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The Historical and Political Context of evolution of the UNGP Framework

The initiation of the codification of human rights in soft law commenced with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, as promulgated by the United Nations. Broadly construed, international human rights law does not impose direct obligations on businesses to actively advance, uphold, or safeguard human rights. Instead, human rights obligations have traditionally been circumscribed in their applicability to non-state actors or corporations, as noted by Clapham in 1996. Notably, corporations have predominantly focused on specific areas such as environmental protection or equitable remuneration (Methvan O'Brien, 2019).

The 1990s witnessed an increasing acknowledgment, both in international global politics and within the realm of business scholarship, of the deficiencies in transparency and accountability concerning human rights violations stemming from business activities (Dhanarajan and Methven O'Brien, 2015; Methven O'Brien, 2022). This recognition marked a pivotal moment in the discourse surrounding the intersection of business practices and human rights, paving the way for heightened scrutiny and deliberation on these issues. In the year 2005, the then UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, designated Professor John Ruggie, an esteemed UN policy maker and faculty member at Harvard University, to formulate a framework for business and human rights. The objective was to integrate corporate accountability and responsibility into the realm of international soft law. In 2008, Professor John Ruggie, along with his team, presented a comprehensive report to the UN, proposing a "three-pillar framework." The first pillar, ***Protect***, delineated the obligation of the state to safeguard individuals from human rights abuses perpetrated by both state and non-state actors, including businesses and corporations (Pillar I, UN: UNHRC A/HRC/8/5, 7 April 2008). The second pillar, ***Respect,*** underscored the corporate responsibility to uphold the human rights of all stakeholders (Pillar II, ibid). Finally, the third pillar, ***Remedy,*** emphasised the establishment of

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