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Introduction: A “Due Diligence” for Human Rights

In the last decades the international debate on the responsibilities of companies on Human Rights has proved to be very controversial. In this context, the UN framework “Protect, Respect and Remedy” and the Guiding Principles on Business and human Rights marked a turning point as they achieved the paramount goal of building consensus on the duties of States and companies and their implications.

Ruggie’s paradigm is remarkable, indeed, for its austereness also.

Following a long period of consultation worldwide with institutions, stakeholders, companies and the civil society, Ruggie, simply keeps upholding a disarming truth.

That’s to say: the State duty to protect human rights and companies’ responsibility to respect them.

In his framework Prof. Ruggie considers as basic actors both states and companies: they are called together- even though in their peculiarities- acting for the respect of human rights.

Any austere model lifts the veil to a great complexity: in fact guaranteeing the respect of human rights in the whole operative process of a big company is the result of a sensible and efficient system of governance aimed at a constant effort in holding high awareness and attention on the matter. And that’s not so easy.

Eni, since 2007 has been wandering and keeping asking itself how to find the best ways to integrate its activities with a human rights based approach and, to this aim, has carried on a “self-assessment” process suited for check the effectiveness of the internal system of control to guarantee the respect of human rights.

The second step has been making sure that there is the same kind of sensibility both in the procedures and in the operative chains of the subsidiary companies all around the world.

Below this assessments all the gaps against international standards we found in procedure and operative behaviours, have been considered and valued as “gaps of the system”. As a matter of fact, consequently, these “gaps” have become subjects of specific “project teams”.

Interfunctional working groups have, therefore, been established right in 2011: each group involves the participation of people coming from the functions most directly impacted by human rights issues (Community Relations, HSE, Procurement, Security,

Legal and Human Resources) , at a corporate and at a division level, looking forward to further increasing our company's ability to integrate Human Rights perspective into internal processes.

The most urgent topics we are going to focus on are the ones related to : labor standards for eni's workers and for contractors all around the world, the gender diversity and the wide range of its connections, business impacts on territories and local communities and the grievance mechanisms, security and human rights.