

Developing a National Plan on Business and Human Rights

Submission by All Together in Dignity - ATD Fourth World

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All Together in Dignity Ireland is a “not for profit” company and an Irish registered charity (www.atdireland.ie).

For the past 15 years, Irish citizens, friends of the International Movement ATD Fourth World (www.atd-fourthworld.org), have been volunteering alongside families facing persistent poverty in Dublin. In 2009, these volunteers decided to register the NGO as All Together in Dignity - ATD Fourth World Ltd. Today projects of ATD Ireland remain mainly “volunteer-based”.

ATD Ireland is a member of the Community Platform (within the Community and Voluntary Pillar), the “Irish Economic, Social & Cultural Rights Initiative”, the “Children’s Rights Alliance”, EAPN Ireland (European Anti-Poverty Network), DOCHAS, IDEA (Irish Development Education Association), the Irish Committee for the UN Day for the Eradication of Poverty (www.17october.ie) and the International Movement ATD Fourth World.

Currently ATD runs the following projects:

- Support visits to people in hostels or socially disadvantaged areas.
- Coordination of the Irish 17 October Committee to mark the UN Day for the Eradication of Poverty and make sure that the voice of the poorest is at the heart of the Day.
- Promotion among Irish stakeholders of the “UN Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights” adopted by the UN Human Rights Council in Sept. 2012.

Noting that the General Principles of the GPs on Business and Human Rights underline the fact that “these Guiding Principles should be implemented in a non-discriminatory manner, with particular attention to the rights and needs of, as well as the challenges faced by, individuals from groups or populations that may be at heightened risk of becoming vulnerable or marginalized, and with due regard to the different risks that may be faced by women and men”,

ATD Ireland invites the Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade to take into consideration the UN Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights¹ when designing the national strategy based on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. For the GPs on Extreme Poverty can help to provide a better understanding of the Human Rights violations faced by many of the most vulnerable groups.

To do so would also be consistent with Ireland’s leading role in the last round of consultations towards the post-2015 agenda and Sustainable Development Goals. This agenda will take on board the challenge to “Leave No One Behind” (no target should be considered achieved until it has been met for all).

Section VII of the GPs on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights addresses the role of non-State actors, including business enterprises. The principles and recommendations of this section should be integrated into the framework of a National Plan on Business and Human Rights.

When designing the implementation framework of Human Rights Impact Assessments and their Follow-Ups (Articles 18 to 22 of the GPs on Business and Human Rights), the Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade should emphasize specific attention to the most vulnerable groups, and ensure their participation in the development of effective impact assessment and remediation tools, in keeping with the foundational principles of the GPs on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights.

1 http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/OHCHR_ExtremePovertyandHumanRights_EN.pdf