



Towards a unified approach for defining private sector responsibility in UN Frameworks

Part of the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 4th International Conference on
Financing for Development

4th December 2024, from 11.30am to 1.00pm, Room S15-23

Context:

Nine years after the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is evident that voluntary actions by companies remain insufficient. The 2024 UN Summit of the Future aimed to address the global governance gaps to meet the SDGs. Within it, **Action 55 (c) of the Pact commits Member States to "encourage the private sector's contribution to addressing global challenges and strengthen its accountability towards implementing United Nations frameworks."** This marks a significant shift from merely recognising the private sector's potential in UN agreements to holding it accountable for its role in their execution.

The Financing for Development (FfD4) process provides the first opportunity to act on the needs of the Action 55(c) and further define the responsibility of financial institutions and real economy companies within a UN process, as outlined under '[Chapter 2: Domestic and international private business and finance](#)' of the [Element Paper for the FfD4 Outcome Document](#). To do this, the UN and Member States must firstly agree and use a set of principles to define those responsibilities.

By working through this process within the FfD4 framework, the UN can build a better understanding of how to define business responsibility within other UN processes. This will help create a unified approach to defining private sector responsibility in contributing to agreed UN frameworks, and help ensure that private sector input is fully transparent and its actions are accountable across the UN system. In doing so, it will support the implementation of Action 55(c), whilst strengthening various UN processes which significantly depend on the contribution of the private sector in order to achieve their goals, such as the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD), COP30 and the implementation of the Global Digital Compact.

Side-event objectives:

The multi-stakeholder session offers a space to discuss working principles in WBA's draft paper '*Implementing Action 55(c) of the Pact for the Future: Towards a unified approach for defining private sector responsibility in UN frameworks*'. Participants will also consider examples where initiatives and principles have been successful in pushing private action forward.

A draft paper that gives context to these principles has been shared with you. The discussion will be used to finalise the paper, which is intended to initiate the implementation of Action 55(c) in UN processes and outcomes. This paper will be made available to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General who is responsible for the implementation of the agreed actions of the Pact for the Future, including Action 55(c). Additionally, the paper will be made available to those responsible for preparing FfD4 and other ongoing UN processes.



About the session:

The in-person convening will be hosted by the World Benchmarking Alliance and the Mission of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. It is a working-level session, gathering stakeholders from Missions, UN bodies, civil society, and private sector. In this interactive meeting all participants are invited to share their thoughts and workshop the guiding questions set out below.

Preliminary agenda:

- Welcome, by Pauliina Murphy, Engagement & Communications Director, WBA
- Keynote address, by Ambassador Andreas Løvold, Mission of Norway to the United Nations
- Scene setting, by Maria Caterina Migliorero, Sustainable Finance Specialist, UN DESA
- Presentation by Gerbrand Haverkamp, Executive Director, WBA
 - Planned interventions (TBC)
 - Open consultation
- Close, by Pauliina Murphy, Engagement & Communications Director, WBA

Guiding questions:

1. Reflecting on existing initiatives and principles regarding the private sector:

- Can you share examples of initiatives or principles that have successfully defined business responsibility and driven meaningful action from the private sector?
- How do we avoid the risks of a siloed approach when defining business responsibility in UN frameworks?
- How can existing frameworks, such as the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, be effectively integrated into new efforts to define private sector responsibility within UN processes?

2. Consulting on draft principles of WBA's draft paper, *Towards a unified approach for defining private sector responsibility in UN frameworks*

- What are the key challenges we need to address to ensure these principles are practical, inclusive, and effective? Are there any gaps or areas that require further development?
- How can these draft principles be integrated into existing UN processes and frameworks? In what ways can they be strengthened to better align with or enhance ongoing efforts?

3. Utilising the FfD process to support implementation of Action 55 (c):

- What specific outcomes are we aiming for in relation to the FfD4 outcome document?
- Who are the key stakeholders and actors we need to engage to successfully integrate these principles into the FfD framework, and how can we enable FfD facilitators and other UN initiatives to incorporate them when engaging with the private sector?

About the World Benchmarking Alliance:

The World Benchmarking Alliance (WBA) is a non-profit organisation that measures how business impact people and planet, so that together we can hold companies accountable for contributing to sustainable development. We publish publicly available and free benchmarks that inform and empower business leaders and investors, as well as governments, civil society and other key stakeholders. WBA insights aim to serve as an accountability mechanism, incentivising companies to become a successful driver of change and deliver on the SDGs. Together with our Alliance, we are building a movement that enables transparent dialogue, and ultimately action towards a more inclusive, fair and sustainable world.