



Concept Note

Exploring synergies in multilateralism and human rights for a just, fair & equitable recovery

18 October 2021, 15:30 CET

1. Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has widened the socio-economic divide and highlighted the fragility of social protection systems all around the world. While the economic recovery of States continues to be a major concern, it is also an opportunity to promote the respect and protection of human rights through developing and financing more resilient and inclusive health and social protection systems for all.

The pandemic has also brought into sharp focus the interdependence of different sectors, regions and economies, requiring coordinated efforts at the multilateral level to enable a just, fair & equitable recovery, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. Further strengthening the coordination, cohesiveness, and unity of developing countries' efforts in the reform of the multilateral system requires identifying and understanding the interlinkages and relationships among current multilateral processes.

One to such processes is the responsibility of private corporations for respecting human rights and promoting a more inclusive economy. As this issue has been gaining considerable momentum globally,¹ the elaboration of an international legally binding instrument to regulate, in accordance with international human rights law, the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises (LBI), as mandated by UN Human Rights Council Resolution 26/9 (A/HRC/26/9), has become highly important. The discussions for elaborating such an instrument are required to strengthen the policy space of States for guaranteeing the protection of human rights, especially in times of crises.

A legally binding instrument could support efforts towards the implementation of higher human rights and social protection standards in related fields, particularly financing for development, climate change, sovereign debt restructuring, among others. It would also serve as a necessary

¹ Countries such as France and Germany have introduced a due diligence law, while others such as UK and Australia have come up with new legislations which require their companies to report on the risks of modern slavery in their operations and supply chains and on actions to address those risks. The EU has also initiated its own processes for creating a regional mandatory human rights due diligence framework.



means for furthering the role of civil society organisations and human rights defenders in the fight against impunity of human rights abuses and violations in the context of business activities.

In continuance of its previous endeavours, the South Centre is organizing a webinar bringing together representatives of developing countries and civil society organizations to discuss how the LBI can support a better and fairer recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic, and to share views and gain insights on how this process will progress going forward, while also exploring its links to the ongoing reform of investor-State dispute settlement (ISDS) and Financing for Development.

2. Objectives

This webinar will serve as an open discussion on how the legally binding instrument on transnational corporations and other business enterprises can support States' efforts in other areas of the multilateral system towards a just, fair and equitable recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular the webinar will:

- a) Assess and analyse the prospective role of the LBI in the post COVID-19 era and its linkages with the international investment law and policy regime, as well as supporting the recovery from COVID-19.
- b) Facilitate an exchange of views among developing countries and civil society organizations towards how collective action for the adoption of the LBI can strengthen the protection and promotion of human rights and build resilience to face future crises.

3. Issues to be addressed and agenda [TBC]

15h30-15h40	Welcoming remarks and update on the process to elaborate the LBI (Dr. Carlos Correa,)
15h40-16h10	Presentations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International Financial Institutions and the LBI (TBC) • Human Rights Impact Assessment of International Trade and Investment Agreements (Jesse Coleman, Columbia Centre on Sustainable Investment)
16h10-16h20	Questions and Answers
16h20-16h50	<p>Substantive discussion on the third revised draft of the LBI</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erika Mendes, Justiça Ambiental and Friends of the Earth, Mozambique • Manja Bayang, Indigenous Peoples Rights International • Iván González Alvarado, Coordinador Político de la Confederación Sindical de las Américas (CSA)
16h50-17h00	Question and Answers

4. Format



The webinar will be held using the Zoom video conferencing platform. Participants will be requested to register in advance so that they can receive the link to join the webinar.

The South Centre will moderate the presentation by panellists and facilitate the discussions among participants responding to some of the issues identified in this Concept Note and, on their views, and assessments of the third revised draft LBI.

5. Participation

The participants will consist of representatives from Member States of the South Centre, of the Group of 77 and China, and participants from civil society organizations and academia. The discussion will be facilitated and moderated by the South Centre.

6. Contact Information and Registration

Please for registration click in the following link: <https://bit.ly/2WKPOOq>

If you have any other question or inquiry, please contact **Mr. Daniel Uribe** (uribe@southcentre.int) and **Mr. Danish** (danish@southcentre.int) or call to +41 22 791 80 50.