

Invitation: Round Table on Business & Human Rights

*Co-organised by Niza, Cordaid, Fatal Transactions and the 'MVO Platform',
November 9, 2009, Museum voor Communicatie, The Hague, 10:00-13:00*

By invitation only

Introduction

[Niza](#), [Cordaid](#), [Fatal Transactions](#), and the Dutch [MVO Platform](#) are organising a round table on Business and Human rights on November 9, 2009. With this round table, the organisations involved would like to contribute to the debate on business and human rights in the Netherlands in the context of the European Union at large.

At the round table meeting, Gerald Pachoud – Special Advisor to SRSJ John Ruggie – will inform a selected group of invited Dutch stakeholders on the current status of the work of John Ruggie and his team. Mr. Pachoud will also exchange ideas with the invitees on how to further operationalise the Ruggie framework in the Netherlands and the EU. In addition, there will be room for exchange and open discussion of ideas between all present stakeholders.

The round table meeting will take place one day before a high level conference on business and human rights organised by the Swedish EU Presidency in Stockholm¹. UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises (SRSJ), Prof. John Ruggie and his team will be key-note speakers at this event, facilitating the debate on how the EU can improve the operationalisation of Ruggie's "protect, respect and remedy" framework for business and human rights.

Aims

The overall aim of this round table meeting is to deepen the debate on business and human rights amongst various Dutch stakeholders, inspired by the proposed framework of John Ruggie. To achieve this, the round table meeting will bring Dutch stakeholders up to date on the proceedings of Ruggie's work and will facilitate a constructive and open debate on the operationalisation of the framework in the Dutch context.

With this round table meeting Niza, Cordaid, Fatal Transactions and the MVO Platform specifically aim:

- to foster and improve the debate on the operationalisation of the Ruggie framework in the Netherlands;
- to propose and discuss policy recommendations to the Dutch government for the operationalisation of the Ruggie framework on the Dutch level.

Set-up

The round table meeting will start with a presentation of Gerald Pachoud. He will be asked to provide an update of the current proceedings of Ruggie's team in relation to its UN Mandate. Furthermore, Pachoud will share his thoughts on the business & human rights debate within the European and Dutch context and provide suggestions on how different stakeholders can further operationalise the

¹http://www.se2009.eu/en/meetings_news/2009/11/10/protect_respect_remedy_a_conference_on_corporate_social_responsibility_csr

Ruggie framework. Thereafter, feedback to Pachoud's presentation will be given by two representatives from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Economic Affairs. Stakeholders invited include government officials, the private sector, civil society and academia. The meeting will be held under the Chatham House Rule.

Draft programme round table meeting

10:00 – 11:30 - Gerald Pachoud, Special Adviser to the SRSG on business and human rights
- Feedback from Representative of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs
- Feedback from Representative of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Comments by and exchange of ideas between all invited stakeholders

11:30 – 12:00 Break

12:00 – 13:00 - Continuation of the discussion
- Closing of the round table meeting

Background

In April this year, John Ruggie, the SRSG, addressed the European Parliament during a Parliamentary Hearing on Business & Human Rights in the European Parliament's Sub Committee on Human Rights². There, he was clear in his demand that a pro-active and leading role of the European Union is needed in the debate on business & human rights. The Swedish Presidency's initiative to organise another EU level meeting on this issue on November 10th, using Ruggie's framework as a starting point, is therefore a positive step in an increased role of the EU on this issue.

Ruggie's original mandate was to create a framework for business and human rights, which he did. The framework consists of 3 pillars: the state's duty to protect, the corporate responsibility to respect human rights, and greater access to remedy by victims of human rights abuses. Currently, Ruggie and his team are working on practical recommendations on how to operationalise the framework. On October 5-6 Ruggie will hold a 2-day consultation informing and bringing together all relevant stakeholders in Geneva, Switzerland.

On all levels the Dutch debate on business & human rights is ongoing and heavily inspired by the work of John Ruggie. For example, there is debate on the various soft law measures at hand and the Dutch Government, through the Ministry of Economic Affairs, is currently researching to what extent Dutch law and regulations are applicable for parent liability of Dutch companies operating abroad, in the context of weak host governments and fragile and violent zones of operation.

Registration

If you are able to attend, please send an email to bas.bijlsma@niza.nl. For further questions you can also contact the secretariat of Fatal Transactions at (+31) 020 5206210.

About the organising organisations

[Niza](#), in association with ActionAid, works to bring about more equitable and sustainable approaches to natural resource management in Sub-Saharan Africa.

[Cordaid](#) is a large international development organisation with expertise in emergency aid and structural poverty eradication around the world.

[Fatal Transactions](#), of which Niza is a member, is an international network of NGOs working on the links between natural resources and conflict in Africa with a particular focus on the role of the extractives industry.

The [MVO Platform](#) is a network of Dutch civil society organisations and trade unions that are working together to promote Corporate Social Responsibility.

² See Position Paper produced by the NGO coalition at <http://www.fataltransactions.org/Media/Files/News/Briefing-Note-HR-Committee-16-April-2009-ENGLISH>