
Challenges of Business and Human Rights: An Obstacle to the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals

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This study discusses Business and Human Rights (BHR) within the current global agenda. The objective is to assess the BHR movement and its possible contribution to the sustainable development goals. In September 2022, the 'UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to hold the Summit of the Future: Multilateral Solutions for a Better Tomorrow in September 2024. A summit expected to serve as an opportunity to refresh the existing global commitments such as the SDG'. One area that can help achieve the global agenda of SDG is human rights by the private sector, known as Business and human rights.

According to the SDG Report 2023, only 12% of the SDGs are currently on track. The role played by the private sector is amongst others, developing public-private partnerships, which remains more concrete in the supply of basic needs such as water, energy (SDG 6 and 7) while addressing environmental concerns such as pollution and gas emission reduction (SDG 13 and 15). These above duties, being in the hands of the private sector and expected to be implemented through voluntary sustainability issues such as philanthropy and CSR remain human rights issues. These HR issues, which the SDG agenda seeks to fulfill for all individuals are lagging in the achievement of the international agenda.

Findings reveal that governments and business priorities in Africa, for example are not aligned but particularly public policies (national action plans) established by governments regarding the above social responsibilities (water, energy, housing) have not been able to be successfully implemented by the private sector. One way of measuring sustainability success is through CSR within which human rights by the private sector are included. This is the situation of BHR in Africa, which could be extended in the world regarding the SDG agenda

Qualitative inquiry through fieldwork and desktop research recently conducted in Africa highlights how businesses, key stakeholders of governments in BHR have failed in their business responsibilities to speed up the SDGs implementation process. Recommendations suggest the private sector should revise and develop new strategies that could align with governments' societal priorities and achieve SDGs.

Keywords: BHR-CSR-Private sector-Africa-SDG-UN