

Press Release



Ministry of Justice

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MOJ publishes an Interpretive Guide to the Corporate Responsibility to Respect Human Rights

Encourages companies to voluntarily fulfill the responsibility based on understanding of ‘Business and Human Rights’

Specify policies and processes for companies to implement the corporate responsibility to respect human rights and introduce a gender perspective in practice;

To distribute approx. 1300 copies to KOSPI-listed companies, relevant associations and agencies

- The Ministry of Justice (“MOJ”) published an Interpretative Guide to the Corporate Responsibility to Respect Human Rights and Gender Dimensions of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights announced by the OHCHR, for our companies to specifically understand the global standard of “Business and Human Rights” on April 15, 2021.
- Since the United Nations Human Rights Council endorsed the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (“Guiding Principles”) in 2011, overseas countries¹⁾ have endeavored to introduce human rights-based business management.²⁾ For example, EU requires companies to disclose non-financial information³⁾, whereas France legislated the mandate of due diligence.

- 1) The *Transparency in Supply Chains Act* in California, US, in 2012; the *Modern Slavery Act* in UK in 2015, the *Duty of Vigilance Law* in France in 2017; the *Child Labor Due Diligence Act* in the Netherlands in 2019, etc
- 2) Human rights-based business management refers to business management practice that complies with the standard of “Business and Human Rights” in Korea. “Business and Human Rights” is an international human rights standard that while states shall be obligated to protect human rights, companies shall have the responsibility to respect human rights and minimize negative impacts of corporate activities on human rights.
- 3) The introduction of mandatory disclosure of non-financial performance in EU in 2018 has affected not only the EU member states, but relevant companies subject to the act in part as operating factories or corporations in Europe.

□ The Korean Government has continuously been recommended by the United Nations human rights bodies* to provide guidelines on the practice of human rights-based business management. The MOJ hopes the publication of the interpretative guide helps more domestic companies voluntarily implement human rights-based business management.

※ At the United Nations Human Rights Committee in December 2015; the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in October 2017, etc

- The Interpretive Guide mainly includes,
- ① the key concepts of the Guiding Principles (due diligence, human rights risks, etc),
 - ② the “Operational Principles” that specified policies and processes to be implemented for companies to respect human rights, and
 - ③ the Gender Dimension announced by the United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights* to integrate a gender perspective in implementing the corporate responsibility to respect human rights,

※ At the 41st session of the Human Rights Council in June 2019, the *United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights* announced the *Gender Dimensions of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights –Respect of the Working Group on the Business and Human Rights*

- While distributing the Interpretive Guide to KOSPI-listed companies, relevant agencies and institutions, associations and other organizations, the MOJ plans to disclose the guide on its official website (www.moj.go.kr) for everyone with an interest in “Business and Human Rights” to provide easy access.

- The MOJ entered into an MOU with the National Human Rights Commission of Korea to ‘encourage more companies to seek human rights-based business management’ in May 2020, and also held the Forum on Business and Human Rights in December 2020 to promote international trends on the needs and practice of human rights-based business management.

- The MOJ will continuously make efforts to raise corporate awareness on the importance of human rights-based business management and to establish the corporate culture to respect human rights.