Human Rights Need ETOs

Who is the ETOs Consortium?

The ETOs Consortium is a network of leading human rights organisations, university institutes, civil society organisations and institution-based individuals.

Its purpose is to address the current shortcomings of human rights interpretation in a globalization context by mainstreaming states’ extraterritorial obligations.

What do its members stand for?

Its members campaign with states and at the UN for the application of ETOs in policy fields such as investment, trade, development cooperation, climate change and eco-destruction, the regulation of transnational corporations and the accountability of intergovernmental organisations.

States’ failures to cooperate in regulating the multilateral development banks and IMF …

… made these a tool for aggressive growth of TNCs and not for good governance.

States’ failures to cooperate in reforming an outdated global “free” trade regime …

… prevent the rights-based development of adequate living standards in many countries.

States’ failures to cooperate in establishing a rights-based global social fund …

… is one of the reasons for the persistence of hunger and abject poverty in some countries.

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Human rights have to provide the foundations of a new world order. Human rights are kept from taking their rightful place when states marginalise economic, social and cultural rights and deny obligations outside their territories – extraterritorial obligations (ETOs).

States carry the obligation to cooperate for the full implementation of human rights – no matter whether the respective rights-holder is within their borders or not. ETOs make this obligation operational.
States’ failures to cooperate in regulating international investment banks …
… destroyed the savings and old age pensions of millions of people.

States’ failures to cooperate in regulating transnational agribusiness …
… marginalised peasant farming worldwide, and threatens sustainability and people’s health.

States’ failures to cooperate in regulating transnational extractive industries …
… destroy the livelihoods of communities and future generations.

States have human rights obligations towards persons outside their territories – extraterritorial obligations (ETOs). These obligations have to be met individually or in cooperation:

• States must respect (individually and jointly) peoples’ enjoyment of human rights no matter where these are.

• States must protect and fulfil people’s enjoyment of human rights abroad according to operational rules based on cooperation: The ETOs’ Principles.

There are glaring gaps in human rights protection which have become more severe in the context of globalisation during the past 20 years.

The paradigm of aggressive growth is coming to an end. The new paradigm will have to be based on a culture of peaceful and regulated sharing – and human rights.

For this to happen, human rights need to strengthen
• extraterritorial obligations, and particularly
• the ETO to cooperate.