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CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND BUSINESS EXPLAINED

A reader-friendly version of the Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No. 16 on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights

FOREWORD

This guide is designed to explain the Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comment No. 16 on children's rights and business in plain language. It follows the same structure as the General Comment, and can be read side-by-side to give a clear sense of what each section of the official text means. The guide gives definitions of common legal and business terms, and lists international standards that relate to children's rights and business. The guide may be helpful to governments, businesses, civil society organizations, children, advocates and others interested in increasing their understanding of children's rights and business.

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GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Administrative remedy	A remedy that re-examines a government action or decision
Arbitration	A private way to determine whether and how children’s rights were violated
Business enterprise	Any kind of business, including companies, corporations and partnerships
Business relationship	Dealings with a partner, supplier, contractor, consultant or other outside person, group or organization that works with a company
Business sector	All business enterprises, no matter how big or small, regardless of how they are structured, where they are based or where they work, and whether family-owned or traded on the stock exchange
Child Rights Impact Assessment	The process which is used by governments to determine how children will be affected by changes to laws, policies, regulations, budgets and other official actions or decisions
Child	Every person below the age of 18 years, unless national laws say otherwise
Children’s rights context	Local information about children’s rights, including potential violations and how children’s rights have been, are being and could be realized
Child rights due diligence	A process that helps businesses to identify and protect against potential negative impacts on children’s rights
Civil remedy	A remedy that resolves a dispute between individuals and/or companies
Collective complaint; class action lawsuit; or public interest litigation	A way for a group whose rights have been violated to jointly bring one big case
Committee on the Rights of the Child	A group of independent experts at the United Nations that looks after the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols; it has been around for as long as the Convention itself, and presently has 18 members who meet three times a year in Geneva, Switzerland
Conciliation and mediation	Informal and less confrontational ways to find a solution for everyone involved in a dispute
Concluding Observations	Recommendations for governments published by the Committee on the Rights of the Child
Contractor	A company that has an agreement to provide goods or services to another company, by, for example supplying parts or assisting with marketing
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	A document that sets out international standards for children’s human rights; from health care and education to freedom of expression and protection from abuse, the CRC is universal and touches on all aspects of children’s lives
Corporate social responsibility	The responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment
Corruption	The abuse of authority for individual gain or personal purposes
CRC Communications Procedure	A procedure through which the Committee on the Rights of the Child reviews complaints about violations of children’s rights

CRC Guiding Principles	The principles that help to understand what children’s rights mean: non-discrimination; life, survival and development; the best interests of the child; and participation
Criminal remedy	A remedy that holds an individual or company responsible for breaking the law
Days of General Discussion	Days planned by the Committee on the Rights of the Child to talk with United Nations agencies, civil society organizations, universities, children and other interested groups about particular children’s rights issues
Decentralization	A way to manage large companies, so that instead of relying on one person to make decisions, a number of groups, teams or departments are responsible for different parts of the business
Economic, social and cultural rights	A set of rights which is more about what governments have to give to children than what children should be able to do, such as the rights to education, health and an adequate standard of living
Enforcement	The way through which a government makes sure its laws are followed and respected
Evidence	Information that a witness provides in a court case to prove what happened
Extraterritorial obligation	A requirement that extends beyond a State’s borders
General Comment No. 16 on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children’s rights	Advice written by the Committee on the Rights of the Child to governments on how to deal with business so that children’s rights are respected, protected and fulfilled
General Comment	A document written by the Committee on the Rights of the Child that provides governments with information and guidance on how to handle important topics for children’s rights
Grievance mechanism	A way for businesses to receive and review complaints about things it may have done to violate children’s rights
Home State	The country where a company is based or registered
Host State	The country where a company is doing business
Human rights complaints mechanisms	A set of remedies available to individuals beyond the national justice system, run by regional or international organizations such as the United Nations
Informal economy	The part of the economy where businesses operate outside the supervision and control of the government
International humanitarian law	A set of rules for armed conflicts that protects people who are not involved in the fighting
Joint venture	An arrangement that lets companies pool their resources and work together
Jurisdiction	The authority or control that a government can exercise
Legal aid	Public assistance that helps people pay for the cost of bringing or being involved in a court case
Legislation	The written laws of a government
Licensee	A company that has permission to use something that belongs to another company, for example a brand name

Marketing and advertising	Ways in which businesses promote products and services
Minimum age of employment	The basic minimum age for work, which should not be below the age for finishing compulsory schooling, generally set at 15
Monitoring	Watching over activities to ensure they are carried out correctly, as when a government sets up systems to make sure companies are doing what they proclaim to do
National human rights institution	An organization set up by a government to look after human rights
Obligation to fulfil	The requirement that governments take steps to realize children's rights through laws, systems and support for business
Obligation to protect	The requirement that governments protect children from violations of their rights
Obligation to respect	The requirement that governments never support, enable, allow or approve violations of children's rights
Optional Protocols	Three additional human rights treaties to the CRC that States can ratify: the first two explain some rights in more detail (the Optional Protocol on children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography), and the third one (the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure) gives children a chance to bring violations of their rights to international attention
Outsourcing	When a company hires another company to handle certain responsibilities
Parent company	A company that controls and makes decisions for a subsidiary company
Periodic Reporting Process	An ongoing discussion between the Committee on the Rights of the Child and governments of ratifying countries about whether national laws, policies and programmes uphold children's rights
Private sector	A sector broader than the business sector which includes non-profit organizations that are part of the voluntary sector
Privatization	When a government pays or allows a private company to deliver what are usually public services like water, electricity, healthcare or education
Public procurement	The process through which a government hires a company to provide goods or services
Ratification	The process through which a State formally accepts the provisions of a treaty
Regulation	A rule that fills in the details of legislation
Remedy	A way to seek justice and ask for reparations when rights have been violated
Reparations	A measure to address harm caused by human rights violations
Rights holder	An individual or group that has certain rights
Stakeholder	A person or group with an interest or concern in something
State party	A State that through ratification has formally accepted the provisions of the CRC and/or its Optional Protocols
Subsidiary	A company owned and controlled by another company
Supplier	A company that sells goods or services, such as raw materials or technical services, to another company

Territory	The land that falls within a country's borders
United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights	Principles that assist governments and businesses in understanding and addressing the ways in which corporate activities, operations and relationships impact on human rights, based on three pillars: governments' duty to protect against human rights abuses by third parties, including businesses; the responsibility of businesses to respect human rights; and the shared obligation to provide access to remedies for victims of corporate human rights violations
Universality, indivisibility, interdependency and interrelatedness of children's rights	The characteristics of children's human rights, which mean that children's rights apply to everyone, that they have to be considered as a whole set, and that what is done for one right will affect other rights
Worst forms of child labour	Any work likely to jeopardize children's physical, mental or moral health, safety or morals and that should not be done by anyone below the age of 18 years

BACKGROUND

What is the Convention on the Rights of the Child?

Approved by the United Nations in 1989, the [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (CRC) sets international standards for children's human rights. From health care and education to freedom of expression and protection from abuse, the CRC is universal and touches on all aspects of children's lives. It has four guiding principles that help to understand what children's rights mean: non-discrimination; life, survival and development; the best interests of the child; and participation.

The CRC is the most widely ratified international human rights treaty, which means that nearly every country in the world has formally accepted its provisions. In addition to the Convention itself, countries can ratify three Optional Protocols to the CRC. The first two – the [Optional Protocol on children in armed conflict](#) (OPAC) and the [Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography](#) (OPSC) – were introduced in 2000 to set out some of children's rights in more detail. The [third Optional Protocol](#) was passed in 2011 to create a communications procedure, which gives children a chance to bring violations of their rights to the attention of the United Nations.

What is the Committee on the Rights of the Child?

The [Committee on the Rights of the Child](#) is a group of independent experts at the United Nations that looks after the CRC and its Optional Protocols. It has been around for as long as the Convention itself, and presently has 18 members who meet three times a year in Geneva, Switzerland. During these sessions, the Committee has three main functions:

1. It oversees the periodic [Reporting Process](#), which is an ongoing discussion between the Committee and governments of ratifying countries – also called State parties – about whether national laws, policies and programmes uphold children's rights. As part of this, the Committee regularly publishes recommendations known as 'Concluding Observations'.
2. It plans [Days of General Discussion](#) with United Nations agencies, civil society organizations, universities, children and other interested groups about particular children's rights issues. For example, the Committee has organized discussions on child labour, indigenous children's rights, and migration.
3. It writes [General Comments](#), which provide governments with information and guidance on how to handle important topics for children's rights. The next section explains the aim of General Comments and why they matter.

The Committee is also in charge of the [CRC Communications Procedure](#), which means it is responsible for reviewing complaints about violations of children's rights.

What is a General Comment?

General Comments are published by the Committee on the Rights of the Child. The Committee is the highest authority for interpreting what the CRC means, and General Comments either explain individual provisions of the Convention in more detail or talk about issues that are especially relevant for children's rights. The Committee has, for instance, written General Comments about the right to be heard, the right to play, juvenile justice, and children with disabilities.

No matter what topic they cover, General Comments make the Convention stronger. General Comments explain to governments what they should do, and address concerns that come up regularly during the Reporting Process. General Comments also point out other human rights conventions, standards and guidelines that relate to children's rights. Because of all this, General Comments are valuable contributions to international law.

Why is there a General Comment on children's rights and business?

More than ever before, businesses play a central role in children's lives. The size and influence of the private sector have increased dramatically over the past decades, and business actors have a powerful and widespread impact on children's rights. This can be positive, as when companies bring employment, investment and new services to communities. At the same time, however, businesses can cause and contribute to a range of children's rights violations, such as by polluting the environment or paying young children to do dangerous jobs. For these reasons, the Committee on the Rights of the Child has for a long time been interested in how business affects children's rights.

Businesses must be responsible for their impact on children's rights, but governments are the ones that sign and ratify international human rights treaties like the CRC. This means that national authorities have to make sure that businesses respect children's rights. With this in mind, the Committee started speaking and consulting with experts, United Nations agencies, civil society organizations and children¹ in 2011 about how governments can manage the way business affects children's rights.

Released two years later in 2013, [General Comment No. 16 on State obligations regarding the impact of the business sector on children's rights](#) gives governments advice on how to deal with businesses so that children's rights are respected, protected and fulfilled. Specifically, it explains how governments can make certain that companies think about children's rights, what they should do when companies violate children's rights, and how they can encourage businesses to make positive contributions to children's lives. The General Comment also talks about what other people and organizations can do to help, like raising awareness of children's rights, keeping an eye on what businesses are doing, and supporting children whose rights are not being respected.

How can the General Comment on children's rights and business be used?

The General Comment on children's rights and business has important information for governments, businesses, civil society organizations, children, parents and people who work with children. Among other things, the General Comment:

- Shows how businesses can affect children's rights and gives a better understanding of what children's rights are overall
- Sets expectations for businesses and explains how governments must hold businesses responsible for their impact on children
- Encourages governments to improve all kinds of laws, policies and programmes that relate to children
- Makes it easier for children's rights advocates everywhere to demand that their governments take action on children's rights and business

¹ Wilson, Jason, *Doing good work for us children. Children and Adolescent's Contributions to the draft General Comment on Child Rights and Business Sector*, Save the Children Sweden, Stockholm, 2012, <<http://resourcecentre.savethechildren.se/library/doing-good-work-us-children-children-and-adolescents-contributions-draft-general-comment>>, accessed 13 November 2014.

THE GENERAL COMMENT EXPLAINED

I. Introduction and objectives

Introduction

The General Comment looks at how the **business sector** affects children's rights. The business sector includes all business organizations, no matter how big or small, regardless of how they are structured, where they are based or where they work, and whether family-owned or traded on the stock exchange.

The business sector is made up of individual **business enterprises** such as companies, corporations and partnerships. It is the biggest part of the **private sector**, which is broader than the business sector because it includes non-profit organizations that are part of the **voluntary sector**. In addition to business, the General Comment looks at the roles of these organizations in realizing children's rights.

The business sector's impact on children's rights has grown substantially over the years. Increased trade between countries means that national economies are more connected than before, and many enterprises are now operating across borders. As companies expand, some of the new ways in which they work have raised concerns about how they might affect human rights. **Decentralization, outsourcing** and **privatization** are a few of the business trends to look out for.

- **Decentralization:** Large corporations are managed in more complex ways than small companies. Instead of relying on one person to make decisions, big companies often have a number of groups, teams or departments responsible for different parts of the business. This can help management to see the big picture, but it can also make it difficult to keep track of what people are doing and to ensure that everyone is working in unison.
- **Outsourcing:** Companies sometimes hire other companies to manage certain functions for them. For instance, a company might pay someone else to handle their customer services, or a manufacturer might buy some parts from another factory. This can save money and time, but it also means that companies are less directly responsible for their operations.
- **Privatization:** Just as with business outsourcing, governments might pay or allow private companies to deliver what are usually public services like water, electricity, health care or education. This is mostly done with the belief that companies will operate faster and for less money, but it can cause problems if governments do not remain involved and confirm the hired companies do a good job. The privatization of public services is such an important issue for human rights that the Committee on the Rights of the Child held a [Day of General Discussion on the Private Sector as a Service Provider and its Role in Implementing Child Rights](#) in 2002.

While the business sector can bring investments, jobs, services and new technology to communities, successful companies do not necessarily improve the lives of children. Rather, in many cases, economic growth mainly benefits adults who are already wealthy and powerful, leaving children and disadvantaged families behind. It is the government's job to make sure this does not happen, and that bigger business means greater respect for all children's rights.

Governments have promised to uphold children's rights by signing the CRC, OPAC and/or OPSC. This makes children **rights holders**, and children are also **stakeholders** in the business sector. Stakeholders are people or groups with an interest or concern in something. Children are stakeholders in the business sector because they buy things from companies, work for or have parents or caregivers who work for companies, live in communities where companies operate, and might grow up to be business leaders or employees.

Children are especially vulnerable to the effects of doing business. Because children are growing and developing, toxic chemicals, for example, can affect children much more than adults. And since they do not vote in elections or have a say in what businesses do, children are dependent on governments and businesses to make decisions that respect their rights. When their rights are not respected, children have little influence on businesses to take responsibility for their actions. Children are no match for big corporations in the courtroom, and rarely can find or afford lawyers to help them.

For these reasons, governments must take into account that children need extra protection. To guarantee that children's rights are respected, governments should design laws, policies and programmes with children's rights in mind. At the same time, governments must put systems in place to help children hold businesses accountable when they cause or contribute to violations of children's rights.

Objectives

The General Comment spells out what governments need to do to realize children's rights wherever business is involved. It does not go through every article of the CRC, OPAC or OPSC, but focuses on how governments can:

1. Ensure business does not have a negative impact on children's rights;
2. Make it easier for companies to respect children's rights in their activities, operations and **business relationships**, which include dealings with partners, suppliers, contractors, consultants and other outside persons, groups or organizations that work with a company; and
3. Provide children with effective ways of holding businesses responsible for rights violations.

The General Comment recognizes that there are many other international treaties, standards, guidelines and expectations regarding business and human rights. In fact, the General Comment was written with International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions in mind, on the [minimum age of employment](#) and the [elimination of the worst forms of child labour](#). It also draws on the [United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#), which refer to the government duty to protect human rights, the business duty to respect human rights, and the importance of having remedies to address any harm caused by human rights violations.

II. Scope and application

Scope

The General Comment mainly looks at what the CRC, OPAC and OPSC require governments to do for children's rights. Currently, few international treaties specifically address children's rights and business, but that does not mean businesses can remain indifferent. On the contrary, businesses have the same responsibilities as governments, and governments must verify that businesses meet their responsibilities. Companies should not hinder governments from carrying out their duties, or they might end up obstructing children's rights.

Many companies support children's rights through **corporate social responsibility** programmes, which can involve, for example, investing in children's communities, raising awareness of children's issues, making public commitments to respect children's rights, and funding organizations that work with children. Corporate social responsibility is valuable, and governments should encourage companies to keep supporting children's rights. But these programmes are not enough by themselves; governments still have to make sure the business sector meets its responsibility to respect children's rights.

Application

The CRC, OPAC and OPSC apply to national governments. Some governments are more complicated than others, though, because they have separate states or regions that can make their own laws and policies for certain things. This does not matter for international treaties, however; the main national government is responsible for guaranteeing the rights of all children in the country, no matter where they live.

The General Comment looks at the different aspects of the relationship between government, business and children's rights. It starts with the special role of the four general principles of the CRC, and then discusses how governments can meet their children's rights responsibilities. It gives a big picture of government obligations, and then focuses on specific situations where business tends to have a large impact on children's rights. Lastly, the General Comment talks about how governments need to spread the message and start things moving in the right direction.

III. General principles of the Convention as they relate to business activities

The General Comment states that children’s rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. This means that children’s rights apply to everyone, that they have to be considered as a whole set, and that what is done for one right will affect other rights.

Within the CRC, four rights deserve special attention: non-discrimination (article 2); the best interests of the child (article 3); life, survival and development (article 6); and participation (article 12). These are known as general principles, and are a good basis for considering how governments and businesses should approach children’s rights.

General Principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child	
Non-discrimination: All children have the right to be treated equally regardless of their race, colour, sex, language, disability, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.	Best interests of the child: Children’s best interests must be a major factor in all actions or decisions that concern them, particularly in relation to their care and protection.
Life, survival and development: Children have a fundamental right to life, and to reach their full potential through physical, psychological, emotional, social and spiritual growth.	Participation: Children have the right to express their views freely on any issues that affect them, and these views must be taken into account in a meaningful way.

Non-discrimination

When putting together laws, policies and programmes that relate to business, governments need to be sure that they do not have an unfair impact on children. For example, governments might require companies to help working parents meet their child care responsibilities so that their children can grow and develop to their full potential.

It is equally important that governments not allow discrimination against specific groups of children such as indigenous children, children who were born in another country, or children from minority ethnic backgrounds. Sometimes this might involve asking the business sector to put in extra effort, for example making sure that children with disabilities can buy, use and do the same things as other children.

For governments to prevent businesses from discriminating against children, they have to keep tabs on what businesses are doing and be prepared to stop companies from treating children wrongly. Governments should collect information on how business activities and operations affect children in general and also certain groups of children that are likely to face discrimination. Governments should have a system for reviewing this kind of information, and should set up official agencies, commissions or other structures to investigate any concerns and help victims of discrimination hold businesses accountable for violations.

While governments need to keep a watchful eye on the business sector, they should also find ways of supporting businesses in protecting children from discrimination. Governments can explain children’s right to be treated equally to companies. They might engage with media and companies involved in **marketing** or **advertising**, which are ways in which businesses promote their products and services. Business training and awareness-raising programmes should aim to eliminate all kinds of discrimination against children, and should give particular attention to children in vulnerable situations, like those who work or live in the street.

Best interests of the child

The CRC requires that children’s best interests be a primary consideration in any official decisions that concern them. In terms of children’s rights and business, this means that children must be considered whenever governments write new business laws or policies, or when judges review cases or incidents that involve children.

For example, governments should make children’s best interests a big part of debates on the economy, finance,

international trade, taxes, privatization and **corruption**. Corruption is what happens when people abuse their authority for their own gain or purposes. The best interest principle also applies to business and private organizations that provide social services for children, such as child care, foster care, health care, education or residential placements for children in conflict with the law.

The CRC, OPAC and OPSC give a good sense of what governments should think about when they are figuring out children's best interests. It is especially important that governments take children's best interests into account when weighing possible courses of action, for example whether to do something that will make a difference now or to follow a long-term plan that will bring about change more slowly. No matter what decisions governments make, they should be ready to share the reasons behind their choices and the ways in which they thought about children's best interests.

Life, survival and development

Children's right to life, survival and development is not just about them having enough to eat and drink. The General Comment recognizes that children must be able to grow not only physically, but also mentally, spiritually, morally, psychologically and socially. Children have the right to thrive and reach their full potential in every sense, so governments must think broadly when considering life, survival and development.

Governments need to be aware that businesses can put children's lives, survival and development at risk in different ways. Businesses might:

- Pollute the environment, which can cause health problems, ruin crops or make water unsafe for drinking or bathing;
- Buy or rent land that children and families depend on to make a living;
- Advertise or sell dangerous things to children, such as cigarettes, alcohol, or food that has little nutritional value; or
- Set demanding work schedules that make it difficult for parents and caregivers to look after their children properly.

Thankfully, governments can use a variety of strategies to prevent such things from happening. For instance, they can write **regulations** – another way of saying rules – to set boundaries for what businesses can market to children, or verify that businesses take care of the environment. Governments can also push businesses to introduce family-friendly policies at work, such as having regular work hours or giving new parents paid time off to care for their children.

Participation

To guarantee children's right to participation, also known as the right to be heard, governments have to make sure that children can share their thoughts on things that affect them, and that people take what children have to say seriously. When governments write new business laws and policies that will impact children, for example, they need to seek children's opinions. The same applies when governments put together **child rights impact assessments**, which are used to determine how children will be affected by changes to laws, policies, regulations, budgets and other official actions or decisions.

Participation applies to all parts of government, including departments, agencies and ministries responsible for education, the environment, labour and the media. Because it is especially difficult for some children to get people to listen to them, as may be the case for children with disabilities, indigenous children and children from minority cultural backgrounds, governments must take extra steps to reach these and other vulnerable children to make sure their voices are heard.

Children's right to be heard also extends to courts and other systems that governments and businesses have set up to resolve disputes. When businesses cause or contribute to violations of children's rights, affected children should be given a chance to get involved in resolving things. If they want to, children should be allowed to speak for themselves, or they should be permitted to ask another person or organization to speak on their behalf.

Just like governments, businesses should allow children to express their views. For example, sometimes companies consult with groups and communities that would be affected by a new project or big decision. In cases like this, governments should advise businesses on how to help children voice their opinions and on how to act on children's feedback. Business consultations with children should always be comfortable, inclusive and easy for everyone to follow. Civil society organizations can be a valuable source of support throughout the process.

IV. Nature and scope of State obligations

The CRC requires governments to take “all appropriate legislative, administrative and other measures” to meet their commitments to children’s rights. This means that governments need to put laws, regulations, policies, structures, systems, programmes and services in place to make it possible for all children to fully enjoy all their rights.

For **economic, social and cultural rights** like the rights to health, education and an adequate standard of living – which are more about what governments have to give to children than what children should be able to do – governments are expected to “devote the maximum amount of available resources”. Some governments have more to provide to children than others, but it does not mean they should not do everything they can to improve the situation for children.

The General Comment talks about three broad requirements that governments have to meet for children’s rights, which are known as the obligations to **respect, protect** and **fulfil**. These obligations cover actions governments have to take and things they must achieve as a result. The same obligations apply to companies, non-profit organizations and other groups that governments hire to deliver services or run programmes on their behalf.

Respect

The **obligation to respect** means that governments should never support, enable, allow or approve of any violations of children’s rights. As part of this, governments must ensure that the private sector respects children’s rights. They should be open and straightforward about their laws, policies, rules and decisions about business, and should always think about potential impacts on children’s rights.

Governments also need to respect children’s rights when they work with businesses or do things that businesses do. For example, if a government decides to hire a company to provide goods or services through a process known as **public procurement**, it should pick a company that has a good track record and is committed to respecting children’s rights. In the same way, governments should only invest money and resources in companies that uphold children’s rights.

Protect

In addition to their obligation to respect, governments have an **obligation to protect** children from violations of their rights. In terms of business, this means governments must do everything possible to stop businesses from abusing children’s rights in the first place or from making ongoing violations of children’s rights worse.

With this in mind, governments should create laws, regulations and policies to control how business affects children’s rights. They need to verify that rules are followed, look into situations where businesses are involved in violating children’s rights, and help make things right for child victims. When governments do not do this, they can be held responsible for failing to stop businesses from violating children’s rights.

Fulfil

The **obligation to fulfil** requires governments to take steps to realize children’s rights through laws, systems and support for businesses. Governments need to be clear and consistent about their high expectations for businesses on issues that affect children, such as labour, health, safety, the environment, land, taxes and corruption.

More specifically, governments should strive to guarantee equal employment opportunities and fair treatment in the workplace; promote practical training programmes, decent jobs and higher standards of living; and support the success of small and medium-sized enterprises. As part of this, it is essential that governments provide information about the CRC, OPAC and OPSC to all agencies, departments and employees who are in a position to champion business and children’s rights.

Remedy and repair

Whenever children's rights are violated, governments need to make remedies available that help child victims get **reparations** to set things right. Children should know about and have easy access to remedies that are designed for their situation and give fair, prompt responses. The General Comment talks about **civil, criminal** and **administrative** remedies. Civil remedies resolve disputes between individuals and/or companies; criminal remedies hold individuals or businesses responsible for breaking the law; and administrative remedies reexamine government actions or decisions. It is especially important that children have access to official remedies that are neutral and separate from the rest of the government, such as independent courts or tribunals.

Governments should hold businesses accountable for violating children's rights. Specifically, divisions that handle labour, education, health, safety, the environment, taxes, human rights, equality and other relevant subjects can look for and investigate potential negative impacts on children's rights. When a company has been found responsible for violating children's rights, governments might issue a fine, order the company to provide compensation for harm caused, or bring a court case against the company.

When providing reparations for child victims, governments have to remember that children are more vulnerable than adults. Because some violations can have serious and permanent effects, they must be resolved quickly to minimize the possibility of long-term harm. For example, many forms of pollution should be addressed as soon as they have been identified, and children affected should have immediate access to health care.

No matter what the violation, governments must eventually provide all child victims with the medical, psychological and legal services, assistance and support they need to recover as fully as possible. This includes guaranteeing that the same violations will not happen again. Governments might revise related laws and policies, change how they monitor business activities and operations, or take steps to hold companies that abuse children's rights responsible, whether in a civil or criminal manner, for their actions.

V. State obligations in specific contexts

Business affects children's rights in a vast range of situations. In some areas, business tends to have an especially big impact, and governments often have not done everything possible to make sure businesses respect children's rights. The General Comment looks at some of these topics in detail, but it is important to remember that businesses also affect children's rights in many other ways.

Providing services

Sometimes governments hire or allow companies or non-profit organizations to handle public services on their behalf. These kinds of agreements are often used for utilities like water, electricity or transportation, and for programmes related to health care, education, security or juvenile justice. No matter which services are provided, which companies or organizations are involved, or the nature of the arrangements, governments are always responsible for making certain public services are delivered in line with children's rights.

Before governments outsource or privatize public services, they should set standards for how they expect companies and organizations to respect children's rights. For instance, it should be clear that all children need to have full, equal access to services without fear of discrimination. Governments also need to know that their standards are being followed, so they should set up **monitoring** systems to watch over arrangements with the private sector. If rights abuses happen, governments must provide child victims with remedies to demand that the violations be stopped and ask for appropriate reparations.

Informal economy

The **informal economy** is where business takes place unofficially, meaning that it is outside the supervision and control of the government. Informal economic activity might involve people trading goods and services, doing odd jobs for cash, or selling things on the street. Many people work in the informal economy, especially in developing countries, which raises special concerns for children's rights. For example, things that are made or bought in the informal economy like food, clothes and toys might be unhealthy or unsafe for children.

Children are much more likely to work in the informal economy, mainly for small family businesses or in connection with agriculture or tourism. Most often, this kind of work is poorly paid, unreliable and even dangerous, and can leave children vulnerable to many rights violations. Without the protection of laws and regulations, children working informally are not always able to pursue an education and may not have enough time to rest and play. To make matters worse, parents who work in the informal sector regularly have work long hours to make a living, making it difficult for them to look after their children's needs.

To address children's rights in the informal economy, governments need to cover all business activities. Among other things, they should:

- Raise awareness of children's rights in the informal economy;
- Study and collect information on how the informal economy affects children's rights;
- Help to create decent, well-paid work for parents and caregivers;
- Develop and enforce clear rules about how land can be used and where business can occur;
- Improve social support for disadvantaged families; and
- Bring business out of the informal sector by making registration processes simple, tax arrangements clear, and financial services broadly available

Moreover, governments must give particular attention to the education, health and development of children working in the informal economy. International children's rights and child protection standards apply to informal and family businesses just as they do for large companies. Governments should ensure that these business operations follow guidelines on, for example, the minimum age for work and acceptable working conditions. Governments can further advance children's rights by offering high-quality education programmes and practical or life skills training.

Global operations

More and more companies are working internationally through increasingly complicated legal structures and relationships. Some of the most common ways of doing business across borders involve the following actors:

- **Subsidiaries** are companies that are owned and controlled by other companies. When a company wants to do business in a new country, it might start a foreign subsidiary to handle operations in that country. In relation to a subsidiary, the controlling company is called a **parent company**.
- **Contractors** are companies that have an agreement to provide goods or services to another company by, for example, supplying parts or assisting with marketing. Contractors operate independently and are not part of the structure of a company in the same way as subsidiaries.
- **Licensees** are companies that have permission to use something that belongs to another company, such as a brand name. As with contractors, licensees are separate from the companies they work with.
- **Suppliers**, also called vendors, are companies that sell goods or services, such as raw materials or technical services, to other companies. Suppliers are different from contractors because they tend to be less involved in advising companies on business decisions.
- **Joint ventures** are arrangements that let companies pool their resources and work together. Joint ventures are controlled by but operate separately from the companies that invest in them.

All of these arrangements can make it difficult to figure out exactly how businesses are affecting children's rights. For example, a company's supplier might be using child labour to build parts, its subsidiary might be buying land that traditionally belongs to an indigenous community, and its contractors and licensees might be involved in selling and promoting unhealthy food to children.

International corporations raise further challenges for governments, which have a harder time getting companies to respect children's rights when they are based or registered in one country (a **home State**) and doing business in another (a **host State**). Even so, the CRC, OPAC and OPSC still require governments to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of all children under their **jurisdiction**, which is another way of saying authority or control. This is not just limited to children who are in a country's territory, which is the land that falls within its borders, but can also extend to children in other places. These are called **extraterritorial obligations**. As one example, to fight child sex tourism, the OPSC instructs governments to hold people and companies accountable for buying, selling, abusing and exploiting children abroad.

Given that one company can have impact in many different jurisdictions at the same time, it is critical that governments work together to make sure children's rights are respected everywhere. This is very much in the spirit of the CRC, which emphasizes the importance of international cooperation in advancing children's rights. Host States have the main responsibility for preventing abuses, and should regulate and monitor business activities, operations and relationships in their territories. Home States should similarly verify that companies based in their territories respect children's rights, but should never allow their efforts to permit host States to ignore their own responsibilities.

Home States need to provide remedies to children and families in other countries whose rights have been violated by an international business. This applies whenever a government has a 'reasonable link' with a violation, which could be that the business responsible is headquartered, registered or doing some work in the country. As part of international cooperation, governments should assist other governments in looking into violations of children's rights or taking steps to hold businesses accountable for their actions. By the same token, governments should support and abide by regional and international systems in place to address extraterritorial violations of children's rights.

Furthermore, home States can do a number of things to prevent businesses from violating children rights overseas. If a business requests public financing or insurance, for example, governments can require that the business identify and address potential negative impacts from planned operations abroad. Governments can also consider companies' previous records on children's rights when they make these kinds of decisions.

Parts of the government that are directly involved with promoting business can take a proactive role, and can make clear that they will not support projects or activities that are likely to violate children's rights. Home States should make sure that the departments that manage trade and foreign investment work alongside those more directly responsible for realizing children's rights. The same goes for international development agencies, which should respect children's rights in their policies and programmes and raise business issues in discussions about human rights with other governments.

International organizations

International cooperation is key for realizing children's rights, and one way this happens is through international organizations. The United Nations is probably the best known international organization, but there are many more, some of which focus specifically on business issues such as development, finance and trade. They include:

- The [World Bank Group](#), which provides financial assistance to fight poverty in developing countries;
- The [International Monetary Fund](#), which gives loans and advice to countries in difficult economic situations; and
- The [World Trade Organization](#), which sets rules for and resolves disputes over international trade.

When governments work with these organizations, they need to remember their children's rights obligations. For instance, governments should not accept international loans or support financial policies that threaten children's rights.

Similarly, governments must check that international organizations follow the CRC, OPAC and OPSC when they make decisions, sign agreements or write business standards. They should address not only well-known issues such as child labour, but also children's rights in general. When international organizations are considering new projects, they must have systems in place to look for and prevent possible negative impacts on children. If children's rights have already been violated, organizations should provide remedies for the victims, especially when the violations happened because of something the organizations funded or supported.

Emergencies and conflict

It can be challenging for governments to ensure that businesses respect children's rights in parts of the world where children are more vulnerable because of war, natural disasters or other emergencies. Among other things, conflict and emergencies can raise serious issues related to child labour, the use of child soldiers and corruption. Importantly, though, children in difficult situations have the exact same rights, and governments have the same obligations to respect, protect and fulfil these rights.

Home States should require companies working in areas affected by conflict or an emergency to engage in **child-rights due diligence**, which is a process that helps businesses to identify and protect against potential negative impacts on children's rights. Governments can further ask companies to publish information about what they have done to guarantee they do not violate vulnerable children's rights. They can even pass new laws and regulations to prevent certain kinds of violations, like banning the sale of weapons to countries where children are used as soldiers.

Home States should support companies that work in troubled areas by providing information about the local **children's rights context**, which covers the risks of violation and how children's rights have been, are being and could be realized. Companies must be reminded that they have the responsibility to respect children's rights no matter what they are doing or where they are working. In particular, businesses need to understand how children in vulnerable situations can be affected by forms of violence, including sexual abuse, exploitation and child trafficking.

In places with war or conflict, both home and host States have special obligations under the CRC and OPAC. They have to obey **international humanitarian law**, which sets the rules for armed conflict and protects people who are not involved in the fighting. Governments have to stop recruiting children into their armed forces, and must help children who have been affected by conflict to recover as fully as possible.

In terms of business, issues can arise when private security companies, hired to protect offices, factories or other property, abuse or exploit children. Governments should prohibit security companies from using children in their work, require that they take steps to protect children from violence and exploitation, and find ways to hold employees accountable for violating children's rights.

VI. Framework for implementation

Legislation, regulation and enforcement

Legislation and regulation

Governments can make sure that businesses respect children's rights through **legislation** – another word for written laws – and **regulations**, which fill in the details of legislation. Legislation and regulations should be reliable and straightforward, and should make clear that children's rights are everyone's responsibility. So that laws cover all the important topics, governments first need to collect background information on how business has an impact on children's rights. Legislation and regulations should address the many ways that businesses can affect children, from supporting families and paying taxes to making workplaces safe and promoting healthy food and drink.

To help working parents take care of their children, governments should put family-friendly business laws and policies in place. Among other things, this means that new parents should get time off to meet their responsibilities, working mothers should be permitted and encouraged to breastfeed, and child care should be available onsite or nearby the workplace. Businesses should pay decent wages, protect parents and caregivers from rights violations such as violence or discrimination, and keep work environments safe and secure.

Governments need resources to fulfil children's rights, and many of these come from business activity. Governments can tax private companies that are working in their country, and they can also operate their own business. Wherever their finances come from, governments need laws, regulations and systems to determine how money is collected and managed. Bribery and other forms of corruption must be forbidden, and governments should be clear, open and fair about how they spend and look after public funds.

Governments have specific obligations to children. One of the main things they need to do is prevent children from getting involved in harmful labour. They should set a minimum age for employment, limit children's work to reasonable hours, and have strict guidelines on acceptable working conditions. Children who can legally work should be further protected from tasks and assignments that place their health, safety or development in danger. They must be able to attend school, play, grow and reach their full potential. Labour laws are not enough, though; governments also need to monitor and inspect businesses to confirm that the laws are being followed. Businesses should be held accountable for violations, and governments must help all victims of harmful child labour to recover and return to community life.

Governments should prevent businesses from making, selling and marketing things that are bad for children. Some products are especially unhealthy. There are already international agreements on, for example, advertising tobacco to children and marketing baby formula to mothers who breastfeed. Good health also involves access to medicine. Governments should encourage drug companies to make up-to-date and good quality medicine available for children. In addition, further steps should be taken to keep medicine affordable for children around the world, regardless of where it is manufactured.

Companies that work in or with the media have a special responsibility to help children grow and develop using the information they share. Governments need to ensure that the media meet this responsibility, and should set rules to protect children from pornographic, violent or otherwise harmful content. At the same time, children have the right to information and to express themselves freely, so governments should not withhold information from children just because they disagree with it. Rather, governments should work with media companies to develop guidelines that not only fight violations such as violence and discrimination, but also promote full respect for all children's rights. For example, governments should help and encourage businesses to adapt books, magazines and other publications for children with disabilities.

Children are easily influenced by advertising and marketing messages in the media. Since they tend not to question commercial messages, children might buy, use, eat or drink products that are unsafe or unhealthy. Furthermore, advertising and marketing can affect how children feel about themselves by, for example, showing only certain kinds of people in commercials or using photographs that have been changed to make people look better than in real life. Governments should set rules to keep advertising and marketing accurate. They should support new business standards, including requiring clear labels to make sure that parents and children have the information needed to make a decision.

The Internet is another area of concern for children's rights. It can expose children to serious risks of violence through cyber-bullying, sexual abuse, trafficking and other forms of exploitation. Businesses might not always be directly responsible for these violations, but they could play a role in making them possible. Travel agency websites might indirectly make child sex tourism accessible, for instance, or credit cards might make it easy for people to buy child pornography online. To fight this, governments should help children understand how to use the Internet safely, help businesses appreciate their digital impact on children's rights, and work with technology companies to protect children from violent and harmful online content.

Enforcement

Even when governments have good business legislation and regulations in place, children's rights may still end up getting violated. Governments have to verify that their laws are **enforced**, which means that businesses must follow and respect them in practice. Governments can do this by:

- Giving agencies and departments more power to maintain high standards for health, safety, labour, the environment, advertising and other things that affect children; this might involve monitoring business activities and operations more thoroughly, receiving and looking into complaints about children's rights violations, and providing remedies to child victims;
- Sharing laws and official guidelines about children's rights and business with everyone who might be interested, including children and companies;
- Training judges, lawyers and others in the justice system about how the CRC, OPAC and OPSC relate to their work, and encouraging them to talk about international children's rights when they make decisions; and
- Making remedies available in and outside of the courtroom to help children whose rights have been violated get reparations.

Children's rights and due diligence

Child-rights due diligence is a way to identify and prevent negative impacts on children's rights. This process can give businesses a sense of how their actions affect children all over the world, and governments should require that all companies apply it. When there is a high risk that a company might violate children's rights because of the kind of work it does or where it has set up operations, governments should have even stricter standards. Specifically, governments should require businesses in these situations to set up systems for monitoring activities and preventing children's rights violations.

Sometimes companies conduct more general human rights due diligence rather than having a separate process for children. When this is the case, it is extremely important that the CRC, OPAC and OPSC still play a big role in the review. Any plans that businesses make to prevent or remedy human rights violations should always look at how their actions would affect children.

The same way that private businesses have to look at how decisions affect children's rights, government-owned companies should engage in child-rights due diligence. This is a chance to show private companies how due diligence works, and government companies should write and publish regular reports on their children's rights impacts.

When private companies ask for public financing or support, governments should require that they first commit to child-rights due diligence. In fact, governments should ask or even require large, well-known companies to share with the public what they are doing about children's rights. This information should be easy to read and easy to compare against other companies, and should talk about the steps being taken to protect against and remedy negative impacts on children's rights.

As part of child-rights due diligence, companies should explain how they prevent the things they make, advertise or sell from contributing to serious violations of children's rights like slavery or forced labour. If governments require that companies publish this kind of information, they need to make sure that business reports are accurate and received on time. Governments can also create forms, checklists and other ways of tracking how companies are handling certain children's rights issues, and draw attention to those that are doing a good job.

Remedial measures

It can be difficult for children to hold businesses responsible for violating their rights. First of all, many children do not have basic information about their rights or the remedies that are available to them when their rights have been violated. Children in some countries are not allowed to file court cases, and there may be serious doubts about whether courts can actually help. Governments do not always reliably investigate children's rights violations, even when companies have done something that is clearly illegal.

Perhaps most importantly, companies have a lot more money and power than children do. It can be hard for children to find a lawyer to take their case, and expensive to fight a company in court. Cases against companies tend to be settled out of court, which means judges do not have a chance to review and discuss possible violations. This can be a problem in legal systems where judges base their decisions on cases that have already been decided. If there are no cases for judges to consider, it can be challenging to predict the outcome or determine whether a child has a good chance of getting reparations.

The situation is more problematic with companies working across borders. Given the complicated structure of international companies, it can be confusing to figure out which branch or part of the business is responsible for a violation. Foreign subsidiaries sometimes do not have the funds to pay or the insurance to cover court costs, so getting a remedy might require filing a case in another country. Unfortunately, many governments do not make it easy for people who live abroad to use their courts, and children may have no way of getting public **legal aid** to help pay for the costs. It is also difficult to collect **evidence** – information that is needed to prove what happened – when it is located in more than one country.

With all of these obstacles, governments have to take great care that children whose rights have been violated by a company can access remedies. First, children and their families must be given information about remedies through schools, children's programmes and community centres. Child victims should be able to bring court cases by themselves, and governments should provide or pay for legal aid to help them do so. Governments must give extra assistance to vulnerable children and those who have difficulty communicating, including young children and children with disabilities. Governments ought to apply their criminal laws to companies that are responsible for serious violations of children's rights, and are required to do this for the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography under the OPSC.

If a business violates the rights of many children in the same way, the children should be able to jointly bring one big case. This is known as a **collective complaint**, but it can take on other names in different legal systems, such as a **class action lawsuit or public interest litigation**. Whatever the nature of the remedy, children must be able to take full part in any case that relates to violations of their rights. Justice systems should be adapted for this purpose, and special rules should help child victims testify and participate in court. It is essential that children have the right to confidentiality and privacy, and they must be helped to understand what is happening at each stage.

Governments can offer other remedies for child victims outside the courts. For instance, **arbitration** can be a faster, easier and more private way to determine whether and how children's rights were violated. **Mediation** and **conciliation** give informal, less confrontational chances to find a solution for everyone involved. Similarly, some companies run their own **grievance mechanisms** to raise and resolve concerns. Governments should make certain all these remedies are fair, appropriate and timely, and children should always be able to ask a judge to take another look at the situation.

Finally, governments should ensure children whose rights have been violated can use **human rights complaints mechanisms**, which are remedies beyond the national justice system. These mechanisms are run by regional and international organizations such as the United Nations. They operate by their own rules, but most of the time, governments have to sign up for a mechanism before people can use it. A special CRC complaints mechanism at the United Nations works in this manner. It can review cases where ratifying governments have failed to protect children from rights violations committed by businesses.

Policy measures

Governments should try to bring an awareness of children's rights into all ways of doing business. They must recognize children's rights and business as part of their responsibility under the CRC, and help businesses understand and respect children's rights. More specifically, governments should set out guidelines that make it clear to businesses what needs to be done to respect children's rights at home and abroad. This must cover not only what companies themselves do, but also what they can do to ensure the companies and people they work with respect children's rights. For instance, companies can make it known they will not tolerate any violence against children.

It is especially important that governments help smaller companies to better understand and respect children's rights. As part of this, bigger companies can assist smaller ones they work with to improve respect for children's rights. At the same time, it must be possible for smaller firms to meet their responsibilities without using too many resources.

Coordination and monitoring measures

Coordination

For governments to meet their obligations under the CRC, OPAC and OPSC, all their parts have to work together. This includes local, regional and national levels and every department, agency and branch. In most governments, for instance, the divisions that address business issues work separately from the sections that consider children's rights. Because of this, governments have to make sure the people who write new laws and policies about business also know about their children's rights obligations.

With this in mind, governments should distribute information on children's rights, run training programmes and set up support systems so that new laws, policies and business agreements with other countries respect the CRC. Some countries have **national human rights institutions** set up by the government to look after human rights. These institutions can play an important role in linking all the parts of government that deal with children's rights and business.

Monitoring

Governments must watch for children's rights violations that businesses might be responsible for, whether within their borders or in other countries. Governments can monitor children's rights concerns by:

- Collecting information to determine where violations are happening;
- Looking more in depth into possible rights abuses;
- Working with civil society organizations and national human rights institutions; and
- Asking or requiring companies to publish reports on how they are impacting children's rights.

National human rights institutions play a special role in monitoring children's rights, and governments should ensure they can deal with issues related to business. In particular, national human rights institutions should be able to:

- Receive and review complaints about children's rights violations;
- Launch public investigations into widespread abuses;
- Help determine how to remedy violations; and
- Look over national laws to confirm they are in line with the CRC.

As governments set out more general plans to realize children's rights under the CRC, OPAC and OPSC, they should acknowledge their international obligations to respect, protect and fulfil children's rights when it comes to business. By the same token, governments need to look at what business is doing for children's rights. To do this, governments might form special committees or cooperate with civil society organizations, professional groups or associations, and national human rights institutions. Furthermore, governments should ask children how business is affecting them. They might contact children through social media channels, local or national youth councils, student government associations, youth groups, or other child-led or child-focused organizations.

To make sure children's best interests stay at the centre of their work on children's rights and business, governments should carry out **child rights impacts assessments**. They show how laws, policies, regulations, budgets and other government actions or decisions might affect children's rights before they come into effect, and are just as important as monitoring actual effects on children afterwards.

Child rights impact assessments can be carried out in many ways, but every assessment should be based on the CRC, OPAC, OPSC and the Committee on the Rights of the Child's General Comments and recommendations. Sometimes governments do broader human rights impact assessments instead of separate ones for child rights, but the main points in the CRC, OPAC and OPSC should still be addressed. Even though an assessment might cover more than children's rights, governments must think specifically of how children might be affected.

Child rights impact assessments can look at how a business or industry might affect children overall, but they can also decide whether some groups of children are more likely to be affected than others. To determine the scope, assessments can ask for feedback and information from children, civil society organizations, independent experts, relevant agencies or departments, universities, researchers and other sources. Assessments should be as useful and practical as possible, and give ideas on new things to include, recommendations for improvement, and options to consider. Completed assessments should be published and made available to anyone interested in reading them.

Finally, governments should consider hiring an outside person or group to carry out impact assessments. A person who does not work for the government is likely to give a more honest review than someone who already has an idea of what the assessment should state. Ultimately, the government has to guarantee that every assessment is helpful and accurate.

Collaborative and awareness-raising measures

Only governments can ratify the CRC, but everyone – including children, businesses and civil society organizations – should be involved in realizing children's rights. With this in mind, governments should explain to children and their families that companies around the world have to respect children's rights. Governments must likewise ensure that businesses know about children's rights, and should help businesses understand how to meet their responsibility to children. As they do this, governments should try to cover all the rights in the CRC and be prepared to challenge any negative ideas about children.

Importantly, governments do not have to act alone. For example, the media can play a part in helping children, their families and businesses learn about children's rights. National human rights institutions can explain the CRC to businesses and formulate policies, guidelines and models on how to respect children's rights. Civil society organizations also have an important role, including:

- Talking to companies about their responsibility to respect children's rights;
- Taking part in government and business child rights impact assessments;
- Monitoring business activities to hold companies responsible for their impact on children's rights; and
- Helping children to access remedies and receive reparations when their rights have been violated.

Governments need to make sure that civil society organizations can do all these things, and should give them a chance to get involved in national planning on children's rights and business issues. Governments should support and try to work with independent advocacy organizations, business industry groups, trade or labour unions, child-led organizations, universities, consumer groups, professional bodies or societies, chambers of commerce and other local business associations.

VII. Dissemination

Governments should share the General Comment with everyone who needs or wants to understand it, including:

- Lawmakers;
- Agencies, departments and local branches, including groups that make decisions about business issues, trade, overseas investment, international relations, and giving or lending money to other countries;
- Companies of every size, from large, global corporations to small family businesses that operate in the informal economy;
- People who work with children, including teachers, social workers, lawyers and judges;
- Civil society organizations; and
- Children.

This might mean that governments have to translate the General Comment into many languages, and they will most likely need to create versions for children and people who have difficulty seeing or reading. Governments should consider running workshops, classes or discussion groups on what the General Comment means and how people can meet their children's rights obligations. Along these lines, governments should cover the General Comment when training new employees involved in children's rights and business.

Lastly, governments should include children's rights and business in progress reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. They should provide information on what they are doing to ensure that businesses improves their children's rights records at home and abroad, and share any problems they have come across. The Committee will want to confirm that governments are doing everything possible to meet their obligations to respect, protect and fulfil children's rights as set out in the General Comment.

ANNEX: INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

The following international human rights standards are referenced in General Comment No. 16. Together, they give a full picture of what governments can, should and must do about children's rights and business.

Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of international Humanitarian Law (2005).

Charter of the United Nations (1945).

Children's Rights and Business Principles (2012).

Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 13 on the right to education (1999).

Committee on the Rights of the Child, Day of General Discussion on the Private Sector as a Service Provider and its Role in Implementing Child Rights (2002).

Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 5 on general measures of implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (2003).

Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 6 on treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin (2005).

Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 7 on implementing child rights in early childhood (2005).

Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 9 on the rights of children with disabilities (2006).

Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 11 on indigenous children and their rights under the Convention (2009).

Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 12 on the right of the child to be heard (2009).

Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 13 on the right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence (2011).

Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 14 on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration (2013).

Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 15 on the right of the child to the highest attainable standard of health (2013).

Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 17 on the right of the child to rest, leisure, play, recreational activities, cultural life and the arts (2013).

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).

Guidelines on Justice in Matters involving Child Victims and Witnesses of Crime (2005).

Human Rights Guidelines for Pharmaceutical Companies in relation to Access to Medicines (2008).

International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 138 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (1973).

International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999).

International Labour Organization (ILO) Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (1977).

Maastricht Principles on Extraterritorial Obligations of States in the area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2012).

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure (2011).

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions (1997).

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (1976).
The United Nations Global Compact (2000).

United Nations Convention against Corruption (2003).

United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011).

United Nations Study on Violence against Children (2006).

World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (2003).

World Health Organization International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes (1981).

World Trade Organization Declaration on the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement and Public Health (2001).

