

***Business and Human
Rights in Asia:
Promoting Responsible
Business Practices
through Regional
Partnerships***

**PROJECT
BOARD
MEETING**

Minutes

12 March 2020

Minutes of Project Board Meeting

Business and Human Rights in Asia: Promoting Responsible Business Practices through Regional Partnerships

Date: 12 March 2020

Time: 10:00 – 12:00

Venue: Zoom (virtual)

List of Participants

Board Members:

Executive Chair: UNDP Chief Policy and Programming, Mr Jaco Cilliers

Senior Supplier, represented by UNDP Head of Governance a.i., Mr Nicholas Booth

Senior Beneficiaries, including:

- Ms Nareeluc Pairchaiyapoom, Director of International Rights Division, Ministry of Justice of the Kingdom of Thailand
- Mr Lorenzo Urbinati, Partnership Development Officer, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
- Ms Catherine Phuong, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP Viet Nam Country Office
- Mr Viraf Mehta, Advisor, Partners in Change, India
- Mr Freddy Guyacan, Project Manager, Responsible Supply Chains in Asia, ILO Asia and the Pacific
- Ms Shubha Sekhar, Director Human Rights, Eurasia and North Africa, Coca-Cola

UNDP B+HR Asia Project Staff:

- Mr Livio Sarandrea, Business and Human Rights Advisor, UNDP Asia-Pacific
- Dr Harpreet Kaur, Business and Human Rights Project Manager a.i., UNDP Asia-Pacific
- Ms Victoria de Mello, Regional Project Coordinator, UNDP Asia-Pacific
- Mr Kevin Lehmann, Business and Human Rights Consultant, UNDP Asia-Pacific
- Ms Katarzyna Popiolek, Business and Human Rights Communications Consultant, UNDP Asia-Pacific

- Ms Dollaporn Introong, Business and Human Rights Programme Assistant

Observers:

- Ms Åsa Hedén, Head of Development Cooperation, Regional Asia and the Pacific, Embassy of Sweden
- Ms Juttathip Subhaswasdikul, Senior Programme Officer, Development Cooperation Section, Embassy of Sweden
- Ms Laura Liguori, Regional Programme Officer, Foreign Policy Instrument Asia Pacific, Delegation of the European Union to Thailand
- Ms Sophia Areias, Responsible Business Consultant, UNDP Asia-Pacific
- Mr Sean Lees, Business and Human Rights Specialist, UNDP Asia-Pacific
- Ms Anna Keller, Communications and Knowledge Management Officer, UNPD Asia-Pacific

[List of Annexes](#)

Annex I: Project Board Meeting Agenda

Annex II: PowerPoint Presentation

Annex III: Annual Workplan

Minutes of Project Board Meeting

Welcome remarks by Mr Jaco Cilliers

The meeting begins at 10:08. After a round of introductions, Mr Cilliers thanks everyone for their attendance. All members of the board are present. However, Mr Mehta informs Ms Kaur that he is sick and cannot stay in the meeting, and that he will provide inputs to the B+HR Team in person. Mr Cilliers provides an outline of the meeting and invites Ms Hedén to provide opening remarks.

Opening remarks by Åsa Hedén

Ms Hedén thanks UNDP for inviting the Embassy of Sweden as observers and congratulates UNDP on the milestones achieved, among other things highlighting that UNDP organized the first UN South Asia Forum on Business and Human Rights, co-published the Gender Dimensions of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and provided support to the Government of Thailand in developing Asia's first stand-alone National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAP). Ms Hedén emphasizes that the next steps are to continue realizing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) while emphasizing that human rights are the foundation for sustainable development. Sweden's, together with the EU, she emphasizes, is committed to these agendas.

Review of project implementation in 2019 by Livio Sarandrea

Mr Sarandrea thanks the board for their time and clarifies that he will outline B+HR Asia's progress and challenges in 2019, as well as how the project will overcome existing challenges in 2020. Five strategic priorities that have been achieved in 2019 outlined below.

First, UNDP supported the regional momentum on business and human rights (BHR) by doubling regional peer learning opportunities through organizing two regional forums. In this respect, Mr Sarandrea highlights how the BHR discourse spread from Southeast Asia to South Asia. Second, Mr Sarandrea mentions that B+HR Asia strengthened the partnership architecture by bringing together various actors involved in business and human rights (BHR). As an example, he points to the Responsible Business and Human Rights (RBHR) Forum, which was co-organized by UNDP, ILO, OECD, UN ESCAP. Third, Mr Sarandrea highlights increased engagements with CSOs and indigenous peoples. In this respect, small

grants were provided to CSOs, ANGOC and CEC, using funds to implement activities aimed at building the capacity of human rights defenders. A fourth key achievement was the alignment of priorities between B+HR Asia and the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights (UNWG). B+HR Asia organized a regional session at the annual Business and Human Rights Forum in Geneva, and UNDP's Assistant Secretary-General, Ms Asako Okai, was invited to speak at a high-level panel on policy coherence, which also included representatives from the EU, OECD, ILO, OHCHR, and UNICEF. Ms Okai's presence symbolized that UNDP's work on BHR is now of global nature, which was enabled through the regional support of Sweden to B+HR Asia. Moreover, the gender guidance on the UNGPs was co-published with the UNWG. Another co-effort was a regional consultation on BHR and conflict, held in collaboration with UNWG in Davao, the Philippines. Finally, Mr Sarandrea highlights a new project funded by the EU. In 2019, B+HR Asia ensured harmonization and complementarity between the projects funded by Sweden and the EU. Fifth, Mr Sarandrea highlights B+HR Asia's support to NAPs in the region. Most importantly, Thailand adopted Asia's stand-alone NAP, which was of very high quality. Moreover, UNDP supported the zero-draft of India's NAP, and will continue to provide technical advisory support to India's NAP process in 2020.

Mr Sarandrea then continues to outline key challenges faced in 2019. A first challenge was the lower than expected project delivery at the country level. One of the main causes has been identified in lower than assumed level of attention given by Country Offices to the work of B+HR Asia given the limited human resources capacities. This will be addressed in 2020 through bringing in BHR specialists in country offices (Bangladesh and Vietnam for the project funded by Sweden, while the other countries covered by the Sweden project will benefit from specialists funded by the EU project). Mr Sarandrea also noted that this challenge did not apply to Vietnam in 2019. A second challenge pertains to the slower than expected finalization of research projects, as outlined in the annual report. Third, private sector engagement remains an ongoing challenge that will be further addressed in 2020. Mr Sarandrea mentions he remains open for suggestions on how to improve performance in this respect. Fourth, Mr Sarandrea highlights that fragile political landscapes in the countries in focus require adapting strategies. Finally, UNDP will explore new strategies to ensure cooperation with regional institutions such as ASEAN and SAARC.

Questions and remarks

Mr Cilliers invites participants to pose questions.

Ms Hedén requests Mr Sarandrea to give more details about the vacant positions in UNDP country offices. Mr Sarandrea clarifies that most of the vacancies under the EU project have been advertised and are expected to be filled soon. Moreover, in respect of the Sweden project, Mr Sarandrea outlines that, instead of giving a small percentage of staff cost recovery to implementing country offices, now most funds relating to country-level work will be used to hire two BHR specialists in Bangladesh and Viet Nam, the two countries not covered by the EU project.

Ms Pairchaiyapoom thanks UNDP country office Thailand and UNDP Asia-Pacific for their ongoing support to the development of Thailand's NAP. She highlights various ways in which UNDP support to the Government of Thailand has stimulated regional peer-learning in Southeast and South Asian countries.

Ms Phuong echoes the comments provided by Ms Pairchaiyapoom. The experience from Thailand has helped UNDP Viet Nam with its activities in the country. Moreover, Ms Phuong emphasizes that the recruitment of the BHR specialist at the country level will be instrumental in implementing activities relating to responsible business with the Government of Viet Nam, including a potential NAP process. Finally, Ms Phuong mentions that UNDP Viet Nam is putting increasing efforts in private sector engagement.

Ms Liguori explains that it is important for the EU to have dedicated BHR specialists in UNDP country offices, given the EU project's 'national focus'. She also highlighted the need for complementarity between the two projects, and that the national specialists under the EU project will also be well placed to promote the outcomes to be achieved under the project funded by Sweden. Moreover, Ms Liguori asks how UNDP can most effectively engage with the private sector and points to the potential role of the EU Chambers of Commerce. Mr Sarandrea affirms that ensuring complementarity between the two projects will be a priority in the years to come and looks forward exploring how to engage with the private sector and the EU Chambers of Commerce.

2020 Annual Work Plan by Harpreet Kaur

Mr Cilliers emphasizes that the discussion on the Annual Workplan (AWP) is where board members can suggest potential corrections to and approve the AWP for 2020. Dr Kaur states that COVID-19 may warrant changes to the AWP and welcomes suggestions in this respect.

Dr Kaur explains the key BHR trends and opportunities and outlines the inputs and feedback that were received in 2019. Dr Kaur identifies that there are various global developments calling for a "smart mix of measures" to foster business respect for human rights and strengthening of national policy coherence

National Baseline Assessments. Moreover, Dr Kaur identifies increasing support for the UNGPs across the world, and developments in terms of integrating gender dimensions, and addressing issues relating to human rights defenders. Dr Kaur also explains how UNDP reflected on its approaches by reviewing the 2019 Project Board meeting, the mid-year project review, the third B+HR Lab, and the lessons learned during the regional forums in Delhi and Bangkok and the annual BHR Forum in Geneva.

Dr Kaur then outlines the principal strategic direction for 2020. This includes shifting greater attention to regional objectives, leaving space for country-level interventions for the countries overlapping with the EU project; in this context, increasing focus on Bangladesh and Vietnam, as well as India; strengthening capacity-building efforts through the development of tools, case studies and training sessions; investing more in research and data collection; greening B+HR Asia. Dr Kaur then outlines the main specific activities planned in 2020 (see the slide named “ACTIVITIES 2020” under Annex II of this document). However, Dr Kaur emphasizes that some activities may be impacted by COVID-19, which will require contingency measures to ensure regional momentum is maintained.

Feedback from bilateral conversations with project board members by Victoria De Mello

Five bilateral conversations of each one hour were held prior to this meeting, posing four general questions.

The first question was “how can the B+HR Project best contribute to increasing the BHR momentum in Asia?” Board members identified continuous advocacy as things that went well in 2019, which included providing safe space to CSOs and stimulate peer-learning between governments during the regional forums, and supporting NAP process and pushing the agenda when there is low awareness or political will. Key suggestions for 2020 included providing support to improve inter-ministerial coordination, work more with trade unions, business and employer’s associations, engage more with SMEs, start-ups or individual entrepreneurs. Moreover, board members proposed that UNDP nurture national champions in the business sector.

The second question posed to during the conversations “what could be the challenges in implementing this Workplan”? From these conversations, four main challenges emerged. First, engaging governments can be challenging as civic spaces in Asia remain continuously shrinking. This could worsen in 2020. Second, it was suggested that UNDP could bridge a dialogue with governments on criminal defamation cases or strategic litigation against public participation (SLAPPs). Third, board members suggested UNDP

allocate more resources to in-countries activities and assist governments in inter-ministerial coordination. Finally, it was suggested that UNDP could support research on BHR and the informal sector.

The third question was “how can the B+HR project (with partners) support enhancing multi-stakeholder engagement?” Board members appreciate the collaborative approach of the project and making use of existing platforms to promote multi-stakeholder engagement. Second, it was noted that B+HR should continue to collaborate and find synergies with other programmes in UNDP to promote a coordinated offer to Governments, which could also apply to private sector partners. Finally, it was suggested UNDP engage more with academia, as they can be a useful link between CSOs and business. Moreover, it was suggested that UNDP continue to build the capacity of CSOs to support NAP processes.

Finally, the last question was “what are, in your view, emerging business and human rights opportunities the project can seize in 2020? A first observation was that the adoption of Thailand’s NAP presents various opportunities for peer-learning and new engagement of governments. Moreover, the EU-Vietnam FTA and Viet Nam’s ASEAN chairmanship were identified as potential opportunities. Other examples include the emerging gender equality agenda, engagement with media, and supporting HRDs are important opportunities.

Additional recommendations

Ms Sekhar provides two inputs on private sector engagement. She mentions that pilots are a powerful tool in bringing solutions to life. A pertinent challenge to business is how to provide or participate in effective grievance mechanisms and effect change deep in supply chains (distant tiers). Ms Sekhar suggests taking a platform approach to grievance mechanisms where companies can come together and offer sector-wide grievance mechanisms instead of having to tackle the problem individually. Second, Ms Sekhar questions whether UNDP can work together with law and business schools to improve the knowledge of civil servants. Third, she suggests exploring how to provide positive incentives to businesses by incorporate human rights and responsible sourcing in public procurement.

Mr Guyacan suggests working with business associations to strengthen business engagement, especially associations that represent buyers (e.g. multinational corporations, SMEs) and suppliers and achieve scale and impact. Mr Guyacan also suggests addressing the high rate of informality since 68% of the workers in the region operate in the informal sector. Second, Mr Guyacan recommends exploring how to institutionalize BHR through existing working groups in governments, translating principles into concrete policies.

Ms Phuong emphasizes the importance of business engagement, being equally important as engaging with governments. She highlights her experience with engaging with Ikea. UNDP Viet Nam visited factories in the country in an attempt to provide them advice on various sustainability issues. This enabled UNDP to understand the granular issues and challenges that business face when it comes to implementing the UNGPs at the factory level. There's an added value to UNDP in providing concrete advice to businesses. Moreover, Ms Phuong also agrees that engaging with the European Chamber of Commerce can be valuable. Moreover, the EU-Viet Nam FTA is a promising development since it includes sustainability provisions. Finally, Ms Phuong sees as a key challenge with the government is that it wants a medium to long-term strategy; the government recommends creating an ambitious AWP covering several years.

Mr Urbinati thinks the strengthened focus on human rights defenders, criminal defamation and SLAPPs is welcome. Moreover, Mr Urbinati stresses that it is important to not only build the capacity of individuals or groups that are at a heightened risk of intimidation but also speak out and act; all with an eye on the 'do no harm' approach.

Mr Booth also emphasizes the need to strengthen coordination between various programmes within UNDP. In this respect, platforms relating to, for example, ESG, gender and SMEs can be a useful tool for promoting the transparency and anti-corruption and BHR programmes. Mr Booth agrees with Ms Sekhar to move governments to incentivize businesses to act responsibly.

Ms Pairchaiyapoom explains that during the NAP process, Thailand has improved awareness of government entities, businesses, state-owned enterprises and CSOs. She agrees that a priority area should be private sector engagement, especially SMEs. She points out that large and international companies often go beyond what the government is doing, in part due to market forces. But these forces have not yet trickled down to SMEs. Ms Pairchaiyapoom also agrees that pilot projects can prove a valuable tool to test new ideas and implement the NAP on the local level. This approach could be applied on both the government and business level. Moreover, Ms Pairchaiyapoom sees that companies are approaching the government on how they can implement the UNGPs and how they can benefit from integrating BHR approaches into their business models.

Ms Hedén recommends looking into IOM Crest for enhancing business engagement.

Ms Liguori questions whether advocacy missions could be extended to additional countries currently not covered under the Sweden project, especially where there seems to be an interest in BHR. Ms Liguori clarifies that the EU project has less flexibility in terms of regional advisory support since the EU project has a specific country-level focus, while the Sweden project has a more regional focus. Moreover, with

regard to India, considering that the country is covered by both projects, it would be important to ensure there are no overlapping actions and make the best use of available funds. Finally, Ms Liguori asks how the Government of Thailand is approaching the implementation of the NAP, and whether there are any requests for cooperation which could be covered under the project funded by the EU.

Mr Sarandrea welcomes the elaborate inputs by participants. Regarding the flexibility of the Sweden project, it is indeed the case that the project created a significant impetus for BHR developments outside the countries covered by the project. Mr Sarandrea points to Pakistan, Nepal, Maldives, Mongolia and many others. These countries have already been provided support, but not through the two existing projects. Mr Sarandrea clarifies that he is a core staff member of UNDP. Thus, his role requires him to provide advisory support to country offices not covered by the two projects. Nevertheless, it is indeed the case that the Sweden project indeed has more flexibility to support developments in the wider region, though this should always be discussed with Sweden individually. On India, Mr Sarandrea mentions that India is included in both projects. This is because India requires immediate support due to the ongoing NAP process from pretty much everyone in the B+HR Asia team. The India expert in the team is Harpreet, leading the Sweden project. Thus, she is well-placed to provide technical advisory support to India. However, B+HR Asia will ensure that no unnecessary overlap will exist.

On all other points, Mr Sarandrea takes all recommendations to heart. B+HR will explore working with IOM Crest as recommended by Ms Hedén and coordinating with the UNDP Fair Business programme as suggested by Mr Booth. Moreover, Mr Sarandrea acknowledges Ms Sekhar's recommendations on promoting positive incentives to business, including in relation to public procurement. B+HR Asia will also explore how to act on the suggested platform approach and pilots. In this respect, Mr Sarandrea mentions that UNDP India is piloting a project with Coca-Cola. Moreover, working with law schools was already in focus, and B+HR will also see how it can include business schools. Further, the recommendation provided by Mr Guyacan on working with business associations is also something UNDP is keen on exploring further. A very challenging part of UNDP's work is addressing the informal sector, as suggested by Mr Guyacan and Ms Pairchaiyapoom. In fact, Mr Sarandrea mentions that UNDP is discussing with the UNWG on how to address issues in the informal sectors, though there currently are no immediate solutions, which also applies to SMEs. Further, as suggested by Mr Urbinati, B+HR will continue to work on human rights defenders, criminal defamation and SLAPPs, while ensuring that UNDP does not put human rights defenders in danger. Finally, Mr Sarandrea mentions that in principle, there should be no problem in exploring how to create long-term plans together with the Government of Viet Nam.

The impact of COVID-19 on the AWP

Mr Sarandrea clarifies that the 2020 UN South Asia Forum on Business and Human Rights has already been postponed. UNDP has already started working on the RBHR Forum, working together with ILO, UNICEF, UN Women, UN ESCAP and the UNWG. UNDP is still planning on organizing the Forum. However, considering the current situation with COVID-19, it could be possible that the Forum may not happen. Internally, UNDP is exploring what will happen if the RBHR Forum cannot be held. A meeting is scheduled next week with all co-organizers on how to approach this issue.

UNDP has identified four contingency plans in relation to COVID-19. First of all, UNDP is exploring the possibility of organizing regional forums online. This is still something that will be discussed with the co-organizers. Moreover, Mr Sarandrea clarifies that if funds cannot be used for planned activities, UNDP may consider building momentum through strengthening research and publications planned for 2020, increase the allocation of funds to Bangladesh, Viet Nam and India, and re-allocate resources towards additional countries outside the project's focus to strengthen ongoing regional momentum. Mr Sarandrea clarifies that all these decisions will be discussed with donors.

The board takes note of the contingency plans, which shall be subject to the approval of board members and donors. Then decisions can be made on those contingency plans. Mr Cilliers invites anyone to raise any issues, concerns or questions.

Mr Lees mentions that the COVID-19 situation may negatively affect the appetite for BHR, given the risk that bottom lines may come under pressure.

Dr Harpreet acknowledges the contributions by all participants and the project will see how these can be implemented.

Mr Cilliers thanks all the participants for their inputs and the project team for their comprehensive outline, and adjourns the meeting.

ANNEX I: AGENDA

Agenda	
10:00	Welcome Remarks and Introductions Jaco Cilliers, Chief of Policy and Programming, UNDP Asia-Pacific
10:10	Opening Remarks Åsa Hedén, Head of Development Cooperation, Asia and the Pacific, Government of Sweden
10:15	Year in Review: Project Implementation 2019 Livio Sarandrea, Business and Human Rights Advisor, UNDP Asia-Pacific
10:30	Project Opportunities Harpreet Kaur, Project Manager a.i. and Victoria de Mello, Project Coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2020 Workplan- Report from Bilateral Consultations with the Board- Consultation on Contingency Plan related to the impact of COVID-19
10:50	Inputs and feedback from the Board Members
11:50	Wrap Up and Next Steps
Members of the Board	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Executive Chair: UNDP Chief Policy and Programming, Jaco Cilliers- Senior Supplier, represented by UNDP Head of Governance a.i., Nicholas Booth- Senior Beneficiaries, including:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ms. Nareeluc Pairchaiyapoom, Director of International Rights Division, Ministry of Justice of the Kingdom of Thailand2. Mr. Supanat Kaewlek, Justice Officer, Ministry of Justice of the Kingdom of Thailand3. Mr. Lorenzo Urbinati, Partnership Development Officer, Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)4. Ms. Catherine Phuong, Assistant Resident Representative, UNDP Viet Nam Country Office5. Mr. Viraf Mehta, Advisor, Partners in Change, India6. Mr. Freddy Guyacan, Project Manager, Responsible Supply Chains in Asia, ILO Asia and the Pacific7. Ms Shubha Sekhar, Director Human Rights, Eurasia and North Africa, Coca-Cola
Observers	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Åsa Hedén, Head of Development Cooperation, Regional Asia and the Pacific, Embassy of Sweden- Juthathip Subhaswasdikul, Senior Programme Officer, Development Cooperation Section, Embassy of Sweden- Laura Liguori, Regional Programme Officer, Foreign Policy Instrument Asia Pacific, European Commission

ANNEX II: PRESENTATION



BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

in Asia



PROJECT BOARD 2020: PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES IN 2019

AGENDA

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REPORT:2019

Livio Sarandrea, Business and Human Rights Advisor, UNDP Asia Pacific

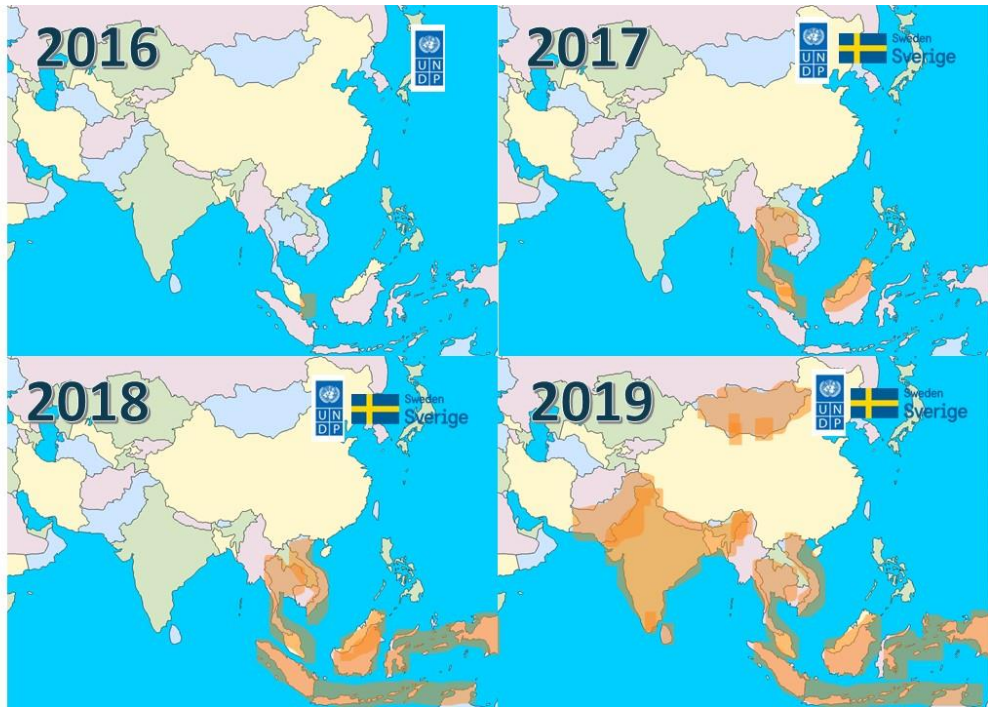
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AGREED IN PREVIOUS PROJECT BOARD

- Build on Regional Momentum by doubling Regional Peer learning opportunities (2 Subregions-2 Forums)
- Increase Engagement with CSOs
- Align with priorities of UNWG on B+HR
- Increase joint work with other B+HR Actors
- Ensure better balance between events and products
- Harmonize Project Supported by Government of Sweden with new project funded by EU
- Fill Gaps left by missed partnership with ASEAN CSR Network

PROGRESS IN ADDRESSING AGREED STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- ✓ Build on Regional Momentum by doubling Regional Peer learning opportunities (2 Subregions-2 Forums)
- ✓ Increase Engagement with CSOs
- ✓ Align with priorities of UNWG on B+HR
- ✓ Increase joint work with other B+HR Actors
- ⌚ Ensure better balance between events and products
- ✓ Harmonize Project Supported by Government of Sweden with new project funded by EU
- ⌚ Fill Gaps left by missed partnership with ASEAN CSR Network





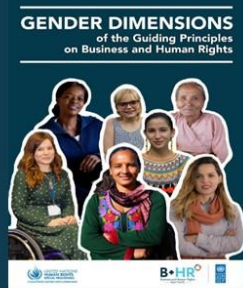
**INCREASED WORK WITH OTHER BHR ACTORS:
THE RBHR FORUM**



INCREASED
ENGAGEMENT WITH
CSOs AND INDIGENOUS
PEOPLE:
SMALL GRANTS AND
FOCUS ON HRDS

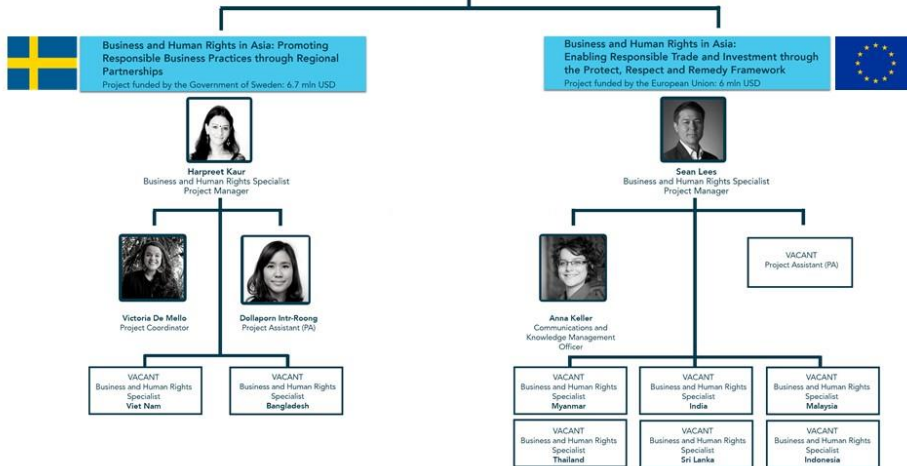


PROJECT PRIORITIES
ALIGNED WITH THOSE
OF THE UNWG ON
BUSINESS AND HUMAN
RIGHTS





Livio Sarandrea
Business and Human Rights Advisor
Programme Manager



TWO B+HR PROJECTS HARMONIZED

1ST NAP IN ASIA
ADOPTED
AND MORE IN THE
WORKS...



CHALLENGES FACED IN 2019

- Project delivery lower than expected at country level
- Processes to finalize research products slower than expected
- Participation of Private Sector to events and initiatives not yet high enough
- Fragile political landscape in countries in focus
- Reduced entry points to work with Regional Institutions

**BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN ASIA:
Promoting Responsible Business Practices through Regional Partnerships**

ANNUAL WORK PLAN

1 January 2020 - 31 December 2020

Dr Harpreet Kaur, Business and Human Rights Specialist, UNDP Asia Pacific

GUIDING PROCESS TO DEVELOP AWP

B+HR TRENDS & OPPORTUNITIES

- Calls for “**Smart-mix**” and building on the rise of human rights due diligence binding norms
- National Action Plans—**lack of national policy coherence** and uneven quality of National Baseline Assessments
- **Regional momentum** in support of UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)
- Increasing attention to **Gender dimensions** of Business and Human Rights
- Key **human rights impacts** of businesses on human rights defenders, workers, global supply chains
- **New EU and UNDP multi-country partnership:** “Enabling Sustainable Economic Growth through the Protect, Respect and Remedy Framework.



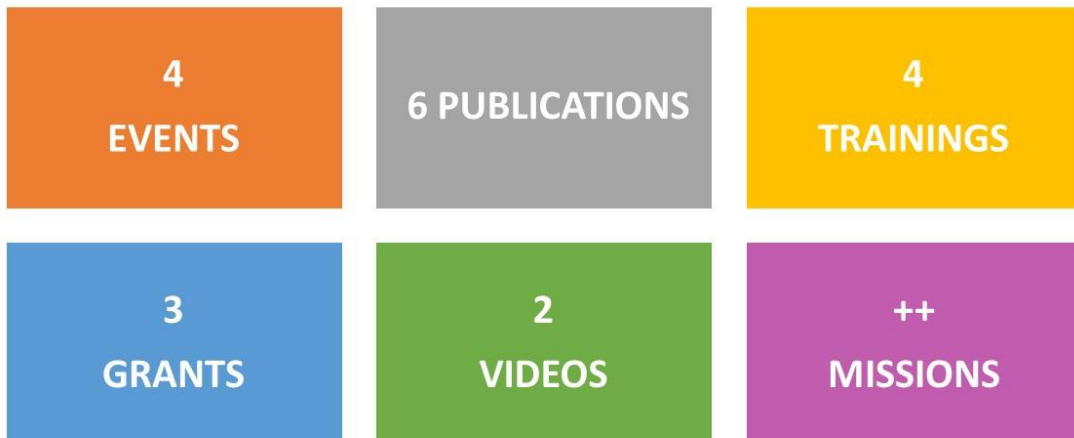
INPUTS & FEEDBACK

- The project board held in February 2019
- The mid-year project review held with representatives of the Swedish Embassy in Sweden
- The B+HR Lab 3, which focused on testing our assumptions and involving UN Agencies, and several CSOs.
- The 2019 Annual UN Forum on Business and Human Rights

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- Shifting **greater attention to regional objectives** and leaving more significant space for country-level interventions, in countries of geographical overlap to the EU project
- **Increasing focus on Bangladesh and Vietnam** as the two countries not in focus in the EU project + **India**
- Increasing focus on **capacity building** through the development of more **tools, case studies and training** sessions
- Investing more in **research and data collection**
- **Greening** B+HR Asia

ACTIVITIES PLANNED:



ACTIVITIES 2020

<p>Strengthening Regional Momentum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020 UN South Asia Forum on B&HR in Kathmandu, Nepal • Responsible B&HR Forum, Bangkok, Thailand • Asia Session organized at the Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights on Progress in Asia in collaboration with the UNWG • Trainings on Human Rights Due Diligence with AICHR, Bangkok, Thailand • Regional Capacity Strengthening Programme for Indigenous Peoples in Sabah, Malaysia • Two videos, one each, on gender and environment to demonstrate connections with B&HR and its implications for the communities
<p>NAP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy missions to provide technical advisory support and guidance to governments • Increased technical assistance to NAP development process in India • Report: Status of Business and Human Rights in Asia • Case book on applying gender-sensitive practices to the UNGPs
<p>Strengthening Partnership Architecture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional B+HR Lab4 • Regional Dialogue on Indigenous Youth Social Entrepreneurship and Small Grants for Indigenous Entrepreneurs
<p>Access to Remedy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handbook on the tools & techniques to increase media reportage on B&HR • Study on the costs of sexual harassment for businesses and female employees and the role businesses can play to address violence against women in workplaces • Research on the regional scope and impact of SLAPP legislation • Train NHRIs to facilitate contribution to NBA and monitoring of NAPs
<p>Trade</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on role of trade negotiations in promoting Human Rights and building Peace

■ EVENTS
 ■ PUBLICATIONS
 ■ TRAINING
 ■ GRANTS
 ■ VIDEOS
 ■ MISSIONS



FEEDBACK FROM BILATERAL CONVERSATIONS WITH PROJECT BOARD MEMBERS

Victoria De Mello. Project Coordinator, UNDP Asia Pacific

Bilateral Consultations with Project Board members

1. How can the B+HR Project best contribute to increasing the Business and Human Rights momentum in Asia?
2. What could be the challenges in implementing this Workplan?
3. How can the B+HR Project (with partners) support enhancing multi-stakeholder engagement?
4. What are, in your view, emerging Business and Human Rights opportunities the Project can seize in 2020?

Bilateral Consultations with Project Board members

1. **How can the B+HR Project best contribute to increasing the Business and Human Rights momentum in Asia?**
 - Board members appreciated the continuous advocacy led by B+HR in 2019. Both regional and country-level interventions kept momentum in Asia alive.
 - The **safe space provided to CSOs** was recognized as a highlight of the year, as well as the opportunities for **governmental peer-learning** during the Regional Forums.
 - UNDP was recognised for having played an essential role in **supporting NAP processes** and pushing the agenda when there was low awareness or political will.
 - In some countries, there is a pressing need for **better inter-ministerial coordination**, and UNDP is well-placed to provide this support in the future.
 - Board members have suggested UNDP **work more with trade unions, business and employer's association**, and to try to **engage more with MSMEs, startups or individual entrepreneurs**.
 - Board members proposed that UNDP **nurture national champions in the business sector**.

Bilateral Consultations with Project Board members

2. What could be the challenges in implementing this Workplan?

- The interviewed Board members recognise the Workplan have pressing challenges, and they vary.
- Engaging some governments on BHR issues can be challenging as **civic spaces in Asia remain continuously shrinking**. The countries in focus (Bangladesh and Vietnam) are countries with restricted civic spaces and research shows that the **scenario will keep worsening in 2020**.
- UNDP could **bridge a dialogue with governments** on the issue of criminal defamations, or other suits against public participation (SLAPPs).
- Board members suggest UNDP allocate **more resources in country-led activities**, to assist governments champions in providing **inter-ministerial coordination**.
- The **informal sector accounts for 60 per cent of the workforce in Asia**. UNDP could lead pieces of research to understand how UNGPs can be implemented within this growing sector.

Bilateral Consultations with Project Board members

3. How can the B+HR Project (with partners) support enhancing multi-stakeholder engagement?

- The interviewed Board members appreciate the **collaborative approach** the project is taking and the platforms that exist to promote multi-stakeholder engagement.
- B+HR should continue finding **synergies with other programmes in UNDP**, to promote a **coordinated offer** to Governments partners. This could apply to private sector partners as well.
- UNDP should **engage more with Academia**, as they can be a useful link between CSOs and business. UNDP to continue promoting **capacity building for CSOs** to best support NAP processes.

Bilateral Consultations with Project Board members

4. What are, in your view, emerging Business and Human Rights opportunities the Project can seize in 2020?

- Multiple opportunities emerge from the recently adopted **Thailand NAP** and the constantly evolving political and economic scenario in Asia.
- The **EU-Vietnam FTA** that has just been ratified, alongside Vietnam's ASEAN Chairmanship; both can pose multiple opportunities to seize.
- Board members believe the **Gender Equality agenda** is picking up fast within the business sectors.
- Engaging with the **Media** can be an exciting opportunity.
- Multiple actors are working to **support HRDs** at the moment, and this could be an excellent opportunity for collaboration (FORUM-ASIA is hosting the bi-annual forum on HRDs in Korea in October).

COVID – 19 : STATUS



Confirmed cases*	
China	80596
Bangladesh	3
India	56
Indonesia	27
Japan	581
Nepal	1
Pakistan	16
Sri Lanka	1
Thailand	53
Vietnam	31

* As of 11 March 2020, 1350 Hrs

ACTIVITIES 2020: IMPACT OF COVID-19

<p>Strengthening Regional Momentum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020 UN South Asia Forum on B&HR in Kathmandu, Nepal • Responsible B&HR Forum, Bangkok, Thailand • Asia Session organized at the Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights on Progress in Asia in collaboration with the UNWG • Trainings on Human Rights Due Diligence with AICHR, Bangkok, Thailand • Regional Capacity Strengthening Programme for Indigenous Peoples in Sabah, Malaysia • Two videos, one each, on gender and environment to demonstrate connections with B&HR and its implications for the communities
<p>NAP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy missions to provide technical advisory support and guidance to governments • Increased technical assistance to NAP development process in India • Report: Status of Business and Human Rights in Asia • Case book on applying gender-sensitive practices to the UNGPs
<p>Strengthening Partnership Architecture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional B+HR Lab4 • Regional Dialogue on Indigenous Youth Social Entrepreneurship and Small Grants for Indigenous Entrepreneurs
<p>Access to Remedy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handbook on the tools & techniques to increase media reportage on B&HR • Study on the costs of sexual harassment for businesses and female employees and the role businesses can play to address violence against women in workplaces • Research on the regional scope and impact of SLAPP legislation • Train NHRIs to facilitate contribution to NBA and monitoring of NAPs
<p>Trade</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research on role of trade negotiations in promoting Human Rights and building Peace

QUESTIONS

CONTINGENCY PLANS

- Exploring possibility of organizing regional forums online through different approach
- Strengthening the research and publications planned for 2020
- Increased allocation to Bangladesh, Vietnam and India
- Re-allocating resources towards “additional countries” to strengthen the ongoing regional momentum

ANNEX III: ANNUAL WORKPLAN



WORKPLAN, 2020

Business and Human Rights in Asia: Promoting Responsible Business

Practices through Regional Partnerships (B+HR Asia)

1 January 2020 - 31 December 2020

Submission Date:

2 December 2019

SUMMARY

The B+HR Asia project promotes and supports the implementation of the United Nations (UN) Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) in Asia through regional efforts focused on advocacy, policy development, technical advisory support, capacity building, awareness-raising, innovation platforms, regional peer learning events, and South-South cooperation.

Project activities are channelled towards five (5) principle outputs: 1) regional peer learning and training events that build regional momentum and inform progress on implementation of the UNGPs; 2) regional strategies in support of the advancement of National Action Plans (NAPs), or similar policy frameworks, in furtherance of implementation of the UNGPs; 3) a partnership architecture that brings greater coherence to policy and advocacy efforts among actors working on a regional level on Business and Human Rights (B&HR); 4) strengthened Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) that provide access to effective remedy for violations of human rights in the context of business operations and; 5) greater policy coherence and public discourse on trade and international investor agreements, and their relationship to the B&HR agenda.

In 2020, the B+HR Asia project will **continue to align with the priorities of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights (UNWG)** while responding to the inputs and feedback collected all-year-around through various interactions with a range of stakeholders. The 2020 Annual Work Plan (AWP) builds upon the successful implementation of work carried out in 2019 and the lessons learnt during the same period. Additionally, it is informed by the **evolving B&HR discourse** and responds to the **inputs and feedback from multi-stakeholder consultations** held during the year, including:

- The project board held in February 2019
- The mid-year project review held with representatives of the Swedish Embassy in Sweden
- The B+HR Lab 3, which focused on testing our assumptions and involving UN Agencies, and several CSOs.
- The 2019 Annual UN Forum on Business and Human Rights

The partnership architecture has evolved and expanded in 2019 and has called for a re-alignment of the strategic regional priorities and approach in promoting the implementation of the UNGPs in Asia.

Resources have been mobilised, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has entered into a new partnership with the European Union (EU) for a four-year project to enable sustainable economic growth through the UNGPs. Given this, the geographical focus suggested for 2020 reflects sought complementarity with the EU project approved in November 2020.

This Annual Workplan (AWP) builds upon the **regional momentum** strengthened through UNDP's year-long technical advisory support to governments, advocacy on inclusive policy processes, awareness-raising and capacity building of multiple stakeholders, peer learning opportunities and South-South cooperation. **Collaborative and complementary approaches** will be reinforced in 2020 to strengthen the impetus gained through **inter-agency coordination** and collaboration.

Given the above, B+HR Asia will focus in 2020 on the following thematic areas:

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- Technical and advisory support to ensure **policy coherence** in government action to protect against business-related human rights abuses;
 - Access to remedy with an emphasis on the role of the NHRIs, human rights defenders and protection of civic space;
 - Applying the **gender lens** to the B&HR agenda; and
 - Conflict prevention/sustaining peace and development.

With the advent of the EU-funded project focusing on country-level programming and the growing regional momentum, the B+HR Asia project will shift increased attention to regional activities. At country level the project will prioritise and allocate more resources to the two countries not overlapping with the EU Project (Bangladesh and Vietnam) while de-prioritizing the others (Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Sri Lanka) starting January 2020 until the end of the project, unless any unforeseen change will suggest otherwise.

In 2018 and 2019, extensive efforts were made to create awareness about B&HR. While Awareness raising will remain central from 2020 onwards, increased time and resources will be allocated to evolve from awareness raised to capacity built. In 2020 more time and efforts will be dedicated to collecting data, publishing reports and developing tools to build capacity and strengthen the regional momentum. The project will also bring in more partners, share resources, and promote green activities.

This Workplan is divided into five sections:

- Section 1 provides an overview of the key B&HR trends in the region;
- Section 2 details corresponding activities to respond to the evolving trends;
- Section 3 outlines the provisions related to the programme management and support; and
- Section 4 details the activity-wise budget.

Section 1: Business and Human Rights (B&HR) priorities and trends for 2020

Despite considerable progress on B&HR in Asia, challenges continue to exist at various levels. Some governments are still assessing the business case for implementing the UNGPs as they lack understanding of the principles, and policy coherence remains an issue. Businesses, mainly, domestic companies and small and medium enterprises, believe that the B&HR agenda is still a risk to profit maximisation. Commitment to National Action Plans (NAPs) on B&HR is not yet synonymous with stronger protections for individuals and communities affected by the corporate human rights abuses and violations. Legal and administrative barriers created by governments are resulting in shrinking space for civil society movements, and human rights defenders are often subjected to intimidation and harassment.

In addition to these challenges, the slowdown of the global economy adversely impacts the fastest growing economic region, Asia and the Pacific. International Monetary Fund's (IMF) latest economic [assessment](#) for Asia and the Pacific highlights rising downside risks to growth in the context of a synchronised global slowdown. Growth in Asia softened in the first half of 2019, driven by a pronounced

"The near-term outlook points to continued slowdown of regional growth, driven by global policy uncertainty and slowing growth in China and India. With Asia's conjuncture at a delicate moment, policies will need to be supportive while safeguarding financial stability".

- Chang Yong Rhee, Director of the IMF's Asia and Pacific Department

decline in fixed investment and exports.

The UNGPs was endorsed in 2011, and since then, the B&HR discourse has evolved globally. There has been much action to turn UNGPs into practice via a mix of state-led measures, private-sector initiatives, investor-driven approaches and multi-stakeholder efforts by CSOs, trade unions and NHRIs. While European states took the lead in demonstrating action on the UNGPs, progress in Asia in recent years has been remarkable. The following section outlines the key business and human rights issues, strategic trends and opportunities that informed the drafting of the 2020 AWP.

1.1 Key human rights impacts of businesses:

Data indicates that **human rights defenders (HRDs)** all over the world are increasingly **threatened, attacked, and silenced**. The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) documented 527 cases of violations and abuses against Asian HRDs in 2019 as against 251 in 2017.

Their biennial report, *Defending In Numbers*, reported an increase in non-state actors such as businesses and corporations in the mining and extractives industries and agri-businesses responsible for land abuses and harms to the environment and environmental rights defenders.

The Asia-Pacific region is well integrated into global supply chains given its population size and low-cost labour to produce goods and services. However, the growth in employment opportunities and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has not resulted in improved **working conditions**. Instead, Asia has become a reference for unfair labour practices. The region accounted for the world's highest rates of **child labour** and **forced labour** and is notoriously known for the exploitation of **migrant workers** with little regard for their **health and safety and fair wages**. The condition of **women workers** is even worse as they face distinct forms of gender-based discrimination as compared to their male counterparts, including “differential wages, poor quality of jobs, limited access to facilities and benefits (such as sanitary facilities, drinking water, health care and transportation) and, sexual harassment”.

Adverse human rights impacts often occur following **land acquisition by corporates** and land appropriation practices by governments that violate and undermine the human rights and local use rights of local communities and traditional users of the land.

1.2 National Action Plans—lack of national policy coherence and uneven quality of National Baseline Assessments

A commitment to developing a National Action Plan (NAP) on B&HR is the first step undertaken by States to articulate their priorities to implement the UNGPs. There has been considerable progress last year in Asia in this domain. [Thailand](#) was the first Asian country to adopt a NAP on Business and Human Rights in November 2019; [India](#) launched a Zero draft of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights in March 2019; [South Korea](#) adopted a Human Rights National Action Plan containing a chapter on Business and Human Rights; and initiatives and processes are underway in [Indonesia](#), [Malaysia](#), Japan and [Pakistan](#) to develop stand-alone National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights.

While there is a commitment from governments of the respective States to develop NAPs, conflicting mandates and agendas among lead and other ministries (and departments) often result in a lack of **national policy coherence**. For NAPs to be owned and fully understood by multiple ministries, it is important to understand the importance of a comprehensive baseline assessment that takes into consideration the views and mandate of multiple ministries, as well as engages with them, increasing the ownership of the process. UNWG's recent [report](#) identified numerous challenges in achieving policy coherence in implementing the Guiding Principles.

Additionally, there are very few States investing in thorough National Baseline Assessments (NBA). For NAPs to be able to address the ground realities, States must conduct baseline assessments, including at the local level, to fully understand the situation on the ground and to plan responses.

1.3 Calls for “Smart-mix” and building on the rise of human rights due diligence binding norms

Smart-mix was the buzz word at the Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights in Geneva. A **smart mix** refers to the **right** combination of mandatory, voluntary, national and international measures needed to effectively foster **business** respect for **human rights** in a particular context. The UNGPs represent the voluntary instrument while strong advocacy for a binding treaty on B&HR confirms the translation of the soft law expectation of a corporate responsibility to respect human rights under the UNGPs, into hard law through legislative action. The adoption of mandatory human rights due diligence (mHRDD) laws in a growing number of countries shows that it is no longer a question of *if*, but of *when* such laws will be in place and how will it impact current business operations and practices, and facilitate access to remedy to victims of corporate abuses. There has been a [legislative tide](#) among the European states to promote mHRDD with most recent being The Netherlands' adoption of The Child Labour Due Diligence Law (due to come into force in 2020). It is interesting to note that there is growing support among the business community for mHRDD as demonstrated by [public statements and endorsements](#). Companies can no longer ignore respect for human rights given the social expectations from stakeholders including investors, employees and consumers. The legislation can offer legal certainty and a level playing field, vis-à-vis both competitors and upstream business partners who may not face the same public pressure.

1.4 Regional momentum in support of UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs)

The change of pace in Asia on Business and Human Rights is encouraging. Government uptake on the B&HR agenda is proceeding rapidly in the region through UNDP's increased advocacy efforts and technical support. Companies are increasingly embedding mHRDD approaches into their operational policies and corporate communication profiles.

The regional momentum steered through the regional forums including the **UN South Asia Forum on Business and Human Rights** and the **Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum** spurred a race-to-the-top among States and encouraged them to engage with the B&HR agenda. For example, at the UN South Asia Forum, the coming together of South Asia countries and demonstration of their commitment to action on UNGPs inspired Pakistan and Nepal to initiate country-level advocacy and action. Following this, the Government of Pakistan requested UNDP to organise a South-South exchange and peer learning opportunity with Thailand to understand the process undertaken to develop the NAP. Over the following eight months, Pakistan committed to develop a NAP and started a baseline assessment with multiple multi-stakeholder consultations. Nepal and Maldives are expected to include a section/chapter on Business and Human Rights in their NAPs on Human Rights. UNDP has also received requests from Mongolia and Laos to conduct a scoping study on Business and Human Rights and provide technical advisory support.

With Thailand's NAP process concluded during its Chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), inevitably other ASEAN Member States have also become attuned to UNDP's advocacy efforts to promote the implementation of the UNGPs. The ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) plays an important role in convening the ASEAN Member States on Business and Human Rights. UNDP continues to forge strong partnerships with AICHR on strengthening the Rule of Law and on promoting the Business and Human Rights agenda with the ASEAN Member States.

1.5 Gender dimensions of Business and Human Rights

During the 41st session of the Human Rights Council, on 26 June 2019, the UNWG presented the report on the [Gender Dimensions of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#). The report presents a gender framework for the UNGPs and proposes gender guidance specific to each of the 31

Guiding Principles. Both States and businesses are invited to consider the gender framework and guidance set when implementing the UNGPs. Gender Guidance makes a case for specific attention to the rights of women and girls in UNGPs implementation, and for addressing the structural gender discrimination that underpins workplaces and communities. UNDP contributed to the multi-stakeholder consultations conducted by the UNWG to seek inputs and feedback and published a booklet on the **Gender Dimensions of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights** which was enthusiastically received at its launch at the 2019 Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights.

UNDP, in its 2019 AWP proposed to produce a Women’s Rights Due Diligence (WRDD) Toolkit. However, before embarking in developing the instrument, UNDP decided to map the current state of knowledge and resources available for the business sector to identify and assess risks related to women’s rights. A White Paper was produced to identify and analyse what already made available by other relevant actors. The study identified a tool produced by BSR (Business for Social Responsibility) that seems to already adequately address the gap intended to be filled by the UNDP initiative. [Making Women Workers Count: A Framework for Conducting Gender Responsive Due Diligence in Supply Chains](#) provides step-by-step guidance towards women-sensitive HRDD in global supply chains. With this in mind, UNDP decided not to replicate ongoing efforts and to disseminate the existing BSR tool while developing complementary approaches to further the objective of using the gender lens while conducting Human Rights Due Diligence.

1.6. New EU and UNDP multi-country partnership: “Enabling Sustainable Economic Growth through the Protect, Respect and Remedy Framework”

After 24 months of negotiations and consultations, UNDP and the EU Foreign Policy Instrument firmed an agreement for a multi-country partnership focused on the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Alignment with the already ongoing action, supported by the Government of Sweden was one of the main criteria guiding the drafting of the new project.

Complementarily to the B+HR Asia programme supported by the Government of Sweden, the EU and UNDP project will contribute to policy discussions and awareness-raising programmes in six countries in Asia, namely **India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand**. The project will reach

its objectives through three (3) workstreams: 1) awareness-raising of the UNGPs and peer-to-peer exchange on lessons learned among key stakeholders to build knowledge and political will in furtherance of policy convergence and compliance; 2) communication and public diplomacy efforts to build public support of business and human rights agenda and; 3) promotion of access to remedy to ensure rights-based solutions and prevent future human rights abuses. The project will commence in January of 2020 and be followed by an implementation period of 42 months.

From the moment of entry into force of the new, EU funded project regular coordination between the two programmatic actions will be ensured, including by having a shared Project Advisor and periodic joint strategy meetings.

Section 2: Responding to the trends in 2020

In developing this AWP, the following inputs were taken into consideration:

- The ongoing B&HR challenges and the evolving regional discourse in Asia
- The feedback on our work collected during the Project Board, the mid-year review and the B+HR Lab 3
- The need for continued coherency and alignment with the priorities of the UNWG¹
- The need to place a specific focus on gender dimensions and social inclusion
- The need to ensure complementarity with the new project funded by the EU

A team reflection on the above **four guiding principles** led to choosing the following strategic directions for the 12 months to come:

1. Shifting greater attention to regional objectives and leaving more significant space for country-level interventions, in countries of geographical overlap to the EU project
2. Increasing focus on Bangladesh and Vietnam as the two countries not in focus in the EU project while maintaining ongoing support to NAP development processes in other countries (India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand).
3. Increasing focus on capacity building through the development of more tools, case studies and training sessions for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), HRDs, NHRIs, businesses and governments officials.
4. Investing more in research and data collection

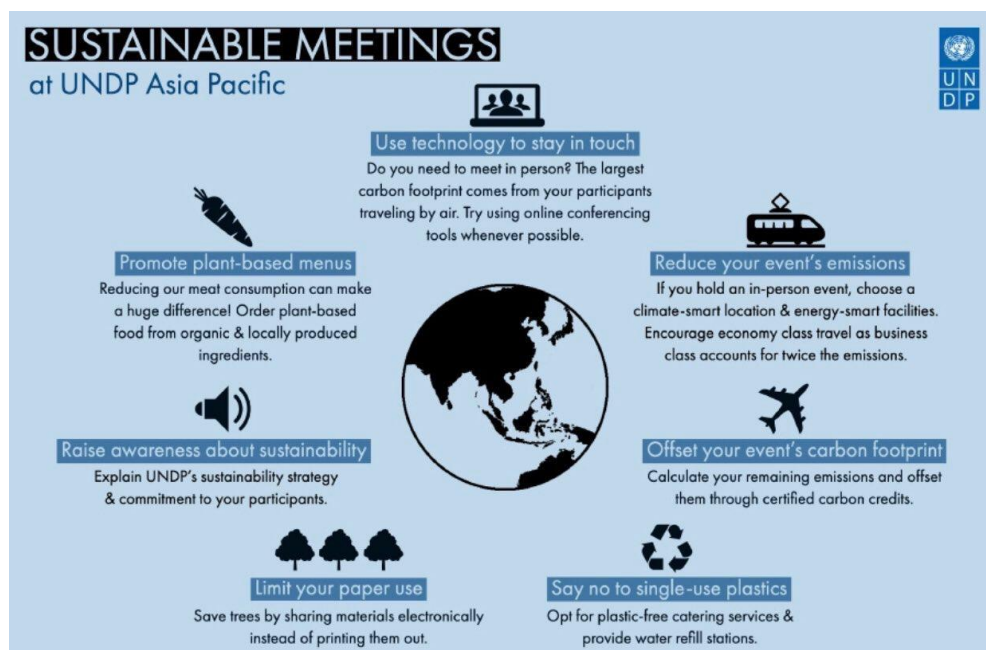
Given focus on the above-mentioned outputs, more financial resources are allocated to activities aimed at these results. A large number of financial resources are aimed at activities aimed at strengthening regional momentum and building capacity of varied stakeholders to hold companies accountable. However, this shift will not have any impact on the total amount budgeted for 2020. It is to be noted that

¹ UNWG's priorities are determined by the Members of the UNWG. Current priorities for the UNWG includes Access to Remedy (includes NHRI), Gender, Conflict/Peace, Human Rights Defenders and Investment and Trade. These priorities are determined and reviewed regularly by the UNWG Members during their regular sessions. An additional priority area, climate change will be introduced in 2021.

some amount of money will be rolled over from 2019, and will be utilised to deliver activities not budgeted for 2020.

Greening B+HR Asia

While discussing the way forward for B+HR Asia in 2020, the B+HR Team reflected at length on the importance to lead by example and reduce the project carbon footprint. With immediate effect, the project decided to embrace the corporate strategy **on sustainable meetings** (see below) with event documentation only available in electronic form, no single-use plastic, and participants encouraged to bring reusable water bottles and use e-documentation. By Q2 of 2020, the project will also analyse the specific impact of its activities on the environment using the [Side Green Toolbox](#) and come up with a dedicated project strategy.



2.0 Annual Workplan 2020: Activities

2.1 Output 1: Regional momentum strengthened toward implementation of the UNGPs through advocacy and regional dialogue on opportunities, priorities, and challenges of implementation.

Regional dialogues (such as the UN South Asia Forum and the Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum), advocacy missions, and regional partnerships have been instrumental in fostering a positive race-to-the-top in implementation of the UNGPs among the Asian States. Peer-learning sessions among NHRIs and CSOs organised during the regional forums encouraged collaborative approaches and the establishment of a network to exchange best practices to implement UNGPs. Regional mechanisms, including the AICHR, have played an important role in supporting the B&HR agenda in Southeast Asia. UNDP will continue to partner with AICHR to raise awareness as well as build capacity of ASEAN States. AICHR initiatives are driven by individual AICHR members, and the B+HR issues have been championed by previous and current AICHR representatives. UNDP plans to build capacity and interest on the subject on two additional AICHR representatives, Indonesia and Malaysia as they have shown initial interest in the subject.

UNDP will continue to invest in regional partners and produce audio-video materials to support the dissemination of information on B&HR. The following activities will be conducted in 2020 under this output:

2.1.1 Regional Forums:

The thriving regional forums reinforced the momentum in all countries in focus, as well as generated interest in countries not in focus for the project (Nepal and Pakistan). Encouraged by the decision to hold the inaugural South Asia Forum on Business and Human Rights in Delhi, the Government of India fast-tracked the drafting of Zero draft NAP. Engaged in “healthy competition” the Government of Pakistan also started the process of developing a NAP in July 2019. Nepal and Maldives included in fall 2019 a reference to B&HR in the ongoing National Human Rights Action Plan on Human Rights. In effect, NAP development processes are underway in most of the South Asian countries, and the regional peer-learning appears more critical than ever.

- **2020 UN South Asia Forum on Business and Human Rights, Kathmandu, Nepal**

After the 2019 Inaugural Forum kicked started a south Asia momentum by focusing mostly on awareness raising the 2020 UN South Asia Forum on B&HR will aim at a slightly more ambitious

objective: developing and strengthening the capacity of all stakeholders. Given the extent of labour rights challenges in Asia, and the role played by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in addressing the same, the 2020 UN South Asia Forum will be organized on 18-20 March 2020 in collaboration with the UN Working Group on B&HR and the ILO, focusing on impacts of businesses on labour rights in Asia. Additionally, considering the feedback from the Government of Sweden² and the location of the South Asia Forum, a session will be dedicated to the impacts of big infrastructure projects on communities.

- **2020 Responsible Business & Human Rights (RBHR) forum, Bangkok, Thailand:**

Building on the success of the RBHR 2019, UNDP will continue organising the 2020 RBHR forum in collaboration with ILO and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and will focus on emerging trends in Southeast Asia, particularly in the context of the recently adopted NAP in Thailand. Following recommendations from the B+HR Lab 3, the RBHR will place a stronger focus on the role that businesses can play as catalysts of change and the arising role of mHRDD. Unarguably, the protection of human rights defenders and the relevant role of participatory processes will remain a priority. UN Women and UNICEF have also expressed an interest in providing technical and tactical support to the event. The two organizations are likely to support participation of their partners from the region and have shared initial ability to cost share the organization of the event.

The regional events organised in 2019 in collaboration with other partners proved successful and called for resource sharing going-further. Both proposed forums will share resources with other partners to increase outreach as well as the impact of the initiative. Safe spaces (in the form of dedicate sessions) will be organised for CSO discussions, and greater attention will be paid to HRDs. The CSOs which received small grants through the project will also participate in these sessions. This will help in strengthening their capacity and expanding networks to further their initiatives aimed at addressing human rights abuses and violations by businesses. South-South cooperation among NHRIs will be encouraged through the sharing of best practices.

2.1.2 Partnership with AICHR:

² Mid-year review, SIDA

The partnership with AICHR that started in 2016 will be evolving in its modalities. While a substantial focus was given in the partnership on creating awareness during the period 2016-2019, the time seems now appropriate to focus on training sessions and building capacity. In 2020 UNDP plans to **partner with AICHR to conduct** Human Rights Due Diligence training for stakeholders in the ASEAN member states. The trainings will be targeted at business representatives with an aim to promote Human Rights Impact Assessments and stakeholder engagements as a means for due diligence.

2.1.3 Regional capacity strengthening programme for Indigenous Peoples (in Sabah, Malaysia):

In partnership with the Diplomacy Training Programme (DTP), B+HR Asia will develop and deliver a capacity building programme for up to 30 indigenous people's human rights defenders in Asia. The programme will be designed to enable these individuals and their organisations to better engage with representatives of government and business, and in intergovernmental forums, and to more effectively promote and protect their rights, including the right to free, prior and informed consent. The participants and their organisations will also be able to more effectively promote the B&HR agenda in Asia, including through engaging in processes such as the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

2.1.4 UN Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights in Geneva:

The Annual Forum on B&HR in Geneva brings together the international B&HR community to showcase progress, validate efforts, and share lessons learned year-through. In 2020, UNDP will organise the **Asia session** in collaboration with the UNGPs and report on the progress made in Asia in 2020. Like previous years the session will be aimed at encouraging States to publicly commit to implement the UNGPs and report on progress in developing NAPs. B+HR Asia has agreed with the UNWG to assign a specific focus in the 2020 Asia Session to the protection of Human Rights Defenders.

2.1.5 Audio-Visuals To support awareness and capacity building sessions, audio-visual materials will be developed. Two videos will be developed in 2020, focusing on human rights and the environmental

OUTPUT 1: STRENGTHENING REGIONAL MOMENTUM

- 2020 UN South Asia Forum on B&HR in Kathmandu, Nepal (March 2020)
- Responsible B&HR Forum, Bangkok (June 2020)
- Trainings on Human Rights Due Diligence with AICHR (September 2020)
- Asia Session organized at the Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights on Progress in Asia in collaboration with the UNWG (November 2020)
- Regional Capacity Strengthening Programme for Indigenous Peoples in Sabah, Malaysia (April 2020)
- Two videos, one each, on gender and environment to demonstrate connections with B&HR and its implications for the communities (April 2020)

impacts of business operations and on applying the gender lens to B&HR.

2.2 Output 2: Support development and implementation of regional and national legislative and policy frameworks

UNDP will continue to provide technical and advisory support in developing NAPs and will work closely through country offices to support robust National Baseline Assessments (NBAs) to inform the **formulation and prioritisation of actions in NAPs**. As experienced in Thailand, NBAs will also be utilized as an opportunity to build Business and Human Rights capacity among stakeholders involved in the research and consultations; and to contribute to transparency and accountability to the specific actions adopted in the NAPs. The following activities that will be covered under this output shall complement the activities outlined in the EU project focused on country-level programming.

2.2.1 Research: Status of Business and Human Rights in Asia

To update and consolidate the regional data baseline, a research study will be carried out to document the status of B&HR in Asia. The publication will document the key B&HR issues in the region, analyse the **regional trends, challenges and strategies** in implementing the UNGPs and provide recommendations for effective implementation. The **publication** which will review selected countries will bring even greater attention to the B&HR discourse in Asia and provide a critical baseline to gauge progress in the years to come. The report will be updated on a bi-yearly basis.

2.2.2. Casebook: Gender dimensions of Business and Human Rights

The UNWG issued Gender Guidance on strengthening the gender lens on the UNGPs in 2019. While the report provides an overarching framework and suggests principles to govern corporate conduct, it remains important for companies to develop practices consistent with such standards. UNDP will support peer learning by developing a **casebook on applying gender-sensitive practices** to enable companies to learn from what other companies have done to set things right. The casebook will be produced through a mix of desk-research and regional consultations with relevant stakeholders and experts in Asia. Finalization of the flagship publication is expected for late 2020 and will coincide with Human Rights Day. It will also commemorate the 45th anniversary of the original International Women’s Year and the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration.

2.2.3 Ongoing country-level implementation and additional support to country-level activities driving the regional momentum

The availability of resources under the EU project to work at the country level in India, Thailand, Sri Lanka Indonesia and Malaysia suggested a strategic redirection of most of the country-level work under the Swedish-funded project to Bangladesh and Vietnam. While all 7 countries originally in focus will still be receiving support, B+HR Asia will let the EU project lead in countries of geographical overlap and shift more resources to those, not in focus in the EU action. In 2020 Bangladesh and Vietnam will be allocated around 30% each of the resources destined to country-level interventions. The remaining 40% will be divided among India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia.

Keeping in mind the overall objective of the project to foster regional momentum and **move the B&HR momentum in Asia**, opportunities to support progress in new countries in the region will be seized to the extent possible and compatible with the desire of the Swedish Embassy to maintain the main focus on the countries originally designated as priority. In 2020 a modest amount of resources will be allocated to study further the developing B&HR scenario in countries such as Nepal, Pakistan, Maldives, Mongolia and Laos, all of which have expressed interest in developing policy frameworks. By the end of 2020, UNDP plans to submit a proposal to the Government of Sweden for an updated geographical focus of the project based on evolving opportunities to move the discourse in Asia and to maximize complementarities with other programmatic actions.

However, it is to be noted that the two projects will be aligned to ensure greater reach and impact. While EU-funded project will focus more on country-level interventions, Sweden funded project will continue to strengthen the regional momentum while contributing to country-level programming. Sweden and EU programme activities will align with regards to work supporting NAP implementation in India, Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia. However, the volume of SIDA support towards these ends will be reduced substantially. Further, SIDA support under Output 5 Strengthened policy coherence between regional trade and investment agreements, and the UNGPs, will complement EU work on country-specific work around the same. For example, any Policy coherence roundtables at the regional level will be complemented by the same at the country level. Also, B+HR Labs at the regional level will support “mini-labs” in country. Lastly, engagement on the Forum on Business and Human Rights in Geneva will require support from EU-funded national officers.

OUTPUT 2: SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT & IMPLEMENT OF REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE POLICY FRAMEWORKS

1. Advocacy missions to provide technical advisory support and guidance to governments of seven countries with emphasis on those (Bangladesh & Vietnam) not covered by the project under the UNDP-EU partnership (year-through)
2. Report: Status of Business and Human Rights in Asia (October, 2020)
3. Case book on applying gender-sensitive practices to the UNGPs (December, 2020)

2.3 Output 3: Strengthen regional partnership architecture made up of UN system, NHRIs, CSO, and private sector actors working on B&HR

Through the regional events and the annual B+HR Lab, UNDP has successfully utilised its convening power in the previous years to strengthen the regional partnership architecture made up UN system, NHRIs, CSOs, and private sector actors. In 2020, UNDP will continue to use joint-events modalities and promote joint submissions to Governments seeking consolidated inputs on their B&HR policies from the UN family. The B+HR Lab will be organized again and serve as a way to keep testing assumptions, coordinate work, and to the extent possible programme jointly.

2.3.1 B+HR Lab 4

Building on the success of previous B+HR Labs, UNDP will organise a regional **B+HR Lab 4** in Bangkok in October 2020. With expanding work at country level thanks to the partnership with the EU, a coherent

partnership architecture will also be pursued at the country through **local-B+HR labs**. The Regional Lab will also be utilized to convene the country focal points and encourage coordination.

2.3.2 Regional Dialogue on Indigenous Youth Social Entrepreneurship:

Indigenous communities across Asia-Pacific are often adversely impacted by business activities. Indigenous youth is particularly vulnerable to human rights abuses because of their age and the intersectional nature of the discrimination they experience. In 2020 B+HR Asia will build capacity on the UNGPs among young indigenous entrepreneurs to enable them to promote better and protect the rights of their communities. A Regional Dialogue organised by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNDP and the Asia Indigenous People's Pact (AIPP) will serve as one of the key activities for the Asia Indigenous Youth Platform to understand social entrepreneurship by bringing together stakeholders from the social entrepreneurship ecosystem and indigenous communities. The Regional Dialogue will introduce a UNDP and AIPP small Grants facility for young indigenous entrepreneurs that pitch innovative solutions to address B&HR in their respective communities.

OUTPUT 3: STRENGTHEN REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP ARCHITECTURE

1. Regional B+HR Lab 4 (October, 2020)
2. Regional Dialogue on Indigenous Youth Social Entrepreneurship and Small Grants for Indigenous Entrepreneurs (April, 2020)

2.4 Output 4: Increased awareness of all regional stakeholders of the UNGPs and strengthened access to an effective remedy for violations of human rights in the context of business operations

Some recent progress notwithstanding, access to remedy remains to a large extent the “forgotten pillar” of the UNGPs. Advocacy at the state level and buy-in from businesses to respect human rights will be meaningless if the victims of abuses aren’t able to access effective remediation. Participants at the B+HR Lab 3 highlighted the need to document violations, put more effort on activism, and raised questions on pathways to inspire the general public to care about corporates’ adverse impacts on human rights; “When you document, they change”, said a participant. Similar points were made during the RBHR and South Asia Forums. Accordingly, activities under Output 4 will focus on research, product development and training of relevant stakeholders. Investments will be made to increase the reportage of B&HR issues in

mainstream media. More research will be supported to document cases of violations and abuses as well as produce evidence to support activism. The following activities have been planned to enhance support to access to remedy:

2.4.1 Handbook: Tools & techniques to increase media reportage on Business and Human Rights

At the B+HR Lab 3, the role played by media in shaping narratives and actions by businesses and governments received great attention. The participants of the B+HR Lab 3 collectively inferred that media could/should play a crucial role in investigating cases of corporate human rights abuse and create awareness among consumers. No actor more than the media can produce pressure points to hold governments and businesses accountable. In 2020 a **Handbook** will be created to train the journalists on investigative and social affairs reporting. A **pilot project** will be conducted in a selected country to train journalists and gather evidence on corporate's human rights abuses and violations. UNDP is exploring partnership with media agencies such as BBC Media Action, Internews and Al-Jazeera as well as independent experts and media consultants to develop this handbook and the pilot in 2020.

2.4.2 Study on the costs of sexual harassment for businesses and female employees and the role businesses can play to address violence against women in workplaces in two selected countries of Asia and the Pacific:

UNDP collaborated with UN women to conduct a research study on the costs of sexual harassment for businesses, and the role businesses can play to address violence against women in workplaces in two selected countries of Asia and the Pacific. Data collection and analysis will be conducted in 2020, and the report will be published in 2021. The research will strengthen our advocacy to promote the inclusion of gender dimensions to the United Nations Guiding Principles.

2.4.3 SLAPP Research

Building on the briefing note done in 2019 with the Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, UNDP proposes to expand the study to additional two countries in 2020. The 2019 study surveyed and analysed SLAPP cases and anti-SLAPP laws and policies in four Southeast Asian countries over the past five years, including cases against human rights defenders and the lawyers and witnesses who support their work. The proposed research in 2020 will survey and analyse SLAPP cases and anti-SLAPP laws and policies over the last five years in the four Southeast Asian countries of Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia,

Vietnam/Philippines. NAPs are being developed in Indonesia, Thailand, India and Malaysia and CSOs in the four chosen countries have advocated for the use of NAPs to ensure increased protection for human rights defenders. This research project aims to urge governments to review existing laws and explore innovative approaches to ensure that human rights defenders can operate safely, and potentially utilise NAPs to address the legislative gaps and protect human rights defenders.

The research piece will include cases that fall under the definition of SLAPPs, including claims against, among others, environmental defenders, labour rights activists, communities, women’s rights and civil society leaders, lawyers.

2.4.4 Training for NHRIs at the APF annual meeting

NHRIs have a crucial role in facilitating and providing access to remedy directly and indirectly. A partnership will be forged with Asian Pacific Forum (APF) of National Human Rights Institutions and the Danish Institute of Human Rights to assist them with tools and techniques to support the development of baseline assessments and monitoring of NAPs.

OUTPUT 4: INCREASED ACCESS TO REMEDY

1. Handbook on the tools & techniques to increase media reportage on B&HR (October, 2020)
2. Study on the costs of sexual harassment for businesses and female employees and the role businesses can play to address violence against women in workplaces in two selected countries of Asia and the Pacific (December, 2020)
3. Research on the regional scope and impact of SLAPP legislation (June, 2020)
4. Partnership with the Danish Institute of Human Rights and Asian Pacific Forum to train NHRIs to facilitate contribution to NBA and monitoring of NAPs (September, 2020)

2.5 Output 5: Strengthened policy coherence between regional Trade Agreements, International Investor Agreements, and UNGPs to enhance the region’s competitive positioning in attracting investment and increasing trade flows

The UNGPs deal explicitly with international trade and investment agreements and expect States to consistently fulfil their obligation to protect human rights in this context, cautioning States to reserve and maintain the adequate policy and regulatory ability to do so. Guiding Principle 4 states, “States should take additional steps to protect against human rights abuses by business enterprises (...) that receive substantial support and services from State agencies such as export credit agencies and official investment insurance or guarantee agencies, including, where appropriate, by requiring human rights due diligence.”

This becomes even more crucial when the State under consideration is conflict-affected. Guiding Principle 7, focusing on conflict-affected areas, expects States to “Ensure that their current policies, legislation, regulations and enforcement measures are effective in addressing the risk of business involvement in gross human rights abuses”. The Regional Consultation titled, Delivering Peace, Justice and Reconciliation: The Role of Business conducted in Davao in September highlighted the role that businesses could play in sustaining peace and reconciliation in conflict-affected areas. Several speakers reiterated the underlying premise of the consultation: how business enterprises operating in conflict and post-conflict context will affect the dynamics that enable or undermine sustainable peace. Activities under output five will build upon the foundations laid in 2019 and will focus on the following:

2.5.1 Research on the role of trade in conflict resolution and peacebuilding

The September consultation highlighted an interesting dilemma. There was broad agreement that the private sector has a key role to play in establishing foundations for peace, in particular through responsible business conduct founded on respect for human rights. However, the role of the private sector, as well as ways to incentivise and support business in playing a positive role, is often overlooked in peacebuilding programmes. Building on inputs gained from the consultation, a research study will be commissioned to assess the role of trade negotiations in human rights promotion, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Emphasis will be laid on human rights due diligence while promoting trade and investment in conflict-affected areas.

OUTPUT 5: POLICY COHERENCE TRADE & INVESTMENTS

1. Research on role of trade negotiations in promoting Human Rights and building Peace

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

Activities	Scope	2020											
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2020 UN South Asia Forum on Business and Human Rights, Nepal	Regional Event												
2020 Responsible Business and Human Rights Forum, Bangkok	Regional Event												
Training on Human Rights Due Diligence with AICHR	Regional Event												
Regional Capacity Strengthening Programme for Indigenous Peoples in Sabah, Malaysia	Training												
Asia Session at the Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights, Geneva	Regional Event												
Regional Videos - gender, environment	Videos												
Advocacy Missions	Missions												
Research: <i>Status of BHR in Asia</i>	Research												
Case book on applying gender-sensitive practices to the UNGP	Research												
Regional B+HR Lab 4	Regional Event												
Seed funding for a social enterprise to create innovative solutions to support behavior change among governments and businesses around the treatment of indigenous peoples.	Grants												

2.6 Section 3: Re-alignment of the project organisational structure

The entering into force of the agreement with the European Union with an additional project on UNGPs implementation in Asia becoming operational in January 2020 will double the overall resources available to UNDP under the B+HR initiative. While the new funding brings much needed greater volume or resources in 6 countries, coordination and coherency between the two programmatic actions will be of paramount importance to avoid overlap and take advantage of complementarities.

To ensure alignment with the EU project, maximise synergies and accommodate the evolved focus toward more regional work, some strategic adjustments were made at the substantive level and illustrated in the above paragraphs. A corresponding restructuring is also suggested in the use of the available human resources capacities.

The suggested amended organisational structure, illustrated below, would provide a more nimble and strategic use of the project staff capacities given the evolved context. It would do so by sharing some of the advisory costs with the EU (hence naturally achieving across-project coordination and joint leadership) and redistributing programme management, project coordination and technical support tasks. Importantly, the reviewed organizational structure will have a lower cost to the project than the one agreed for 2018 and 2019.

The 2018-2019 structure consisted of

- One Project Advisor/Programme Manager (P5) funded for 50% of the salary by the project
- One Project Specialist (P4) focusing on providing technical support to Southeast Asia
- One Project Coordinator (UNV)
- One Project Specialist (International Consultant) providing technical support to South Asia
- 50% Administrative Assistant

Starting in 2020 the following changes would be recommended:

- **Sharing of Project Advisor with the EU and UNDP** resulting in only 25% of the P5 post charged to the project (the remaining part of the salary will be supported by the EU (25%) and UNDP (50%).

The Project Advisor will continue to be in charge of overall strategic direction, management of partnerships, high-level advisory and alignment between the two projects under the B+HR initiative

- **Shifting of the day-to-day programme management responsibilities from the Project Advisor to the Project Specialist (P4).** The Project Specialist/Project Manager will manage the project under delegated authority from the Project Advisor and continue providing technical support work, primarily to Bangladesh and Vietnam and in coordination with the technical specialist of the EU project to the other five countries in focus.
- **Replacing of the Project Coordinator (UNV) post with a Project Analyst (P2).** Under this change, the Project Analyst would inherit most of the project coordination responsibilities once assigned to the project coordinator while adding to her/his job description some technical support tasks. The substitution of the Project Coordinator post with a Project Analyst capable to also offer technical support, paired with reduced focus at country level will make the hiring of a full-time second Business and Human Rights Specialist unnecessary.
- **Upgrading from 50% to 100% the capacities of the Administrative Assistant** who would take up part of the project coordination work once under the responsibilities of the Project Coordinator.

The B+HR Team is convinced that the amended staff structure will be better able to deliver on the evolved project ambitions while providing a more cost-efficient use of the resources allocated for programme management and technical support.

While the Project Advisor will continue to lead on strategic directions and remain available to advise stakeholders, the Project Specialist and the Project Analyst (Technical Team) will be in charge of main project operations and day to day technical support. The Project Manager/Specialist will become primary focal point for communication with government of Sweden, while s/he will continue to work under the support and guidance of the Project Advisor. The Project Advisor will continue to provide strategic guidance and be available on all key consultations within the project and the government of Sweden.

The presence of long-term technical capacity (with embedded programme management responsibilities) will also reduce the costs and time required to bring new consultants up to speed. Productivity and quality control are expected to be more efficient. The Technical Team³ will lead advocacy missions, deliver training sessions and facilitate workshops, provide technical expertise and advice on the drafting of NAPs, provide quality assurance of the work at the country level and report on progress.

i. Implementing activities at Country Level:

One of the lessons learned by the Project in 2019 was the difficulty encountered in ensuring prompt delivery of activities at country level. The lower than expected project delivery, especially in Vietnam, Malaysia and Sri Lanka were at least in part due to the stretched staff capacities at Country Office level. The cost recovery formula with 15% of the programmatic delivery allocated to Country Offices to compensate for staff costs did not prove to be motivational enough for Country Offices to prioritize activities under B+HR Asia. To address the issue, UNDP decided to provide from 2020 full-time **national Business and Human Rights coordinators (NBHRC)** based in India, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Myanmar under the EU funded programmatic action. These human resources will also be coordinating activities implemented in the same countries by the project funded by the Government of Sweden.

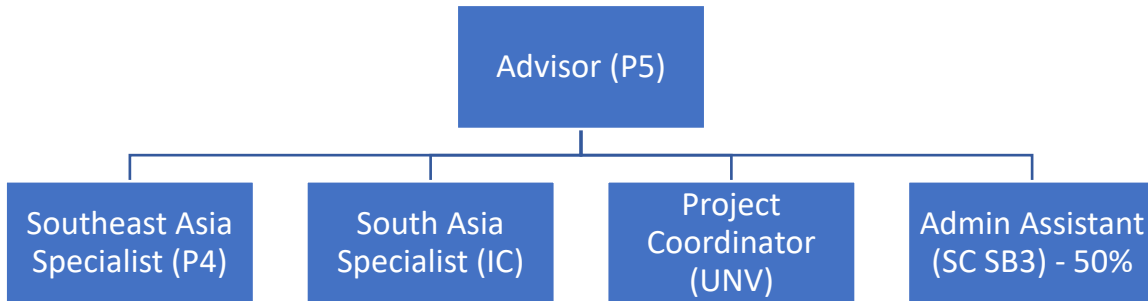
Based on the same principle that dedicated, empowered full-time coordinators are much more likely to deliver on national agendas it is suggested to use funds under this project to fund full-time **National Business and Human Rights coordinators** for Vietnam and Bangladesh based in the Country Office.

Importantly, the suggested increased programmatic allocations to these two countries would have resulted anyway in much-increased reimbursement of staff costs at the end of the year against a very similar amount to the one budgeted in 2020 for the national coordinators.

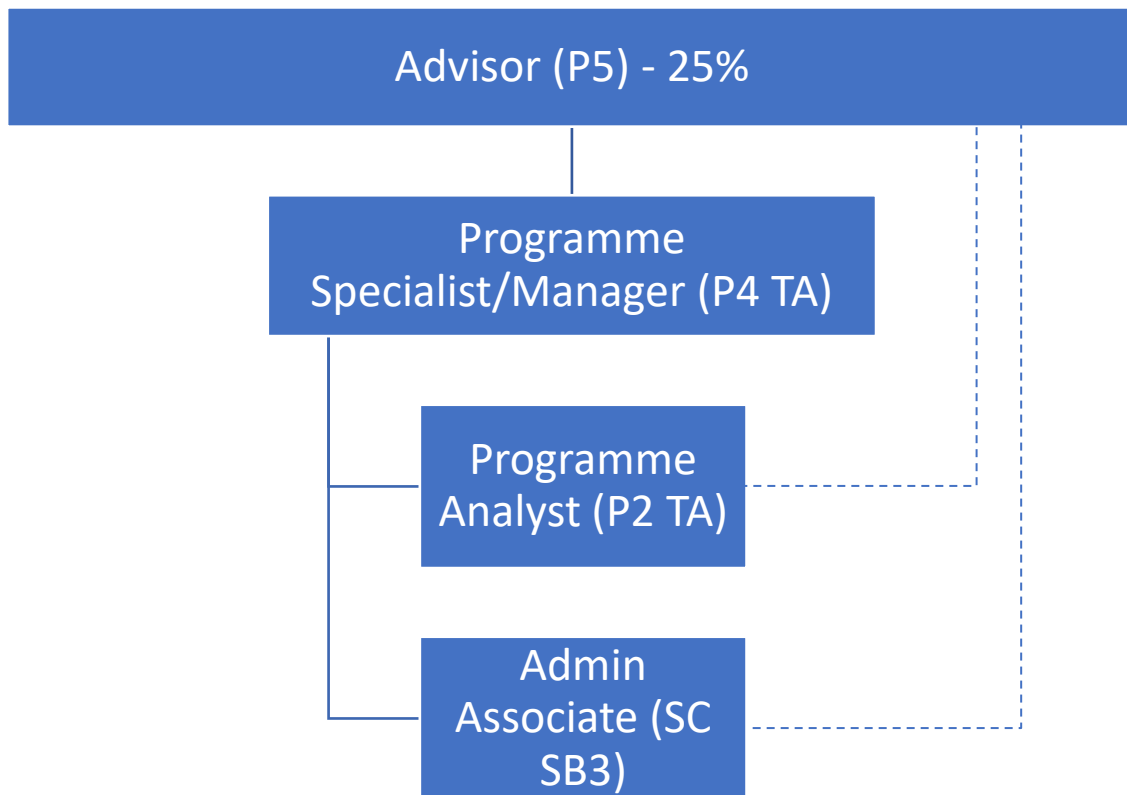
³ The cost of the suggested P-4 and P-2 positions is determined in the UN System by a Salary Scale that is the same for all UN agencies. The cost indicated in the budget refers to a standard proforma cost determined centrally by the headquarters that includes the salary and other expenses. Both P-4 and P-2 are budgeted under the provision of a Temporary Appointment (TA). UNDP is currently going through an administrative review process on the basis of which Fixed-Term Appointments (FTA) for projects such as B+HR Asia is discontinued until further notice.

The country-level focal points (NBHRC) will be responsible for the day to day liaising with stakeholders at country level (CSOs, NHRIs, private sector, government officials) for the organisation of events as well as for liaising with other UN Agencies. They will become part of the B&HR Asia community of practice to be composed by all the Regional Staff members of the EU and Swedish funded projects as well as focal points (NBHRCs) based in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka.

Programme Organogram (2018-2019)



Proposed New Organogram



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND APPROVALS BY THE BOARD MEMBERS

Victoria de Mello

From: Catherine Phuong
Sent: Thursday, April 9, 2020 10:37 AM
To: Harpreet Kaur
Cc: Victoria de Mello; Dollaporn Intrroong
Subject: RE: Thank You

Dear Harpreet,

Good to see you on the call this morning – Project board meeting minutes are fine with me.

Best,
Catherine



Catherine Phuong
Assistant Resident Representative – Governance and Participation
United Nations Development Programme

Address: 304 Kim Ma st, Ha Noi, Viet Nam
Tel: +84 24-38500126 | Fax: +84 24-37265520
Cell: +84 373095408
Email: catherine.phuong@undp.org
Twitter <https://twitter.com/CatherinePhuong>
web www.vn.undp.org
FB <http://www.facebook.com/undpvietnam>

From: Harpreet Kaur <harpreet.kaur@undp.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 9, 2020 9:52 AM
To: Catherine Phuong <catherine.phuong@undp.org>
Cc: Victoria de Mello <victoria.demello@undp.org>; Dollaporn Intrroong <dollaporn.intrroong@undp.org>
Subject: RE: Thank You

Dear Catherine,

Hope you all are well and safe.

We do understand how busy you are in these difficult times, and I was hesitant to bring this up but we need to document final minutes of the Project Board meeting. I'd appreciate if you could please take note of the minutes of the Project board meeting and acknowledge acceptance of the same. Attaching the minutes again for easy reference,

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Regards
Harpreet



Harpreet Kaur, PhD

Business & Human rights Specialist (IC)
Asia-Pacific Regional Centre
United Nations Development Programme
3rd Floor United Nations Service Building
Rajdamnern Nok Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand
harpreet.kaur@undp.org
Tel.: +91 9811312449
Skype: hk.harpreetkaur

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From: Harpreet Kaur

Sent: Friday, March 27, 2020 2:48 PM

To: Livio Sarandrea <livio.sarandrea@undp.org>; Catherine Phuong <catherine.phuong@undp.org>; Lorenzo Urbinati <lorenzo@forum-asia.org>; guayacan@ilo.org

Cc: Juthathip Subhaswasdikul <juthathip.subhaswasdikul@gov.se>; LIGUORI Laura (EEAS-BANGKOK <Laura.LIGUORI@eeas.europa.eu>; Jaco Cilliers <jaco.cilliers@undp.org>; Nareeluc Pairchaiyapoom <moomeey@hotmail.com>; Victoria de Mello <victoria.demello@undp.org>; Kevin Lehmann <kevin.lehmann@undp.org>; Dollaporn Intrroong <dollaporn.intrroong@undp.org>; B+HR Asia <BHRAsia@undp.onmicrosoft.com>; Jaco Cilliers <jaco.cilliers@undp.org>; Nicholas Booth <nicholas.booth@undp.org>; Shubha Sekhar <ssekhar@coca-cola.com>; Åsa Hedén <asa.heden@gov.se>; Anna Keller <anna.keller@undp.org>; Sophia Areias <sophia.areias@undp.org>

Subject: RE: Thank You

Dear members and observers of the Project Board of B+HR Asia,

I hope you all are keeping well.

Thanks once again for your time and constructive inputs. We have been reflecting on the points raised, particularly in the context of COVID-19 and developing contingency plans to ensure the project delivery is on track as much possible given the situation.

Please find attached herewith the minutes of the project board meeting for your perusal, and feel free to add comments. We'd appreciate acknowledgement of receipt of the minutes of the meeting and acceptance of the same by 6 April.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Regards

Harpreet



Harpreet Kaur, PhD

Business & Human rights Specialist (IC)
Asia-Pacific Regional Centre
United Nations Development Programme
3rd Floor United Nations Service Building
Rajdamnern Nok Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand
harpreet.kaur@undp.org
Tel.: +91 9811312449
Skype: hk.harpreetkaur

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From: Livio Sarandrea <livio.sarandrea@undp.org>

Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2020 12:18 PM

To: Catherine Phuong <catherine.phuong@undp.org>; Lorenzo Urbinati <lorenzo@forum-asia.org>; guayacan@ilo.org

Cc: Juthathip Subhaswasdikul <juthathip.subhaswasdikul@gov.se>; LIGUORI Laura (EEAS-BANGKOK <Laura.LIGUORI@eeas.europa.eu>; Jaco Cilliers <jaco.cilliers@undp.org>; Nareeluc Pairchaiyapoom <moomeey@hotmail.com>; Harpreet Kaur <harpreet.kaur@undp.org>; Victoria de Mello <victoria.demello@undp.org>; Kevin Lehmann <kevin.lehmann@undp.org>; Dollaporn Intrroong <dollaporn.intrroong@undp.org>; B+HR Asia <BHRAsia@undp.onmicrosoft.com>; Jaco Cilliers <jaco.cilliers@undp.org>; Nicholas Booth <nicholas.booth@undp.org>; Shubha Sekhar <ssekhar@coca-cola.com>; Åsa Hedén <asa.heden@gov.se>; Anna Keller <anna.keller@undp.org>; Sophia Areias <sophia.areias@undp.org>

Subject: Thank You

Dear members and observers of the Project Board of B+HR Asia,

I would like to thank you all very much for taking the time to attend our yearly discussion on progress and planning of our project.

I am sincerely grateful for the very constructive inputs shared by all of you. I felt that the VTC modality actually worked quite well.

This will give us us greater confidence in exploring the use of technology also for future events and forums, not only as a way to by-pass limits posed by the spread of covid-19 but also as an opportunity to drastically reduce the Co2 footprint of our project and green our work.

All the best

Livio

From: Livio Sarandrea

Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2020 9:15 AM

To: Catherine Phuong <catherine.phuong@undp.org>; Lorenzo Urbinati <lorenzo@forum-asia.org>; guayacan@ilo.org

Cc: Juthathip Subhaswasdikul <juthathip.subhaswasdikul@gov.se>; LIGUORI Laura (EEAS-BANGKOK <Laura.LIGUORI@eeas.europa.eu>; Nareeluc Pairchaiyapoom <moomeey@hotmail.com>; Viraf M Mehta <viraf.m.mehta@gmail.com>; Harpreet Kaur <harpreet.kaur@undp.org>; Victoria de Mello <victoria.demello@undp.org>; Kevin Lehmann <kevin.lehmann@undp.org>; Dollaporn Intrroong <dollaporn.intrroong@undp.org>; B+HR Asia <BHRAsia@undp.onmicrosoft.com>; Jaco Cilliers <jaco.cilliers@undp.org>; Nicholas Booth <nicholas.booth@undp.org>

Subject: RE: B+HR Asia Project Board (Important update)

Dear Catherine,

Thank you very much!

Let me also inform everyone that we received confirmation of attendance from all members of the board and have added one more, in representation of the Business Sector:

Shuba Sekhar , Director of Human Rights for Europe and Asia and North Africa, Coca Cola

Looking forward to speaking to all in some 45 minutes.

Victoria de Mello

From: Jaco Cilliers
Sent: Thursday, April 9, 2020 2:08 PM
To: Nicholas Booth; Harpreet Kaur
Cc: Livio Sarandrea; Victoria de Mello; Dollaporn Intrroong
Subject: RE: Thank You

Thanks – approved from my side. Best

From: Nicholas Booth <nicholas.booth@undp.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 9, 2020 12:18 PM
To: Harpreet Kaur <harpreet.kaur@undp.org>; Jaco Cilliers <jaco.cilliers@undp.org>
Cc: Livio Sarandrea <livio.sarandrea@undp.org>; Victoria de Mello <victoria.demello@undp.org>; Dollaporn Intrroong <dollaporn.intrroong@undp.org>
Subject: RE: Thank You

Thanks Harpreet, fine with me.



Nicholas Booth

Programme Advisor, Access to Justice, Conflict Prevention and Human Rights
Bangkok Regional Hub
United Nations Development Programme
3rd Floor United Nations Service Building
Rajdamnern Nok Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand

nicholas.booth@undp.org

Mobile/whatsapp +66(0) 909 767 369

Tel.: +66 (0)2 304 9100 ext. 2568

Skype: nick.booth.undp

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From: Harpreet Kaur <harpreet.kaur@undp.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 9, 2020 10:05 AM
To: Jaco Cilliers <jaco.cilliers@undp.org>; Nicholas Booth <nicholas.booth@undp.org>
Cc: Livio Sarandrea <livio.sarandrea@undp.org>; Victoria de Mello <victoria.demello@undp.org>; Dollaporn Intrroong <dollaporn.intrroong@undp.org>
Subject: Re: Thank You

Dear Jaco & Nick,

Hope you all are well and safe.

We do understand how busy you are in these times, and I was hesitant to bring this up, but we need to document minutes of the Project Board meeting and share with donors.

I'd appreciate if you could please take note of the minutes of the Project board meeting and acknowledge acceptance of the same. Attaching the minutes again for easy reference,

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Regards
Harpreet



Harpreet Kaur, PhD
Business & Human rights Specialist (IC)
Asia-Pacific Regional Centre
United Nations Development Programme
3rd Floor United Nations Service Building
Rajdamnern Nok Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand
harpreet.kaur@undp.org
Tel.: +91 9811312449
Skype: hk.harpreetkaur

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From: Harpreet Kaur

Sent: Friday, March 27, 2020 2:48 PM

To: Livio Sarandrea <livio.sarandrea@undp.org>; Catherine Phuong <catherine.phuong@undp.org>; Lorenzo Urbinati <lorenzo@forum-asia.org>; guayacan@ilo.org

Cc: Juthathip Subhaswasdikul <juthathip.subhaswasdikul@gov.se>; LIGUORI Laura (EEAS-BANGKOK) <Laura.LIGUORI@eeas.europa.eu>; Jaco Cilliers <jaco.cilliers@undp.org>; Nareeluc Pairchaiyapoom <moomeey@hotmail.com>; Victoria de Mello <victoria.demello@undp.org>; Kevin Lehmann <kevin.lehmann@undp.org>; Dollaporn Intrroong <dollaporn.intrroong@undp.org>; B+HR Asia <BHRAsia@undp.onmicrosoft.com>; Jaco Cilliers <jaco.cilliers@undp.org>; Nicholas Booth <nicholas.booth@undp.org>; Shubha Sekhar <ssekhar@coca-cola.com>; Åsa Hedén <asa.heden@gov.se>; Anna Keller <anna.keller@undp.org>; Sophia Areias <sophia.areias@undp.org>

Subject: RE: Thank You

Dear members and observers of the Project Board of B+HR Asia,

I hope you all are keeping well.

Thanks once again for your time and constructive inputs. We have been reflecting on the points raised, particularly in the context of COVID-19 and developing contingency plans to ensure the project delivery is on track as much possible given the situation.

Please find attached herewith the minutes of the project board meeting for your perusal, and feel free to add comments. We'd appreciate acknowledgement of receipt of the minutes of the meeting and acceptance of the same by 6 April.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Regards
Harpreet

<dollaporn.intrroong@undp.org>; B+HR Asia <BHRAsia@undp.onmicrosoft.com>

Subject: Re: B+HR Asia Project Board (Important update)

Dear Livio and the Team,

Thank you very much for your email and thanks to Victoria for the instruction and material, I also confirm my participation.

Best,

Lorenzo

Lorenzo Urbinati

Senior Programme Officer, Development and Knowledge Management

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

3rd floor SPD Building, 79/2 Krungthoburi Road

Khlong Ton Sai, Khlong San, Bangkok 10600

www.forum-asia.org

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On Wed, Mar 11, 2020 at 4:29 PM Guayacan, Fredy <guayacan@ilo.org> wrote:

Dear Livio,

Thank you for your email.

I confirm my participation via teleconference tomorrow.

Once again thank you for the invitation and I look forward for an interesting meeting tomorrow.

Kind regards,

Fredy Guayacan

On 10 Mar 2020, at 12:50, Livio Sarandrea <livio.sarandrea@undp.org> wrote:

Dear members and observers of the Project Board of B+HR Asia project,

Thank you very much again for accepting to be part of this yearly exercise to reflect on our work on Business and Human Rights with support from the Government of Sweden.

I would like to inform you of a decision just taken by our Bureau, to hold on Thursday 12 March, the day scheduled for our board, a test-run of "UNDP's Business Continuity Plan". This exercise will require all staff to work from home to test UNDP's ability to remain operational should the unfolding of the Covid-19 Crisis in Thailand require closing of the offices in the future.

Victoria de Mello

From: LIGUORI Laura (EEAS-BANGKOK) <Laura.LIGUORI@eeas.europa.eu>
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2020 6:51 PM
To: Harpreet Kaur
Cc: Victoria de Mello; Dollaporn Intrroong; Livio Sarandrea; Sean Lees
Subject: RE: Thank You
Attachments: Minutes of SIDA Project Board Meeting (3-12-2020)_LL.docx

Dear Harpreet,

Thanks a lot for sharing the minutes of the Board Meeting of the SIDA-funded B&HR project with me. It was a pleasure to participate in the meeting and I thank you once again UNDP (as well as Sweden) for the opportunity. With my apologies for my belated reply due to current work priorities (all focused on minimizing the impact of COVID-19 on the EU-funded projects in Asia), please find attached my minor comments on the minutes. Just minor suggestions for your consideration.

Looking forward to working also with you, besides Sean and his team, given the evident complementarity and synergies between the two projects, as discussed in the meeting last month.

Thank you very much once again.
All my best wishes,

Laura

Laura Liguori
Foreign Policy Instruments – Asia/Pacific
Delegation of the European Union to Thailand

Athenee Tower, 10th floor, 63 Wireless Road, BANGKOK 10330
Tel: +66 (02) 305 2600 ext: 2663 Fax: +66 (02) 305 2799
E-mail: laura.liguori@eeas.europa.eu <http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/thailand>
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/EUinThailand>

From: Harpreet Kaur <harpreet.kaur@undp.org>
Sent: 09 April 2020 09:57
To: LIGUORI Laura (EEAS-BANGKOK) <Laura.LIGUORI@eeas.europa.eu>
Cc: Victoria de Mello <victoria.demello@undp.org>; Dollaporn Intrroong <dollaporn.intrroong@undp.org>; Livio Sarandrea <livio.sarandrea@undp.org>; Sean Lees <sean.lees@undp.org>
Subject: FW: Thank You

Dear Laura,

Hope you all are well and safe.

We do understand how busy you are in these difficult times, and I was hesitant to bring this up but we need to document final minutes of the Project Board meeting. I'd appreciate if you could please take note of the minutes of the meeting and acknowledge acceptance of the same. Please feel free to add any comments, if need be.

Attaching the minutes again for easy reference,

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Regards
Harpreet



Harpreet Kaur, PhD

Business & Human rights Specialist (IC)
Asia-Pacific Regional Centre
United Nations Development Programme
3rd Floor United Nations Service Building
Rajdamnern Nok Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand
harpreet.kaur@undp.org
Tel.: +91 9811312449
Skype: hk.harpreetkaur

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From: Harpreet Kaur

Sent: Friday, March 27, 2020 2:48 PM

To: Livio Sarandrea <livio.sarandrea@undp.org>; Catherine Phuong <catherine.phuong@undp.org>; Lorenzo Urbinati <lorenzo@forum-asia.org>; guayacan@ilo.org

Cc: Juthathip Subhaswasdikul <juthathip.subhaswasdikul@gov.se>; LIGUORI Laura (EEAS-BANGKOK) <Laura.LIGUORI@eeas.europa.eu>; Jaco Cilliers <jaco.cilliers@undp.org>; Nareeluc Pairchaiyapoom <moomeey@hotmail.com>; Victoria de Mello <victoria.demello@undp.org>; Kevin Lehmann <kevin.lehmann@undp.org>; Dollaporn Intrroong <dollaporn.intrroong@undp.org>; B+HR Asia <BHRAsia@undp.onmicrosoft.com>; Jaco Cilliers <jaco.cilliers@undp.org>; Nicholas Booth <nicholas.booth@undp.org>; Shubha Sekhar <ssekhar@coca-cola.com>; Åsa Hedén <asa.heden@gov.se>; Anna Keller <anna.keller@undp.org>; Sophia Areias <sophia.areias@undp.org>

Subject: RE: Thank You

Dear members and observers of the Project Board of B+HR Asia,

I hope you all are keeping well.

Thanks once again for your time and constructive inputs. We have been reflecting on the points raised, particularly in the context of COVID-19 and developing contingency plans to ensure the project delivery is on track as much possible given the situation.

Please find attached herewith the minutes of the project board meeting for your perusal, and feel free to add comments. We'd appreciate acknowledgement of receipt of the minutes of the meeting and acceptance of the same by 6 April.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Regards

Victoria de Mello

From: Lorenzo Urbinati <lorenzo@forum-asia.org>
Sent: Thursday, April 9, 2020 4:08 PM
To: Harpreet Kaur
Cc: Victoria de Mello; Dollaporn Intrroong
Subject: Re: FW: Thank You

Dear Harpreet,

Thank you very much for the kind reminder, and sincere apologies for my late reply. Happy to acknowledge the receipt and accept the very detailed minutes of the meeting.

Hope everything is well with you and the Team despite the challenging situation.

All the best and take care,

Lorenzo

Lorenzo Urbinati

Senior Programme Officer, Development and Knowledge Management

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

3rd floor SPD Building, 79/2 Krungthonburi Road

Khlong Ton Sai, Khlong San, Bangkok 10600

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On Thu, Apr 9, 2020 at 9:53 AM Harpreet Kaur <harpreet.kaur@undp.org> wrote:

Dear Lorenzo,

Hope you all are well and safe.

We do understand how busy you are in these difficult times, and I was hesitant to bring this up but we need to document final minutes of the Project Board meeting. I'd appreciate if you could please take note of the minutes of the Project board meeting and acknowledge acceptance of the same. Attaching the minutes again for easy reference,

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Regards



Harpreet Kaur, PhD

Business & Human rights Specialist (IC)

Asia-Pacific Regional Centre
United Nations Development Programme
3rd Floor United Nations Service Building
Rajdamnern Nok Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand

harpreet.kaur@undp.org

Tel.: +91 9811312449

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Resilient nations.*

Skype: hk.harpreetkaur

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From: Harpreet Kaur

Sent: Friday, March 27, 2020 2:48 PM

To: Livio Sarandrea <livio.sarandrea@undp.org>; Catherine Phuong <catherine.phuong@undp.org>; Lorenzo Urbinati <lorenzo@forum-asia.org>; guayacan@ilo.org

Cc: Juthathip Subhaswasdikul <juthathip.subhaswasdikul@gov.se>; LIGUORI Laura (EAS-BANGKOK) <Laura.LIGUORI@eeas.europa.eu>; Jaco Cilliers <jaco.cilliers@undp.org>; Nareeluc Pairchaiyapoom <moomeey@hotmail.com>; Victoria de Mello <victoria.demello@undp.org>; Kevin Lehmann <kevin.lehmann@undp.org>; Dollaporn Intrroong <dollaporn.intrroong@undp.org>; B+HR Asia <BHRAsia@undp.onmicrosoft.com>; Jaco Cilliers <jaco.cilliers@undp.org>; Nicholas Booth <nicholas.booth@undp.org>; Shubha Sekhar <ssekhar@coca-cola.com>; Åsa Hedén <asa.heden@gov.se>; Anna Keller <anna.keller@undp.org>; Sophia Areias <sophia.areias@undp.org>

Subject: RE: Thank You

Dear members and observers of the Project Board of B+HR Asia,

I hope you all are keeping well.

Thanks once again for your time and constructive inputs. We have been reflecting on the points raised, particularly in the context of COVID-19 and developing contingency plans to ensure the project delivery is on track as much possible given the situation.

Victoria de Mello

From: Viraf M Mehta <viraf.m.mehta@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2020 10:57 AM
To: Harpreet Kaur
Cc: Victoria de Mello; Dollaporn Intrroong
Subject: RE: Thank You

Dear Harpreet,

Thanks for your mail.

Yes, its been a busy time here with NAP matters, despite the constraints. The Sub-Committees have sent in their final recommendations to the MCA-Steering Committee, and hopefully we will see a draft version later this month.

The minutes are fine with me,

Best,

Viraf

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

From: [Harpreet Kaur](#)
Sent: 09 April 2020 08:32
To: [viraf mehta](#)
Cc: [Victoria de Mello](#); [Dollaporn Intrroong](#)
Subject: Thank You

Dear Viraf,

I hope you all are keeping well.

We realise you weren't able to participate in the entire meeting, but your inputs during the bilateral were extremely useful. Thanks once again for your time and constructive inputs.

Please find attached herewith the minutes of the project board meeting for your perusal, and feel free to add comments. We'd appreciate acknowledgement of receipt of the minutes of the meeting and acceptance of the same by 6 April.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Regards
Harpreet