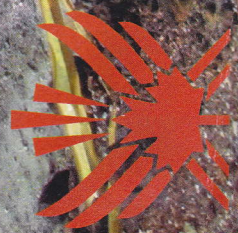# Foreign investment and human rights:

Are impact assessments the solution?

Case studies in: Ecuator, Colombia, Peru, Indonesia, ...

Droits et Démocratie
Rights & Democracy

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One of the most important challenges of the 21st century is to ensure that the increasing amount of foreign investment and corporate activity does not contradict our commitments to human rights. This affects millions of people around the world. Many of those whose lives may be fundamentally transformed by corporate activity are ill-equipped to negotiate with companies or to participate in government decision-making.

To address these challenges, Rights & Democracy has developed a methodology that allows civil society organizations to determine the impact of investment on the human rights of individuals and communities and to more effectively voice their concerns regarding these issues. Since 2004, this methodology has been tested in several countries.

This public panel will hear from various stakeholders (private sector, civil society, experts) interested in the impact of foreign investment on human rights. Their experiences will help us to identify the main challenges that they have encountered in their work and best practices for overcoming them.

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Opening remarks: Caroline Brodeur, Program officer, Rights & Democracy.

Key note speaker: Christine Bader
Advisor to the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on business and human rights, Christine will discuss the importance and challenges of commissioning HRIAs.

Panel 1: Issues and challenges of documenting human rights impacts

This panel discusses the challenges of documenting the impacts of foreign investments on human rights. The discussions will revolve around the identification of solutions to these challenges.

➤ *"Access to information: challenges and difficulties in elaborating HRIAs"*

Francisco Hurtado - Lawyer, Ecuador Research Team.
Discussion about obstacles encountered when trying to obtain different types of information (public or private) during HRIA investigations.

➤ *"HRIAs and the Company's Relationship with Local Communities"*
Dost Bardouille – Acting Director, Corporate Engagement Project, CDA Collaborative Learning Projects.
Presentation of key challenges and opportunities of impact assessments with regard to the company's relationship with local communities.

➤ *"Company Challenges and Opportunities for Addressing Human Rights"*

Aaron Steeghs – Sustainability Advisor, IAMGOLD Corporation.
Presentation of primary human rights issues that concern industry and what is being done to address grievances by stakeholders (private sector perspective).

➤ *"Enforceability of human rights for women affected by environmental pollution: Challenges encountered in the case of La Oroya, Peru"*

Grecia Elena Rojas Ortíz – *Lawyer*, CEPEMA.
Discussion of both methodological and practical issues for different actors in the HRIA process conducted in La Oroya, Peru.

Panel 2: HRIA- Its relevance and impact

This panel will look at HRIAs from a broader perspective: Can they bring adequate changes to the current dynamic between stakeholders? Can they prevent violations or help identify an adequate remedy? How can they be integrated into a broader approach to protect human rights?

➤ *"Strategies for defending the human rights of communities affected by projects promoted by foreign companies"*

Alirio Uribe – Lawyer, CAJAR, FIDH.
Discussion about the various strategies that foreign investment affected-communities can use.

➤ *"Actions undertaken through investigation"*
Isabella Figueroa – CEDHU, Ecuador Research Team.
Discussion about the importance of documenting case studies as a means to influencing public policies.

➤ *"HRIA as a tool for social change in the industry supply chains"*
Baldemar Velasquez – FLOC, USA Research team.
This presentation will focus on obstacles and challenges related to the nature and structure of the corporations that are the focus of the HRIA.

➤ *"HRIAs as one piece of a larger struggle"*
Chris Jochnick – Director, Private Sector Department, Oxfam America.
His talk will consider how HRIAs fit with a larger strategy and movement.

Closing remarks: Christine Bader - Advisor to the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative on business and human rights.