



GLOBAL BUSINESS INITIATIVE
ON HUMAN RIGHTS



Global Compact Network
South Africa

SUMMARY OF 'BUSINESS LEADERS DIALOGUE ON CORPORATE RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS: ADDRESSING COMPLEX CHALLENGES, BUSINESS RISK AND THE TRUST DEFICIT'

Thursday 26 May 2016 – Turbine Hall, Newtown, Johannesburg, South Africa

On 26 May a unique business leaders conference was held on the topic of corporate respect for human rights in the South African context. The conference was attended by 100 business leaders and other experts. The event focused on case studies and real-life examples of how South African and multi-national companies are responding to and managing human rights in their businesses. The event was an opportunity to hear about how companies are responding to specific human rights challenges, learn about strategies and approaches to human rights and connect with peers and local experts.

Judge Dennis Davis gave the opening keynote speech, noting the context in which business and human rights in South Africa exists, including the legacy of apartheid. He then spoke about the importance of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in progressing human rights in the country and beyond.



'In South Africa, a human rights culture has to be brought about not just by the state but by business too ... it is about a practice of that culture that we all need to engage with because if we don't, people will say human rights are only there to protect a few wealthy people at the expense of the majority, and that would be the antithesis of what human rights are supposed to do.' **Judge Dennis Davis**

The first panel of the day focused on the need for corporate leadership and action on a range of human rights issues – including community and worker engagement, improved transparency, labour rights in supply chains, and working with government and civil society actors, amongst other topics.



'Business needs to claim its place at the table as an architect and as an enthusiastic champion. Thus far transformative policies have helped us achieve what we have because we are required to comply.' **Sipho Pityana, Chair, AngloGold Ashanti**

'When starting a project or site, you need to engage the communities and learn about their needs. You cannot assume that you know what is needed.' **Arnold Kanyangarara, Workplace Accountability Manager, The Coca-Cola Company**

Companies then presented case studies in breakout groups, launching into wider group dialogue on the themes of community engagement, consultation and natural resources and human rights in business relationships. Anglo American Platinum presented their challenges, progress and lessons from a community relocation in Mogalkwena, South Africa; Illovo Sugar presented their work on land rights and the risks of land grabbing; BASF described how they establish Community Advisory Panels surrounding key chemicals plants around the world; the Coca-Cola Company described their work around the challenges of contract labour and employment conditions on farms owned by small holders; and AngloGold Ashanti described how they manage human rights risks associated with security providers.

'We, as companies, need to be engaging with civil society and NGOs. We need to be sitting around the table, not across the table.' **Kate Mathias, Development Consultant, Illovo Sugar**



In the afternoon, participants focused on two key case studies on complex social and human rights issues in South Africa. The first case study provided an overview of the tragic events that unfolded in August 2012 at Marikana. This was the first time that Lonmin had provided a comprehensive response to what happened, presented by Lerato Molebatsi, Executive Vice President, Communications and Public Affairs. She provided an overview from Lonmin's perspective, how the company responded in the short- and medium- term and what still needs to be done and lessons learned to safeguard non-repetition. Following the conference, Lerato noted:



'The challenges facing the industry are complex and multi-faceted. Through collaboration and bold action, the mining industry can achieve the level of transformation it sorely needs.'

Lerato Molebatsi, Executive Vice President, Communications and Public Affairs, Lonmin

The second case study focused on how multiple stakeholders can come together and collaborate to solve complex problems at a local level. The case study focused on how companies, communities, local government and an independent third party have worked together. The case involved an alliance between two gold mining companies and other stakeholders to resolve structural challenges, reduce conflict and build a sustainable local economy and business operating environment for the benefit of all stakeholders. Experiences were shared by Gavin Andersson, Seriti Institute who convened these actors as well as the companies engaged and a community representative. Sayi Nindi, Legal Resources Centre and Salil Tripathi, Institute for Human Rights and Business provided expert closing reflections.



The final session of the day, brought together a number of leading individuals working on implementing corporate respect for human rights in their companies, including representatives from ABB, Anglo American, Total and Vale. This session emphasised the value of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights – and how they can provide a holistic approach to managing all human rights risks. The benefits of this were emphasised in moving away from issue- or crisis- management to proactively identifying, assessing and responding to human rights risks.

Many companies remarked on how the conference was a remarkable opportunity to hear from peers and to discuss real-life challenges in a safe space context. The organisers are interested to hear from participants and others on what may be useful moving forwards.

[Access conference materials here](#) and the [full agenda here](#).
A full report of the meeting will be available shortly.
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