SPECIAL PROCEDURES
UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Concept Note

15th United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights

23 - 25 November 2026, Palais des Nations, Geneva

UNGPs at 15: Building on Gains, Confronting Gaps, Reimagining the Future

Overview

The UN Forum on Business and Human Rights is the world's largest annual gathering on business and human rights. Since its inception in 2012, it has brought together every year thousands of participants from governments, business, civil society, trade unions, international organisations, Indigenous Peoples, affected communities, academia and others from around the world. Last year there was a record number of over 4,600 registered participants, the vast majority in-person at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. Many others followed the discussions on UNWebTV. Centred on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), the Forum provides a unique multi-stakeholder platform for discussing key trends and challenges in implementing and advancing the UNGPs.

The Forum is created, organized and managed entirely by the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights (Working Group on Business and Human Rights | OHCHR). The Working Group sits within Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council and is supported by a Secretariat based at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Focus of the 2026 Forum

2026 marks the 15th anniversary of the endorsement by the UN Human Rights Council (in 2011) of the UNGPs, which is the authoritative global framework for States and businesses in relation to preventing and addressing adverse impacts on human rights arising from business activities. As exemplified during last year's Forum, this anniversary comes at a time when the world is confronting interlocking crises that pose significant challenges to sustaining and accelerating commitments to protect and respect human rights in the context of business activities, and to provide effective remedy when harm occurs.

This Forum will provide a multi-stakeholder platform to reflect upon the positive impacts and enduring obstacles seen in the application and implementation of the UNGPs by States and businesses, and in providing access to effective remedies for rightsholders, over the past 15 years. It will also discuss ideas on the ways forward towards ensuring long-term embedding of policies and practices consistent with the UNGPs. The goal is for participants to leave the Forum with examples of measures that proved effective to advance UNGPs' implementation, a renewed sense of hope for the future of business and human rights, and strengthened commitments to concrete action. Finally, it can be an opportunity to revisit the Working Group's UNGPs10+ Roadmap for the Next Decade of Business and Human Rights, which outlined the need to raise the ambition, increase the pace of implementation, improve coherence and create greater impact of the UNGPs.

As with previous Forums, the agenda of the Forum will be built on the proposals made by all stakeholders, with the aim to ensure that they are as reflective as possible of current interests and issues both globally and regionally. Diversity of issues, speakers and approaches is encouraged in these proposals, including offering different ways of ensuring engagement by participants, while remaining within the scope of the general theme of the Forum. Some ideas of sub-themes include:

- Building effective stakeholder initiatives;
- Improving access to effective remedies, including in complex environments;
- Agribusiness, human rights and food security;
- Means and methods for improving corporate governance to ensure respect of human rights;
- Effective human rights due diligence, including in conflict-affected regions;
- The benefits and challenges of new technologies for protection and respect of human rights;
- Protecting groups at risk, including Indigenous Peoples, human rights defenders, women, children, persons with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ persons and migrant workers;
- Incorporating an intersectional lens to the implementation of the UNGPs;
- Developments in response to climate change and environmental degradation;
- The effectiveness of the role of financial institutions in ensuring respect of people and the planet;
- Capacity building of States, businesses and civil society; and
- Encouraging new voices, including young people.

The Forum will also provide an opportunity to address other issues that encompass systemic and emerging challenges confronting the business and human rights agenda.

In light of the above, some of the key questions to be considered at the Forum include:

- What positive impacts have the UNGPs generated, especially for rightsholders, over the past 15 years?
- What are the persistent obstacles to the effective implementation of the UNGPs? How could these be addressed?
- What practical steps can States, businesses and other stakeholders take to scale up implementation of UNGPs?
- What are the lessons learned from the implementation of the UNGPs in different country and regional contexts, including existing initiatives to ensure a smart mix of measures? How can these be adapted to meet current challenges?
- In these challenging times, what innovative measures can be taken to advance UNGPs implementation?

A provisional Forum programme is expected in **September 2026.** The full agenda will be posted on the **Forum web page** **by early October 2026.**

Session proposals

The Working Group makes an open call for session proposals as part of its inclusive approach for the Forum. As renovations to the United Nations buildings in Geneva are ongoing, and the UN's financial constraints continue to affect the Forum, it is unclear at this stage as to how many sessions the Forum will be possible to accommodate.

Proposals for sessions are very welcome. These must include:

- A title;
- An outline of the proposed topic and its focus and key objectives – limited to 250 words;
- Proposed speakers, **with a maximum of 4 speakers plus a moderator**;
- Proposed speakers **must** reflect diversity of gender, region and stakeholder background (e.g., State, business, civil society organisation). The Working Group **will not consider proposals with panels that are not well balanced;** and
- Name of proposer organization/s, and envisaged contribution in the session. **Only one proposal per organization will be considered** (joint proposals are accepted but only a maximum of two joint proposals for any one organisation).

The form for call for session proposals: [Call for Proposals]

Please be aware of the following:

- Given the growth in the number of proposals over the past few years and the limited capacity due to ongoing building renovations, it will not be possible to accommodate all proposals. In some instances, two or more proposals might be merged, and formats of sessions may be modified by the Working Group; and
- The Working Group is **a co-organiser of all sessions**. Speakers will be subject of approval by the Working Group and diversity in stakeholder, gender and region will be mandatory. Organizations whose proposals are selected should not confirm speakers until the approval by the Working Group of the speaker panel is obtained.

All proposals must be submitted to the Forum organisers by 24 April 2026.

These proposals will be considered by the Working Group at its 44th session in May 2026. Successful proposals will be informed by August 2026.

Side-Events

As in previous Forums, those wishing to organize side-events in Geneva around the dates of the Forum should explore options outside of the UN premises and keep the Forum organizers informed viaohchr-forumbhr@un.org.

We request those organizing side-events to refrain from scheduling them during the Forum's official hours (10.00am to 1.00pm and 3.00pm – 6.00pm). Only side-events that are organized outside of these official hours can be advertised on the official Forum website.

General

Information about the agenda, registration process and virtual participation will be posted on the Forum's dedicated webpage in due course. Updates can be found by following the Working Group on LinkedIn: UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights