10 Criteria for National Action Plans (NAPs)
on Business and Human Rights

Just days after the UN Human Rights Council launched new initiatives to address corporate accountability for human rights impacts, a major report was released by the International Corporate Accountability Roundtable (ICAR) and the Danish Institute for Human Rights (DIHR) on June 30, providing guidance on what governments should do to promote better corporate human rights practices. The report establishes new guidelines to help national leaders and administrations integrate respect for human rights into corporate culture by developing National Action Plans (NAPs) on business and human rights—a key measure called for by the UN Human Rights Council in a resolution passed on June 26. Based on the ICAR-DIRH report, the following list of 10 key criteria constitutes what journalists and civil society organizations should look for in a strong National Action Plan (NAP).

A government, through or in connection with its NAP, should:

1. Clearly identify and publicly communicate leadership and ownership of the NAP development and implementation process within the government;

2. Devise and publish terms of reference and a timeline for the NAP process;

3. Allocate adequate resources to the NAP process, from beginning to end;

4. Ensure effective participation by all relevant stakeholders through stakeholder mapping and capacity-building and by ensuring participation by disempowered or at-risk stakeholders;

5. Begin its process by conducting a national baseline assessment of the government's current implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) and relevant frameworks, and base the content of the NAP on the results of this baseline assessment;

6. Address the full scope of the UNGPs within the NAP, as well as the full extent of the State's territory and jurisdiction;

7. Articulate action points (i.e. commitments) within the NAP that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-specific;

8. Implement a NAP process that is fully transparent, includes publication of drafts of the NAP, and provides public summary reports of any stakeholder engagement;

9. Identify who is responsible for the implementation of individual action points within the NAP and overall follow-up;

10. Map a framework for the monitoring of and reporting on implementation of the NAP once published.