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## First Comprehensive Guidance for Companies on Human Rights Reporting Launches in London

*Guidance is first to align with the global standard on business and human rights*

24 February 2015 – London, United Kingdom – The first comprehensive guidance for companies to report on human rights issues in line with the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) launches today in London. The guidance, the United Nations Guiding Principles Reporting Framework, is the culmination of 18 months of research and consultation led by the leading centre of expertise on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Shift, and international accountancy firm Mazars.

Companies from five different industries are early adopters of the Guiding Principles Reporting Framework, including Unilever – the first adopter – plus Ericsson, H&M, Nestlé and Newmont. Many other companies across industries are expected to start using the Reporting Framework in 2015.

At an evening reception in London, Richard Howitt MEP will moderate a discussion about the importance of corporate reporting on human rights with Professor Ruggie, the author of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, Jo Swinson, UK Minister for Employment Relations and Consumer Affairs, and Marcela Manubens, Global VP for Social Impact at Unilever.

Caroline Rees, President of Shift, comments, *“The UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework is a ground-breaking and vital tool for companies to know and show that they are managing risks to human rights effectively throughout their operations and value chain, with the potential for positive impact on millions of peoples’ lives. We are delighted by the positive reactions of companies, investors and civil society to the Reporting Framework thus far and we look forward to seeing many more businesses take it up in the future.”*

Sixty-seven investors representing \$3.91 trillion assets under management have signed a statement of support for the Reporting Framework, calling it, *“an essential tool for investors to review companies’ disclosure on their understanding and management of human rights risks, to incentivize improved disclosure on human rights issues, and to guide their engagement with companies.”*

The Reporting Framework, organized in a series of ‘smart’ questions, enables companies to begin reporting on their human rights performance, regardless of size or how far they have progressed in implementing their responsibility to respect human rights. It is also designed to incentivize them to improve over time.

Richard Karmel, Head of Human Rights at Mazars explains, *“The Reporting Framework will act further as a guide to companies on how they can modify their behaviours and enhance*

*their controls to reduce the potential for negative human rights impacts. The Reporting Framework places the focus of reporting on a company's salient human rights issues: the human rights that are most severe, based on what the company does, where it works and with whom it works."*

Although the Framework is relevant and accessible for all companies, recent growth in reporting requirements on human rights focus mostly on large and listed companies. In October 2014, the European Union adopted a directive requiring around 6,000 companies to disclose non-financial information, including human rights performance, by 2017. However, as Karmel concludes, *"If 2017 reporting is to be meaningful, new approaches are needed for behavioural change – now. We see the Reporting Framework as a catalyst for this change."*

For more information on the Reporting Framework, visit [www.UNGReporting.org](http://www.UNGReporting.org) or contact:

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#### Notes

1. The Reporting Framework project is supported by the United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights and overseen by an Eminent Persons Group chaired by Professor John Ruggie, author of the UN Guiding Principles on Business. The project is facilitated by Shift, the leading centre of expertise on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and international accountancy firm Mazars, in liaison with the Human Rights Resource Centre for ASEAN.
2. The names of the lead investor signatories to the aforementioned statement of support for the Reporting Framework are listed below. Additional investors are listed in the investor statement. Additional investors are expected to sign the statement of support in the future.
  1. Boston Common Asset Management
  2. F & C Investments
  3. APG Asset Management
  4. Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR)
  5. Aviva Investors
  6. Calvert Investments
  7. Robeco

8. Church of Sweden
  9. BNP Paribas Investment Partners
  10. MN Services
  11. Alliance Trust
  12. Rockefeller Sustainability and Impact Investing Group
  13. Hermes Equity Ownership Services
  14. Domini Social Investments LLC
  15. NEI Investments
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3. Shift is the leading centre of expertise on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Founded in 2011, Shift's team of experts works globally with businesses, governments, civil society and international organizations to embed the Guiding Principles into practice. Further information on Shift and its work is available at [shiftproject.org](http://shiftproject.org).
  4. Mazars is an international, integrated and independent organisation, specialising in audit, advisory, accounting and tax services. As of 1 January 2015, the Group operates in 73 countries and draws on the expertise of 14,000 professionals to assist major international groups, SMEs, private investors and public bodies at every stage in their development. In the UK, Mazars has over 1,500 partners and staff serving clients from 20 offices.