

## RESEARCH PROJECT NOTE

11 MARCH 2019

### “REALISING THE SDGS: THE ROLE OF RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS”

MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT ON:  
[HUMANRIGHTS.DK/REALISING-SDGS](https://humanrights.dk/realising-sdgs)

## 1 RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION

This project will address the effects of the following three particular instruments for the strengthening of responsible business conduct:

### 1.1 NATIONAL ACTION PLANS ON BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

National action plans (NAPs) are policy documents that articulate state priorities and actions to support implementation of legal obligations or other commitments on a given topic. Since the UNGPs require states and businesses to respect ILO Core Labour Standards, business and human rights NAPs should lead to measures that contribute to fulfilling Targets under SDGs 8 and 16. In addition, if they embody good governance norms, such as transparency, inclusion and participation, the processes of developing NAPs hold potential to strengthen social accountability of business.

### 1.2 NON-JUDICIAL MECHANISMS FOR REMEDIATION OF BUSINESS-RELATED GRIEVANCES

When non-judicial grievance mechanisms function well, such bodies can contribute to positive state-building, conflict prevention and investor risk reduction, for instance, by facilitating dialogue on developmental impacts of investment. Where cases handled by non-judicial grievance mechanisms relate to child labour, forced labour, health and safety, unlawful harassment or discrimination or working conditions more generally, they may similarly contribute to realisation of SDG 8 and other Goals and their Targets consequentially. Yet the topic of access to remedy for rights-holders negatively impacted by business activities remains somewhat neglected, within the UNGPs framework, and open questions remain: What sorts of non-judicial grievance mechanisms are effective in advancing respect for human rights? What policy interventions support non-judicial grievance mechanisms to fulfil this role? What are the effects of engagement with such mechanisms by respondent businesses?

### **1.3 SECTOR-SPECIFIC RESPONSIBLE VALUE CHAIN INITIATIVES**

Sector-specific responsible value chain initiatives may be local but typically operate transnationally along supply-chains for specific resources or products. Increasingly it is observed that their governance should involve state, business, labour and civil society actors, and mandate transparency, certification, reporting or other measures to promote responsible business conduct by their participants or members, if they are to be effective. However, empirical research is incomplete on how such initiatives contribute in practice to UNGPs implementation and broader developmental goals, including enhancing rule of law under SDG 16, as well as specific labour rights Targets envisaged under SDG 8.

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