

A circular graphic with a teal watercolor texture, featuring various shades of blue and green with soft, irregular edges.

ABN AMRO and Human Rights

Our path towards respecting
human rights



22,000 ABN AMRO employees
provide financial products
and services to:

5.1 million individual
people and families

300,000 small
businesses

70,000 large
businesses

That means we directly affect the lives of over 5 million people, as well as millions more through the companies we finance and we procure from. That's a lot of people whose lives our business can affect. What is our responsibility to all of these people?

At ABN AMRO, we recognize our responsibility to respect human rights throughout our activities and the activities of our suppliers and clients.

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» a better
bank
contributing
to a better
world »



ABN AMRO's pledge is to be a better bank contributing to a better world. We can only contribute to a better world with the trust of people, which we earn by acting ethically and by being transparent. We base our actions on principles that put people first: from our employees to our clients and suppliers. The basis for putting people first is respecting their fundamental dignity: their human rights.

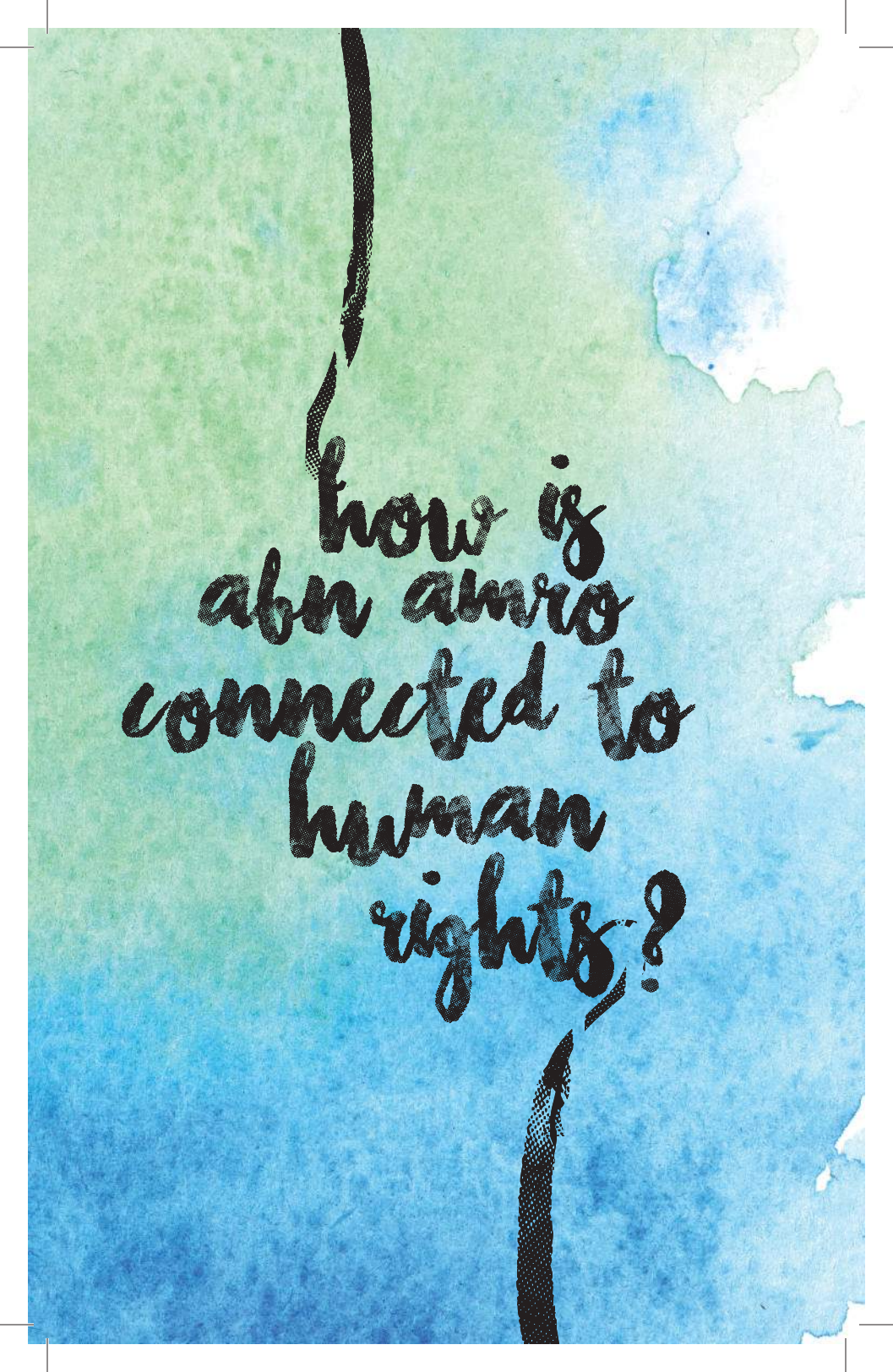
In this guide we present a clear statement of our belief, commitment, current practice and plans for the future. We want to plant our flag and show that respect for human rights by a business matters. Earlier, we laid down our commitment in our Human Rights Statement, which is part of our sustainability policy.

We are aware that everyone working for and with us, no matter where, needs to continually focus their attention on human rights. We work together with all parties involved to find ways to effect positive change, from our suppliers to our clients and from NGOs to the academic world.

To us, this guide is also the opening of a conversation. We welcome your honest review of our commitment, current actions and plans as laid out in this publication. We've committed ourselves to respecting human rights, and we need your commitment too.

Caroline Princen

Member of ABN AMRO Managing Board



how is
abn amro
connected to
human
rights?

How is ABN AMRO connected to human rights?

ABN AMRO is a bank, which means we provide products and services with people and for people. We rely on people for our business. In many ways our activities make a positive contribution to those people and their families: our loans enable companies to invest in their business, our mortgages allow people to buy a house, and our investment services help people increase their pensions. We want to have a favourable impact on people's lives: to be a better bank contributing to a better world. But we also recognise that our bank may be connected to practices that harm people's fundamental dignity: their human rights.

At ABN AMRO, we address our connection to human rights, and to potential human rights abuses, on a day-to-day basis. We have an impact on human rights:

- through our own activities and the activities of our suppliers.
- through the business activities of our clients.

In our own activities, we are connected to potential human rights abuses in a number of ways. For example, we handle large amounts of data that in the hands of the wrong people could infringe on our clients' privacy. Our relationship managers could discriminate - intentionally or unintentionally - when deciding whether or not to offer a mortgage to a family. Female employees could be paid less than male employees for the same work; our staff could be under pressure to work long hours. Through our suppliers, we could be connected to abuses like underpayment of janitors and canteen cooks in our offices.

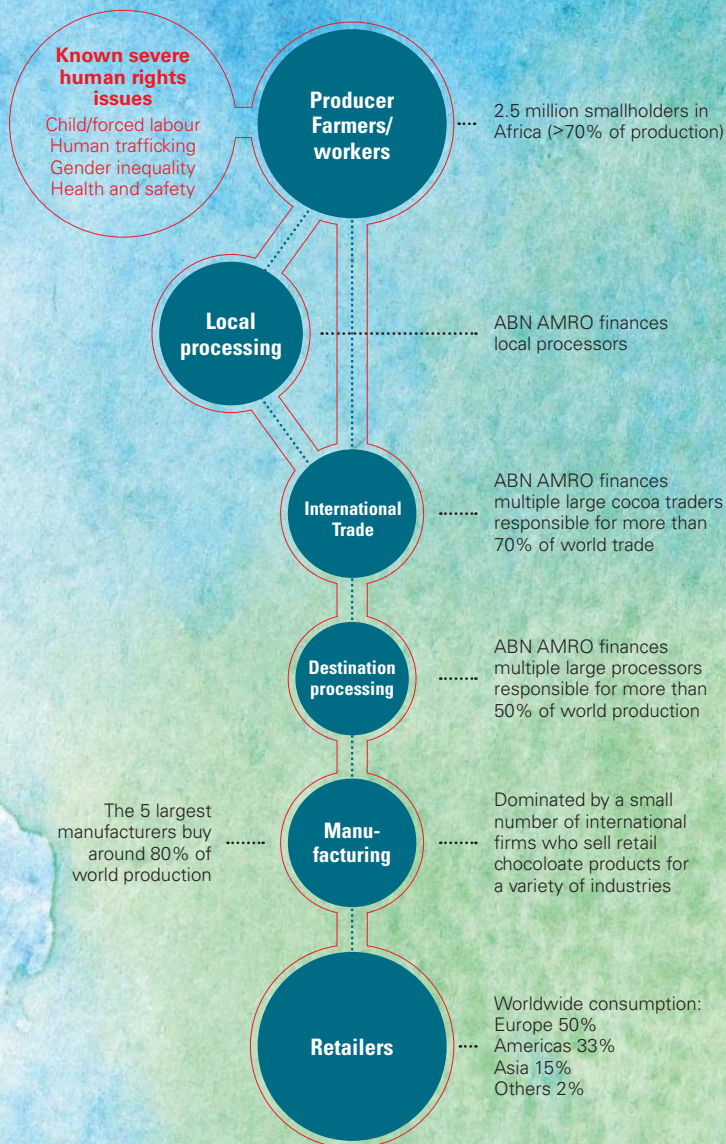
The activities of our clients are another area in which ABN AMRO could be connected to potential abuses of human rights. As a bank, we recognise that some of the most severe human rights risks we could be connected to occur as a result of our clients' activities, or those of our clients' own clients. For example, a clothing designer we finance could source its fabric from a company that forces cotton pickers to work excessive hours without pay and denies these workers their freedom to leave the fields. We may provide a loan to an oil company that uses the money to build a facility on land seized from local people. Or a diamond trader we provide credit to may buy and sell diamonds mined by child labourers.

Recognising the potential for ABN AMRO to be connected to serious abuses of people's fundamental dignity is not an easy story to tell for any organisation, including our own. It becomes harder still to accept the need for action when we may be connected to, but are not directly causing, human rights abuses. Yet we have a responsibility to address these difficult realities. We can only be a better bank contributing to a better world if we take appropriate action to prevent human rights abuses from occurring in our own activities and in the activities of our clients and suppliers.

Human rights due diligence helps us with overall risk management


For ABN AMRO, understanding how we can be connected to human rights abuses is first and foremost about trying to prevent or mitigate those abuses. But improving our understanding of serious risks connected to our business also helps us be a better bank: it helps us know more about our business and the activities we're connected to. Knowing more is important when it comes to risk management.

Cocoa Supply Chain and the role of ABN AMRO





▶▶ We
use our
influence to
encourage
others! ▶▶



I've been working with clients in the agricultural commodities sector for four years now. One of the sectors that our clients are active in is the international cocoa trade, a sector with a reputation for vulnerability to human rights abuses in the supply chain. Because of our involvement in the cocoa sector, as a financier, we wanted to find out whether the bank was in any way connected with such human rights abuses. We therefore did a thorough analysis of the cocoa value chain, like we have previously done for the clothing and diamond industries.

Our analysis showed that human rights abuses tend to occur at the start of the value chain. Child labour on small cocoa farms in West Africa supporting a single family, known as smallholders, is seen as a particularly severe and pervasive problem. Of course, local governments and companies have an important role in addressing these problems. However, other players in the value chain, including banks as financiers of cocoa traders and processors, have a responsibility too. We can use our influence to encourage other players in the value chain to stop human rights abuses in the cocoa industry.

ABN AMRO is a leading global cocoa commodity bank. Our clients buy around 70 per cent of the annual global cocoa production. As we don't want to close our eyes to challenging realities, we take an active approach to improving sustainability in the supply chains we are active in.

Emilie Ottervanger

Senior Associate, Agri Commodities Clients



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Martine Stig / Viviane Sassen

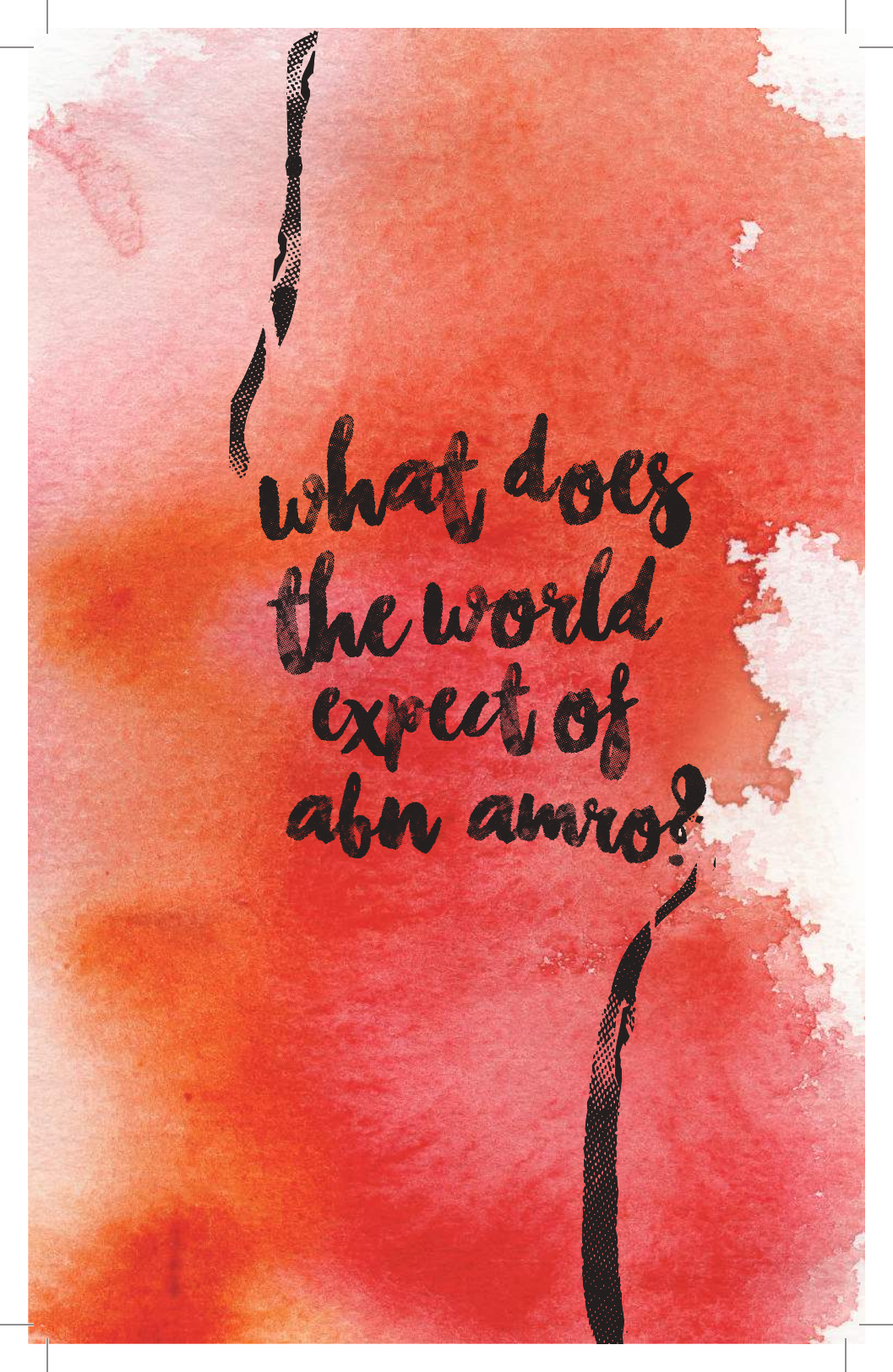
Nijmegen 1972 / Amsterdam 1972

From the series "Osdorp Girls" 2005

inkjet print on archive paper 100 x 80 cm

A young girl looks directly at the camera with a self-assured expression. She is wearing a colourful floral headscarf. In the foreground a shawl billows into the wind, and the ducks appear to be flying. This intriguing portrait is part of the series "Osdorp Girls" by Martine Stig (born 1972) and Viviane Sassen (born 1972). In 2005 they did a series about the street fashion of young Muslim girls in Osdorp, Amsterdam for the British fashion magazine *Dazed & Confused* with the help of the fashion designer Emmeline de Mooij. These are balanced compositions, a combined result of Sassen's eye for graphic detail and Stig's ability to stage everyday situations in a snapshot style. Stig and Sassen have regularly collaborated on commercial commissions since 2000 without losing their own individual qualities in the process.

Osdorp Girls depicts more than street fashion. In the series the headscarf does not stand for religion or the oppression of women, but for expressing an individual style and a personal identity. The great variety of styles, colours and personal interpretations of the practice reveal individual expression. In Osdorp Girls the headscarf is mysterious, fashionable, seductive, and above all, feminine. It presents the veiled Muslim woman as a powerful individual.



what does
the world
expect of
abn amro?

What does the world expect of ABN AMRO?

ABN AMRO is certainly not the first bank or business to recognise that the activities of businesses can both help and hurt people. In 2011 the United Nations Human Rights Council unanimously endorsed a standard for business respect for human rights. The standard is called the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, or UNGPs (see annex C for the text of the UNGPs). The UNGPs were developed over a six-year period of global consultations with companies, governments, investors, and potentially affected people and their representatives by then-Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Professor John Ruggie.

The UNGPs provide a principled and structured approach. The approach - a blueprint for action - includes three elements:



COMMIT

MANAGE

REMEDY

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights - in brief

① Right to Equality ② Freedom from Discrimination
③ Right to Life, Liberty, Personal Security ④ Freedom from Slavery ⑤ Freedom from Torture and Degrading Treatment ⑥ Right to Recognition as a Person before the Law ⑦ Right to Equality before the Law ⑧ Right to Remedy by Competent Tribunal ⑨ Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest and Exile ⑩ Right to Fair Public Hearing ⑪ Right to be Considered Innocent until Proven Guilty ⑫ Freedom from Interference with Privacy, Family, Home and Correspondence ⑬ Right to Free Movement in and out of the Country ⑭ Right to Asylum in other Countries from Persecution ⑮ Right to a Nationality and the Freedom to Change It ⑯ Right to Marriage and Family ⑰ Right to Own Property ⑱ Freedom of Belief and Religion ⑲ Freedom of Opinion and Information ⑳ Right of Peaceful Assembly and Association ㉑ Right to Participate in Government and in Free Elections ㉒ Right to Social Security ㉓ Right to Desirable Work and to Join Trade Unions ㉔ Right to Rest and Leisure ㉕ Right to Adequate Living Standard ㉖ Right to Education ㉗ Right to Participate in the Cultural Life of Community ㉘ Right to a Social Order that Articulates this Document ㉙ Community Duties Essential to Free and Full Development ㉚ Freedom from State or Personal Interference in the above Rights.

Source: Human Rights Here and Now; Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Edited by Nancy Flowers, 1998, the Human Rights Educators' Network of Amnesty International USA, the Human Rights Resource Center, and the Stanley Foundation.



ELEMENT 1: COMMIT

Establish a policy commitment: businesses should establish a policy to respect human rights and embed that policy throughout their organisation.

ELEMENT 2: MANAGE

Implement a system to identify, prevent and mitigate human rights abuses: businesses should implement processes to identify, prevent and mitigate abuses to people's human rights that may occur due to their own activities and the activities they are connected to through their business relationships (this is called human rights due diligence);

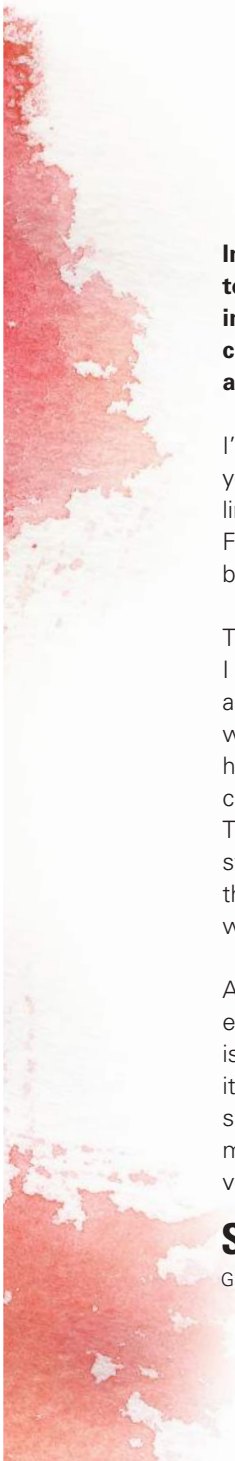
ELEMENT 3: REMEDY

Make it right when abuses have occurred: businesses should provide for or participate in remediation - setting things right - where they have caused or contributed to a human rights abuse.

The UNGPs are backed by thousands of public and private institutions worldwide, including the OECD, and companies around the world are implementing the UNGPs in their policies and practices. ABN AMRO is part of this global movement: we have committed ourselves to respect human rights in accordance with the global standard set by the UNGPs and report on our progress.



abusing
peoples human
rights is out
of step with
our values



In my line of business, we advise our clients to invest in certain companies. Our advice influences where money flows and which companies have access to funds. I am very aware of the influence we can have.

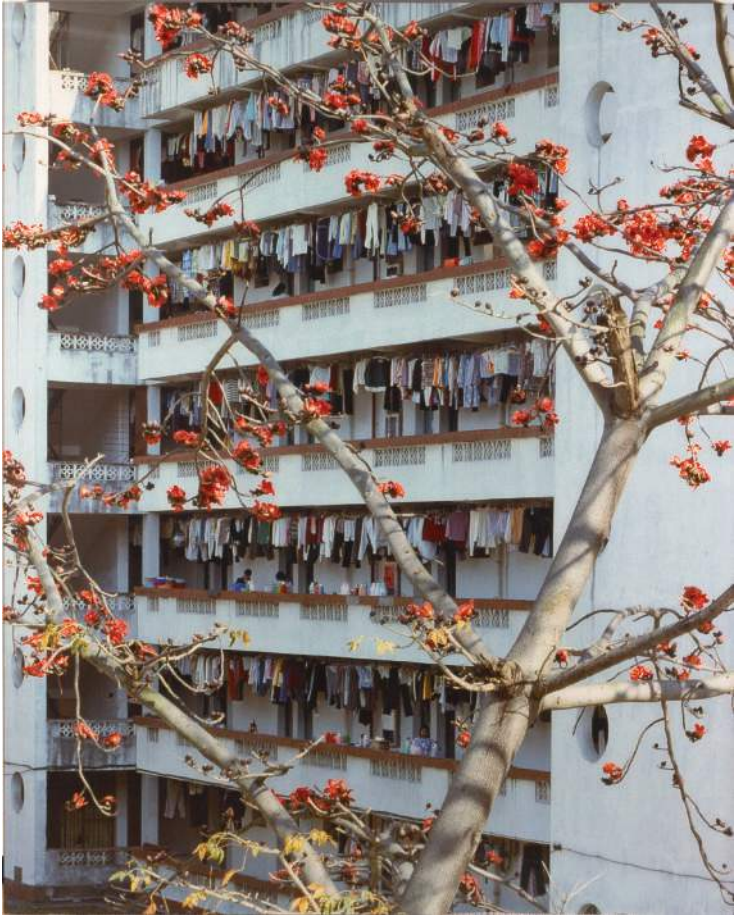
I've worked for ABN AMRO for almost twenty years and it's clear to me that capital markets are linked to our social and environmental well-being. Financial and non-financial realities need to be better aligned.

This connection became very clear to me when I was living in Beijing. I could see 28 cranes on a huge construction site outside my apartment window, and the workers were busy 12-14 hours a day. One day there was a huge riot - the construction company had stopped paying wages. The workers clearly suffered from the unjust stoppage of pay. But the riot was a problem for the company too because work ceased and they were on a deadline.

At ABN AMRO, we show our clients and employees that abusing people's human rights is not only out of step with our values, but that it also can have financial consequences. In the short run human rights abuses might lead to more profit. But in the long run they can be very expensive.

Solange Rouschop

Global Head Investment Services & Sustainability



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Gerald van der Kaap

Enschede 1959

Xiada (Fruittree) Xiamen 2002

cibachrome, perspex, dibond 152,5 x 122,5 cm

The Dutch artist Gerald van der Kaap (born 1959) stayed at the campus of a university in Xiamen, Southern China, as an artist in residence for a few months in 2002. Van der Kaap recorded life on the campus and its residents in 4000 digital photographs and several video works. The ultra-clean, well-organised campus gave Van der Kaap a sense of having landed in another universe: "The media and the multinationals - still called "the State" in China - have surrounded us with a universe of illusions. A theatre that we now take for reality. And, of course, I know this is also reality, but inside it, I know for sure, people dream all kinds of secret things, because I do too. I will make pictures of them, film them, jot them down, record them."

Van der Kaap recorded this unreal superficial world in minute detail in "Xiada (Fruittree) Xiamen". The flats of the female students can be seen behind the blossoming branches of a fruit tree. The balconies are surprisingly full of colourful clothes hanging up to dry. Because of the rhythm of the shapes, the lines and the colours, the image has a beautifully abstract quality. Nevertheless, this image of an apparently orderly world actually reveals the individuals behind it, each with her own dreams of secret things.

The background is a soft, textured purple watercolor wash. A black dotted ribbon graphic starts at the top left, curves down and around the text, and ends at the bottom right. The text is written in a black, cursive, handwritten style.

*making
the
commitment*



Making the commitment


We've committed to taking action to prevent human rights abuses because we recognise our potential to impact people's human rights. In our Human Rights Statement we have formulated our own commitment to respect human rights and the expectations we have of the businesses we serve and those that serve us.

We expect the following commitments from business enterprises (including ourselves, suppliers, business clients, partners and subcontractors):

- Adherence to internationally recognised human rights by applying them across the organisation and all business activities and through relationships with third parties associated with those activities, such as in the supply chain.
- Where national law conflicts with human rights, we expect business enterprises to comply with national law while aiming to respect international human rights principles as much as possible.
- Commitment to a robust human rights due diligence process. This should include an assessment of actual and potential human rights impacts, and action in response to the findings of the assessment.
- Commitment to engage continuously with external stakeholders in order to strengthen our capacity to improve.
- Commitment to track progress and performance, and to report periodically on this.

The background is a watercolor wash of purple and blue. A thick, black, dotted line runs vertically down the center, curving slightly at the top and bottom. The text is written in a black, cursive script, centered on the page. The quote is enclosed in double quotation marks.

“ i am
convinced
that we
are making
progress ”



In 2006 I attended a stakeholder meeting with Professor John Ruggie about business and human rights. It was one of the first times that the business community was invited to learn and discuss what would be later referred to as the UN Guiding Principles. At that meeting, Professor Ruggie talked about 'managing human rights risk' and 'due diligence'. It struck me that he wasn't talking about risk to the business; he was talking about risk to people while using common business language. It immediately made sense to me: banks manage risk every day and know how to perform due diligence. So banks should be able to apply this framework.

The UNGPs are so important because they made human rights and business tangible. That's why we explicitly committed to them right from the start. They are changing our way of doing business. We are incorporating human rights due diligence into our existing due diligence processes. We adapt procedures, guided by our commitment to the UNGPs as expressed in our Human Rights Statement. This is my primary focus at ABN AMRO: putting things into practice. For writing a human rights statement is easy, but actually implementing it is difficult. I am convinced, though, that we are making progress.

Today, the banking world is moving along and is aware of the significant role it plays in this respect. ABN AMRO wants to be at the forefront of that movement. Hopefully, our efforts will not just help us meet our own commitments, but also make a wider contribution to respecting human rights by banks globally. We aspire to do better, and we hope to inspire, so that other banks and businesses will too.

Maria Anne van Dijk

Head of Environmental and Social Risk Advisory & Monitoring



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Dana Lixenberg

Amsterdam 1964

**From the series Imperial Courts,
1993 - 2015 Miyong and Anthony 1993**

barite print 75 x 100 cm

For 22 years Dana Lixenberg (born 1964) photographed the Imperial Courts ghetto in Los Angeles and made an impressive series of the inhabitants and their lives. Built as social housing in 1944, Imperial Courts mainly attracted African-American immigrants from the southern states. The infamous Watts race riots broke out in 1965 as a result of tensions and injustice. Riots broke out again in 1992 and Imperial Courts was the bloody stage for gang warfare. When Lixenberg wanted to photograph the area in 1993 the community reacted suspiciously: they were always portrayed in a negative light in the media. However, Lixenberg gradually managed to gain their confidence with her intimate and elegant portraits of the men, women and children there.

Lixenberg photographed this mother and son, Miyong and Anthony, with a large camera on a tripod in black and white, using natural light. She deliberately opted for a neutral background, not showing the walls covered with graffiti or anything that could serve as a reference to the gang culture outside the image. From 2008 to 2015 Lixenberg returned to Imperial Courts. After 22 years the community has become part of her life and she can no longer imagine having to do without it.



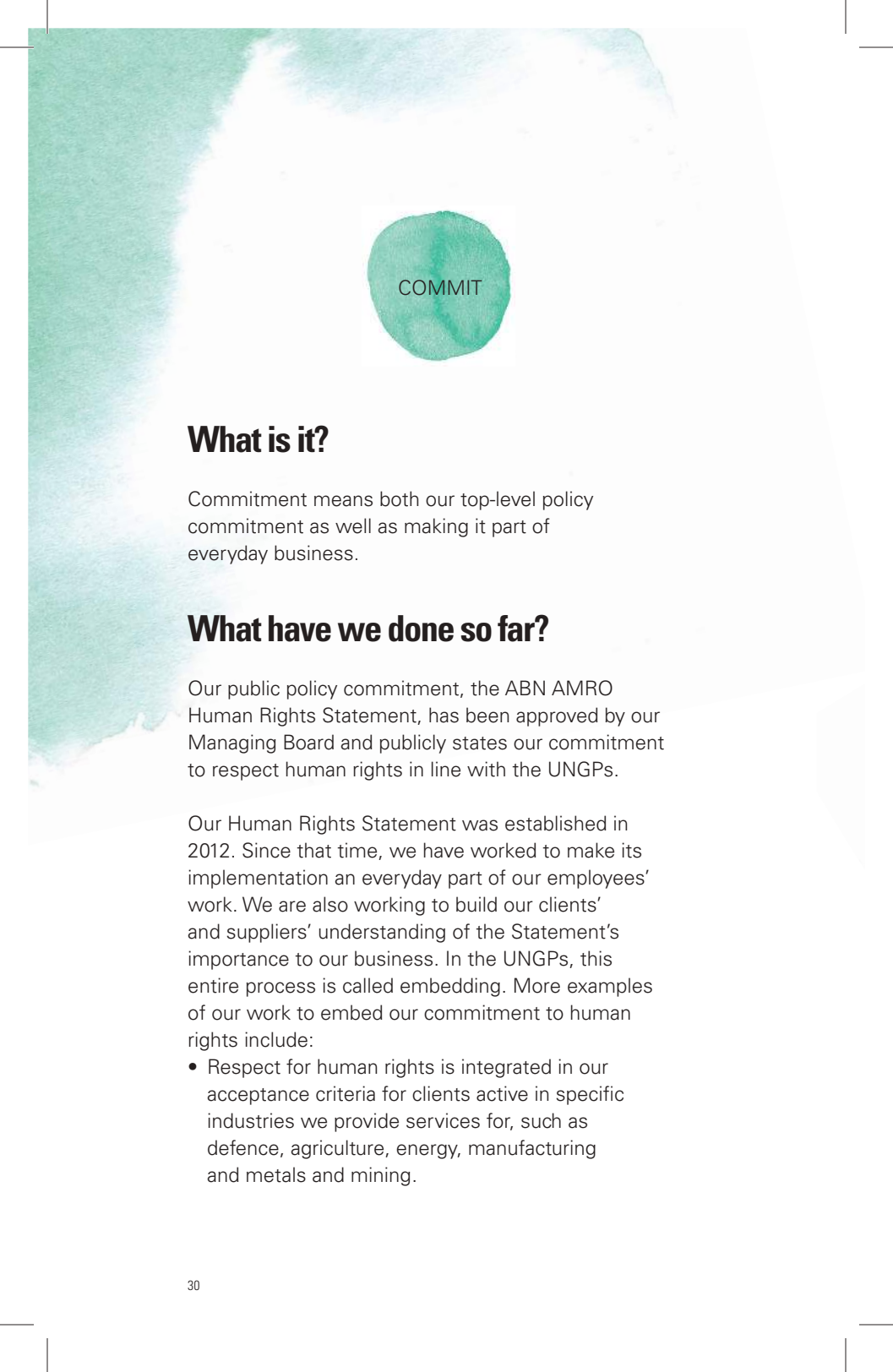
taking
action
to respect
human
rights

Taking action to respect human rights

For several years, we have worked to build our understanding of how we may be connected to human rights abuses, and examined ways we could prevent these abuses from happening. The establishment of the global standard in the UNGPs helps us by setting a principled and structured approach for action: our blueprint.

In the next section we lay out the work we've done so far and activities we are planning for the future based on this blueprint.





COMMIT

What is it?

Commitment means both our top-level policy commitment as well as making it part of everyday business.

What have we done so far?

Our public policy commitment, the ABN AMRO Human Rights Statement, has been approved by our Managing Board and publicly states our commitment to respect human rights in line with the UNGPs.

Our Human Rights Statement was established in 2012. Since that time, we have worked to make its implementation an everyday part of our employees' work. We are also working to build our clients' and suppliers' understanding of the Statement's importance to our business. In the UNGPs, this entire process is called embedding. More examples of our work to embed our commitment to human rights include:

- Respect for human rights is integrated in our acceptance criteria for clients active in specific industries we provide services for, such as defence, agriculture, energy, manufacturing and metals and mining.

Our business management, risk management, sustainability, compliance and audit departments all share responsibility to respect human rights and to ensure our commitment is applied to all relevant transactions. This approach is part of our Sustainability Risk Management Framework.

- Our Supplier Code of Conduct addresses equality and safety in the workplace, prohibition of forced and child labour, working hours and freedom of association, amongst other human rights issues. All of our suppliers are required to commit to our Supplier Code of Conduct.
- We have policies and practices to prevent discrimination throughout the bank, including initiatives to promote respect for minorities, diversity, gender equality and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights.

We ask ourselves and our clients and suppliers questions like:

- ?** **Is there top-level commitment for respecting human rights?**
- ?** **What are the business implications of the human rights commitment?**
- ?** **How is the human rights commitment embedded in the day-to-day business?**
- ?** **Do you have a similar human rights policy commitment and how have you embedded it throughout your organisation and supply chain?**



MANAGE

The second part is about establishing a structured approach that shows us how our business could be connected to human rights abuses. This is the part that we're very focused on now and will continue to focus on for many years to come. In the UNGPs, this work is called human rights due diligence.

Human rights due diligence includes four elements: assess, integrate and act, track and communicate, and throughout, hear the perspectives of stakeholders. These elements are part of a continual, ongoing process.



Hearing stakeholders

What is it?

Hearing (“engaging with”) stakeholders means hearing the concerns of people who could or do experience human rights abuses as a result of our activities or the activities of our clients or suppliers. Hearing these people’s perspectives - and taking them on board - is critical for the efficacy and accountability of our efforts to respect people’s human rights.

We also speak with legitimate representatives of people who might experience human rights abuses connected to our bank, like trade unions. In addition, we discuss key issues with people and organisations that we believe have expert insight into the perspectives of potentially affected people, like non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

These continual conversations are both a critical part of general accountability for ABN AMRO, as well as a core part of our human rights due diligence.

What have we done so far?

- ABN AMRO has an International Framework Agreement with FNV and UNI Global Union in which we commit to an ongoing dialogue related to our employee's labour rights and working conditions.
- We hold stakeholder dialogues every three months on key sustainability topics, including human rights, with clients, civil society organisations, investors, rating agencies and research institutions.
- We regularly discuss human rights issues with international groups and governments, such as the ILO-UNGC Child Labour Platform, the UN Environment Programme Finance Initiative, the UN Global Compact and the OECD workstream on responsible business conduct in the financial sector. We also meet regularly with government officials and human rights experts to discuss specific human rights issues such as human trafficking, privacy and human rights related to land.

We ask ourselves and our clients and suppliers questions like:

? **Have you talked to the people, or their legitimate representatives, who might experience human rights abuses to hear their perspectives?**

? **Can you explain how you took potentially affected people's perspectives into account in your decisions and actions?**

? **Afterwards, did you ask the people you discussed the issues with whether they thought the conversation was helpful? What did they say?**

Assess

What is it?

This step is about understanding the potential for human rights abuses due to our activities or the activities of our clients and suppliers. In the UNGPs, this is called "assessing risk." The risks we are assessing are risks to people. This is a "whole value chain approach," which means we want to understand where people could experience abuses to their rights due to our activities, the activities of our clients, the activities of our clients' clients, and so on through the chain.

What have we done so far?

- We filter all transactions. For medium- and high-risk transactions, we do in-depth research on sustainability factors, including human rights, by reviewing company-specific data and having conversations with the client and expert stakeholders. In 2014 we thoroughly assessed human rights issues in 167 specific cases.
- We are conducting value chain analyses for sectors where, through our clients, there is high risk that people could experience human rights abuses. These sectors include diamonds, cocoa and copper.
- Our International Framework Agreement with FNV and UNI Global Union helps us stay in regular dialogue with our employees, which contributes to our understanding of potential abuses to their human rights.

We ask ourselves and our clients and suppliers questions like:

- ? **What do you do as a business?**
- ? **What businesses and business activities are you providing services for, or providing products to?**
- ? **What are these other businesses doing with the services or products you provide?**
- ? **Could any of these activities affect people's human rights?**

Salient human rights issues

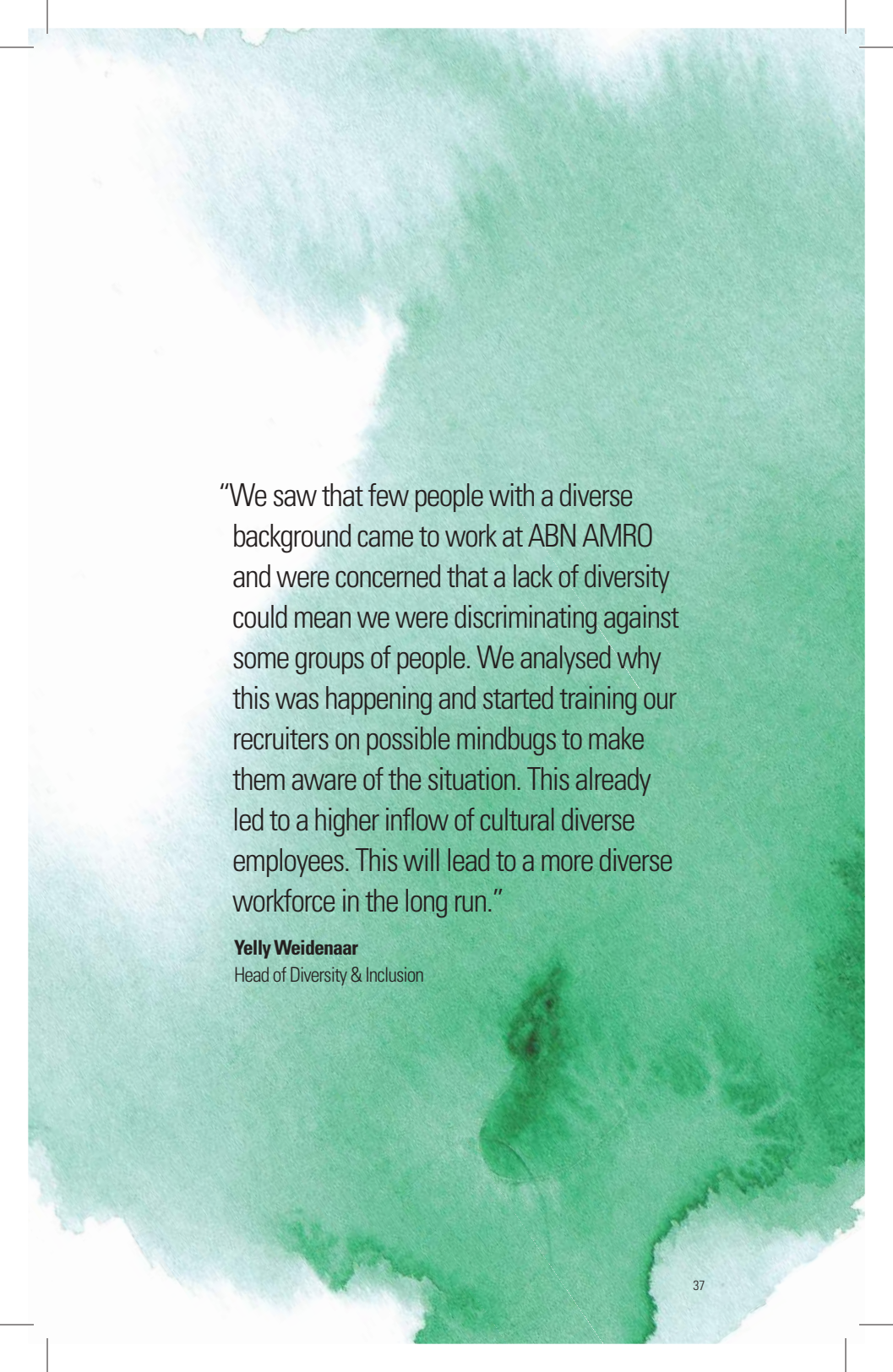
As a practical reality, we need to focus our attention and prioritise our resources on those issues that are most important, or, in the language of the UNGPs, those that are most “salient”. The UNGPs provide a principled basis for determining which issues are salient. Salient human rights issues are those human rights most at risk of severe negative impacts.

As a bank, we are connected to potential human rights abuses, also through the thousands of relationships we have with our clients and suppliers. At ABN AMRO we determine our salient human rights issues through analysis and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. These issues provide focus for our internal policies and management systems, and are also the issues we report on in alignment with the UNGP Reporting Framework.

Integrate and Act

What is it?

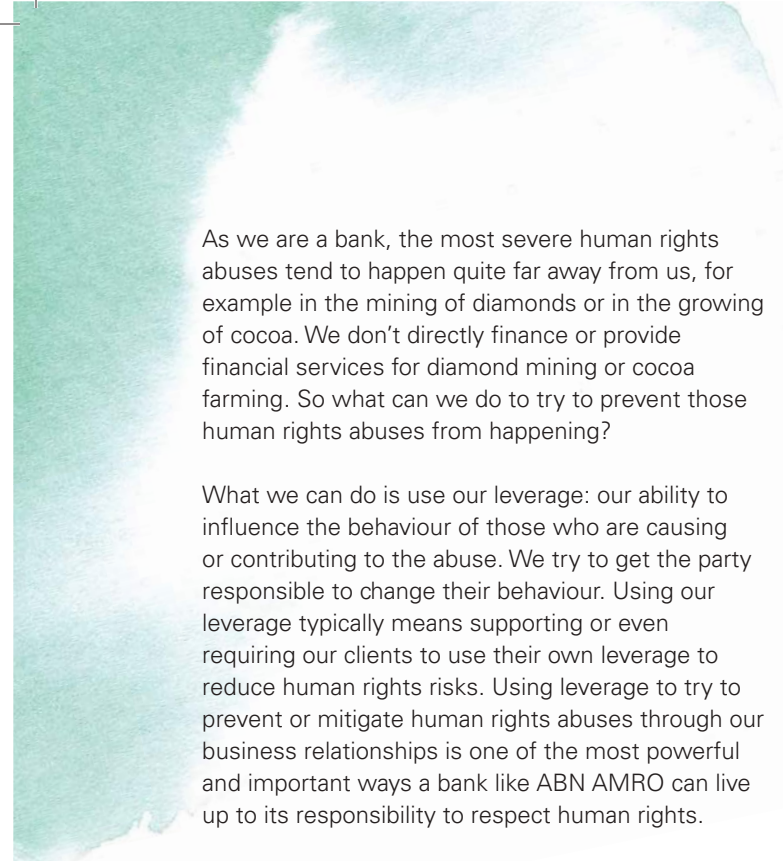
Integrating and acting is about incorporating our understanding of human rights risks into our decision-making processes. We then implement those processes in order to try to prevent or mitigate potential human rights abuses. The UNGPs provide us with more detail about what we should do, depending on how we’re connected to the abuse. We aim to meet those expectations.



“We saw that few people with a diverse background came to work at ABN AMRO and were concerned that a lack of diversity could mean we were discriminating against some groups of people. We analysed why this was happening and started training our recruiters on possible mindbugs to make them aware of the situation. This already led to a higher inflow of cultural diverse employees. This will lead to a more diverse workforce in the long run.”

Yelly Weidenaar

Head of Diversity & Inclusion



As we are a bank, the most severe human rights abuses tend to happen quite far away from us, for example in the mining of diamonds or in the growing of cocoa. We don't directly finance or provide financial services for diamond mining or cocoa farming. So what can we do to try to prevent those human rights abuses from happening?

What we can do is use our leverage: our ability to influence the behaviour of those who are causing or contributing to the abuse. We try to get the party responsible to change their behaviour. Using our leverage typically means supporting or even requiring our clients to use their own leverage to reduce human rights risks. Using leverage to try to prevent or mitigate human rights abuses through our business relationships is one of the most powerful and important ways a bank like ABN AMRO can live up to its responsibility to respect human rights.

What have we done so far?

- We use our leverage when we work with clients by asking critical questions and sharing knowledge and expertise, for example by organising learning roundtables for clients, Dutch and European peers in the banking sector and civil society organisations. We also influence our clients' behaviour by requiring demonstration of improvements over time as part of our ongoing contractual relationships.

- For business activities that are inherently dangerous for people's human rights, and can thus by definition not be prevented or mitigated, we have developed exclusion lists based on our risk assessments. All decisions on whether or not to issue a loan or deliver another financial product to a client are assessed against these exclusion lists.
- Difficult ethical dilemmas, including those on human rights, are considered by ABN AMRO's Ethics Committee, which is comprised of top-level managers in the bank. The Ethics Committee communicates its decisions to all employees to ensure everybody is aware of expectations for ethical conduct.

We ask ourselves and our clients and suppliers questions like:

- ? Do you have a policy that addresses potential human rights abuses, including what you do to prevent and mitigate them?**
- ? How do you take human rights risks into account when you make decisions?**
- ? How do you handle it when the way to prevent the abuse goes against another business priority?**
- ? If an abuse did take place, did you set it right and how?**

Track and Communicate

What is it?

Tracking and communicating is about knowing whether our actions are working, and being transparent about our efforts.

What have we done so far?

- We check to see whether or not key human rights policies are being implemented by conducting internal audits. We conduct audits on the implementation of our Human Rights Statement, our Collective Labour Agreement, sector policies related to human rights and our Supplier Code of Conduct.
- We report on human rights, including how we conduct due diligence on corporate clients and address human rights dilemmas. We are the first financial institution to commit to implementing the UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework, which includes identifying our most important human rights issues.
- We communicate publicly the outcomes of our research related to our human rights due diligence. For example, we shared our diamond value chain mapping in a public report and discuss it in public events with other banks, civil society organisations and government. We also reference this research to inform Dutch national policy discussions on implementing the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.


We ask ourselves and our clients and suppliers questions like:

- ? How do you know whether the actions you've taken to prevent human rights abuses are working?**
- ? Are you communicating about what you're doing to prevent human rights abuses connected to your business?**
- ? Have you changed how you communicate based on feedback from key stakeholders?**
- ? Are you communicating about your human rights due diligence process and progress?**

“In terms of preventing discrimination and achieving diversity in our workplace, we are focusing on providing opportunities. In addition, we set targets. We realise that if we are not aware of possible inequalities change won't happen. That's why we are looking to increase awareness.”

Yelly Weidenaar

Head of Diversity & Inclusion



REMEDY

What is it?

Remedy means making it right when human rights abuses have already happened. The UNGPs give us more detail about what's expected of us to make it right, and we meet those expectations. Where we have caused or contributed to the abuse, we work to have systems in place to ensure we are responsive to the concerns of affected people, and provide appropriate remedy. We provide some examples below, mainly in relation to our own employees.

As said earlier in this guide, in many instances a bank like ours is linked indirectly to human rights abuses. This means the company that caused the abuse may be many steps removed from us in complex global value chains.

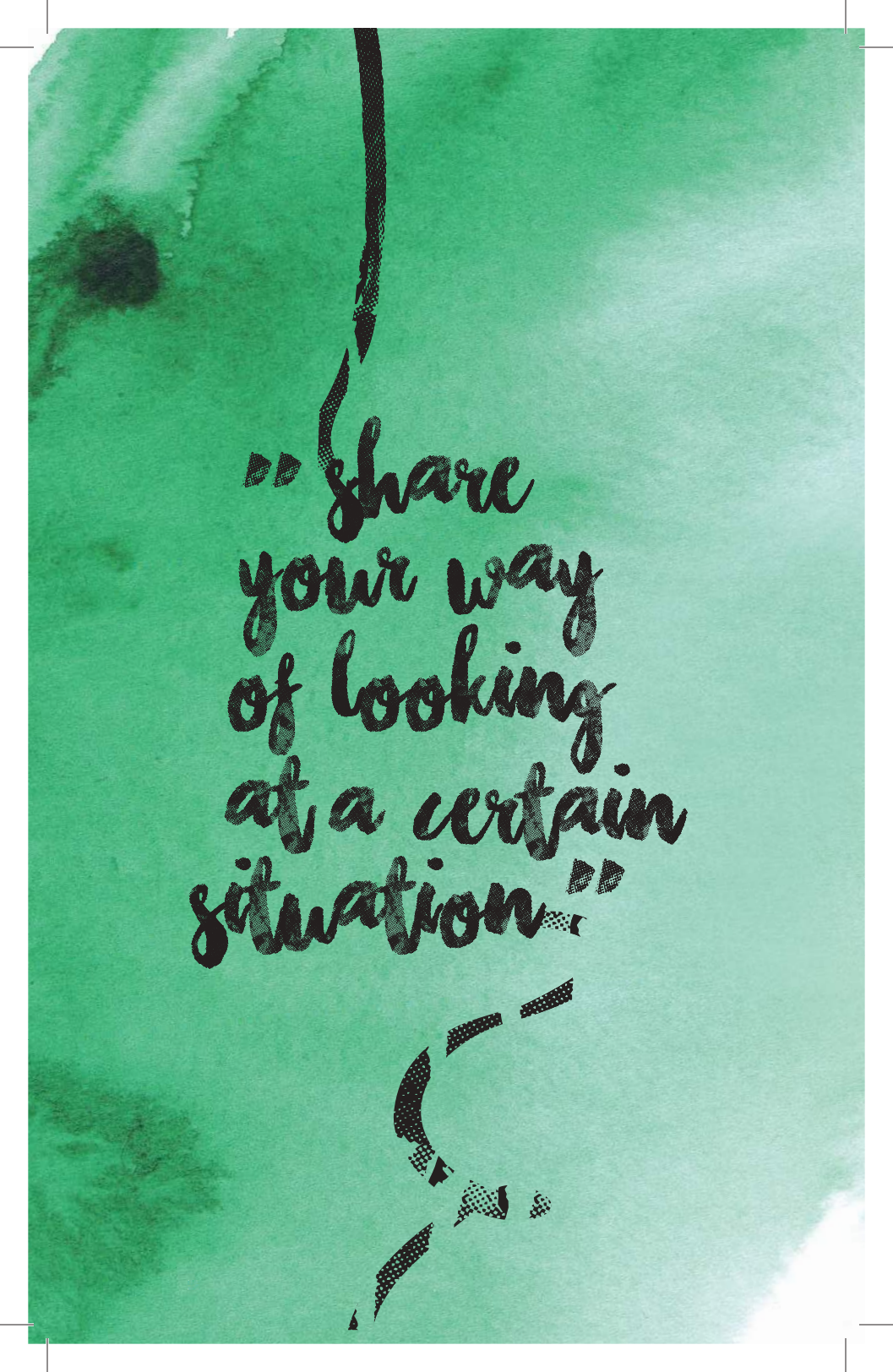
We believe that in those cases, we can play a role in urging others to make it right. Financial institutions like banks, and our bank specifically, have broad networks and can often help set things right by pushing clients to be involved in remedy. We can also support broader remedy mechanisms like the OECD's National Contact Point system. The type of role we can play in remedy is an ongoing area of learning for us.

What have we done so far?

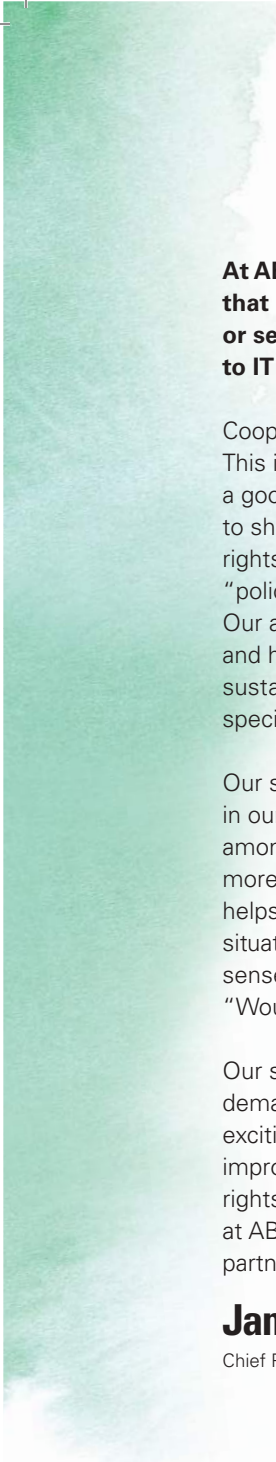
- We have introduced a Code of Conduct for our employees. Employees who have concerns about violations of our behavioural standards can approach specially trained staff for confidential discussions.
- We are currently participating in a project designed to create more transparency, accountability and remedy in the financial industry.
- We encourage our clients to implement a grievance mechanism by discussing best practices and available support resources.

We ask ourselves and our clients and suppliers questions like:

- **Do you have a means for remedy if people are abused in connection to your business?**
- **How does your company hear complaints related to human rights?**
- **Do you have a way to know whether people feel able to raise their concerns?**
- **How do you process complaints and determine if your remediation efforts were successful?**
- **Can you give examples of complaints and remedies you were part of?**



» share
your way
of looking
at a certain
situation.»



At ABN AMRO, we have over 1,000 suppliers that provide us with a huge range of products or services from computers to janitorial services to IT support to call centres.

Cooperating with our suppliers is very important. This is not only because we want them to deliver a good product or service - we also want them to share our values, including respecting human rights. We don't want to be the "teacher" or the "police", but we do want them to take responsibility. Our approach is to make it personal and tangible and have our suppliers see the importance of sustainability in general and human rights more specifically.

Our suppliers are required to meet the standard set in our Supplier Code of Conduct, which addresses amongst others human rights. But this has to be more than words on paper. In my experience, it helps to share your way of looking at a certain situation. I find that it helps to ask suppliers common sense questions on some of these issues, like, "Would you like to work 12 hours without a break?".

Our supply chain has many demands and those demands are continuously growing. This is an exciting job. We are very motivated to make improvements in every area, including human rights. I see it as the responsibility of Procurement at ABN AMRO that our suppliers and business partners are serious about respecting human rights.

Jan Stoop

Chief Procurement Officer



4 / 4

Ni Haifeng

Zhoushan, China 1964

Of the Departure and the Arrival

2005

porcelain, various sizes

This remarkable collection of curious porcelain objects is the result of the project *Of the Departure and the Arrival* by the Amsterdam-Chinese artist Ni Haifeng (born 1964). Haifeng collected 140 everyday articles used by people from Delft, reflecting the life and characteristics of the city. Books, vacuum cleaner lids, umbrellas and toothbrushes were shipped to China, where they were copied in porcelain and then painted in the traditional Delft blue style. Finally the consignment was shipped back to the Netherlands, in the same way that goods were shipped backwards and forwards centuries ago for the Chinese-Dutch trade in porcelain and tea. In this way Haifeng refers to the historical roots of contemporary globalism. With the world's first multinational, *de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (the Dutch East Indies Company), the Netherlands was present at the birth of this phenomenon. However, in addition to the historical references, Haifeng also examines cultural identity. Are the objects in fact Dutch or Chinese? After being processed by the Chinese, the typically Dutch objects with a very personal character have become uniform objects made of the same material and decorated with identical patterns. The unique emotional value has been transformed into an abstract economic value. In this way the artist is responding to the cultural and economic, as well as the human aspects of trade and exchange. For Haifeng, who has double nationality himself, cultural identity is not a static fact. Identity changes over time.



continuing
on our
path towards
respecting
human
rights,

Continuing on our path towards respecting human rights

What are we doing to continue on our path towards meeting global expectations on respecting human rights? We want to improve our understanding of how we may be connected to abuses of human rights. We want to improve and expand the actions we take to stop or prevent these abuses. And we want to know more about whether or not our actions have worked, and communicate more transparently about those efforts.

This guide, we hope, has made very clear our firm belief in and commitment to the importance of respect for human rights at ABN AMRO. We also hope it has shared meaningful information about our existing and planned future actions that enable us to live up to our commitment.

Why is it so important for us to lay out so clearly, and so publicly, our commitment and our plan before we're done? We certainly believe in transparency. But the real purpose of this publication is you: your contribution to our efforts. We want you to join us, to help us make sure that all of our business activities respect people's most fundamental dignity: the rights all of us are born with.

This work is unquestionably an ongoing process for us and we are open to suggestions for improvement. We are looking forward to learning more about our business and our impact on people, together with our employees, our clients, our suppliers and all our other stakeholders - helping us live up to our aim of being a better bank contributing to a better world.



key
definitions
and
concepts



Annex A

Key Definitions and Concepts

This Annex includes definitions drawn from Annex B of the UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework, a joint initiative of Shift and Mazars.¹ These are noted with a star.

ABN AMRO Ethics Committee

The committee discusses Ethics issues that arise at ABN AMRO where law, regulations and internal discussion does not provide for a solution. Every employee can present an issue to the Ethics Committee. Every decision of the Ethics Committee is available for employees to read. The ABN AMRO Ethics Committee exists of a keyteam of senior managers of the Bank. The board member who is responsible for People, Regulations and Identity (PR&I) department is the Chairman of the Ethics Committee.

Clients

In this guide clients refer to ABN AMRO corporate and private banking clients.

Exclusion list

The ABN AMRO exclusion list is part of the Sustainability Risk Management Policy. The exclusion list lists business activities that are illegal or that we consider to be substandard or unethical.

Grievance mechanism

“Grievance mechanism” is used in the Guiding Principles and their commentary as a term of art to cover a whole range of mechanisms that address complaints and disputes involving enterprises and their stakeholders.²

An operational-level grievance mechanism is a formalised means through which individuals or groups can raise concerns about the impact an enterprise has on them - including, but not exclusively, on their human rights - and can seek remedy.³

Human rights*

Basic international standards aimed at securing dignity and equality for all. Every human being is entitled to enjoy them without discrimination. They include the rights contained in the International Bill of Human Rights – meaning the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. They also include the principles concerning fundamental rights set out in the International Labour Organization’s Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. For more, see Annex B.

International Labour Organisation (ILO)

The ILO is aimed at promoting rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue on work-related issues.

ILO Core Conventions

The governing body of the International Labour Organization (ILO) has identified eight conventions as “fundamental”; covering four subjects that are considered as “fundamental principles and rights at work.” These subjects are: freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; the effective abolition of child labour; and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

ILO-UNGC Child Labour Platform

An initiative of the International Labour Organization and the UN Global Compact, the Child Labour Platform aims to identify the obstacles to the implementation of the ILO Conventions on child labour in supply chains and surrounding communities, identify practical ways of overcoming these obstacles and catalyse collective action. It is co-chaired by the IOE, the International Organization of Employers, representing employers and their representative organisations from around the world at the ILO and the ITUC, the International Trade Union Federation, representing workers and their representative organisations from around the world at the ILO.

International Framework Agreement

An instrument negotiated between a multinational enterprise and a Global Union Federation (GUF) in order to establish an ongoing relationship between the parties and ensure that the company respects the same standards in all the countries where it operates.⁴

Leverage*

The ability of a business enterprise to effect change in the wrongful practices of another party that is causing or contributing to an adverse human rights impact.

Medium- and high-risk transactions

ABN AMRO identifies sustainability risks of transactions and determines if the risk level is low-medium or high. The risk is determined through sector and country of operation. ABN AMRO defined high, medium and low risk sectors and countries. A transaction can take place in a low risk country, but when it falls within the scope of a high risk sector, the transaction is seen a high risk from a sustainability perspective.

Mitigation*

The mitigation of a negative human rights impact refers to actions taken to reduce the extent of the impact. The mitigation of a human rights risk refers to actions taken to reduce the likelihood that a potential negative impact will occur.

Negative impact on human rights*

A negative human rights impact occurs when an action removes or reduces the ability of an individual to enjoy his or her human rights.

Non-governmental organisation (NGO)

A non-governmental organisation (NGO, sometimes also referred to as “civil society organisation” or CSO) is a not-for-profit group, principally independent from government, which is organised on a local, national or international level to address issues in support of the public good.⁵

OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises

The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises are recommendations addressed by governments to multinational enterprises operating in or from OECD adhering countries. They provide principles and standards for responsible business conduct across a range of issues and are aligned with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

OECD National Contact Point

OECD adhering states are required to establish a National Contact Point (NCP). The NCP assists governments with the implementation of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. They undertake promotional activities, handle enquiries, and contribute to the resolution of issues that arise from alleged failures to observe the Guidelines in specific instances.

Prevention*

The prevention of a negative human rights impact refers to actions taken to ensure the impact does not occur.

Remedy*

Refers to both the process of providing remedy for a negative human rights impact and the substantive outcomes that can counteract, or make good, the negative impact. These outcomes may take a range of forms such as apologies, restitution, rehabilitation, financial or non-financial compensation, and punitive sanctions (whether criminal or administrative, such as fines), as well as the prevention of harm through, for example, injunctions or guarantees of non-repetition.

Responsibility to respect human rights*

The responsibility of a company to avoid infringing on the human rights of others and to address negative impacts with which it may be involved, as set out in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Salient human rights issues*

Those human rights that are at risk of the most severe negative impacts through a company's activities or business relationships. They therefore vary from company to company.

Stakeholder*

Any individual or organisation that may affect, or be affected by a company's actions and decisions. In the UN Guiding Principles the primary focus is on affected or potentially affected stakeholders, meaning individuals whose human rights have been or may be affected by a company's operations, products or services.

Other particularly relevant stakeholders in the context of the UN Guiding Principles are the legitimate representatives of potentially affected stakeholders, including trade unions, as well as civil society organisations and others with experience and expertise related to business impacts on human rights.

Supplier Code of Conduct

A code that describes what environmental, social and ethical standard a supplier should comply with to become a supplier of ABN AMRO.

Sustainability risk management framework

ABN AMRO has a policy framework in place to manage sustainability risks. The Sustainable Risk Management Policy is the overarching policy. There are four operational policies (Investment, Procurement, Lending and Products) and several sector policies that describe environmental, social and ethical criteria that apply specifically to those sectors. In addition to operational and sector specific policies ABN AMRO has cross-sector policies for human rights and climate change and a project-specific policy adopting the Equator Principles.

UN Environment Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI)

UNEP FI is a global partnership between the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the financial sector. Over 200 institutions, including banks, insurers and fund managers, work with UNEP to understand the impacts of environmental and social considerations on financial performance.

UN Global Compact

The UN Global Compact is a corporate sustainability initiative for companies to align strategies and operations with universal principles on human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption, and take actions that advance societal goals.

UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*

A set of 31 principles that set out the respective roles of States and companies in ensuring that companies respect human rights in their business activities and through their business relationships. The Guiding Principles were endorsed by the UN Human Rights Council in 2011. See Annex C for full text of the Guiding Principles.

UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework*

The UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework is the first comprehensive guidance for companies to report on human rights issues in line with their responsibility to respect human rights. The Reporting Framework provides a concise set of questions to which any company should strive to have answers in order to know and show that it is meeting its responsibility to respect human rights in practice. The Reporting Framework has been developed through the Human Rights Reporting and Assurance Frameworks Initiative (RAFI). RAFI is co-facilitated by Shift and Mazars through an open, global, consultative process involving representatives from over 200 companies, investor groups, civil society organisations, governments, assurance providers, lawyers and other expert organisations from all regions of the world. ABN AMRO is the first financial institution that has committed to implement the UNGP Reporting Framework.

UN Human Rights Council

An inter-governmental body within the UN system made up of 47 States responsible for the promotion and protection of all human rights around the globe. They address situations of human rights violations and make recommendations on them.

UNI Global Union

UNI Global Union represents more than 20 million workers from over 900 trade unions in the skills and services sector. UNI works to ensure that jobs within the sectors are decent and that workers' rights are protected, including the right to join a trade union and to bargain collectively.

Value chain*

A company's value chain encompasses the activities that convert input into output by adding value. It includes entities with which it has a direct or indirect business relationship and which either (a) supply products or services that contribute to the company's own products or services or (b) receive products or services from the company.

¹ See: <http://www.ungpreporting.org/resources/glossary/>

² OHCHR, *The Responsibility to Respect: An Interpretative Guide*, New York and Geneva, 2012, p. 69.

³ *Ibid*, p. 68.

⁴ Dominique Michel (ILO), 31 January 2007.
http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_080723/lang-en/index.htm

⁵ United Nations Rule of Law, Non-government organizations,
http://www.unrol.org/article.aspx?article_id=23





internationally
recognized
human
rights

Annex B

Internationally recognised human rights

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights reference a list of human rights that, at a minimum, all companies should respect regardless of which industry or country they operate in. This annex provides brief explanations of these “internationally recognised human rights.” It replicates content in Annex A of the UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework, a joint initiative of Shift and Mazars. Annex A itself draws on the publication by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, International Business Leaders Forum and the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law, *Human Rights Translated: A Business Reference Guide* (2008). This overview should not be interpreted as a ranking of rights, nor as a definitive statement of the content of the rights, which need to be understood in light of their subsequent interpretation and with reference to ILO Core Conventions.

Brief explanation of internationally recognised human rights

Right of self-determination

- A right of peoples, rather than individuals.
- Peoples are entitled to determine their political status and place in the international community.
- It includes the rights to pursue economic, social and cultural development, to dispose of a land’s natural resources and not to be deprived of the means of subsistence.
- A particular right of indigenous peoples to self-determination has been specifically recognised by the international community.

Right to life

- Right not to be deprived of life arbitrarily or unlawfully.
- Right to have one's life protected, for example, from physical attacks or health and safety risks.

Right not to be subjected to torture, cruel, inhuman and/or degrading treatment or punishment

- An absolute right, which applies in all circumstances.
- Torture has been held to involve a very high degree of pain or suffering that is intentionally inflicted for a specific purpose.
- Cruel and/or inhuman treatment also entails severe suffering.
- Degrading treatment has been held to involve extreme humiliation of the victim.

Right not to be subjected to slavery, servitude or forced labour

- Slavery exists when one human effectively owns another.
- Freedom from servitude covers other forms of severe economic exploitation or degradation, such as in the trafficking of workers or debt bondage.
- Rights to freedom from slavery and servitude are absolute rights.
- Forced or compulsory labour is defined by the ILO as all work or service that is extracted under menace of any penalty and for which the person has not voluntarily offered themselves.
- Providing payment does not mean that work is not forced labour if the other aspects of the definition are met.

Rights to liberty and security of the person

- These rights involve the prohibition of unlawful or arbitrary detention.
- ‘Lawful’ detention is understood to mean that it must be authorised by an appropriate government body, such as the courts, and be capable of being challenged by the detainee.
- ‘Arbitrary’ detention is always prohibited.
- Security of the person includes protection from physical attacks, threats of such attacks, or other severe forms of harassment, whether or not a person is detained.

Right of detained persons to humane treatment

- This right requires detention authorities to take special measures for the protection of detainees (such as separating juveniles from other detainees).

Right not to be subjected to imprisonment for inability to fulfil a contract

- This right applies where a person is incapable of meeting a private contractual obligation.
- It restricts the type of punishment that the State can impose.

Right to freedom of movement

- Individuals who are lawfully in a country have the right to move freely throughout it, to choose where to live and to leave.
- Individuals also have the right not to be arbitrarily prevented from entering their own country.

Right of aliens to due process when facing expulsion

- Aliens (meaning foreigners) who are legally present in a country are entitled to due process (meaning fair legal procedures) before being forced to leave.

Right to a fair trial

- Required in both civil and criminal proceedings, this includes the right to a public hearing before an impartial tribunal.
- Additional protections are required in criminal proceedings.

Right to be free from retroactive criminal law

- The State is prohibited from imposing criminal penalties for an act that was not illegal when it was committed, or from imposing higher penalties than those that were in force at the time.

Right to recognition as a person before the law

- All individuals are entitled to 'legal personality', or independent legal recognition.

Right to privacy

- Individuals have a right to be protected from arbitrary, unreasonable or unlawful interference with their privacy, family, home or correspondence and from attacks on their reputation.
- The State is allowed to authorise restrictions on privacy in line with international human rights standards, but 'arbitrary' restrictions are always prohibited.

Rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion

- Individuals have a right to choose, practise and observe their chosen religion or belief, to be an atheist or not to follow any religion or belief.
- It includes the right to worship and to observe rituals, such as the wearing of particular clothing.

Rights to freedom of opinion and expression

- The right to hold opinions free from outside interference is an absolute right.
- Individuals have a right to seek, receive and impart ideas in whatever media or form. The State is allowed to authorise restrictions in line with international human rights standards.

Rights to freedom from war propaganda, and freedom from incitement to racial, religious or national hatred

- These rights prohibit certain speech that is not protected by the right to freedom of expression.
- Individuals are prohibited from advocating racial, religious or national hatred that amounts to an incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence.

Right to freedom of assembly

- Individuals have the right to peacefully assemble for a specific purpose or where there is a public discussion, to put forward ideas or to engage in a demonstration, including marches.
- The State is allowed to authorise restrictions in line with international human rights standards.

Right to freedom of association

- Protects the right to form or join all types of association, including political, religious, sporting/recreational, non-governmental and trade union associations. (See also the right to form and join trade unions below.)
- The State is allowed to authorise restrictions in line with international human rights standards.

Rights of protection of the family and the right to marry

- The concept of a family varies. This includes the rights to enter freely into marriage and to start a family.

Rights of protection for the child

- A child has the right to be registered, given a name and to acquire a nationality.
- Children must be protected from sexual and economic exploitation, including child labour.
- ILO standards prohibit hazardous work for all persons under 18 years. They also prohibit labour for those under 15, with limited exceptions for developing States.

Right to participate in public life

- Citizens have the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, including the rights to vote and be elected in free and fair elections, and the right of equal access to positions within the public service.

Right to equality before the law, equal protection of the law, and rights of non- discrimination

- Individuals have a right not to be discriminated against, directly or indirectly, on various grounds, including race, ethnicity, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, and birth or other status (such as sexual orientation or health status, for example, having HIV/AIDS).
- This right applies to the enjoyment of all other rights.
- The State is allowed to make distinctions where they are in line with international human rights standards.
- ILO standards provide further guidance on the content of the right.

Rights of minorities

- Members of ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities are entitled to enjoy their own culture, practice their religion and speak their language.

Right to work

- Individuals are entitled to the opportunity to make a living by work which they freely choose or accept. The work must be 'decent work', meaning that it respects their human rights.
- The right includes the prohibition of arbitrary dismissal and the rights to just and favourable conditions of work and to form and join trade unions, discussed below.

Right to enjoy just and favourable conditions of work

- Individuals have the right to fair remuneration and equal remuneration for work of equal value. Remuneration must enable them, and their families, to have a decent living.
- The right includes safe and healthy conditions of work, equality of opportunity for promotion, and a right to rest, leisure and holidays.
- ILO standards provide further guidance on the content of the right.

Right to form and join trade unions and the right to strike

- Individuals have the right to form or join trade unions of their choice.
- Trade unions must be permitted to function freely, subject only to limitations that are in line with international human rights standards.
- Workers have the right to strike, in conformity with reasonable legal requirements.
- ILO standards provide guidance on the content of the right, for example, that workers have the right to bargain collectively with their employers and that workers should not be discriminated against because of trade union membership.

Right to social security, including social insurance

- This right obliges the State to create and maintain a system of social security that provides adequate benefits for a range of issues (such as injury or unemployment).

Right to a family life

- Protection should be given to families during their establishment, and while they are responsible for the care and education of dependent children.
- The right includes special protections for working mothers.
- The right also includes special protections for children.

Right to an adequate standard of living

- This right includes access to adequate housing, food, clothing, and water and sanitation.
- Individuals have a right to live somewhere in security, dignity and peace and that fulfils certain criteria (such as availability of utilities and accessibility).
- Food should be available and accessible to individuals, in sufficient quality and quantity, to meet their nutritional needs, free from harmful substances and acceptable to their culture.
- The right to water and sanitation was recognised as a distinct right in 2010. Individuals are entitled to sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic use and to sanitation services that fulfil certain criteria (such as being safe, physically accessible, and providing privacy and dignity).

Right to health

- Individuals have a right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.
- This includes the right to have control over one's health and body, and freedom from interference.

Right to education

- All children have the right to free and compulsory primary education.
- The right also includes equal access to education and equal enjoyment of educational facilities, among other aspects.

Rights to take part in cultural life, to benefit from scientific progress, and to protection of the material and moral rights of authors and inventors

- Individuals have a right to take part in the cultural life of society and enjoy the benefits of scientific progress, especially disadvantaged groups.
- This includes protection of an individual author's moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production.
- This protection extends to the rights of indigenous peoples to preserve, protect and develop indigenous and traditional knowledge systems and cultural expressions.

text of
the UN
guiding
principles

Annex C

Text of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (without commentary)

General Principles

These Guiding Principles are grounded in recognition of:

- (a)** States' existing obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- (b)** The role of business enterprises as specialized organs of society performing specialized functions, required to comply with all applicable laws and to respect human rights;
- (c)** The need for rights and obligations to be matched to appropriate and effective remedies when breached.

These Guiding Principles apply to all States and to all business enterprises, both transnational and others, regardless of their size, sector, location, ownership and structure.

These Guiding Principles should be understood as a coherent whole and should be read, individually and collectively, in terms of their objective of enhancing standards and practices with regard to business and human rights so as to achieve tangible results for affected individuals and communities, and thereby also contributing to a socially sustainable globalization.

Nothing in these Guiding Principles should be read as creating new international law obligations, or as limiting or undermining any legal obligations a State may have undertaken or be subject to under international law with regard to human rights.

These Guiding Principles should be implemented in a non-discriminatory manner, with particular attention to the rights and needs of, as well as the challenges faced by, individuals from groups or populations that may be at heightened risk of becoming vulnerable or marginalized, and with due regard to the different risks that may be faced by women and men.

I. THE STATE DUTY TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS

A. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

1. States must protect against human rights abuse within their territory and/or jurisdiction by third parties, including business enterprises. This requires taking appropriate steps to prevent, investigate, punish and redress such abuse through effective policies, legislation, regulations and adjudication.
2. States should set out clearly the expectation that all business enterprises domiciled in their territory and/or jurisdiction respect human rights throughout their operations.

B. OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

General state regulatory and policy functions

3. In meeting their duty to protect, States should:
 - (a) Enforce laws that are aimed at, or have the effect of, requiring business enterprises to respect human rights, and periodically to assess the adequacy of such laws and address any gaps;
 - (b) Ensure that other laws and policies governing the creation and ongoing operation of business enterprises, such as corporate law, do not constrain but enable business respect for human rights;

- (c) Provide effective guidance to business enterprises on how to respect human rights throughout their operations;
- (d) Encourage, and where appropriate require, business enterprises to communicate how they address their human rights impacts.

The State-business nexus

4. States should take additional steps to protect against human rights abuses by business enterprises that are owned or controlled by the State, or 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.
5. States should exercise adequate oversight in order to meet their international human rights obligations when they contract with, or legislate for, business enterprises to provide services that may impact upon the enjoyment of human rights.
6. States should promote respect for human rights by business enterprises with which they conduct commercial transactions.

Supporting business respect for human rights in conflict affected areas

7. Because the risk of gross human rights abuses is heightened in conflict affected areas, States should help ensure that business enterprises operating in those contexts are not involved with such abuses, including by:

- (a) Engaging at the earliest stage possible with business enterprises to help them identify, prevent and mitigate the human rights-related risks of their activities and business relationships;
- (b) Providing adequate assistance to business enterprises to assess and address the heightened risks of abuses, paying special attention to both gender-based and sexual violence;
- (c) Denying access to public support and services for a business enterprise that is involved with gross human rights abuses and refuses to cooperate in addressing the situation;
- (d) Ensuring that their current policies, legislation, regulations and enforcement measures are effective in addressing the risk of business involvement in gross human rights abuses.

Ensuring policy coherence

8. States should ensure that governmental departments, agencies and other State-based institutions that shape business practices are aware of and observe the State's human rights obligations when fulfilling their respective mandates, including by providing them with relevant information, training and support.
9. States should maintain adequate domestic policy space to meet their human rights obligations when pursuing business-related policy objectives with other States or business enterprises, for instance through investment treaties or contracts.
10. States, when acting as members of multilateral institutions that deal with business-related issues, should:

- (a) Seek to ensure that those institutions neither restrain the ability of their member States to meet their duty to protect nor hinder business enterprises from respecting human rights;
- (b) Encourage those institutions, within their respective mandates and capacities, to promote business respect for human rights and, where requested, to help States meet their duty to protect against human rights abuse by business enterprises, including through technical assistance, capacity-building and awareness-raising;
- (c) Draw on these Guiding Principles to promote shared understanding and advance international cooperation in the management of business and human rights challenges.

II. THE CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY TO RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS

A. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

11. Business enterprises should respect human rights. This means that they should avoid infringing on the human rights of others and should address adverse human rights impacts with which they are involved.
12. The responsibility of business enterprises to respect human rights refers to internationally recognized human rights – understood, at a minimum, as those expressed in the International Bill of Human Rights and the principles concerning fundamental rights set out in the International Labour Organization’s Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

13. The responsibility to respect human rights requires that business enterprises:

- (a)** Avoid causing or contributing to adverse human rights impacts through their own activities, and address such impacts when they occur;
- (b)** Seek to prevent or mitigate adverse human rights impacts that are directly linked to their operations, products or services by their business relationships, even if they have not contributed to those impacts.

14. The responsibility of business enterprises to respect human rights applies to all enterprises regardless of their size, sector, operational context, ownership and structure. Nevertheless, the scale and complexity of the means through which enterprises meet that responsibility may vary according to these factors and with the severity of the enterprise's adverse human rights impacts.

15. In order to meet their responsibility to respect human rights, business enterprises should have in place policies and processes appropriate to their size and circumstances, including:

- (a)** A policy commitment to meet their responsibility to respect human rights;
- (b)** A human rights due diligence process to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address their impacts on human rights;
- (c)** Processes to enable the remediation of any adverse human rights impacts they cause or to which they contribute.

B. OPERATIONAL

Policy commitment

16. As the basis for embedding their responsibility to respect human rights, business enterprises should express their commitment to meet this responsibility through a statement of policy that:
- (a)** Is approved at the most senior level of the business enterprise;
 - (b)** Is informed by relevant internal and/or external expertise;
 - (c)** Stipulates the enterprise's human rights expectations of personnel, business partners and other parties directly linked to its operations, products or services;
 - (d)** Is publicly available and communicated internally and externally to all personnel, business partners and other relevant parties;
 - (e)** Is reflected in operational policies and procedures necessary to embed it throughout the business enterprise.

Human rights due diligence

17. In order to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address their adverse human rights impacts, business enterprises should carry out human rights due diligence. The process should include assessing actual and potential human rights impacts, integrating and acting upon the findings, tracking responses, and communicating how impacts are addressed. Human rights due diligence:

- (a)** Should cover adverse human rights impacts that the business enterprise may cause or contribute to through its own activities, or which may be directly linked to its operations, products or services by its business relationships;
- (b)** Will vary in complexity with the size of the business enterprise, the risk of severe human rights impacts, and the nature and context of its operations;
- (c)** Should be ongoing, recognizing that the human rights risks may change over time as the business enterprise's operations and operating context evolve.

18. In order to gauge human rights risks, business enterprises should identify and assess any actual or potential adverse human rights impacts with which they may be involved either through their own activities or as a result of their business relationships. This process should:

- (a)** Draw on internal and/or independent external human rights expertise;
- (b)** Involve meaningful consultation with potentially affected groups and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate to the size of the business enterprise and the nature and context of the operation.

19. In order to prevent and mitigate adverse human rights impacts, business enterprises should integrate the findings from their impact assessments across relevant internal functions and processes, and take appropriate action.

- (a)** Effective integration requires that:
 - (i) Responsibility for addressing such impacts is assigned to the appropriate level and function within the business enterprise;
 - (ii) Internal decision-making, budget allocations and oversight processes enable effective responses to such impacts.

- (b)** Appropriate action will vary according to:
 - (i) Whether the business enterprise causes or contributes to an adverse impact, or whether it is involved solely because the impact is directly linked to its operations, products or services by a business relationship;
 - (ii) The extent of its leverage in addressing the adverse impact.

- 20. In order to verify whether adverse human rights impacts are being addressed, business enterprises should track the effectiveness of their response. Tracking should:
 - (a)** Be based on appropriate qualitative and quantitative indicators;
 - (b)** Draw on feedback from both internal and external sources, including affected stakeholders.

- 21. In order to account for how they address their human rights impacts, business enterprises should be prepared to communicate this externally, particularly when concerns are raised by or on behalf of affected stakeholders. Business enterprises whose operations or operating contexts pose risks of severe human rights impacts should report formally on how they address them. In all instances, communications should:
 - (a)** Be of a form and frequency that reflect an enterprise's human rights impacts and that are accessible to its intended audiences;
 - (b)** Provide information that is sufficient to evaluate the adequacy of an enterprise's response to the particular human rights impact involved;
 - (c)** In turn not pose risks to affected stakeholders, personnel or to legitimate requirements of commercial confidentiality.

Remediation

22. Where business enterprises identify that they have caused or contributed to adverse impacts, they should provide for or cooperate in their remediation through legitimate processes.

Issues of context

23. In all contexts, business enterprises should:

- (a)** Comply with all applicable laws and respect internationally recognized human rights, wherever they operate;
- (b)** Seek ways to honour the principles of internationally recognized human rights when faced with conflicting requirements;
- (c)** Treat the risk of causing or contributing to gross human rights abuses as a legal compliance issue wherever they operate.

24. Where it is necessary to prioritize actions to address actual and potential adverse human rights impacts, business enterprises should first seek to prevent and mitigate those that are most severe or where delayed response would make them irremediable.

III. ACCESS TO REMEDY

A. FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE

25. As part of their duty to protect against business-related human rights abuse, States must take appropriate steps to ensure, through judicial, administrative, legislative or other appropriate means, that when such abuses occur within their territory and/or jurisdiction those affected have access to effective remedy.

B. OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

State-based judicial mechanisms

26. States should take appropriate steps to ensure the effectiveness of domestic judicial mechanisms when addressing business-related human rights abuses, including considering ways to reduce legal, practical and other relevant barriers that could lead to a denial of access to remedy.

State-based non-judicial grievance mechanisms

27. States should provide effective and appropriate non-judicial grievance mechanisms, alongside judicial mechanisms, as part of a comprehensive State-based system for the remedy of business-related human rights abuse.

Non-State-based grievance mechanisms

28. States should consider ways to facilitate access to effective non-Statebased grievance mechanisms dealing with business-related human rights harms.
29. To make it possible for grievances to be addressed early and remediated directly, business enterprises should establish or participate in effective operational-level grievance mechanisms for individuals and communities who may be adversely impacted.
30. Industry, multi-stakeholder and other collaborative initiatives that are based on respect for human rights-related standards should ensure that effective grievance mechanisms are available.

Effectiveness criteria for non-judicial grievance mechanisms

31. In order to ensure their effectiveness, non-judicial grievance mechanisms, both State-based and non-State-based, should be:

- (a)** Legitimate: enabling trust from the stakeholder groups for whose use they are intended, and being accountable for the fair conduct of grievance processes;
 - (b)** Accessible: being known to all stakeholder groups for whose use they are intended, and providing adequate assistance for those who may face particular barriers to access;
 - (c)** Predictable: providing a clear and known procedure with an indicative time frame for each stage, and clarity on the types of process and outcome available and means of monitoring implementation;
 - (d)** Equitable: seeking to ensure that aggrieved parties have reasonable access to sources of information, advice and expertise necessary to engage in a grievance process on fair, informed and respectful terms;
 - (e)** Transparent: keeping parties to a grievance informed about its progress, and providing sufficient information about the mechanism's performance to build confidence in its effectiveness and meet any public interest at stake;
 - (f)** Rights-compatible: ensuring that outcomes and remedies accord with internationally recognized human rights;
 - (g)** A source of continuous learning: drawing on relevant measures to identify lessons for improving the mechanism and preventing future grievances and harms;
- Operational-level mechanisms should also be:

(h) Based on engagement and dialogue: consulting the stakeholder groups for whose use they are intended on their design and performance, and focusing on dialogue as the means to address and resolve grievances.

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The ABN AMRO collection as a source of inspiration

ABN AMRO has always been very actively engaged in the arts and over the course of time it has amassed an impressive collection of artworks and historical objects. This has resulted in an art collection that dates back to the nineteenth century. The unique ABN AMRO collection is a reflection of the role the bank has played in society right up to the present day.

Art is emotion. Art inspires. Art is original and imparts its own unique perspectives to everyday reality.

Being part of society also means respecting human rights. We have included artwork from the ABN AMRO collection in this publication to inspire ourselves and our partners to make human rights an everyday reality.

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