



## **CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND BUSINESS: THE ROLE OF STATES**

### **Practical Guidance and Best Practice**

#### **30th session of the UN Human Rights Council**

**Thursday 17 September**

**12:00 to 14:00 hrs**

**Room XXVII- Palais des Nations**

Organized by UNICEF and the International Commission of Jurists

And sponsored by:

Permanent Mission of Belgium to the UN in Geneva

Permanent Mission of Chile to the UN in Geneva

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Save the Children

### **Background**

More than ever before, business enterprises have an impact on children's lives. Children are consumers of businesses' products and services, workers in their factories and fields, family members of their employees, and residents of the communities that host their operations.

Some of these interactions can benefit children. Companies have, for instance, created new technologies that enrich children's education, enhance medical care, and connect families around the world. Yet at the same time, businesses can also have detrimental impacts. Companies can make and sell unhealthy and unsafe goods to children, pollute the environments in which children live and play, and expose them to serious dangers including in the workplace.

As children are still growing and developing, they are especially vulnerable to negative business impacts and can be severely and permanently affected by infringements of their rights. Child consumers can be more easily convinced to buy and use inappropriate or unsuitable products, and children are much more susceptible than adults to the harmful physical effects of toxic chemicals, manual labour and poor diets. Young workers can never fully make up for time spent out of education, and missed opportunities are rarely restored.

Many of these impacts remain unnoticed, and businesses rarely involve or seek the input of children on decisions that will profoundly affect them. Children may not understand that their rights are in jeopardy, and, even when they do, often face tremendous challenges in making their voices heard. All too frequently, child victims lack the confidence, resources and legal authority to demand accountability from those who violate their rights.

For these reasons, it is imperative that governments take action to protect and promote children's rights in the context of business operations. In February 2013, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child adopted General Comment 16 on "State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights" to assist States to ensure that businesses respect children's rights as envisioned in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The ICJ and UNICEF, at the request of the Committee, have elaborated a Guide to offer to States practical examples and best practices on how to protect and ensure the realization of the rights of the child in the context of business operations.

### **Objectives**

- To identify the challenges faced by Governments and other stakeholders in the protection of children's rights in the context of business operations.
- To share and learn from practical examples on ways to enhance the protection of children's rights in this context.

### **Format and programme**

The event will take the shape of a round table and open discussion to facilitate fluid interaction among participants and the sharing of perspectives and practices.

Moderator: (tbc)

Discussants:

Mr Andres Franco – UNICEF, Chief of Private Sector Engagement

Mrs Marta Maurás – Ambassador of Chile

Mr Leo Ratledge – Child Rights International Network (CRIN)

Prof Jorge Cardona- Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

### **Participation**

Participation is open to all State delegates and non-governmental organizations. External participants who do not possess a valid ground pass to enter the United Nations Palais des Nations, should register by sending an email to (whom?) until the 15 September.

*Refreshments will be offered before the session*