China’s Policy Shift on B&HR and CSR in Overseas Investments

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Human rights: an integral part of CSR in Chinese policy?


✓ Statement by the Chinese rep. at UN HRC (2011)

✓ Continuously reiterated by recent industrial CSR guidance/guidelines
  1. CHINCA Guidance (2010)
  2. CESA Guide (2012)
  3. SMEC Guidance for SMEs (2013)
Policy shift in CSR for overseas investment: from protecting Chinese investment and personnel to guaranteeing social license based on due diligence and localization

✓ *Interim Measures for the Supervision and Administration of Overseas Investment by Central Enterprises* (SASAC, May 2012)

✓ *Guidance on Environmental Protection in Foreign Investment and Cooperation* (MOFCOM & MEP, 2013)

✓ *Regulation on Overseas Investment* (MOFCOM, as revised in 2014)

As opposed to:


Thank you!
Business and Human Rights in Chinese Policy and Practice – Learnings from Projects in China

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External and domestic drivers

• More overseas operations – increasing pressure on companies to meet standards

• Social unrest and protest, discrimination, environmental degradation, corruption

• Changing state-society dynamics - calls for transparency, public participation and accountability

• Stability and development at all cost → sustainable and human-centered development

• ”Rule of Law Plenum”
Our work on B&HR in China

- 2013 event series: Sustainable Business and Investment in the Global Context: Rights, Risks and Responsibilities
Our work on B&HR in China

- 2014 *Sino-Swedish Training Programme on CSR for Central SOEs* – first time Chinese SOEs trained on UNGPs
Learnings and conclusions

- Now is an important and dynamic period - clear interest from Chinese companies
- Moving from traditional CSR to addressing impacts, looking at issues through a HR lens
- Need for Chinese government policy and guidelines on UNGPs
- Double standards? Chinese companies overseas as well as MNCs in China