

Programme for Identifying Human Rights Issues

In order to assist companies in implementing human rights due diligence, the Consortium conducts discussions on relationships between business activities and human rights. An overview of the past Workshops is explained below.

In the 2012 Workshop, sector specific human rights issues were identified based on UNEP FI Human Rights Guidance Tool¹. The final report “Human Rights Issues by Sector (2013)” was released.

In 2013, the Workshop further explored “Human Rights Issues by Sector (2013)” from the perspective of the value chain. It was very useful to identify human rights issues throughout the value chain, in order to understand what human rights issue may be arisen by the activities of different departments. The final report “Human Rights Issues by Sector (v.2)” was released in 2013.

In 2014, the Workshop was planned and conducted in order to respond to public comments received in 2013 indicating that “companies need to understand the particular context in which human rights issues arise”. First, the participants examined 31 Global Risks outlined in the World Economic Forum Report² and they then identified 16 Global Risks which were considered to give the greatest influence on the sectors they belonged to. Then, they explored and identified the interconnectivities between global risks and human rights. This identification was useful for them to understand how social and environmental issues were dynamically interconnected, and to understand the particular contexts in which human rights issues arose. The final report “Human Rights Issues by Sector (v.3)” was issued.

In 2015, the participants examined the points which should be either added, removed or modified in “Human Rights Issues by Sector (v.2)” using the Human Rights Guidance Tool³ (2014 revision) developed by UNEP FI. As the main feature of the 2015 Workshop, NGOs/NPOs and subject experts addressed emerging human rights issues in Japan, covering sexual minorities, the empowerment of women and technical intern trainees. In addition, the Workshop was scaled up from 9 sectors in 2014 to 11 sectors in 2015, examining and identifying sector specific human rights issues. The final report “Human Rights Issues by Sector (v.4)” was issued.

The other workshop was held to discuss how to facilitate food procurement in consideration for sustainability at the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, and issued a draft “Food Vision”⁴ for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics.

The 2016 Workshop addressed the relevance between the SDGs and human rights issues. The year of 2015

¹ <http://www.unepfi.org/humanrightstoolkit/fundamentals.php> (Accessed on Nov 10th, 2014).

² http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GlobalRisks_Report_2014.pdf (Accessed on August, 08, 2014)

³ <http://www.unepfi.org/humanrightstoolkit/> (Accessed on July 10th, 2015)

⁴ <http://crt-japan.jp/files2014/2-4-0-olympic2020/pdf/Food%20Vision%20for%20the%20Tokyo%202020%20Olympic%20Games.pdf> (Accessed on August 8th, 2017)

marked the following four significant events: Firstly, at the G7 Summit in Schloss Elmau Germany, G7 leaders pledged to promote responsible supply chains, and strongly supported the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. They also stressed the need to develop substantive National Action Plans and strengthen grievance mechanisms. Secondly, at a Session of the United Nations General Assembly in September, the SDGs were adopted. Thirdly, In the UK, the Modern Slavery Act was adopted. And finally, at the UN Climate Conference in Paris COP 21 in December, the Paris Agreement was adopted which will come into effect in 2020. Considering all of these events, the participants identified sector specific human rights issues with the use of Human Rights Guidance Tool developed by UNEP FI, and they identified priorities on the SDGs by sector with the use of the SDG Compass⁵ whilst considering the SDGs and the proposals for the SDGs submitted by NGOs/NPOs at the G7 Ise-Shima Summit. The final report “Human Rights Issues by Sector (v.5)” and “Priorities on the SDGs by sector” was issued.

In 2017, given the raised concerns from NGOs/NPOs, the participants reviewed the sector specific human rights issues formulated by the CSR Consortium as to whether there were any additions/deletions/correction points. This year's workshop was implemented to help companies recognize human rights issues particular to Japan, human rights issues in supply chains in Asia, and trends of institutional investors in Japan. Compared to the composition of corporate participants last year, there were more corporate participants from the consumer goods sector and food sector, whereas there were less corporate participants from the manufacturing sector and infrastructure sector. Also, there were more participants from the human resource department and procurement department. Lastly, over 70% of the participants were new to the workshop.

In 2018, given the raised concerns from NGOs/NPOs, the participants reviewed the sector specific human rights issues formulated by the CSR Consortium last year as to whether there were any additions/deletions/correction points. As a feature of the working of 2018, NGOs/NPOs raised globally increasing concerns such as on marine plastic pollution, SOGI (sexual orientation/gender identification), and the Technical Intern Training Program in Japan. Also, the subject experts shared the trends of Japanese institutional investors. In regard to the composition of the corporate participants, the participation from the chemical and building materials sector, consumer goods sector, and food sector increased significantly from the previous year. In addition, the companies in the pharmaceutical, printing and consulting sectors, which did not identify sector specific human rights issues in the previous year, participated in the workshop. On the other hand, the companies from the manufacturing and transport sectors did not participant in the workshop this year.

In 2019, given the raised concerns from NGOs/NPOs, the participants reviewed the sector specific human rights issues formulated by the CSR Consortium last year as to whether there were any additions/deletions/correction points. As a feature of the working of 2019, NGOs/NPOs raised globally increasing concerns such as AI and human rights, AI and privacy, relationships between climate change and

⁵ <http://sdgcompass.org/> (Accessed on August 15th, 2016)

human rights, foreign workers in Japan, grievance mechanism, and SDGs and human rights. In regard to the composition of the corporate participants, the participation from the chemical and building materials sector, consumer goods sector, and food sector increased significantly from the previous year.

In 2020, given the raised concerns from NGOs/NPOs, the participants reviewed the sector specific human rights issues formulated by the CSR Consortium last year as to whether there were any additions/deletions/correction points. Due to the impact of Covid-19, this workshop, which was originally held from May to July, was postponed twice. In the end, we planned and implemented an online workshop using the Zoom system from August to November. At the beginning of the workshop, the secretariat and participants made some mistakes and were confused about how to operate the Zoom system. However, they accumulated know-how on Zoom methods as they experienced the workshop. In the half of the workshop, face-to-face meetings with adequate infection control measures were also incorporated, and the workshop was conducted in a hybrid format combining both online and face-to-face meetings. Many of the participants were working from home for infection control measures, and the workshop truly reflected the current work style.

In 2021, as was the case last year, NGOs/NPOs and experts raised issues and, referring to the human rights guidance tool developed by the United Nations Environment Programme's Financial Initiative (developed in 2011 and revised in 2014), the Nippon CSR Consortium conducted a review of each sector to see if there were any additions, deletions or amendments to the "Human Rights Issues by Sector" formulated last year. Due to the impact of the Covid-19 since last year, the program was conducted in an online format using the Zoom system. Due to the state of emergency declared during the period (June to October), most of the participants were teleworking, and the programme reflected the work style of the Covid-19. Due to the teleworking environment, some participants came from Chubu, Kansai, Kyushu, Tohoku and the United States, broadening the scope of the programme.

The ten themes included human rights and environmental issues that needed to be taken into consideration in the ongoing shift to renewable energy, forced labor issues in Xinjiang and the Uyghur Autonomous Region that had a major impact on the global supply chain, proposals from Generation Z who have risen to the occasion of climate change, and hidden challenges in resource recycling. The results were published as "Human Rights Issues by Sector (Tenth Edition)" and "Content of Sharing and Discussion Across Industries. The "Content of Cross-industry Sharing and Discussions" was the result of discussions among participants from other industries on how their business activities negatively impact the human rights of their stakeholders and how they should respond to such impacts, referring to specific examples related to "Business and Human Rights" introduced by civil society.

In 2022, as in the previous year, we received issues raised by NGOs/NPOs and experts and, referring to the Human Rights Guidance Tool (formulated in 2011 and revised in 2014) developed by the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative, added, deleted, or revised the "Human Rights Issues by Sector" developed by the Nippon CSR Consortium last year. The following items were reviewed on an industry-by-industry basis to see if there were any additions, deletions, or modifications. Due to the impact

of the new coronavirus infection (Covid-19), the program was conducted using the Zoom system, an online meeting tool, in combination with face-to-face meetings, as in the previous year. Due to the declared state of emergency and restricted activities, STEP 1 was held via the web, and from STEP 2 (the 6th meeting) onward, the program was held via a 2-dimensional relay between the web and a face-to-face meeting place with infection countermeasures in place, reflecting the work style of the coronavirus disaster. The use of a teleworking environment has broadened the range of participants, who now come from all over Japan. This year's program included 10 themes, such as the issues of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, including those from Ukraine; plastic waste, which is becoming increasingly contaminated on a global scale; migrant workers (including foreign technical interns) in Japan; and the dangers of handling personal information in cyberspace, which is increasingly being used for business purposes. The discussion was based on the issues raised by the participants. The results were summarized as "Important Human Rights Issues for Each Industry (11th Edition). The "Summary of Discussions among Companies in Different Industries (12 teams)" (Appendix 2) is attached as an appendix to this report. In the "Summary of Discussions among Companies from Different Industries (All 12 Teams)," the participants, who were shuffled from one industry to another, discussed the following issues from the following perspectives, which the secretariat summarized in a diagram.

The secretariat summarized the discussion by drawing up a diagram from the following perspectives:

- The impact of alleged human rights abuses involving the state on real businesses and the cases in which such abuses have become apparent
- Cases in which the company's activities may have a negative impact on the issues raised by civil society
- The form of "relief mechanisms" that should be put in place for socially vulnerable groups.

In 2023, as in the previous year, we received issues raised by NGOs/NPOs and experts and, referring to the Human Rights Guidance Tool (formulated in 2011 and revised in 2014) developed by the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative, added, deleted, or revised the "Human Rights Issues by Sector" developed by the Nippon CSR Consortium last year. The following items were reviewed on an industry-by-industry basis to see if there were any additions, deletions, or modifications. New coronavirus infection (Covid-19) was declared a "category 5 infectious disease" in May, moving to the "new normal. Although improvement in coronas was observed, the program continued from last year, utilizing the Zoom system, an online conferencing tool, and face-to-face meetings; STEP 1 was held via the web, and from STEP 2 (6th meeting) onward, the program was held via the web and a 2-dimensional relay between the web and the face-to-face venue. Because of the teleworking environment, participants came from all over Japan, expanding the range of participants. This year's session focused on the issue of climate change, which is attracting attention as a human rights issue. Human rights abuses in the Palestinian Interim Authority (PA) The discussion was based on issues raised by civil society on 10 themes, including the emergence of generative AI. The results were summarized in "Human Rights Issues by Sector". This year, the Global dialogue was held in October, taking advantage of the visit to Japan of overseas experts in the field of human rights, which had been interrupted by Covid-19.