

# Shining a Light on Women Affected by Corporate Activities: The Gender Dimension of Business and Human Rights

Workshop Report<sup>1</sup>

A Workshop organized by the Netherlands Network for Business and Human Rights, a Working Group of the Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research



Supported by the Asser Institute



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<sup>1</sup> This report has been prepared by the chairs of the Working Group, Ben Grama, Lottie Lane and Daniela Heerdt, with support from the speakers.

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## INTRODUCTION

The [Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research](#)'s working group on [business and human rights \(@NLNBHR\)](#) recently arranged a workshop on the Gender Dimension of Business and Human Rights, under the auspices of the Asser Institute in The Hague. While it has long been recognized that corporate-related human rights harms affect men and women differently, there has been little attention paid to the gender dimensions within business and human rights scholarship and practice. This workshop sought to bring scholars together to provide an overview of the 'state of the art' within business and human rights in relation to gender issues and to facilitate a constructive dialogue around potential spaces for collaboration and paths forward. In this report, we will describe these sessions in turn (Part I) before discussing the key points of discussion raised throughout the workshop (Part II).

## PART I: WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

The workshop was divided into three sessions: 'Call for Action', 'Setting the Scene', and 'A New Approach'.

### 1. Call for Action: taking a gender-transformative approach

The first session was an introductory presentation delivered by Professor Surya Deva (City University of Hong Kong and member of the UN Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises (UNWG)). He divided his presentation into three parts.

First, Deva explained how to unpack gender issues and raised the importance of viewing rights-holders as a heterogeneous group. Human rights issues have asymmetric impacts on women and men. He discussed various issues that uniquely affected women: discrimination, lack of representation, sexual harassment, the invisibility of the informal sector, lack of recognition of land rights, access to finance, lack of awareness of rights, and dominant cultural expectations. He raised the unique impacts which affect women as a result of climate change and automation in women-dominated value chains. At the same time as advocating a gender lens, he also emphasized the need for intersectionality recognizing how different forms of discrimination can compound across different dimensions including age, sexual orientation, migrant status, economic situation, and/or caste.

Second, Professor Deva discussed the [UNWG report on applying a gender lens to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights \(UNGPs\)](#).

The gender dimension is already implicit in the UNGPs, but this report makes it more explicit. He outlined three steps for a gender responsive approach to both the UNGPs and other standards. The first is to raise sensitivity amongst all stakeholders (not simply corporations) to implement the UNGPs and mainstream gender issues. It is essential to view issues of gender as not solely relevant to companies; NGOs, trade unions and other actors may be male-dominated and/or fail to take a gender lens in their work as well. The second is to develop guidance to assist all actors with practical recommendations and concrete steps to implement the UNGPs including a gender responsive assessment, gender-transformative measures, and gender-transformative remedies. These measures and remedies should be transformative in the sense that they should be capable of bringing more systemic change to patriarchal norms and unequal power relations that underpin many gender issues. The third is to bring together various agencies to continuously explore ways to empower women

The gender dimension in the UNGPs is implicit already, but it needs to be made explicit.

Third, Deva discussed the need for challenging cultural norms with respect to gender, a project which will require a wide variety of actors (including BHR scholars). There is a need to explore ways to empower women who are at-risk or have been adversely affected by business-related human rights abuses. In this vein, Deva raised the issue that, while there is a lot of scholarship on 'gender' and a lot

of scholarship on ‘business and human rights’, these field of scholarship have so far acted as separate islands. He had three suggestions moving forward:

1. Assessing the relevant standards we have already (including ILO Standards, the women empowerment principles, and SDG 5). This will require both normative and empirical research.
2. Going beyond ‘the general’ with gender guidance and moving towards ‘the specific’, including sector-based and company-based guidance.
3. Not becoming preoccupied with existing company-led issues such as the business case for diversity in the workplace. While there may be value in such approaches, we should not accept the business case paradigm as our starting point for research on gender issues, but also focus on the normative case.

## 2. Setting the Scene: the current state of the art on the gender dimension of business and human rights

The second session sought to provide an overview of the current debate and state of research on the gender dimension of business and human rights. The speakers were Marian Ingrams from OECD Watch/ SOMO, Nadia Bernaz from the University of Wageningen, and Elin Wrzoncki from the Danish Institute for Human Rights. The panel was moderated by Antoine Duval from the Asser Institute.

### 2.1 Understanding the gender dimension as impacts *and* factors

The first speaker was Marian Ingrams who works for OECD Watch specialising on access to remedy and corporate accountability. Prior to this she completed a research grant on gender budgeting and gender mainstreaming in sustainable finance. Ingrams’ presentation on the current state of the art focussed on the gendered impacts of businesses. She argued that existing approaches tend to be focussed on equality for women in the workplace, maternity leave policies, and (occasionally) unique impacts on women as consumers, especially where such policies are deemed to produce benefits to companies. There may be a niche for this, but, in her view, the focus going forward must be towards producing a ‘normative shift’ in approaches to gender and not on the business case.

Ingrams highlighted that women experience differential impacts not only as workers within supply chains, but as members of communities experiencing harm from corporate activities. She suggested it is better to view gender issues not only as standalone ‘impacts’ but also as ‘factors’ which can worsen other impacts. For example, gender-based discrimination is itself an impact, and also a factor

Gender issues should be understood not only as *impacts* but also *factors* which may worsen impacts.

that worsens other impacts such as access to higher or safer job positions or better salary. Her presentation was divided into three sections: sector-based impacts, cross-sector challenges, and access to remedy. She raised issues of informal pay-arrangements, high overtime, discrimination, sexual abuse/violence, increase in sex work, destruction of existing opportunities for women to sustain a livelihood, increases in STIs and incidences of HIV, pollutants which

uniquely affect pregnant women, more hazardous work, lack of recognition of land tenure rights, and lack of access to programmes such as training, finance, and vaccination, amongst others. Ingrams also reiterated the need for intersectional approaches to understanding how women of different social, economic, religious or physical status experience impacts differently from other women.

She then talked about how corporate activities can create new patriarchal paradigms. For instance, a mine in Lesotho effectively created a new race and gender segregated structure whereby the foreign white people took the higher paid jobs, the black men took lower paid jobs, and black women’s livelihoods were diminished to being wholly outside the mine (e.g., providing lunches or sex services

to workers). Cultural and gender norms can create cultural biases and a lack of rights awareness amongst women. Women are often discriminated against in legal and social structures, for instance lack of land tenure recognition and lack of unionisation or representation by male-dominated unions, discrimination that can then be compounded by corporate reliance on those structures or bargaining partners. Ingrams also argued that companies often ascribe gender imbalance in their own workforce to gender-based hierarchies endemic in a culture, whereas in fact, companies also often *create* new unequal gender structures by introducing work structures that disrupt former equal gender relations and relegate women to dependent positions outside the company workforce. She also raised difficulties in how gender issues should be dealt with by grievance mechanisms where there is currently a lack of proactive sensitivity on gender risks or tailored procedures for supporting women's participation.

## 2.2. Academic research on BHR from a gender perspective: one big gap; many opportunities; many challenges

Bernaz discussed the current state of academic research on business and human rights domain from a gender perspective. She argued that overall there is not much scholarship on this, or at least not much scholarship referring to itself by the term 'business and human rights'. A few notable exceptions are a [special issue on resource extraction from the Canadian Journal of Women and the Law](#), Bonita Meyersfeld's book chapter "[Business, human rights and gender: a legal approach to external and internal considerations](#)", or the 2018 Business and Human Rights Journal article "[A Feminist Approach to the Binding Instrument on Transnational Corporations and other Business Enterprises](#)" by Awori et al. (BHR Journal 2018). Bernaz is currently carrying out her own research with Heerdt on FIFA and gender and with Chiara Macchi on EU policy on BHR from a gender perspective.

Given the broad gap and endless possibilities for new research, Bernaz argued the question we should be addressing is not 'where is the gap?' but 'what should we choose to focus on?'. One obvious path forward is to take the UNWG's gender framework and use that to analyse a variety of current initiatives including national action plans which governments have adopted on business and human rights, company human rights due diligence processes, and human rights defenders. This could include empirical studies. Potentially more challenging is to seriously engage with theoretical feminist approaches to highlight feminist approaches to BHR.

There are three key challenges to this research. First, the focus of many BHR scholars is in English yet it is likely that a lot of work has been done in other languages (e.g., Spanish) that is currently being overlooked in English academia. There is thus a need for more cross-continent discussion. A second is that, while BHR presents itself as an interdisciplinary field, it is still dominated by legal scholars. A gender perspective will require significant interdisciplinary engagement with scholarship outside of legal academia. A third challenge is that gender scholarship is not homogeneous but will present many different perspectives from which an approach will have to be derived. Once a scholar has their eyes opened to the full scope of issues thrown up by a gender lens, there will also be the need to discuss intersectional issues. Overall, engaging seriously in gender issues is a significant task to take on.

Further challenges or risks relate to how research will be treated within academia. As a female researcher, there is always the risk of being labelled as the 'feminist researcher' or 'the woman who works on women's stuff'. Obtaining funding on gender and business and human rights is incredibly difficult. There is a need to create visibility for gender in business and human rights scholarship and bring such issues to the fore.

Gender scholarship is not homogeneous but contains many perspectives potentially relevant to BHR.

### 2.3 The current state of the art from a practitioner's perspective

Wrzoncki is Chief Adviser on Human Rights and Business who recently completed two projects on the gender dimension: one [on mapping topics for state attention in the implementation of the UNGPs](#) and another on [providing guidance on a gender-responsive approach to project planning and implementation](#). Moving from the academic perspective to the practitioner perspective, Wrzoncki identified a similar lack of emphasis on gender in existing and developing policy including government national action plans on business and human rights. Where gender is mentioned in national action plans, it is largely limited to employment and labour right issues. Wrzoncki therefore identified a similar gap in more practitioner-oriented approaches and argued for four topics which require more attention: employment and labour rights, land and natural resources, essential services and privatisation, and trade and investment.

In relation to employment and labour rights, she raised the issue of women often not being included in the formalised workforce, sex segregation in industries, sexual harassment and violence, and the specific challenges to migrant workers. In relation to land and natural resources, Wrzoncki stated that, in many cases, women's land rights are not recognised or undermined and women are marginalised in consultations, agreement-making, resettlement and compensation. Privatisation of essential services can have both positive and negative impacts and is a growing phenomenon which brings with it new issues which are often neglected. She suggests there is a need for further empirical studies on this issue. Trade liberalisation affects small-holder farms which disproportionately affects women, intellectual property provisions affects the price of drugs, and where there is a decrease in revenue the effect of essential services is distributed in such a way that women are affected disproportionately.

Wrzoncki suggested four paths forward for addressing gender-related issues. First, there is a greater need to understand gender issues and intersectionality in general and in context, in partnership with women's organisations. Second, there are gender initiatives existing already (e.g., Sustainable Development Goals 5) where connections could be made to business and human rights issues. Third, there is a need for empirical research, particularly on the effects of privatisation and trade liberalisation. Fourth, we need not only to look externally but also internally at how we carry out our own work. Are we being gender-blind, gender-neutral, gender-responsive, or gender-transformative? Gender-neutral is the predominant approach at the moment. We need to look inward as much as we need to look outward.

The starting-point should be to look at how we deal with gender in our own work.

### 3. A new approach: taking a gender perspective on existing BHR standards and the potential BHR treaty

The goal of the third session was to discuss existing and developing standards and instruments in the business and human rights field from a gender perspective, to understand what shortcomings and good practices are, and to analyse the potential of the new draft treaty to account for a gender perspective on business and human rights. Like the previous session, this took the form of a panel discussion followed by a Q&A session with the audience. The panel included Marian Ingrams, Kelly Groen from ActionAid, and Tara van Ho from the University of Essex.

#### 3.1 How gendered impacts can be addressed: gender-sensitive due diligence

In this session Ingrams discussed what she described as the core basis for responsible business conduct based on the UNGPs and OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. Human rights due diligence is the process by which business enterprises should identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address their adverse human rights impacts. Due diligence is essentially a process of assessment, oversight, and monitoring, coupled with proactive action to prevent harmful impacts and cease and

provide remedy for them when they occur. The [OECD's due diligence guidance](#), created after over 2 years of multi-stakeholder processes, provides due diligence guidance to companies in conducting due diligence for human rights, labour rights, environmental issues, bribery, and disclosure. In addition to voluntary recommendations for companies it also requires governments and the OECD to actively support, promote, and monitor the implementation of the OECD Guidelines. It generally enjoys widespread support.

The due diligence guidance includes a Q&A section with one section on how companies should take a gender perspective. This requires companies to explicitly evaluate, identify, and address gendered risks and impacts (e.g., gender disaggregated statistics), develop gender-sensitive and gender-responsive policies & plans, identify overlapping vulnerabilities, support women's equal participation in consultations & negotiations, and provide equal access to compensation and other forms of reparation. These elements represent (relatively) strong language on gender and make mention of intersectionality and representation of women in decision-making processes. At the same time, the guidance remains voluntary. There is a need for legal accountability.

Most of the focus of mandatory legal accountability measures has been in terms of due diligence including in France, Switzerland, the EU, and the draft business and human rights treaty. It is an open question as to whether and how due diligence should be designed in legal terms. Issues that are not especially challenging under the OECD's due diligence guidance, such as piercing the corporate veil, become essential questions when due diligence is translated into legal terms.

While progress has been made in relation to gender issues in the OECD due diligence guidance, this remains voluntary.

Where laws have been passed, they often limit liability to gross violations of human rights (e.g. issues around slavery, extra-judicial killings, etc.). The treaty halfway borrows the due diligence language, but there are questions as to whether a watered-down version of due diligence is acceptable or whether alternative liability regimes might be preferred.

### 3.2 Advocating for change: how the treaty could include gender dimensions

Kelly Groen, a lobbyist for ActionAid, moved on to what forms of corporate accountability we should push for in the near future. She began describing three cases of corporate-related harm and typical issues which affect women, and concluded by describing ActionAid's role in campaigning for gender justice in relation to the business and human rights treaty.

Groen referred to the case of Vedanta Resources being sued for water pollution caused by its subsidiary's copper mining operations in Zambia. As of April this year, the UK Supreme Court has determined that the case may be heard in English courts. She also talked about a criminal complaint against the Kaweri Coffee Plantation in central Uganda for a violent eviction in 2001, with the case still pending in the Ugandan courts. She further discussed SOCFIN who had funded Bollore's rubber plantation on an indigenous community's land in Cambodia. Departing from these large human right cases, Groen zoomed in on the individual stories of women. She described the case of Jupiler, a woman whose community suffered so much pollution that the water was so acidic it took an hour to boil, and the effect this had in Jupiler's life. She described how company-community consultations rarely take account of the fact women are looking after their children meaning it is impossible for them to attend. Companies have both the opportunity and responsibility to address this.

Existing gender approaches often take the approach of 'add women and stir'.

Groen is critical of existing national action plans, which she argued rarely require legislation or significant state action. Where women are considered in policy-making, it is often as an afterthought to an

already designed project or policy. Groen stated this process is colloquially known amongst her and her colleagues as ‘add women and stir’.

[ActionAid is part of a broader coalition of civil society organisations](#) pushing for the EU to engage more with the UN business and human rights treaty process. There is a feminist group within this treaty movement which are pushing for women’s issues to be included in the process. Gender is touched on only briefly in the current draft. There is a need for provisions on a mandatory gender impact assessment, gender-sensitive justice, and gender-sensitive remedy mechanisms. Groen suggested that the Dutch government, normally a strong ally on gender, needs to speak up for gender issues with respect to corporate accountability.

### 3.3 Applying feminist theory to business and human rights: the issue of reparations

Our final speaker, Tara van Ho, discussed her preliminary research applying a gender lens to certain business and human rights issues. At this point, she has more questions than answers and she is still thinking through the issues. The presentation focused on her own process. She echoed sentiments from Deva and Ingrams that we need to reject arguments based on the business case outright. Feminist critiques are not focussed on corporate responsibilities or accountability. In her approach, van Ho focuses on two types of critique: those that portend to the full system of capitalism and those related to reparations.

She argued that capitalism is a system which systematically undervalues women including by formalising and reifying the separation between companies and families and devaluing the latter. It corrupts how women work, and then it undervalues the nature of that work. While women share wealth and focus on the long term and sustainable good, capitalism is built in the image of men: the individual consumes and is paid. ‘Business and human rights’ is a capitalist-friendly approach, it accepts and is premised on the existence of capitalism. ‘Business and human rights’ is thus incompatible with this feminist perspective.

Van Ho further stated that no-one writes about reparations in business and human rights. In the Inter-American Court of Human Rights *Cotton Fields* case, the court concluded that the focus on individual reparations for gender-based violence in Mexico encouraged an environment of impunity. Individual reparations facilitated and promoted the repetition of acts of violence in general. This sent a message that violence against women is tolerated as part of daily life. The court awarded transformative reparations moving beyond financial compensation and basic protections to an examination of the causes and manifestations of discrimination against women.

‘Business and human rights’ is incompatible with feminist critiques of capitalism.

When mining companies enter into negotiations with indigenous communities they promise jobs, although there will rarely if ever be enough jobs for everyone or jobs for women. In a community van Ho worked with, a mining company offered a man a job, and his wife lost her garden where she grew food. The man became the sole provider and the power balance in the relationship shifted. How do we restore her?

She then argued that existing compensation spaces are masculine in nature. They concern (mainly financial) compensation based on ideas of restitution of the individual rather than transformation of communal harm. Companies do not understand remedy, they view these issues through the same economic lens as they would view their own activities. Companies often say ‘but we paid’, but they never say ‘then we followed up’. They are carried out in traditionally masculine, public spaces, with a focus on process not outcome. They misaddress questions of the individual and collective. Women



might lose themselves in the prospect of schools and hospitals – so-called development initiatives which they are entitled to anyway – and thereby forgo their own rights.

According to van Ho, the draft treaty replicates this omission of reparation endemic to business and human rights, and thereby replicates this masculine approach to remedy. It does not mention factors for how remedies should be determined. It mentions gender, but there is no link between gender and the substance of any reparations.

## PART II: SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSIONS

A discussion session followed each of the three sessions above. The final three sections of this report reflect these discussions, structured according to three broad themes that came out of the meeting: the role of transformative measures and remedies, incorporating gender perspectives, and the role of liability.

### 1. The role of transformative measures and remedies

Deva, Wrzoncki and van Ho raised the potential role of transformative measures and remedies during their presentations. Three issues were raised in that context.

*How do companies do it?* - The first was the difficulties companies often have with *how* to translate and implement this knowledge in practice: how do we do transformative? Different points were raised in response to this question. The first is that we require concrete steps in addition to normative guidance (e.g., the examples in the UNWG report) and that a grievance mechanism's procedure (such as the International Finance Corporation's Compliance Advisor Ombudsman) requires something on gender. Companies also need to engage with women and work towards structural change, including training of employees and police force and reforming principles and practices.

*Should companies do it?* – The second was the extent to which, by focusing on structural issues, a focus on transformative measures expects businesses to resolve too many gender and human rights issues. A common criticism of business and human rights scholarship is that it tries to solve too many problems through the business and human rights lens. It was agreed that some companies may indeed say that any expectations that they take up gender transformative measures are unrealistic. They already state that they are struggling implementing pillar 2 of the UNGPs (the business responsibility to respect human rights). However, gender is not an add-on issue: it is part of the process which has always been implicit in the UNGPs and which is now being made explicit. There is also a role for a wider variety of actors to share the burden.

How can remedies focus on structures while not losing sight of individual women?

*Will we lose sight of the individual?* – The final question was a perceived paradox between a focus on transformative remedies, with its possible emphasis on treating harms against women with more communal remedies, and the critique that women might trade off on their individual rights because of their own focus on benefiting others. Do we view gender impacts as communal or not communal? This contradiction was noted as a relevant one: more thought is required on how remedies can focus on structures while not inappropriately losing sight of individual women.

### 2. Challenges with adopting a gender lens

Questions were raised as to why there is such an absence of 'gender' in business and human rights, where we can find 'gender' scholarship relevant for business and human rights, and questions about *who* inserts gender into a process.

*Why is there so little on gender?* – The question of why there is so little on gender was raised during session 2. It was argued that this is perhaps the case because of the relative gender blindness of the UNGPs and other standards. Communities may not see their challenge in gender terms, and NGOs working on these issues do not focus on gender. Others argued that for many scholars, the very field of business and human rights is a problem, and they are less likely to engage with these issues using ‘business and human rights’ terms. Another stated that feminist scholars in law will focus on ‘law’ but not necessarily on actors themselves. One participant noted that the very fact we are looking for and counting the ‘pieces on gender’ is itself a worrying sign as it implies the issue of gender is an ‘add-on’ to business and human rights.

*Where can we look?* – Given the lack of scholarship on gender and business and human rights, different participants suggested different places to look. One participant stated that we need to proactively bring up gender in our own research. We need to be clear, if a due diligence process does not bring up gender it is not human rights due diligence. Women are seen as victims under the UNGPs, a category of victim which is more at risk, but we need to focus on how women are involved in decision-making as well. Other participants suggested looking at feminist approaches to jurisprudence and decolonialisation literature.

*Who puts gender on the agenda?* – One participant raised issues around how corporate decision making around gender issues may lead to sexist and paternalistic approaches to women in some instances. She raised the issue of protests around gender-based violence in South Africa where companies (without engagement with women) stated women could not do certain types of unsafe work. They also took certain working hours off the table for female employees so they would not be required to go home late at night. How do we avoid paternalistic attitudes to women?

A further issue was whether grievance mechanisms should shape complaints. A participant raised a point of contention in their NGO over whether grievance mechanisms should shape complaints on gendered terms. On the one hand, it is helpful in taking a gender perspective if gender is proactively raised during the grievance process. On the other hand, it forces communities to have their complaints dealt with in gender terms they may not have otherwise voiced their concerns in. One participant stated that this latter argument for not shaping community complaints is naïve as it implies that grievances are not already shaped by the grievance mechanism process. Another participant stressed that we need to be careful about how we affect a company’s voice. A further participant stated that grievances submitted across transnational processes are submitted by NGOs, not communities. NGOs are essential interlocutors in capturing community complaints and reframe them in such a way that will best meet the expectations of the grievance mechanism and related standards (e.g., the OECD Guidelines in relation to National Contact Points). Thus, community complaints are already inevitably framed by top-down considerations.

Who puts gender on the agenda? Should a community have their issues framed by others?

### 3. The role of liability

Liability was a focus of discussions throughout the sessions. Three key issues came out of the discussions: what the rejection of the business case means for SMEs, the role of arbitration, and what a treaty can achieve.

*What does the rejection of the business case mean for SMEs?* – Many of the speakers rejected the business case outright for promising paths ahead on gender issues. In response to this question of what rejecting it for SMEs would mean, one participant stated that SMEs are, in principle, more willing

to carry out their human rights due diligence than TNCs. Their main limitation is language, which can be easily rectified with advice. Otherwise, they have the capacity.

*The role of arbitration?* – One participant raised a question around the potential role for the Business and Human Rights Arbitration Project initiated by the BHR Arbitration Working Group in relation to incorporating a gender lens. Another participant was very critical of this project, stating its costs around ten times the amount of filing a court case in a domestic court. Arbitration is between companies? Why are we interested in whether corporations can make money from each other over human rights disputes?

*What do we expect to get out of a business and human rights treaty?* – Many agreed that the gender

What does the rejection of the business case mean?

dimensions of the BHR treaty are quite weak. One participant stated we need to be clear on why we want a BHR treaty and what we expect it will achieve. Even if we established new liability regimes with such a treaty, it would ultimately only establish financial, compensation-based approaches. A participant responded by stating we should ask the same thing as with any other prospective law: does it get us further than existing (tort and contract) law or not? Once you get a real law, then

you get real changes in policy. We can't rely on the business case. We need systemic change. Regulation will not produce systemic change itself, but it will place problems in the right places to force companies to push for broader solutions. Changing company behaviour starts with making them feel pain. Another participant emphasised the need for prevention over liability. In the Vale Valley collapse the company estimated the value of a human life when making its risk assessment (around 1.2 million). As they would earn more money than they would lose, the companies accepted the risk. Likewise, with a pipeline in Nigeria the company did a cost-benefit analysis of the consequences of turning it off. Increasingly, this participant was becoming converted to the idea we need direct obligations for corporations. Finally, another participant suggested that 'if liability doesn't work, why are companies so afraid of it?'

## Annex

### Workshop Invitation

The Business and Human Rights Working Group of the Netherlands Network for Human Rights Research (NNHRR) and the Asser Institute cordially invite you to attend the Workshop:

## The Gender Dimension of Business and Human Rights

9<sup>th</sup> October 2019, 13:00-17:00, Asser Institute, The Hague

Business-related human rights interference impacts women and men differently. Evidence shows that women and girls face higher risks and are disproportionately affected by business activities. With this Workshop, the Business and Human Rights Working Group of the NNHRR aims to provide an overview of the current debate and state of research on gender and business and human rights, and to give the opportunity for constructive dialogue on the available findings and next steps.

### Programme

**13:00 Registration**

**13:15 Welcome** by NNHRR Working Group and the Asser Institute

**13:30 Introductory (video-)presentation**

*Surya Deva, City University of Hong Kong; member of the UN the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises*

**14:00 Session 1:** The current stage of research on business and human rights and gender

Antoine Duval (moderator), *Asser Institute*  
Marian Ingrams, *OECD Watch; SOMO*  
Nadia Bernaz, *University of Wageningen*  
Elin Wrzoncki, *Danish Institute for Human Rights*

**15:15 Coffee break**

**15:30 Session 2:** A gender perspective on available standards in the BHR field including the revised draft of the proposed international treaty on business and human rights

Phillip Paiement (moderator), *Tilburg University*  
Kelly Groen, *ActionAid*  
Marian Ingrams, *OECD Watch; SOMO*  
Tara van Ho, *University of Essex*

**16:45 Closing remarks** followed by drinks & networking

To register for the event, please contact: [d.m.heerdt@uvt.nl](mailto:d.m.heerdt@uvt.nl) (only limited number of places available, deadline for registration is the **2<sup>nd</sup> of October**)