

→ OUR FRAMES OF REFERENCE

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights

Anticipating, Organizing, Training and Evaluating

Human rights, political risks and security considerations are included in the criteria considered when making capital expenditure decisions.

Tested crisis monitoring and management procedures help us to prepare appropriate responses, both to changing local situations and serious events.

At the same time, we provide managers and operational employees with tools and resources to help them meet, on a daily basis, our commitment to respecting human rights. The Ethics Committee, the Human Rights Coordination Committee — a discussion forum for the different departments concerned — and our new Compliance and Corporate Social Responsibility Department act as resource and advisory organizations.

Content on various intranet sites — covering ethics, sustainable development and environment, human resources and security — ethics and human rights seminars and Université Total's courses on these topics keep employees focused on the issue.

In addition, 25% of the evidence points used to assess the ethics performance of Total operations (see page 14) concern human rights issues.

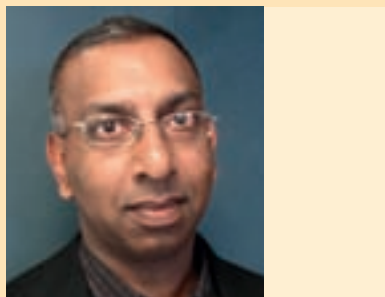
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Insights Arvind Ganesan

Director of the Business and Human Rights Program, Human Rights Watch



Do you see any change or tangible progress in the way the oil industry incorporates human rights in its decision-making and practices?

There is some progress in the industry, as many companies have said that they support human rights. More companies recognize these responsibilities than ever before. However, there are still major challenges. We do not have a system to really see how companies are performing, nor do we have enough information about how companies (in general) incorporate their stated commitments into their policies and practices. Nor do we know whether these efforts are successful. There have to be ways to get better information, other than self-reporting.

Do you think that codes of conducts and standards voluntarily adopted by oil companies have reached their limits? If so, why?

Voluntary standards have not reached their limits, because they still need to be revised and strengthened so that they are better at ensuring companies follow those standards and that the public has adequate information about the implementation of those standards to have confidence that they do effectively integrate respect for human rights into business operations. However, voluntary standards are always going to be inherently limited because they only

apply to companies who choose to follow them and the penalties for noncompliance are much milder than with mandatory measures, which also means they have less of a deterrent effect than they might otherwise have if the standards were mandatory.

You advocate for the implementation of mandatory norms to make sure that companies enforce human rights standards. According to you, what tangible changes would be implied by such a move?

Mandatory norms are important because they would be better at ensuring that more companies follow standards and would potentially make companies more accountable. At the moment, our thinking is that a law like the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act might be a model. It requires companies to have policies and procedures in place to prevent bribery, and also holds them accountable if they bribe officials. This type of approach, when applied to human rights, would mean that companies must put effective policies and procedures in place to respect human rights and could be subject to penalties if they do not. It could also hold them accountable if abuses occurred in relation to their obligations under such a mandatory standard. This would probably be the most effective way to address the issue. ■