

I. Introduction

Background of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), developed under the leadership of John Ruggie, the former UN Special Representative on Business and Human Rights, addresses the critical issue of the impact of corporate activities on human rights worldwide. Established in 2011, these principles define the dual responsibilities of states and businesses in protecting and respecting human rights, structured around three pillars: the state's duty to protect, the corporate responsibility to respect, and ensuring access to remedy for victims of business-related human rights abuses (UN, 2011). The creation of the UNGPs involved extensive multi-stakeholder consultations and garnered significant international consensus. The UN Human Rights Council's unanimous endorsement solidified the UNGPs as a crucial framework for promoting corporate accountability and respect for human rights (UNHRC, 2011).

Countries such as Thailand and France have made progress in implementing the UNGPs by adopting National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights. These plans outline government strategies to promote ethical business practices and

outlining three fundamental pillars: the state's duty to protect human rights, corporate responsibility to respect human rights, and the guarantee of access to remedy for victims of business-related abuses (UN, 2011). The evolution of the UNGPs has underscored the necessity for a cohesive approach to bridge the gaps in human rights safeguards within the corporate sphere, advocating for a significant shift towards responsible business conduct (Wettstein, 2015).

Countries such as the Philippines, in their endeavor to internalize these guidelines through a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, can benefit from the wealth of global experiences, learning to overcome challenges and enhance the impact of these principles in practice (GOP, 2021).

The foundational principles of the UNGPs are instrumental in shaping business practices and strengthening human rights norms. Their core essence lies in delineating state and corporate responsibilities in respecting, protecting, and fulfilling human rights (Nolan, 2013). The UNGPs emphasize human rights due diligence, the necessity of remedial measures, and the imperative for transparency within the business sector, thereby providing a comprehensive approach to integrating human rights into corporate policymaking (Ruggie, 2013). Moreover, the principles highlight the special considerations for vulnerable and marginalized groups, ensuring their rights receive attention in business activities (McCorquodale et al., 2017). Understanding and adhering to these principles are essential in fostering accountability, preventing human rights violations, and instilling a culture of respect for human dignity across the business landscape (Buhmann, 2016).

International Best Practices in Implementing the UN Guiding Principles

Case studies worldwide provide valuable lessons for the Philippines as it strives to adopt the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). France's Law on the Duty of Vigilance is a noteworthy example. Certain large companies must



awareness programs aim to mainstream the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), aligning with international standards



rights in business practices and contribute to a more sustainable global economic landscape (UN, 2011).

Civil Society Engagement and Advocacy

Civil society organizations are crucial in advancing human rights norms within business practices. Through advocacy, awareness campaigns, and monitoring corporate behavior, these organizations serve as critical watchdogs, holding businesses accountable for upholding human rights standards (Ruggie, 2013). In the context of implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) in the Philippines, civil society organizations can offer valuable expertise and grassroots connections to drive meaningful change (CHRP, 2019). Their



processes involve comprehensive risk assessments to understand the potential impacts of corporate activities



these recommendations can bolster the effectiveness of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights in the Philippines and elevate the country's commitment to upholding human rights standards in the business sector.

practices and upholding human rights standards (Morris et al., 2018). Several recommendations can be proposed to institutionalize the UNGPs in the Philippines effectively. First, establishing a centralized monitoring body dedicated to overseeing the implementation of the UNGPs within businesses across various sectors could enhance accountability and compliance (Morris et al., 2018). This would involve regular assessments, reporting mechanisms, and remedial actions for non-compliance. Second, integrating human rights due diligence requirements into existing legislation and regulatory frameworks could provide a solid foundation for upholding the UNGPs in business operations (OECD, 2018). This entails aligning national laws with international standards to ensure consistency and coherence in protecting human rights (Ruggie, 2013). Third, fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration, including government bodies, businesses, civil society, and international organizations, is crucial for promoting dialogue, sharing best practices, and addressing challenges collectively (BHRRC, 2021; FIDH, 2021; UNWGBHR, 2016). By implementing these recommendations, the Philippines can strengthen its commitment to respecting and protecting human rights in the business sphere.

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