



29 August 2007

Niko Lusiani
ESCR-Net
211 East 43rd Street
New York, NY 10017

Dear Niko Lusiani,

I saw in today's updates of the Business and Human Rights Research Centre that ESCR-Net plans to conduct a survey of what you call "emblematic" cases of corporate human rights abuses. I welcome this initiative and look forward to seeing its results. I wanted to let you know that we are starting a mapping of our own that may well overlap somewhat with yours, and hope that we can explore possible synergies as we go along.

I have welcomed greater involvement by NGOs in generating systematic information on this issue from the very start of my mandate. You may recall that I included a brief analysis of patterns of alleged corporate abuses in my "Interim Report," issued in February 2006. In the limited time I had available I was able only to draw on the recent universe of published NGO reports. My discussion focused in particular on the questions of which sectors and in what social/economic/political contexts the reported abuses took place. The results were suggestive and have been widely cited, but the survey was not fully satisfactory methodologically because of the limited number of cases and the difficulty in determining how representative (emblematic?) they were.

At the March 2007 session of the Human Rights Council, a group of NGOs asked me to further document corporate abuses in order to better understand and reflect the situation and needs of affected people and communities. Even though I continued to believe in the importance and utility of such a study I did not think at the time that we would have the resources to conduct it, particularly because our attention and energies are now focused on producing recommendations for consideration by the Council. Thus, in response to the joint NGO statement at that Council session, I urged the NGO community to do so. Subsequently I convened a meeting of interested Special Procedures in June in order to benefit from their insights and on-the-ground experience, and posted a short report on the meeting on the BHRRC website.

But in the interests of being responsive, and to complement further our previous mapping of business and human rights challenges from the perspective of states and business, we have continued to search for ways to fund and conduct such a study. We completed the terms of reference for a new team member just a few days ago.

In our project, we are trying especially hard to come to grips with the lack of systematic evidence by casting our nets as widely as possible. We are hoping that your work will provide a valuable source of information.

Congratulations again on your initiative, and I hope we can be in touch as we both proceed.

Best regards.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ruggie".

John G. Ruggie

Kirkpatrick Professor of International Affairs and Director, Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Business and Government, Kennedy School of Government; Affiliated Professor of International Legal Studies, Harvard Law School; UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Business and Human Rights.