

EXPANDING OUR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

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The Global Business Initiative on Human Rights (GBI) expanded our work around the globe and extended our external engagement in our focus regions in 2022. The coming year looks set to see a further extension of our in-depth work with businesses and other stakeholders.

Through our regional workshops, GBI engages with business practitioners on key business and human rights topics. We disseminate good practice, based on the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs); we also listen and learn. In 2022, we held detailed discussions with over 150 business practitioners across five regions on issues such as the changing legal landscape, value chain due diligence, due diligence beyond audits, and implementing a living wage.

Among our regional workshops, we:

- Led three webinars in Brazil for 50 business practitioners, co-organised with the Conselho Empresarial Brasileiro para o Desenvolvimento Sustentável (CEBDS). We also led a separate webinar for 15 legal practitioners
- Held a webinar for 50 business practitioners in India, in a seminar organised jointly with the Swiss embassy, and the Swiss Indian and Indo-German Chambers of Commerce
- Led a workshop at a UNDP session for 35 business practitioners in Africa
- Co-organised with the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) hybrid business sessions at the UN Forums on Business and Human Rights in Africa and South Asia
- Co-organised with UNDP and International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) the in-person business session for 25 company practitioners at the UN Forum on Responsible Business in Bangkok, Thailand

Dissemination can take many forms. For example, we provided teaching and learning resources for the Central and Eastern European and Central Asia Summer Academy. We participated as faculty in the Business and Human Rights Summer School in Procida, Italy.

And we also spoke in person and remotely in regional forums and conferences in Switzerland, Poland, Japan, the United States, and Mongolia.

These engagements highlighted practical approaches and challenges in a number of areas. They include:

- Compliance versus a UNGPs approach to due diligence and respecting human rights. Discussions in different countries indicated that human rights due diligence is increasingly becoming a matter of legal compliance. But our talks with dozens of businesses showed that companies that have already been implementing meaningful human rights due diligence and have policies and processes to respect human rights in place are much better placed to respond to legislation from various jurisdictions.
- In Brazil, we reviewed a plethora of tools and guidance materials available to practitioners to use to implement due diligence. However, it was clear that companies need to carefully evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of such tools in designing their human rights due diligence processes.
- In Southeast Asia, practitioners explored how effective human rights due diligence puts people at the centre of processes and goes beyond audits and box ticking exercises to really understand the impacts on people of companies' operations and activities.
- In India, we discussed how companies can bring small businesses in the supply chain along to build their capacity to respect human rights, rather than leaving them behind. However, it was also recognised that companies must stand by their policies and commitment to human rights, to ensure similar commitment from suppliers and partners.
- In Africa, practitioners discussed how mitigating adverse impacts can require careful consideration of the root causes and the context in which the business is operating.

In 2023, GBI will continue to facilitate discussions with business practitioners around the world to explore key issues and highlight best practice on implementing human rights in companies.

If you are a company representative and are interested in joining our regional workshops, please contact engage@gbihr.org and include your company name, role, and regions of interest.