



GLOBAL FORUM ON RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS CONDUCT

18-19 JUNE 2015 / OECD CONFERENCE CENTRE / PARIS, FRANCE

Responsibility in International Sporting Events

18 June 2015, 17:00 – 18:30
Room CC1, OECD Conference Centre

The purpose of this session is to reflect on the role and responsibilities of governments, sports governing bodies and businesses for ensuring that social and environmental standards are integrated into consideration of and observed throughout the entire event life-cycle of large sporting events. This includes everything from bidding, planning and design, land acquisition, construction, procurement to supply chains and sponsorship agreements. Hosting large sporting events can create new jobs, improve infrastructure, aid local development (often in previously under-developed areas), and increase visibility for cities and countries that host them. However, these benefits are not automatic and, in many cases, are debateable considering the high costs of such events and evidence that many places have actually been left worse off.¹

Recent criticisms related to the organisation of Olympics and World Cup tournaments have brought renewed focus on practices surrounding the organisation of these events and what governments, sport governing bodies and businesses are doing to ensure that stakeholder rights are respected. Issues raised touch upon the entire life-cycle of the event: from corruption allegations in the bidding stages; to human rights abuses, workplace exploitation, displacement and land issues related to venue construction and infrastructure development; to labour issues in the supply chains for goods produced for the event; to questionable legacy benefits and financial mismanagement and fiscal waste in general.

These issues are increasingly being discussed in the context of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (the Guidelines), which, together with the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights and the core ILO conventions, form the basis of international law for what is considered responsible business conduct (RBC). The Guidelines are recommendations from governments to multinational enterprises (MNEs) operating in or from the jurisdictions of the governments that adhere to them in areas such as environment, employment and industrial relations, human rights, disclosure, combating bribery, consumer interests, science and technology, competition, and taxation. Risk-based due diligence is a central element of RBC - it is an ongoing, proactive, and reactive process through which businesses identify, prevent and mitigate actual and potential negative impacts, and account for how these impacts are addressed. This includes the activities in the supply chain and linked to operations, products or services by a business relationship. All businesses - regardless of their legal status, size, ownership structure or sector – are expected to behave responsibly under the Guidelines.

The Guidelines are relevant for addressing the above mentioned problems because of their focus on problem solving. For example, a group of human rights NGOs recently asked the UK National Contact Point – government agency that each adhering government sets up under the Guidelines to help resolve issues in case the Guidelines are not observed – to mediate a case related to the lack of human rights due diligence by Formula One in Bahrain. The successful outcome has resulted in a commitment by Formula One management to respect human rights wherever it operates and to adopt a human rights due diligence policy.²

¹ These pros and cons are discussed in detail in the 2008 OECD Report on *Local Development Benefits from Staging Global Events*, Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED), OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264042070-en>

² <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en/node/7499>