 2008**

**This publication is a reference tool rather than a cover-to-cover read for company managers and other interested parties.**

It summarises the human rights contained in the two main human rights covenants and explains their relevance in a business context. Each explanation of a right is illustrated by case-studies of real corporate experiences in relation to that human right, and is supplemented by suggested practical actions.

In June 2008, the UN Human Rights Council confirmed that corporations have a responsibility to respect human rights. To discharge this responsibility requires human rights specific due diligence to become aware of, prevent and address adverse human rights impacts. A basic human rights due diligence process should include the following:

- adopting a human rights policy
- undertaking – and acting upon – a human rights impact assessment
- integrating the human rights policy throughout the company, across all functions
- tracking human rights performance by monitoring and auditing processes to ensure continuous improvement.

This publication can be used as follows to support such human rights due diligence:

**Use 1 – Know your operating context: risks and opportunities**

A company's human rights due diligence needs to consider the country contexts in which it conducts business, to highlight any specific human rights challenges that this may reveal. Use the country analysis tools listed on page 143 to identify the specific human rights challenges that may be prevalent in any given country in which your company has business operations, and cross-reference to the summaries of the right in this publication for specific insights and guidance.

**Use 2 – A reference resource for understanding the scope of the human rights challenges that relate to business, including any that are sector-specific**

Use this publication in conjunction with other management tools featured in the Further Resources section on page 143 to map your company's particular risk exposure. By the very nature of their activities, some industries may have a propensity to affect some rights more than others.

**Use 3 – As a means of understanding the particular human rights likely to be most relevant to specific management functions**

It would be helpful for companies to understand how human rights relate to their management functions - for example, human resources, security of assets and personnel, supply chains, and community engagement (see overleaf).

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## Use 3 (continued)

It is hard to be definitive as to which rights will be relevant to which management teams. Nevertheless the snapshot table below highlighting the associated page number in the Guide, and used together with other management tools in Further Resources (on page 139) can help managers identify those rights that may most often be relevant to particular **management functions** (the list is for guidance only and is not exhaustive).

## Rights listed by management function

### 1. Human resources/ supply chain management

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- Family life – including work/ life balance issues .....67/ 109
- Freedom from forced and bonded labour ..... 17
- Freedom of association/ Collective bargaining .....63/ 101
- Freedom of thought, conscience and religion ..... 49
- Health and safety .....9/ 95/ 125
- Join a trade union.....63/ 101
- Just and favourable conditions of work ..... 95
- Minority rights.....81
- Non-discrimination/ Equal opportunities .....7/ 77/ 89
- Privacy..... 43
- Protection of the child .....69
- Social security ..... 105
- Work.....91

### 2. Security

#### Page

- Freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman and/or degrading treatment ..... 13
- Life/ Liberty and security of person .....9/ 21

### 3. Community engagement

#### Page

- Adequate standard of living (food, water and housing) ..... 113
- Education ..... 131
- Freedom of movement ..... 31
- Health ..... 125
- Minority rights.....81
- Self-determination.....3/ 87

### 4. Research and development

#### Page

- Freedom from torture, cruel, inhuman and/or degrading treatment ..... 13
- Health ..... 125
- Participate in cultural life and to benefit from scientific progress ..... 135
- Privacy..... 43