

KOFF  
Newsletter  
No. 125, March 2014



Swiss NAP on  
Business & Human Rights

# Editorial

In June 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council adopted unanimously the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The Guiding Principles – also known as the “Ruggie Principles” after their author – are based on three main criteria: the duty of the state to protect human rights, the responsibility of businesses to respect human rights, and the need for rights and obligations to be matched to appropriate and effective remedies when breached. This has prompted more and more governments to start developing country-specific strategies for putting the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights into practice within the framework of National Action Plans (NAP). Efforts to draw up a NAP for Switzerland are currently in full swing. For this reason the current newsletter issue is dedicated to the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles in Switzerland.

Besides contributions from the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and Swiss NGOs on this topic, the edition also gives representatives from the business world an opportunity to explain their positions and demands.

Lukas Krienbuehl  
Editor

## Table of Contents

<b>FOCUS</b>		<b>SWISS GOVERNMENT AGENCIES</b>	
> Beyond Polarisation: a Nuanced View of what Business and Civil Society Expect from the Swiss National Action Plan	3	> A Ruggie Strategy for Switzerland: How to Put Postulate von Graffenried into Practice	10
<b>KOFF - SWISSPEACE</b>		<b>PUBLICATIONS</b>	
> Implementing Principle 7 on Conflict Areas	4	> Developing National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights: an International Comparison	11
> KOFF Roundtable on Honduras	5	<b>WEB TIP</b>	
> Various Research Approaches on Transitional Justice	6	> Shift project: Putting the UN Guiding Principles into Practice	11
> Regional Dealing with the Past Workshop in Manila	6	<b>INTERNATIONAL</b>	
<b>SWISS NGOS &amp; BUSINESSES</b>		> International Partner Organisations	12
> Civil Society's View of the NAP	7	<b>KOFF TEAM</b>	
> Businesses Call for a Holistic Approach to Ruggie's Guiding Principles	8	> Introducing New Staff Members	12
> Cooperating with Stakeholders in the Tourism Industry	8	<b>CALENDAR</b>	
> Human Rights and Financing the Arms Trade	9	> Upcoming Events	13
> The Thun Group	9		

Publisher:  
Centre for Peacebuilding  
KOFF  
Sonnenbergstrasse 17  
CH - 3000 Bern 7  
Tel: +41 (0)31 330 12 12  
[www.koff.ch](http://www.koff.ch)

# KOFF

Kompetenzzentrum Friedensförderung  
Centre pour la promotion de la paix  
Centre for Peacebuilding

# Beyond Polarisation: a Nuanced View of what Business and Civil Society Expect from the Swiss National Action Plan

In response to the postulate issued by Alec von Graffenried, a member of the Swiss National Council, the Federal Government is formulating a National Action Plan (NAP) for implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. swisspeace was commissioned by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) to carry out a consultation process involving stakeholders from the worlds of business, civil society and academia. These consultations have revealed that there is an extremely wide range of options available to the Federal Government for taking action. They also present a nuanced view of the differing expectations stakeholders have of the NAP, which are far less contradictory than the public debate would suggest.

## Links

[swisspeace: Business & Peace](#)

[United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#)

[Postulate 12.3503 by Federal Council member Alec von Graffenried](#)

[Comparative study of the processes adopted in other European countries. swisspeace. 2013. Essential 4.](#)

[Baseline study by the Swiss Centre of Expertise in Human Rights \(SCHR\) on the Implementation of Human Rights in Switzerland](#)

As part of its Business & Peace programme, swisspeace carried out extensive consultations with non-governmental stakeholders in December 2013 and January 2014 relating to the National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights. A total of 31 actors from the worlds of business, civil society and academia were asked about their expectations and views regarding the NAP. This plan is being drawn up by the Federal Government to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in Switzerland. The Guiding Principles, which were approved unanimously by the UN Human Rights Council in June 2011, incorporate both the obligations of the state and the responsibilities of businesses with regard to human rights. They are based on three key pillars: the state duty to protect human rights, the corporate responsibility to respect human rights and the joint responsibility of states and businesses to ensure that victims have access to remedy. The Swiss NAP will focus on governmental measures for providing protection against human rights violations that occur abroad. It is therefore primarily based on the state-oriented principles of pillars one and three.

The Swiss NAP is being developed in response to a postulate issued by Swiss National Councillor Alec von Graffenried, which is supported by the Federal Council and was approved by the National Council in December 2012. Based on a comparative study of the processes adopted in other European countries, an inter-departmental task force under the joint leadership of the FDFA and SECO outlined the Swiss process in August 2013. It includes an internal administrative analysis of the current situation and the consultation with non-governmental stakeholders to be carried out up to February 2014. These will provide the basis for drawing up the NAP, which is due to be approved by the Federal Council in December 2014.

## Various Options for Action

The consultations with stakeholders show that there is an extremely wide range of options available to the Federal Government for taking action. The summary report on these consultations lists some 200 recommendations in 42 different areas. The measures mentioned can be divided into five categories: (1) providing information and support for companies, (2) requirements for companies which benefit from state support or enter into business relationships with the state, (3) legally binding measures for reporting on or demanding due diligence, (4) the implementation of corporate responsibility in state-controlled companies, and (5) measures for ensuring judicial or non-judicial remedy. The roles of the embassies or Switzerland Global Enterprise, public procurement, export risk insurance, war material exports, agreements on investment protection, free trade treaties, and the OECD National Contact Point, among others, are being examined in this regard. For the UN Guiding Principles to be implemented in a coherent manner, human rights criteria need to be embedded with a broad-based approach and a comprehensive internal administrative process involving a wide range of federal agencies is required.

### No Clear Polarisation between Business and Civil Society

The interviews also reveal that the opinions of businesses and civil society are far less divided when it comes to specific recommendations for action than the public debate would suggest. The vast majority of the stakeholders surveyed take the view that the NAP should contain a combination of supporting and legally binding measures. With regard to the provision of information and support for companies, all of the stakeholders consulted see a considerable need for action in areas such as the provision of support through embassies. Most of the interviewed stakeholders, regardless of whether they represent business or civil society, also opine that the Federal Government should lead by example in areas in which it is actively involved as an economic operator. For example, they expect state-controlled companies to set themselves up as an exemplary model for fulfilling their responsibility to respect human rights and would like to see greater consideration for human rights criteria in public procurement and export risk insurance. Moreover, the majority of the stakeholders in both groups believe that the state should improve access to non-judicial complaints and remedy mechanisms. Extending the mandate of the OECD National Contact Point, forming a new independent ombudsman service and providing support for internal corporate complaints mechanisms were highlighted as key priorities in this respect. In terms of legally binding instruments, most of the consulted stakeholders from both business and civil society recognise a need for action with regard to reporting on human rights issues and payments made by companies to foreign governments. They would particularly expect this kind of approach if corresponding regulations were to be declared as standard within the European Union or by the OECD. There is, however, a distinct polarisation between the views of civil society and business on the issue of legally binding due diligence for management boards in relation to human rights and on the call for facilitating access for victims to Swiss courts. While these are two key requirements as far as civil society is concerned, they are equally opposed by the representatives from the business world.

The stakeholders welcomed the consultation process and actively participated in it. They are now expecting the Federal Government to specify the relevant state instruments in the NAP and to indicate which additional measures it intends to take. It is therefore up to the Federal Administration to define how the various instruments should be weighted and how the corresponding measures are to be developed in detail. The consultations demonstrate that a wide range of recommendations for action can attract majority support.

#### [Further information](#)

swisspeace  
[Andreas Graf](#)  
[Andrea Iff](#)  
[Mathias Winterberg](#)

#### [KOFF - SWISSPEACE](#)

## Implementing Principle 7 on Conflict Areas

#### [Links](#)

[swisspeace: Business & Peace](#)  
[EIRIS Conflict Risk Network](#)  
[QUNO](#)  
[Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights](#)

The swisspeace Business and Peace programme has been supporting the development of the Swiss Strategy to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. In addition to the stakeholder consultations, swisspeace organised two events in December 2013 that focused on how particularly UN Guiding Principle 7 could be implemented. Principle 7 highlights the need for states to support businesses in respecting human rights in conflict-affected areas.

In collaboration with fellow members of the Constructive Engagement Group – a loose network of organisations that work on issues related to the role of business in conflict-affected contexts – swisspeace co-organised a side event at the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights in December on “Business, Human Rights and Conflict: Challenges and Good Practice”. With representatives from EIRIS Conflict Risk Network, Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), the UN Global

## [Links](#)

[UN Global Compact](#)

[Side Events at the UN Forum on Business and Human Rights](#)

[Side Event on “Business, Human Rights and Conflict”](#)

## [Further information](#)

swisspeace  
Rina M. Alluri

Compact and the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, the panellists discussed the potential role of business in preventing violent conflict. Additionally, they highlighted how particular business relationships such as joint venture operations may inhibit or restrict a company’s ability to fulfil their responsibility to respect human rights.

The second event was the annual meeting of the Constructive Engagement Group. After a group meeting in the morning, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) took the opportunity to discuss four questions on implementing Principle 7 on conflict areas with the experts, in order to inform on its approach: How can states take particular care to fulfilling their duty to protect human rights by implementing “enhanced due diligence” in conflict contexts? Which practical measures and instruments can be implemented? How can states improve victims’ access to effective remedy mechanisms? How can a state reduce the risk of its companies in conflict contexts becoming complicit in gender-based violence? Ideas and suggestions discussed by the Constructive Engagement Group will serve to support future dialogue on these issues. Both events highlighted how civil society actors and government representatives have the potential to work together to find practical and feasible solutions to developing national strategies on business and human rights. The events were supported by the Human Security Division of the FDFA.

# KOFF Roundtable on Honduras

## [Links](#)

[KOFF roundtables](#)

[Synthesis of the latest KOFF roundtable discussion on Honduras](#)

[Swiss Guidelines on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders](#)

## [Further information](#)

KOFF  
Anna Leissing

The KOFF Centre for Peacebuilding’s roundtable on Honduras, which was held at the end of January, provided an opportunity for a wide-ranging audience from the Swiss Federal Administration, non-governmental organisations and the academic world to analyse the situation in Honduras in relation to the controversial elections held in November 2013. The first part of the discussion focused on the fragile social, political and economic context in Honduras and on the unequal conditions for the various parties taking part in the elections. The participants talked about issues such as the concentration of institutional and media power in the hands of the ruling party, social conflicts relating to major economic projects, the militarisation of the police, as well as the structural and political violence against defenders of human rights, social and indigenous movements, the media and the political opposition. In the second part, participants examined the significance of the election results for the Honduran population and their implications for the future activities of Swiss governmental and non-governmental organisations in the country. Many of the participants viewed the Swiss Guidelines on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders as a crucial tool for expanding civil society’s scope for action. It was also agreed that Switzerland’s chairmanship during the first semester of 2014 of the G16 group, which comprises the principal donor countries in Honduras, should be used to make a lasting contribution towards establishing active, effective and coherent human rights, peace and development policy in Honduras.

# Various Research Approaches on Transitional Justice

## [Links](#)

[Oxford Transitional Justice Research](#)

[swisspeace and OTJR. 2013. Transitional Justice Methods Manual. swisspeace: Bern.](#)

[Video recording of the panel discussion](#)

[swisspeace: Dealing with the Past](#)

## [Further information](#)

[swisspeace](#)  
[Briony Jones](#)

swisspeace, in collaboration with Oxford Transitional Justice Research (OTJR) and partner at King's College London, is pleased to announce the launch of a new practice-oriented "Transitional Justice Methods Manual". The manual was launched in Bern in January 2014 at a panel discussion on the nexus between academic and advocacy research in transitional justice.

Tracking the structure of the methods manual itself, the panellists at the launch offered their professional and personal reflections on their entry point into working on transitional justice. They then discussed their motivation for using a particular research method providing insights into the work's underlying methodology, alongside reflections on the major ethical challenges which face the current research and practice of transitional justice.

The discussion offered a fitting framework for the launch of the methods manual. The manual is a collaborative endeavour that brings together political scientists, lawyers, psychologists, statisticians, human rights activists, literary writers and anthropologists to examine the current methods used in transitional justice. Thanks to the generous support of the UK Economic and Social Research Council, the manual was developed through a series of roundtables, seminars and workshops held in London, Oxford, Bern, Kigali and Pristina. Rather than an exhaustive list of current methods or a "how to" guide in conducting research in and on post-conflict countries, the manual maps the *process* of conducting research. It lays out a range of possible methods, accompanied by examples of current projects and a series of guiding methodological questions to consider. It aims to offer civil society groups, researchers, students, legal practitioners and policy think-tanks, a guide to help in their critical examination of past research projects and preparation for future ones.

# Regional Dealing with the Past Workshop in Manila

## [Links](#)

[Archives & Dealing with the Past Project](#)

[FDFA: Human Security Division](#)

[Swiss Federal Archives](#)

[swisspeace: Dealing with the Past](#)

The project "Archives and Dealing with the Past", a joint venture of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), the Swiss Federal Archives, and swisspeace organised at the end of January a regional Dealing with the Past workshop with a focus on human rights documentation for government and civil society representatives from different countries in Southeast Asia. It provided participants from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines and Sri Lanka with a general background on dealing with the past and its implications for the documentation of human rights violations, data collection, and memorialisation in a broader strategy against impunity. The participants were professionals engaged in documenting human rights violations and preserving human rights archives in their respective countries. During the workshop they developed dealing with the past strategies for their countries, having in mind how dealing with the past initiatives can be developed in their context with a more constructive impact. On a more technical note the question of building up lessons learned and good practice regarding the documentation of past human rights violations through the collection of testimonies, the protection of and access to data and documents was also addressed. Furthermore, the workshop offered the participants from the same geographical region the opportunity to exchange experiences, learn from each other and to elaborate on their own context-specific dealing with the past under-

### [Further information](#)

swisspeace  
 Elisabeth Baumgartner

standing. During the workshop experts from South Africa, Argentina, Bangladesh and Europe intensively worked with the participants on issues such as the right to know, the right to justice, the right to reparation and the guarantee of non-recurrence and how to use documentation in these fields.

## SWISS NGOS & BUSINESSES

# Civil Society's View of the NAP

### [Links](#)

[Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund](#)

[Bread for all](#)

[Amnesty International, Swiss Section](#)

[Berne Declaration](#)

The process for implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in Switzerland has begun. However, it is still not clear outside of the Federal Administration what will eventually be included in the Swiss National Action Plan (NAP). Will the Federal Council exercise its state duty to protect and ensure that Swiss businesses respect human rights throughout the world? Or will the strategy simply provide support to businesses while leaving commitments on a voluntary basis?

The first steps in the process have been taken: various stakeholder consultations have been carried out and a mapping of the existing legal situation has been conducted to provide a basis for the Federal Council to draw up its report. The consultations gave NGOs the opportunity to have a say on the strategy, and they actively assumed this role. The mapping, however, remains a purely internal administrative instrument. Its contents will not be released in spite of calls from civil society for its publication. As a result, the development of the National Action Plan remains non-transparent. Furthermore, the mapping will not include an analysis of the legal gaps, which means that it will lack the most important element for working out such a strategy. As far as civil society is concerned, these shortcomings are unacceptable.

The lack of a gap analysis raises the concern that the NAP will not be formulated with the aim of closing the legal gaps. Yet, this is in fact a key aspect of the state's obligation, as set out by Ruggie, to enforce existing laws and check whether they are adequate or whether legislative amendments are required. Civil society organisations therefore still expect a gap analysis to be carried out during the process of developing the NAP and to be included in the final report.

For the strategy to be useful, it is crucial that the smart mix of regulatory and voluntary measures called for by Ruggie is implemented appropriately, i.e. in a way that addresses the actual problems. Numerous studies have demonstrated that voluntary standards are not enough when it comes to protecting human rights and providing remedy for victims of human rights violations committed by businesses. To ensure that companies fulfil their responsibility, the UN Guiding Principles also specify corporate due diligence as a key element. Switzerland's Ruggie strategy must clearly state how the government will make this due diligence obligation binding for companies, how breaches of this obligation will be dealt with and how victims of human rights violations caused by Swiss companies or by their subsidiaries or subcontractors can obtain access to remedy. The NGOs therefore regard further consultations with the various stakeholders as essential once the first draft of the strategy has been drawn up. This step would certainly help ensure that the Swiss National Action Plan is appropriately balanced.

### [Further information](#)

[Bread for all](#)  
[Berne Declaration](#)  
[Amnesty International](#)  
[Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund](#), [Daniel Hostettler](#)

# Businesses Call for a Holistic Approach to Ruggie's Guiding Principles

## [Links](#)

[SwissHoldings](#)

When it comes to drawing up the National Action Plan (NAP) for implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights drafted by John Ruggie, the business world is keen for Ruggie's principles not to be interpreted in a way that is too one-dimensional. After all, the Guiding Principles do not just apply to multinational enterprises that deliberately ignore established international standards when conducting their activities. In Ruggie's view, it is just as important for international business to be given further support in its efforts to fulfil its social responsibility in countries with weak governance structures. The Guiding Principles also emphasise the key role incumbent upon corporate groups in these regions in relation to reducing poverty and improving the standard of living.

Regarding the NAP, Switzerland could, for example, examine how it can provide companies with more information about risks. It can also promote at international level the formulation and further development of global guidelines and standards of good practice, paying particular attention to industry-specific initiatives. These serve as an important guide for companies in undertaking their activities in foreign markets. Tools of this kind can be used to help pursue and achieve highly ambitious goals, but it takes time and requires long-term commitment from all stakeholders involved.

The business world argues vehemently against the inclusion of the demands made by the "Corporate Justice" campaign for very extensive provisions on the duty of care and penal responsibility in the NAP. Forcing corporate groups – rather than states – to guarantee the protection of the local population beyond their means of control would be very counterproductive. It would make more sense for the Swiss NAP to include the objective of increasing Switzerland's efforts to improve the institutional structures in the countries concerned.

## [Further information](#)

[SwissHoldings](#)  
[Denise Laufer](#)

# Cooperating with Stakeholders in the Tourism Industry

## [Links](#)

[Kuoni Statement of Commitment on Human Rights](#)

[Human rights impact assessment in Kenya](#)

[akte – Working Group on Tourism and Development](#)

[International Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism](#)

[Commitment of the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism](#)

[Management guidelines](#)

Kuoni has long been concerned with aspects of tourism that relate to human rights, such as ensuring compliance with fair working conditions throughout the value chain and protecting children from sexual exploitation in the tourism industry. In aligning itself with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Kuoni has systemised its approach. For example, it has developed a "Statement of Commitment on Human Rights" and a strategy for putting this statement into practice. In relation to this, two human rights impact assessments have been carried out to date in Kenya and India, and action plans have been drawn up based on the findings.

In areas where Kuoni, as an individual company, has limited influence, cooperation with various stakeholders is indispensable. This is why, for example, it co-initiated the international Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism in collaboration with the Working Group on Tourism and Development (akte). This initiative was launched in October 2012 and involves tourism companies, non-governmental organisations and state institutions. It is intended to serve as an open platform to help fulfil human rights in tourism. With the aim of promoting an industry-wide approach, the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism formulated a commitment which sets out the involvement of tour operators and associated fields of activity. The members of the roundtable also made use of their combined expertise

to compile a set of management guidelines, which use illustrative examples and simple checklists to help facilitate the implementation of corporate responsibility at company level. This is supplemented with a practical training tool for use in company training schemes.

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights do not just govern corporate responsibility with regard to respecting human rights; they also concern the obligations of states to ensure that this responsibility is fulfilled within the context of economic development. This means that structures must also be reinforced at local level in order to prevent human rights violations. In addition, accessible and effective extra-judicial complaint mechanisms need to be put in place for those affected. Switzerland can play an active role in the international dialogue in this regard and build on existing initiatives.

#### [Further information](#)

Kuoni  
Sibylle Baumgartner

## Human Rights and Financing the Arms Trade

#### [Links](#)

[APRED: "Don't bank the bomb" dossier](#)

[IKV Pax Christi and ICAN. 2013. Don't bank the bomb.](#)

[Interpellation and response from the Federal Council regarding the ban on direct and indirect financing of nuclear weapons](#)

[Federal Act on War Material: Article 7 et seq.](#)

[Media report on the exclusion of certain shares by the SNB](#)

#### [Further information](#)

APRED  
Christophe Barbey

The report "Don't bank the bomb" mentions a number of financial institutions that have made investments in the military nuclear sector, with several Swiss banks featured in the list. An amendment to the Swiss Federal Act on War Material in February 2013 placed a ban on the direct or indirect financing of prohibited war material, including nuclear weapons. In June, in response to a parliamentary interpellation, the Federal Council stated that talks were underway with the banks. It brought up the issue of the ban, remarking that it did not intend to take any further action as it was up to the institutions themselves to adapt to the legal framework. The report "Don't bank the bomb", which was published in October 2013, revealed that four notable Swiss banks are still investing a total of more than four billion Swiss francs in this sector. This also concerns the customers of the institutions in question. In January, the Swiss National Bank (SNB) discreetly announced its plans to exclude certain shares from its portfolio due to the reasons outlined above. The banks are thus beginning to adjust their activities in line with the current conditions.

It is important to note that a legal prohibition is necessary for prompting the banks and their customers to start thinking about the ethical aspects of their investments, be it in terms of peace and disarmament, respect for human rights or protecting the environment. If they are put under enough pressure, the financial institutions are capable of adapting and making the changes required to ensure a more peaceful future. Efforts of this kind can be instigated by civil society, in which APRED plays an active part in Switzerland. Indeed, only a peaceful society can fully respect human rights.

## The Thun Group

#### [Links](#)

[Discussion paper by the Thun Group](#)

[Statement by the Thun Group of Banks](#)

In October 2013, the Thun Group of Banks published a discussion paper on the implications of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights for the banking sector. The publication was the result of two years of cooperation between seven European universal banks with the aim of developing a common understanding of the Guiding Principles and identifying possibilities for implementing them in the various business areas of a bank. The Thun Group received support for its efforts from the Competence Center for Human Rights at the University of Zurich as well as critical feedback from a small group of experts who had already been involved in drawing up the Guiding Principles.

The publication of the discussion paper met with a positive response, which indicates that further industry-specific interpretations of the UN Guiding Principles would be welcome. In light of the experiences of the Thun Group, the following points should be borne in mind: firstly, it is clear that there must be a common understanding amongst the companies involved that respect for human rights is an integral part of the business, that taking voluntary and proactive action is better than waiting for legal requirements to be enforced, and that adopting a joint approach with competitors facilitates the internal persuasion process. This shared motivation is an important requirement. Secondly, there are various starting points: companies will join the process with different prior knowledge of the issue at hand, so the first step is to work out a common understanding and explicitly define implicit assumptions. Thirdly, internal processes vary from company to company. Their approaches to the issue may differ, but the companies must be able to link the implementation steps developed collectively to their existing processes. The challenge here is to be specific enough while maintaining a sufficient degree of universality. Finally, expert knowledge and a practical focus have proved helpful. Specialists and experienced practitioners from companies should therefore be able to share their knowledge, enhance one another's expertise, and stimulate and challenge one another. Public authorities and civil society organisations should also be involved in such a process as appropriate.

#### [Further information](#)

Credit Suisse  
Bruno Bischoff

#### SWISS GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

## A Ruggie Strategy for Switzerland: How to Put Postulate von Graffenried into Practice

#### [Links](#)

[FDFA: business and human rights](#)

[EAER](#)

[State Secretariat for Economic Affairs \(SECO\)](#)

[Postulate: "A Ruggie strategy for Switzerland"](#)

[Background Report on Commodities](#)

In accordance with its Federal Constitution, Switzerland has a tradition of active involvement in the promotion of human rights – both at home and abroad. This particularly applies to the area of business and human rights. The Swiss Federal Council has been closely monitoring international developments in this regard for years and continuously evaluates its activities in light of the obligations under international law and relevant practices. The adoption by the United Nations of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights has significantly stimulated discussions surrounding this topic. Switzerland has provided substantial support for the process of developing these Guiding Principles.

With Alec von Graffenried's postulate entitled "A Ruggie strategy for Switzerland", the National Council tasked the Federal Council in December 2012 with producing a report outlining a Swiss strategy for the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Recommendation 10 in the Federal Government's "Background Report on Commodities" also refers to the development of a strategy for putting the UN Guiding Principles into practice: it mentions conducting a review of the existing situation, analysing gaps and defining the measures needed for implementing the UN Guiding Principles. The implementation of the postulate is regarded as a top priority within the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). Instigated by these two departments, a wide-ranging inventory is currently being drawn up of the existing measures, initiatives, regulations and projects which have already been implemented in line with the UN Guiding Principles. Meanwhile, swisspeace has been commissioned to consult non-governmental stakeholders in order to find out their assessment of the current progress in implementing the UN Guiding Principles in Switzerland and what they expect from the strategy and the priorities it sets. The internal review

### [Further information](#)

FDFA  
 Corrina Morrissey  
 SECO  
 Dominik Ledergerber

by the Federal Administration and the report from swisspeace on its consultations with non-governmental stakeholders will provide the basis for an interdepartmental task force to assess the need for action and formulate the strategy for putting the Guiding Principles into practice. The Federal Council is convinced that this strategy will reinforce the cooperation between all the actors involved in the area of business and human rights, that it will help to avoid duplications and enable Switzerland to improve the way it presents and develops its commitment in this regard. The report in compliance with the postulate “A Ruggie strategy for Switzerland” is due to be approved by the Federal Council in December 2014.

### [PUBLICATIONS](#)

## Developing National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights: an International Comparison

### [Links](#)

[Andreas Graf. 2013. Developing National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights. swisspeace Essential 4/2013.](#)

### [Focus article](#)

Since the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights were endorsed in June 2011, some European countries – specifically the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Spain and Norway – have taken on a leading role in developing National Action Plans (NAP) in relation to this area. A recently published swisspeace Essential investigates the NAP development processes in each of these four countries and reports on findings which could be conducive to establishing efficient and legitimate NAP processes in other countries. It offers a brief overview of the general characteristics of the strategy processes and their current status, points out the key elements, sheds light on success factors and formulates corresponding recommendations for government agencies. In doing so, the report focuses exclusively on processes for developing NAPs, without going into detail about the content of these Action Plans.

### [WEB TIP](#)

## Shift project: Putting the UN Guiding Principles into Practice

### [Links](#)

[Shift project](#)

How can the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights be applied in practice? What particular challenges do governments as well as actors from business and civil society face? What implications do the Guiding Principles have for actors in various areas and what tools can be used to help implement them? Shift project, which was established in 2011, offers answers to these questions and aims to provide support for governments, enterprises and civil society organisations in putting the Guiding Principles into practice. A wide range of resources is available on the Shift project website. Visitors to the website can access guides written for various organisations such as the European Union and download other information material, including on stakeholder consultations. The project therefore also facilitates experience sharing in relation to the specific challenges involved in implementing the UN Guiding Principles and with regard to the development of common strategies for taking action. The intention is also to increase public awareness and understanding of the issue of business and human rights through training sessions, workshops, and publications and assessments made available online.

# International Partner Organisations

## [Info](#)

News from ten international KOFF partner organisations.

[Berghof Foundation](#)

[CDA Collaborative Learning Projects](#)

[Conciliation Resources](#)

[EPLO](#)

[forumZFD](#)

[FriEnt](#)

[GIZ](#)

[GPPAC Foundation](#)

[International Alert](#)

[Plattform Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung](#)

## [Conciliation Resources](#)

In a new [position paper on gender, violence and peace](#), Saferworld and Conciliation Resources present their vision of how this issue should be incorporated into the new development agenda once the target date for the Millennium Development Goals has passed in 2015. The organisations argue that, while their proposed approach includes the empowerment of women, it is also designed to go beyond this, drawing attention to the links between gender and violence and promoting inclusive decision-making.

## [forumZFD](#)

forumZFD has examined the coalition agreement by the CDU, CSU and SPD in Germany at the end of 2013 from a peace policy perspective. The [analysis](#) revealed that the growing importance of civil crisis prevention is evident in the coalition agreement. In spite of demands from civil society for an additional EUR 20 million to fund civilian peacebuilding, however, the agreement does not make any clear promises of financial support. It is therefore as important as ever to translate political commitments into tangible action.

## [International Alert](#)

In February, International Alert launched an [exhibition](#) entitled “Crossings: The journey to peace”. Photographs taken by Carol Allen Storey are on display in the photo gallery at the Pullman Hotel in St Pancras, London. These images provide a striking account of what life is like for cross-border traders in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. At the same time, the project is also intended to show the potential these people can offer for building peace. The pictures are also available to view [online](#).

International Alert has also published a [report on gender relations](#) in the wake of conflict and displacement in Uganda. This publication uses specific project examples in an attempt to create a more thorough understanding of gender in peacebuilding initiatives.

## KOFF TEAM

# Introducing New Staff Members



Nadina Diday  
*Conflict sensitivity*



Sabina Handschin  
*Conflict sensitivity*

[Nadina Diday](#) studied international relations at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva. She has worked for swisspeace for several years mainly on projects in Guinea. She is currently involved in developing an exchange and information platform which provides general and context-specific resources to help KOFF member organisations put conflict sensitivity approaches into practice.

After completing her degree in social anthropology, geography and political science, [Sabina Handschin](#) became involved in the area of humanitarian aid in various African contexts through research, teaching and working for international organisations such as UNICEF. Her aim is to ingrain the conflict sensitivity approach more firmly into the practices of KOFF member organisations through tailor-made consultancies.



Sofia Palli  
*Analysis & Impact*

After completing her studies in political economy [Sofia Palli](#) worked for multilateral, civil society and private sector organisations both at headquarters and in the field, for example in Vietnam and Indonesia, focusing on international development, macroeconomics and early recovery. At KOFF she will bring in her expertise and will work on impact measurement and peacebuilding.



Annemarie Sancar  
*Gender*

The work of social anthropologist and gender specialist [Annemarie Sancar](#) focuses on the interfaces between gender research, development cooperation and peacebuilding. In her last role she served as Gender Focal Point for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The goal of her activities at KOFF is to ensure that the gender perspective is incorporated effectively into the various peacebuilding areas.

## CALENDAR

# Upcoming Events

### [26-28 March 2014](#)

The Centre for Peacebuilding (KOFF) is due to hold the last course in its current [KOFF Training Series](#) at the end of March. This three-day course offers an overview of the tools currently used for analysing conflicts and pays particular attention to the question of which analysis tools lend themselves best to specific aspects of programme work in conflict-affected contexts. [Registration deadline on 5 March. Further information.](#)

### [March 2014](#)

In 2014, PeaceNexus Foundation is awarding "[Organisational Development Grants](#)" for the purpose of strengthening the organisational development of NGOs involved in peacebuilding and thus making their work more effective. More details can be found in this year's first [call for applications](#). The deadline for submitting proposals is 31 March.

### [March 2014](#)

The Berghof Foundation has published a [call for proposals](#) for innovative conflict transformation projects with a thematic focus on national dialogues in peacebuilding. The proposals must be submitted by 31 March. The main aim of this scheme is to generate new ideas as to how national dialogues can lead to political solutions during and after war. [Further information.](#)

### [March-July 2014](#)

Throughout the first half of 2014, the [Human Rights Centre of the United Nations University for Peace \(UPEACE-HRC\)](#) and Human Rights Education Associates (HREA) are offering various e-learning courses for specialists working for the United Nations, governments, NGOs and human rights activists. These wide-ranging courses deal with human rights in specific topic areas. [Further information.](#)

[2 April 2014](#)

The Lucerne Initiative for Peace and Security (LIPS) is organising a conference at the University of Lucerne on 2 April on the topic of “Religion and Violence: the Shared Responsibility of Faith Communities to Prevent Violent Extremism”. The event will offer renowned experts a chance to exchange views on the links between religion and violence. [Registration and further information.](#)

[7 April 2014](#)

terre des hommes Switzerland is organising an information event about sexual violence in South Africa, which will be held at 6.30 pm on 7 April at Unternehmen Mitte in Basel. Sinikiwe Biyela, Director of the South African organisation LifeLine, will give a first-hand account of how her organisation assists and supports victims of violence and how the advice it offers helps to successfully prevent violence. [Further information.](#)

[28-29 April 2014](#)

A counter-terrorism conference organised by the Swiss OSCE Chairmanship is due to be held in Interlaken at the end of April. This event is intended to promote an exchange of ideas and views regarding a comprehensive approach to security in the OSCE region. Conference participants will explore various aspects and discuss current issues relating to counter-terrorism. [Further information.](#)

[6-7 June 2014](#)

The [Swiss Mediation Days](#) will take place in Neuchâtel in June. This convention, which is organised by the Swiss Federation of Mediation Associations (SDM-FSM) and the Swiss Chamber for Commercial Mediation (SCCM), will focus on the topic of “Mediation and Business”. The [Swiss Mediation Award](#) for extraordinary practical or theoretical achievements in the field of mediation will also be presented at this event. Entries should be submitted by 15 March. [Details.](#)

[11-12 August 2014](#)

In August, experts from NGOs, governmental institutions and international organisations along with academics and activists will gather at the International Peacebuilders Forum in Caux, near Montreux, to exchange ideas on peacebuilding and to network. This forum is organised by [Caux-Initiatives of Change](#) and the [Institute for Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding \(ICP\)](#). [Further information for exhibitors and participants.](#)

[11-12 August 2014](#)

In the [KOFF- Calendar](#) you can find more information about upcoming roundtables and events organised by KOFF.

[Job advertisement](#)

The swisspeace Academy in Basel is looking for a Head of Secretariat (80-100%) for its new course secretariat, starting in May. The tasks include the administrative management of the courses and the organisation of events amongst others. [Job ad](#) in German. Application deadline on 19 March 2014.

Publisher: [Centre for Peacebuilding \(KOFF\) / swisspeace](#)  
 Address: [Sonnenbergstrasse 17, P.O. Box, CH - 3000 Bern 7](#)  
 Phone: +41 (0)31 330 12 12; Fax: +41 (0)31 330 12 13  
 Editing: [Lukas Krienbuehl, Benjamin Veress](#)  
 Layout: [Liliana Rossier](#)  
 Translation: [Furrer Übersetzungen](#)  
 Cover: [Front page of the UN Guiding Principles: swisspeace, Benjamin Veress](#)

# KOFF

Kompetenzzentrum Friedensförderung  
 Centre pour la promotion de la paix  
 Centre for Peacebuilding

The KOFF newsletter is published in German, English and French on the first day of every month (except 1<sup>st</sup> of August and 1<sup>st</sup> of January). The newsletter is distributed electronically. All previously published editions are available on the [KOFF website](#).

KOFF is a project of swisspeace. It is supported jointly by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the following Swiss NGOs which are members of the platform:

• [Alliance Sud](#) • [APRED](#) • [BAHA'!](#) • [Brücke Le pont](#) • [Caritas Switzerland](#) • [Caux - Initiatives of Change](#) • [cfd](#) • [DCAF](#) • [Eirene Switzerland](#) • [Fondation Hironnelle](#) • [Forum für Friedenserziehung](#) • [PeaceWomen Across the Globe](#) • [Geneva Call](#) • [Graines de Paix](#) • [Green Cross Switzerland](#) • [GSoA](#) • [HEKS - Swiss Church Aid](#) • [HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation](#) • [ICP](#) • [Interpeace](#) • [LIPS](#) • [Medico International Switzerland](#) • [Medienhilfe](#) • [mission 21](#) • [miva Switzerland](#) • [Palmyrah](#) • [Peace Brigades International Switzerland](#) • [Peace Watch Switzerland](#) • [Pestalozzi Children's Foundation](#) • [Quaker United Nations Office](#) • [Swiss Academy for Development](#) • [Schweizerischer Friedensrat](#) • [Schweizerischer Katholischer Frauenbund](#) • [Society for Threatened Peoples Switzerland](#) • [Solidar Suisse](#) • [Service Civil International Switzerland](#) • [SOS Children's Villages Switzerland](#) • [Swissaid](#) • [Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund](#) • [Swiss Red Cross](#) • [Swiss Refugee Council](#) • [TERRE DES FEMMES](#) • [terre des hommes Switzerland](#) • [TRIAL](#) • [Women for Peace Switzerland](#) • [World Vision Switzerland](#) •