

UNITED NATIONS WORKING GROUP ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

VISIT TO GEORGIA, 3 - 12 April 2019

Background

The Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises ([Working Group on Business and Human Rights](#)) is composed of five experts and was established by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2011 with a mandate to promote the implementation of the United Nations [Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) (UNGPs).

The five Working Group members are: Mr. Surya Deva (Chairperson), Ms. Elżbieta Karska (Vice-Chairperson), Mr. Githu Muigai, Mr Dante Pesce, and Ms. Anita Ramasastry. The Working Group is independent from any government or organization. It reports to the United Nations Human Rights Council and General Assembly.

The UNGPs focus on preventing and addressing adverse business-related human rights impacts and are founded on three pillars: 1) the State duty to *protect* against human rights abuses by business, 2) the independent responsibility of business enterprises to avoid causing human rights harm (that is, to *respect* human rights); and 3) access to effective remedy for victims of business-related human rights abuses.¹

The Working Group is mandated to undertake country visits to support efforts at national level to promote responsible business conduct in line with the UNGPs. The visits inform the Working Group's efforts to identify, exchange and promote good practices and lessons learned across countries and regions.

The Working Group will visit Georgia from 3 to 12 April 2019, at the invitation of the Government. After the visit, the Working Group will prepare a report on its findings to be presented to the UN Human Rights Council in June 2020, which will include recommendations to the Government and other relevant stakeholders.

The visit to Georgia is one in a series of country visits undertaken by the Working Group. The Working Group has to date visited Mongolia, the United States of America, Ghana, Azerbaijan, Brazil, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Canada, Peru, Thailand and Kenya.

Programme of visit

During its visit, the Working Group will seek to meet with all stakeholder groups, as per its mandate and methods of work. Overall activities will include:

- Meetings with Government authorities
- Consultations with businesses and business & industry organizations
- Consultations with civil society organizations and affected stakeholders
- Site visits and meetings with local stakeholders in relation to selected thematic issues

On the last day of the visit, on Friday 12 April, the Working Group will hold a debriefing meeting with Government officials in the morning followed by a press conference in which the Working Group will present preliminary observations from the visit.

¹ Other international standards on responsible business conduct that are aligned with the UNGPs include the [OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises](#) and in the [ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy](#).



The two Working Group members who will conduct the visit to Georgia are:



Mr. Surya Deva is an Associate Professor at the School of Law of City University of Hong Kong. He holds BA (Hons), LLB and LLM from the University of Delhi and a PhD from Sydney Law School, and has taught previously at the University of Delhi and at the National Law Institute University Bhopal. Mr Deva's primary research interests lie in Business and Human Rights, Corporate Social Responsibility, India-China Constitutional Law, and Sustainable Development. He has published extensively in these areas, including books *Human Rights Obligations of Business: Beyond the Corporate Responsibility to Respect?* (co-edited with David Bilchitz) (Cambridge, 2013); and *Regulating Corporate Human Rights Violations: Humanizing Business* (Routledge, 2012). Mr Deva has also authored commissioned reports for the International Commission of Jurists and the Ethical Trading Initiative. He is a founding Editor-in-Chief of the *Business and Human Rights Journal* published by Cambridge University Press, and sits on the Editorial/Advisory Board of the *Netherlands Quarterly of Human Rights*, the *Vienna Journal on International Constitutional Law*, and the *International Journal on Human Rights and Business*. In 2014, he was elected a Member of the Executive Committee of the International Association of Constitutional Law.



Ms. Elżbieta Karska is a Professor and the Head of the Department of Protection of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law and the Director of the Institute of International Law, European Union and International Relations at the Faculty of Law and Administration, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, Poland. She obtained a Master in Law, MBA, Ph.D. (Law) and Higher Doctorate (Habilitation Doctor in Law). Her research field is international law, including international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and international criminal law. She also deals with the issue of the role of non-state actors in international law. Author of over 100 publications (books, articles and other works) on international law, human rights law, and on European law, including fundamental rights issues. She is a former member of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination (2011-2018).

Other activities of the Working Group

The Working Group prepares thematic reports to the UN Human Rights Council and to the UN General Assembly. Its 2019 reports will focus respectively on the **gender dimensions of the UNGPs** (further information [here](#)) and on policy coherence in government action to implement the UNGPs.

Current thematic focus areas of the Working Group include:

- **Business in conflict and post-conflict contexts**
- **Access to remedy and the role of national human rights institutions** (further information [here](#))
- **Human rights defenders and the role of business** (further information [here](#))
- **The State as an economic actor** (further information [here](#))
- **The connection between the Sustainable Development Goals and the UNGPs** (further information [here](#))
- **Corporate human rights due diligence.** (Further information [here](#))
- **State national actions plans on business and human rights** (Further information [here](#))

The Working Group also chairs and guides the organization of the annual **UN Forum on Business and Human Rights**, the world's largest annual gathering on business and human rights, bringing together more than 2,000 participants from government, business, and civil society.

For **additional information** about the Working Group's visit to Georgia, please contact Ms. Federica Morvay on tel.: +41 22 928 8863/email: wg-business@ohchr.org.