

KATHOLIEKE UNIVERSITEIT LEUVEN – FACULTY OF LAW

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## *Getting down to business:*

The implementation of the United Nations Guiding Principles on  
Business and Human Rights and ways forward for Corporate  
Human Rights Responsibility

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## **Abstract**

Multiple cases of negative impacts of business activity on human rights came to light in recent years and with them also the lack of proper regulative frameworks, monitoring and grievance mechanisms for corporate related human rights abuses. In June 2011, the Human Rights Council endorsed the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, a non-binding document aiming to enhance corporate respect for human rights and the mechanisms accessible to victims of abuses.

This did not represent the end of the debate regarding business responsibilities. The calls for a binding instrument and for stronger mechanisms to ensure compliance are still a reality, just like the claims that a binding instrument is not the proper avenue to follow to have effective progress in the field.

The aim of this thesis is to contribute to the understanding and to the debate of business and human rights by providing a comprehensive overview of the challenges and ways forward. This is done, on the one hand by analysing the current framework (with a focus on the Guiding Principles) and by gathering different implementation avenues that can lead to increased accountability. On the other hand, it looks into prospective developments, grounded on the idea that this is not a settled field and that the debate for possible complementary solutions is essential to achieve progress.

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