



**DIALOGUE ON BUSINESS AND
HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE ARAB
STATES REGION**



DOHA DECLARATION

Advancing Responsible Business Practices in the Arab States Region

Doha, Qatar

28-29 October 2024

Preamble:

WELCOMING the convening by Qatar's National Human Rights Committee and United Nations Development Programme in partnership with the Arab Network of National Human Rights Institutions, Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, Office of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, and United Nations Children's Fund of the Inaugural Dialogue on Business and Human Rights in the Arab States under the theme "Charting the Course for Responsible Business Practices in the Arab States," to facilitate South-South and North-South exchange, peer learning, and collaboration,

We, the representatives of governments, businesses, rights-holders, civil society organizations (CSOs), National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), academia, and other stakeholders, gathered in Doha, Qatar, on 28-29 October 2024 for the event,

REAFFIRMING the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

RECALLING relevant International and Regional Human Rights Treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil, Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Arab Charter on Human Rights, and *RECALLING ALSO* the ILO Core Conventions as set out in the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises, and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct,

RECOGNIZING the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in its resolution 17/4 of 16 June 2011, as an authoritative framework to prevent and address adverse business-related human rights impacts, based on the three pillars of the UN "Protect, Respect, and Remedy" Framework,

ACKNOWLEDGING that businesses have the capacity to foster economic growth, sustainable development, and technological improvement, as well as be involved in adverse impacts on human rights,

STRESSING that the obligations and the primary duty to promote, protect, and fulfil human rights and fundamental freedoms lie with States and that States must protect against human rights abuses within their territory and/or jurisdiction by businesses,

EMPHASIZING that businesses have the responsibility to respect all human rights,

RECOGNIZING that CSOs and NHRIs have a valuable and legitimate role in promoting the UNGPs, monitoring, documenting, and raising awareness of adverse business-related human rights impacts, and facilitating effective remedies for victims, including to meet the Paris Standards,

Acknowledgments:

1. *UNDERLINE* the progress made and the continuing efforts to implement the UNGPs by States and businesses in the Arab States;
2. *COMMEND* the initiatives led by GCC countries through the Executive Office of the Council



of Labor Ministers on advancing responsible business practices in labor markets;

3. **ACKNOWLEDGE** the remaining challenges States and businesses in the Arab States face in fulfilling their respective duties and responsibilities to prevent and address business-related human rights abuses and **RECOGNIZE**, therefore, the necessity of enhancing efforts for the UNGPs' implementation;
4. **CONFIRM OUR COMMITMENT** to enhancing efforts for the UNGPs' implementation in the Arab States;
5. **AGREE** to prioritize strengthening the capacity of governments, businesses, CSOs, NHRIs, and other stakeholders in the Arab States to implement the UNGPs, and **RECOGNIZE** that the UN has an important role to play in this regard;
6. **UNDESCORE** the importance of continuing the multi-stakeholder dialogue on Business and Human Rights in the Arab Region;

Recommendations and Action Plan:

7. We **RECOMMEND AND PLAN**:

7.1 Encourage **Governments** in the Arab States to enhance efforts for the UNGPs' implementation, particularly by:

- a. Undertaking contextualized National Baseline Assessments and developing intergovernmental National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights while meaningfully engaging diverse stakeholders from the business sector, CSOs, NHRIs, and others in those processes;
- b. Taking into account in their submissions to the Universal Periodic Review the implementation of the "State's Duty to Protect" set out in the UNGPs;
- c. Cooperating fully with the UN Working Group on Business and Human rights in the fulfilment of its mandate, including by replying favorably to its requests for country visits;
- d. Strengthening the national channels and frameworks for reporting business-related human rights abuses, particularly as it relates to women, migrant workers, and groups in vulnerable and marginalized situations;
- e. Incentivizing and guiding businesses to carry out human rights due diligence;
- f. Committing to continuous participatory national dialogues on issues of business and human rights;
- g. Supporting capacity-strengthening of State judicial and non-judicial remedies for victims of human rights abuses committed by businesses operating in territory and/or jurisdiction, as well as for their businesses operating abroad;

7.2 Encourage **businesses** in the Arab States to meet their responsibility to respect all human rights under the UNGPs and in other applicable standards, particularly by:

- a. Carrying out all the four components of human rights due diligence on an ongoing basis, particularly ensuring accurate, comprehensive formal reporting, while ensuring the application of its environmental and climate dimensions;



- b. Meaningfully engaging with affected rights-holders and communities, while prioritizing those in the most vulnerable and marginalized situations, in human rights due diligence;
- c. Supporting capacity-strengthening and practical guidance tailor-made for SMEs operating in the region;
- d. Participating in good faith in national judicial and non-judicial processes and establishing effective operational-level (internal) mechanisms to enable the early resolution of grievances;

7.3 Encourage **CSOs and NHRIs** to support States and businesses in the Arab States in meeting their duties and responsibilities under the UNGPs, particularly by:

- a. Conducting research on business and human rights status at the regional, national, and sub-national levels;
- b. Actively participating in State-led processes to undertake National Baseline Assessments and develop National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights and advocating for their alignment with the UNGPs;
- c. Provide effective and accessible complaints mechanisms for victims of business-related human rights abuses;
- d. Raising awareness of business and human rights among rights-holders and communities while prioritizing those most vulnerable and marginalized, including through the leadership under regional networks such as the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions;

7.4 Organize the 2nd Dialogue on Business and Human Rights in the Arab States in 2025, ensuring representative participation on trade unions and business associations.