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ILO HELPDESK

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International
Labour
Organization

The ILO and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines CSR as

a way in which enterprises give consideration to the impact of their operations on society and affirm their principles and values both in their own internal methods and processes and in their interaction with other actors. CSR is a voluntary, enterprise-driven initiative and refers to activities that are considered to exceed compliance with the law.

CSR is:

- ➔ voluntary – enterprises voluntarily adopt socially responsible conduct by going beyond their legal obligations
- ➔ an integral part of company management
- ➔ systematic not occasional
- ➔ linked with sustainable development
- ➔ not a substitute for the role of government or for collective bargaining or industrial relations.

The ILO can play an important role in CSR because labour standards and social dialogue are key aspects of CSR and this is the core business of the ILO. Most CSR initiatives, including codes of conduct, refer to the principles deriving from international labour standards, developed by the ILO.

ILO Conventions, when ratified at the national level become binding on governments and those governments must adopt legislation to implement them.

Whilst not binding on enterprises, the principles derived from ILO Conventions can act as a guide for enterprises' behaviour.

The ILO plays a role by helping to promote dialogue between governments, workers' and employers' organizations and by providing assistance and tools to better understand the labour dimension of CSR.

The two main reference points for the ILO on CSR are

The **ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work**. This creates a requirement for governments to implement the principles of the ILO's core labour standards

and

The Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises & Social Policy ("the MNE Declaration"). This a guideline on enterprise behaviour for governments, ILO constituents and enterprises.

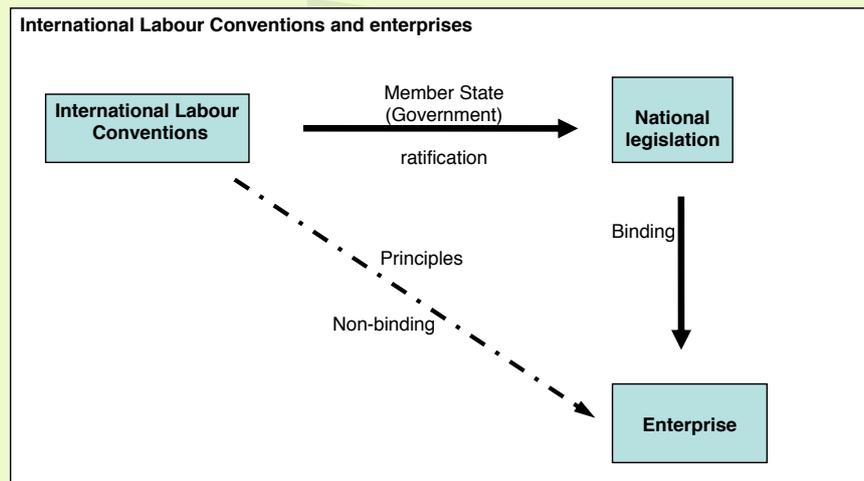
ILO increases involvement with CSR

2000: ILO accepted the invitation of the UN Secretary General to participate in an initiative to promote good corporate citizenship: the UN Global Compact.

2004: The report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization highlighted the ILO's work on CSR-related issues. The ILO continued to develop an agenda on business contribution to the social dimension of globalization.

2006: ILO implemented a CSR In-Focus Initiative which sought to advance the ILO's leadership in this area by promoting the principles laid down in the MNE Declaration as the foundation for good CSR policy and practice.

2009: ILO launched a Helpdesk that provides constituents and enterprises, easy access to information, assistance, referral and advice regarding CSR and the implementation of labour standards.



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