

Bring human rights to discussion tables and into decisions at Davos, UN experts urge

24 January 2018 – With world leaders converging in Davos, Switzerland, for the annual World Economic Forum, a group of United Nations human rights experts has called on government and business leaders to use the occasion to decide on concrete actions to bring about positive change.

“What we are seeing in the world today is the economically disenfranchised yearning for a fairer economic system that spreads the rewards of economic development to all,” Anita Ramasastry, the chairperson of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, [said](#) on Tuesday.

“The inclusion of human rights objectives into political and economic decisions are crucial if economic reforms are to tackle the root causes of populism, global unrest, climate change and inequality,” she added.

In particular, the experts underscored the need for Governments and businesses to act in accordance with the UN [Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) by respecting the rights of workers across supply chains and avoid business operations that cause or contribute to adverse human rights impacts.

Welcoming a session of this year’s World Economic Forum on *Global Prospects for Human Rights*, they called on all participants to remind each other that human rights are not a fringe issue but are at the centre of the most pressing global risks and challenges, and therefore must be the focus of efforts to address those issues.

They also stressed that Governments and business leaders meeting in Davos wield the “power and influence” to set the world on a more inclusive and sustainable path and called on them to realize the commitments world leaders made “to realize the human rights of all” and “to leave no one behind.”

They reiterated their appeal on business leaders to support those pledges.

The Working Group on Business and Human Rights was established by the Geneva-based Human Rights Council in 2011.

Composed of five experts, the Working Group promotes the effective dissemination and implementation of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights through promoting sharing of good practices and lessons learned, integrating a gender perspective, and suggesting recommendations.

UN Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Human Rights Council to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.