

The
Syria Report



SLDP

Syrian Legal Development Programme
البرنامج السوري للتطوير القانوني



SYRIAN INTERNATIONAL
BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

The First Business and Human Rights
Conference in Syria

From Ruins to Responsibility:
Business, Human Rights,
and Syria's Future

Narrative Report with Recommendations

📅 2 November 2025 📍 Cham Hotel, Damascus, Syria 🕒 9:30 am - 6:00 pm

Introduction

On 2 November 2025, the first conference on Business and Human Rights in Syria was held in Damascus, co-hosted by the Syrian Legal Development Programme (SLDP), the Syrian International Business Association (SIBA), and The Syria Report, to discuss the role of the business sector in advancing human rights and contributing to Syria's reconstruction on just and sustainable grounds.

For decades, Syria suffered from severe human rights violations intertwined with economic activity. Under the former regime, an economic structure rooted in corruption and patronage took hold, allowing crony capitalism to flourish. Businesses, both directly and indirectly, contributed to a wide spectrum of human rights and environmental abuses, causing devastating harm to communities and depriving them of their fundamental rights. While regime-affiliated companies amassed immense profits, Syrian civilians bore the cost of exploitation, dispossession, and widespread environmental damage.

With the political transition and the fall of the former regime, Syria now stands at a historic crossroads. This period represents a crucial opportunity to rebuild the country on principles of justice, accountability, and sustainability. Reconstruction efforts must avoid repeating past failures and align with international law, human rights standards, and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). Embedding these principles within Syria's business culture and economic development is not merely an ethical duty—it is the cornerstone of effective transitional justice, sustainable economic recovery, and lasting peace.

The conference brought together a wide range of Syrian and international actors, including representatives from civil society organisations, the private sector, donor governments, think tanks, NGOs, UN agencies, and Syrian institutions. Discussions focused on how business and human rights can jointly contribute to a fair and sustainable reconstruction process in Syria. The conference programme included several thematic sessions addressing key issues such as corporate responsibility for human rights following the fall of the regime; housing, land, and property (HLP) rights as a central challenge to reconstruction; the nexus between business and the environment; and the promotion of inclusion for marginalised groups—including women, girls, and persons with disabilities—in economic life. Legal reforms and investment frameworks were also discussed as tools to ensure a rights-based business environment grounded in good governance.

The closing session featured an open discussion on the next practical steps and the commitments required from various stakeholders—particularly the Syrian government, donor states, the private sector, and civil society—to advance reconstruction in line with human rights principles. At this pivotal stage in shaping Syria's future, raising awareness of the role of business in protecting human rights has never been more urgent.

This report aims to summarise the main discussions and highlight key recommendations and practical steps that can help embed respect for human rights in Syria's future reconstruction and development.

Welcome Remarks

The conference opened with welcoming remarks that underscored the significance of this pivotal moment for Syria and the essential role of business in building a future grounded in justice and human rights.

Saad Baroud, Director of the Department of Organizations and Conferences at the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, welcomed the participants, noting that the chosen theme, “From Ruins to Responsibility,” was highly fitting. He emphasized that Syria’s commitment to human rights remains one of the revolution’s core objectives and stressed that reconstruction is forthcoming—requiring clear public policies, legal frameworks, trust-building through good governance, and an active civil society.

Following that, **Sana Kikhia**, Executive Director of SLDP, welcomed the participants and underscored the importance of cooperation between Arab and international actors to promote respect for human rights within the business environment. She noted that Syria’s protracted and tragic conflict has revealed institutional failures and business sector complicity in atrocities, affirming that economic development must not come at the expense of values and rights. She concluded that future investments should be guided by the principle of “do no harm”—emphasizing the pursuit of not just capital, but responsible capital.

Jihad Yazigi, Founder of The Syria Report, highlighted the responsibility of businesses towards the environment and the rights of women and children, referring to issues such as housing rights, child labour, and the lack of corporate accountability in these areas.

Finally, **Nasser Youssef**, Board Member of the Syrian International Business Association (SIBA), reaffirmed the Association’s commitment to human rights standards and expressed appreciation for entrepreneurs who have chosen to distance themselves from the economy of violence.

Opening Session: Business and Human Rights After the Fall of the Assad Regime

Speakers:

Alreem Kamal
Legal Officer, SLDP

Sarah Tayara
Associate at Hogan Lovells in London

Libor Chlad
Head of Cooperation Section, Delegation of the European Union to Syria

Ahmad Hazromah
Member of the Syrian National Council for Transitional Justice

The first session, moderated by **Jihad Yazigi**, opened with an in-depth discussion on the pivotal role of businesses in Syria following the fall of the former regime, and the accompanying ethical and legal responsibilities to ensure a just and sustainable reconstruction process.

Alreem Kamal, Legal Officer in the Business and Human Rights Unit at SLDP, emphasized that reconstruction is not simply a matter of building infrastructure, but rather an opportunity to rebuild the country in a just and sustainable manner. She explained that violations of HLP rights, as well as the international crimes of pillage and forced displacement, continue to pose a major obstacle to recovery and reconstruction efforts. She stressed the importance of investors conducting thorough background checks on local partners to avoid complicity in activities that violate international law, warning that neglecting issues of justice and accountability could exacerbate social tensions and hinder transitional justice efforts. Kamal called on the private sector to adopt a proactive approach to human rights risk assessment to support Syria's reconstruction in a way that is sustainable, rights-respecting, and conducive to durable peace and stability.

Sarah Tayara, an Associate at Hogan Lovells in London, addressed the domestic legal dimension of corporate responsibility, explaining that the UK's Proceeds of Crime Act allows for the prosecution of companies involved in crimes committed abroad, including indirect complicity in human rights violations in Syria. Tayara underscored that ignorance of abuses within supply chains does not constitute a legal defence, and that labour exploitation, environmental pollution, or discrimination could expose companies to liability in their home jurisdictions.

Libor Chlad, Head of Cooperation at the Delegation of the European Union to Syria, presented the EU's efforts to support the Syrian people, noting that the Union has provided approximately €37 billion in humanitarian and development aid since 2011. He discussed the new EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive, which obliges European companies to respect human rights across their supply chains, even when engaging with non-European entities. Hlad emphasised that the rule of law and transitional justice are essential for attracting investment and fostering development, announcing a new 2025 assistance package focusing on institution-building, private sector support, and the promotion of justice and human rights in Syria.

Ahmad Hazroumah, Member of the National Commission for Transitional Justice, outlined the Commission's six key workstreams: truth-seeking, justice and accountability, reparations, institutional reform, memorialisation, and social reconciliation. He explained that the Commission is drafting a Transitional Justice Law addressing economic violations, with a focus on involving victims and local communities in policy design. Hazroumah highlighted that transitional justice seeks to dismantle the former system of corruption, rebuild trust between the state and society, and urged investors to adopt responsible business practices that contribute to victim recovery and the creation of decent employment opportunities.

The discussion with participants addressed mechanisms for implementing transitional justice, revising outdated legislation, and the role of parliament in overseeing these processes. Questions were also raised about ensuring fair distribution of reconstruction across provinces and cities, and the inclusion of civil society and citizens in all stages of planning and implementation. Participants examined the applicability of European and international laws to companies operating in Syria and the need to develop domestic legislation that upholds human rights and enables effective enforcement. The conversation further stressed the importance of creating a safe and transparent investment environment that safeguards property rights, labour rights, and environmental protection, while centring victims in policymaking and reconstruction governance.

The session concluded with a shared understanding that reconstruction in Syria cannot be separated from justice and accountability. Building a sound and sustainable economy requires a firm commitment to human rights at every stage of the legal and economic process.

Breakout Session 1: HLP Rights and the Challenges Facing Reconstruction in Syria

Speakers:

Jihad Yazigi
Founder and Editor in Chief, The Syria Report

Mazhar Sharbaji
Electoral Reform Coordinator at The Day After Foundation, focusing on governance, local administration, and property rights

Abdelkarim Idris
Director General of the Real Estate Interests Directorate

Rana Mitri
Human rights lawyer and consultant with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ)

The session was moderated by **Anwar Majanni**, Legal Advisor at The Day After, who opened by emphasising that nearly half of housing in Syria falls under informal or unplanned settlements, and that widespread destruction and displacement caused by the conflict have exacerbated the housing and property crisis. He highlighted that any discussion on reconstruction cannot be separated from these core issues affecting the right to housing and property, which remain among the main obstacles to sustainable recovery.

Jihad Yazigi discussed the absence of a specialised national authority for housing and property rights, noting the confusion between the technical role of architectural committees and the legal and social necessity of addressing these files. He raised fundamental questions regarding the priority between return or compensation, and the criteria for identifying beneficiaries of reconstruction, stressing that the lack of a clear national vision creates legal uncertainty that undermines trust and hinders investment. He also pointed out that successful reconstruction is linked to guaranteeing property rights for residents, which is essential for achieving economic and social stability.

Rana Mitri, human rights lawyer and consultant with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), addressed the importance of prior documentation of housing and property rights as a key step toward justice and equitable reconstruction. She explained that land in the Syrian context is not merely a physical asset but represents identity, wealth, and livelihood, highlighting additional complications caused by the destruction of property records and expropriation during years of conflict. She also traced the historical roots of the problem back to nationalisation, expropriation, and emergency laws that disrupted the property system, emphasising the need to address these challenges before launching any reconstruction projects.

Mazhar Sharbaji, Elections Reform Coordinator at The Day After, shared his experience as an architect, noting that the absence of governance and the politicisation of urban planning were key reasons for the emergence of informal housing areas around Damascus and Aleppo. He discussed the regime's use of displacement and destruction as tools of collective punishment, citing Decree No. 66 as a means of legalising property confiscation. He stressed that future reconstruction must be based on the rule of law, with local communities actively involved in urban planning, transparent and accountable participation of reputable private sector actors, and the establishment of a legal framework that ensures accountability and transparency.

Abdelkarim Idris, Director General of the Real Estate Interests Directorate, raised questions regarding the prioritisation of reconstruction versus broader economic development, calling for a national dialogue to determine the most appropriate approach between centralised and decentralised planning. He noted that the absence of property documentation represents a major barrier to investment and rebuilding, highlighting efforts by the Ministries of Local Administration and Justice, in collaboration with supporting entities, to clarify property ownership and streamline legal procedures.

Participants' interventions focused on the lack of effective mechanisms to implement laws related to housing rights, and the need to involve bar associations and legal experts in local committees handling property disputes. Questions were raised regarding the fate of funds from the "Reconstruction Levy" imposed during the previous regime and future sources of funding for rebuilding. The lack of transparency in implementing Decree No. 66 was highlighted as a violation of human rights, with calls for a realistic assessment of the scale of destruction and losses as a first step toward planning a fair and comprehensive reconstruction process.

Breakout Session 2: **Business Responsibility Towards the Environment and Human Rights**

Speakers:

Nadim Houry
Executive Director, Arab Reform Initiative

Noor Harastani
Founding Member and General Director, Serbanism

Anas Alrawi

Executive Director, Hooz Organisation

Obaida Abd Al-Baki

Director of Investment and Real Estate at the Ministry of Local Administration and Environment

The session was moderated by **Zoya Kaghadou**, Co-Founder of Together Space, and focused on environmental and social challenges in the context of Syria's reconstruction, with particular attention to the construction, manufacturing, transport, waste management, and urban planning sectors. Kaghadou opened the discussion by emphasising the need to adopt a new development model based on human rights and environmental considerations, warning against returning to previous practices that prioritised rapid profit over social and environmental wellbeing. She stressed that reconstruction represents an opportunity to correct past mistakes and establish a more sustainable and just development path.

Nadim Houry, Executive Director of the Arab Reform Initiative, highlighted that recovery should not be measured by the scale of investment projects but by their commitment to the public interest and social and environmental dimensions. He noted that reconstruction is inherently a political decision determining who benefits and who is marginalised, warning against repeating regional experiences where rapid reconstruction eroded urban memory and social cohesion, such as in central Beirut. Houry called for the inclusion of local communities and the rebuilding of governance structures as essential elements of recovery.

Nour Harastani, Co-Founder and Managing Director of Syrbanism, emphasised that the environment has often been marginalised in public policy and stressed the need to integrate environmental standards into project design and implementation from the earliest stages rather than treating them as formalities. She recommended enhancing the integration of education, scientific research, and urban planning, embedding environmental expertise within development policies. She also suggested gradually applying environmental standards by mandating compliance for major companies and supporting smaller enterprises to comply progressively.

Anas Al-Rawi, Executive Director of Hooz for Social Development, shared field observations of environmentally harmful practices, including the use of high-emission fuel alternatives, local oil pollution, and unplanned urban expansion that disrupted water distribution. He noted that recent natural disasters, such as earthquakes, revealed the vulnerability of non-compliant buildings, highlighting the urgent need to update urban oversight systems and apply safe and sustainable building standards.

Obaida Abdulbaqi, representing the Ministry of Local Administration and the Environment, presented the ministry's vision for a long-term responsible investment strategy. This includes mandatory environmental monitoring for all projects, exploring opportunities for rubble and debris recycling, and replacing government vehicles with lower-emission alternatives. He stressed prioritising local investors while rejecting any project that lacks a clear environmental oversight plan, noting the adaptation of international experiences to the Syrian context.

During the discussion, participants emphasised the importance of involving local environmental associations and organisations in planning and implementation to leverage their expertise. They called for post-disaster environmental impact assessments to set intervention priorities and noted the decline in urban green spaces and the need to rehabilitate damaged natural reserves.

The session concluded by identifying key challenges, including the absence of an integrated environmental monitoring network, weak coordination between sectoral policies (environment, local administration, investment, health), increasing pressure to accelerate projects at the expense of social and environmental standards, declining green spaces, and limited participation of local expertise in decision-making. Promising opportunities were also highlighted, such as the ministry's move toward enforcing environmental requirements, growing community enthusiasm for recycling initiatives, and the potential to learn from international experiences and develop local industries for waste and debris management that support local employment.

Participants recommended adopting a guiding principle for all reconstruction policies: “placing people and the environment at the centre of the recovery process”. They emphasised conducting initial and periodic environmental impact assessments for major projects and establishing a temporary national mechanism with representatives from the government, civil society, and national experts to develop an actionable roadmap. Additional recommendations included developing environmental monitoring labs, enhancing technical capacities, incentivising investors who comply with environmental standards, implementing community awareness programmes targeting youth and students, and incorporating environmental and social performance indicators into project reports with transparent publication of results to support sustainable recovery in Syria.

Breakout Session 3:

Business Activities and the Human Rights of Marginalised Groups: Challenges and Opportunities

Speakers:

Nimat Halabi

Represents Women Now organisation, especially the group of women with disabilities

Muzna al-Jundi

Director of the Women Now Organization Center in Maarrat al-Numan

Leila al-Samman

vice president of Damascus Chamber of Commerce

Waddah Al-Rakkad

Director of Measurement and Quality, Syrian Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor

The session was moderated by **Iman Nasser**, a consultant on the impact of projects on social cohesion, and focused on gender issues, inclusion, and decent work opportunities during Syria's recovery and reconstruction phase. She opened the session emphasising the importance of addressing social and rights-based dimensions in reconstruction, particularly regarding the inclusion of women and marginalised groups. Interventions highlighted the challenges these groups face in the labour market and potential measures to address structural inequalities.

Nimat Halabi, a representative of Women Now and disability rights activist, discussed the multiple challenges faced by women with disabilities in the workplace, noting they experience double discrimination due to both gender and disability. She explained that employers often assume they are incompetent or cite the financial cost of making workplaces accessible. Halabi also highlighted the continued use of derogatory language in public discourse and called for the adoption of international rights-based language when referring to persons with disabilities, alongside their effective inclusion in reconstruction policies and programs.

Muzna Al-Jundi, Director of Women Now in Ma'arat al-Numan, addressed the realities of the Syrian labour market for women, distinguishing between women in the formal and organised sectors, who enjoy some rights, and those in the informal sector, such as agriculture and domestic work, who lack legal protection, social security, and health coverage. She noted widespread issues of wage discrimination, unfair dismissal, and harassment due to weak legislation and complaint mechanisms. Al-Jundi emphasised the need to support women in rural areas through training, microfinance, and safe spaces for learning and work. She also shared Women Now Organization's experience in empowering women through vocational training and small entrepreneurship initiatives to achieve economic independence amid the conflict.

Leila Al-Samman, Vice President of the Damascus Chamber of Commerce, highlighted the private sector's role in promoting equality through flexible and supportive work policies for women, including part-time hours, flexible leave, and remote work. She emphasised that Syrian women played a pivotal role during the war as primary caregivers and earners and called on state institutions and chambers of commerce to strengthen women's participation in decision-making through inclusive policies. She also outlined initiatives by the Damascus Chamber of Commerce to support women and persons with disabilities through the Women Entrepreneurs Committee, stressing the alignment of national laws with international conventions on combating discrimination and violence against women.

Waddah Rakkad, Director of Measurement and Quality, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, concluded the interventions by reviewing Syria's socio-economic gaps, noting an unemployment rate of approximately 21%, rising to 43% among youth, while the informal economy dominates over two-thirds of economic activity. He pointed to poverty, gender-based violence, and child marriage as direct consequences of the protracted economic crisis, resulting in women's exclusion from education, health, and decent work. Rakkad also discussed the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour's plans to develop a new civil service law recognising the role of women leaders in the public sector, highlighting the need for policies that address the varied developmental realities across governorates and ensure a dignified return for displaced persons.

During the discussion, participants raised several important issues and recommendations. Questions were posed regarding ways to enhance coordination between the Chamber of Commerce and relevant government bodies to address child labor, noting that affected children are often unable to voice their struggles and, in some cases, bear the burden of supporting their families. One participant expressed a desire to hear more about the success story of Women Now rather than focusing solely on challenges, as its experience exemplifies overcoming obstacles. Some attendees also emphasized that child marriage should not be viewed solely through social or legal lenses, but also as an economic issue, since families often marry off their daughters to wealthier men as a means of financial support. Interventions further highlighted the need to consider other vulnerable groups that received limited attention, such as children deprived of education, while noting the current lack of meaningful representation or accessibility for women seeking candidacy in the People's Assembly.

The session concluded with the moderator summarising key points, including the exclusion of women and vulnerable groups from the labour market, weak legislation, and institutional gaps in equality policies. Repeated calls were made to enhance cooperation between the public and private sectors and civil society to find practical and sustainable solutions that ensure a fairer, more inclusive work environment in post-conflict Syria.

Breakout Session 4:

What Reforms are Needed to Ensure Responsible Investment?

Speakers:

Nasser Youssef
Board Member, SIBA

Suleiman Mousselli
Professor at Faculty of Economic, Damascus University

Issa Kafa
Lawyer specialising in Labour related issues

Mona Sharbaji
Risk Management Specialist, UNDP

Mohammad Al-Ashmar, Executive Director of Valley Development MENA), moderated this session and opened with a discussion on ways to embed human rights principles into practical practices within companies and institutions. The session included a historical overview of the Syrian private sector's role in development, discussions of legislation, salary and compensation structures, governance and transparency issues, as well as child labour, exploitation of women, liquidity crises, and trust in the banking system. Speakers shared past and present examples, emphasising legal and operational distortions that require attention. Audience questions focused on capital recovery, stock exchange activation, and investment in environmental resources.

Nasser Youssef discussed the private sector's role before the war, citing development projects undertaken by Syrian businessmen, including the Ain Al-Fijah water project to Damascus, Al-Mouwasat Hospital, and charitable associations. He highlighted the significant contribution of the Syrian private sector to society and emphasised the opportunity to rehabilitate national capital while integrating advanced human rights frameworks. He stressed the importance of meeting European market requirements regarding environmental standards, workers' rights, women's rights, and the prohibition of child labour.

Suleiman Mousselli, a Professor in the Faculty of Economics at Damascus University, highlighted that corporate social responsibility and governance must include environmental and social dimensions. He emphasised the importance of governance reports to reflect companies' social impact, discussed distortions in salary and compensation, tax evasion, and their effects on pensions and insurance. He also noted the problem of disclosing bank managers' salaries and the importance of addressing it to protect employees, while advocating for joint-stock companies to enhance community participation.

Issa Kafa, a lawyer specialized in labour law, highlighted legislative distortions affecting wages, long litigation periods, and limited salary increases that fail to match inflation, creating gaps between actual and reported wages. He noted low legal awareness among workers and employers, child labour, and exploitation of women, emphasising the need for new laws to address these distortions and protect the rights of persons with disabilities, including regulations on retirement and post-retirement work.

Mona Sharbaji, Risk Management Specialist at UNDP, proposed three main areas for UN intervention with the private sector: enhancing transparency in supplier contracting, supporting SMEs while raising awareness of environmental and human rights issues, and initiatives to activate human rights in the workplace. She stressed that primary responsibility lies with the state, highlighting the need for oversight mechanisms, complaint procedures, and enforcement of labour rights, while the UN plays a role in filling legal gaps and raising awareness.

General discussions addressed liquidity issues and frozen funds, noting that a significant portion of printed cash is unavailable due to past financial issues. Plans to gradually replace currency with electronic payments were discussed, along with the importance of infrastructure and trust before encouraging stock exchange trading. Other topics included setting a minimum wage, rights of persons with disabilities after retirement, and the readiness of business leaders to adopt responsible practices, with emphasis on compliance with European market requirements concerning production, environmental, and labour standards.

The session covered topics such as the history of the Syrian private sector, development projects, salary and compensation distortions, lack of disclosure and governance, legislative gaps, child labour, exploitation of women, weak legal awareness, banking liquidity shortages, and preparation for European markets. It brought together diverse perspectives from private sector representatives, legal experts, international organisations, and an engaged audience, focusing on both the historical and current realities of the Syrian private sector and its relationship to social responsibility and human rights.

Closing Panel: Moving Forward

Speakers:

Ayman al-Mawlawi

Chairman of the Damascus and Damascus Countryside Chambers of Industry

Clemens Hach

German Chargé d'Affaires in the Syrian Arab Republic

Karam Shaar

Director of Karam Shaar Advisory LTD

Eyad Hamid

Head of Human Rights and Business Unit, SLDP

The conference concluded with the closing session, moderated by Sana Kikhia, which focused on human rights in the context of business, and its relationship to investment, legislation, and cooperation between the private sector and the state.

Ayman Al-Mawlawi, Chairman of the Damascus and Damascus Countryside Chambers of Industry, addressed the sensitivity of human rights in Syria, noting how the concept had been distorted before and during the revolution. He highlighted the issuance of decrees and laws that were unfair to both workers and employers and emphasised the responsibility of business owners to protect rights and advocate for amending unjust laws. He stressed that laws lacking private sector input are incomplete. Al-Molawi also discussed the importance of clear legislation and simplified procedures to reduce corruption, and addressed electricity price increases and their impact on residential and industrial sectors, highlighting the need for cooperation with labour unions and reforms to the Code of Civil Procedure.

Clemens Hach, German Chargé d'Affaires in Syria, discussed the link between investment and human rights, emphasising the importance of respecting workers' rights, environmental protection, and non-discriminatory treatment for all groups, including minorities. He stressed that adherence to international practices is essential for reconstruction, social cohesion, and stability. Hach identified Germany's priorities as improving the rule of law and providing a safe legal environment to attract investments, drawing parallels with Germany's post-World War II experience.

Karam Shaar, Founder of Karam Shaar Advisory, asserted that human rights are not a luxury and warned that neglecting them in economic policy could lead to collapse. He advocated for integrating human rights into corporate operations, combating corruption at its root, and called on donor countries to support economic recovery linked to human rights. Al-Shaar stressed that responsibility for economic crises is collective and called for genuine participatory solutions and increased public awareness of human rights.

Eyad Hamid described the conference as the realisation of a long-held vision, highlighting SLDP's efforts to support organisations and businesses in operating without violating human rights. He emphasised that civil society must support civic and humanitarian initiatives, acting as a "watchful eye" amid the absence of political parties and an independent judiciary, while providing guidance based on reliable research and facilitating dialogue among stakeholders, including initiatives like the campaign to repeal Decree 66.

Discussions highlighted the importance of translating conference deliberations into community awareness and practical action, enforcing laws despite the absence of an independent judiciary, the role of civil society in raising awareness and providing support, and the involvement of chambers of commerce, labour unions, and private sector actors in shaping legislation. Participants also examined the impact of electricity price increases and the importance of public-private collaboration to ensure justice, protect economic and social rights, and draw on historical lessons and international experience to rebuild Syria's economy in a human-rights-respecting and socially stable manner.

The session concluded with recognition that the conference represents a first step in a long journey of collaborative work, with participants expressing gratitude for its convening and viewing it as a starting point for building a Syria grounded in rights and economic and social justice.

General Recommendations from the Conference

Rebuilding Syria should be a comprehensive and sustainable process grounded in justice, accountability, human rights, and environmental protection. Achieving this requires integrated cooperation among the private sector, government, civil society, and donor countries, with clear frameworks for accountability and transparency, and the active inclusion of victims and marginalised groups in all stages of planning and implementation.

To Businesses:

- **Implement HRDD:** Conduct enhanced human rights due diligence before commencing any activities in Syria, in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, and assess potential operational impacts on human rights and conflict dynamics.
- **Integrate human rights policies:** Develop comprehensive human rights policies that account for Syria's high-risk context and integrate them across all operations and supply chains, in accordance with international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and international environmental law.
- **Transparency and accountability:** Adopt transparency and accountability by disclosing due diligence policies, business partners, and impact assessment results, and avoid engagement with entities involved in violations or international crimes.
- **Safeguard HLP rights:** Protect property, housing, land, and environmental rights by verifying property integrity before projects, and ensure no environmental harm or participation in unlawful land appropriation.
- **Engage affected communities:** Engage local communities and provide remedies through consultation with affected and marginalised groups, establishing effective grievance mechanisms sensitive to gender and conflict.

To the Syrian Government:

- **Legal and institutional reform:** Enact fair and transparent laws that guarantee all human rights to encourage responsible investment.
- **Support transitional justice:** Establish a legal framework to hold business actors accountable for their role in violations and abuses, with victim and civil society participation in policy development.
- **Strengthen governance and the rule of law:** Create effective oversight institutions to monitor compliance with human rights.
- **Involve local communities:** Ensure citizen participation in planning and implementing reconstruction projects, with equitable distribution across governorates and regions.

To Donor States and International Organisations:

- **Support rights-based reconstruction:** Allocate funding to projects that respect human rights and environmental considerations.
- **Build local capacities:** Fund training programmes for civil society and the private sector on human rights, sustainable urban planning, and good governance.
- **International oversight and accountability:** Monitor foreign companies and major projects to ensure compliance with international standards, providing technical and legal support to the Syrian government, companies, and civil society.
- **Promote social stability:** Support initiatives that encourage the social inclusion of marginalised groups and protect the rights of women and marginalized populations, and the most vulnerable in the labour market and reconstruction.

To Civil Society:

- **Monitoring and accountability:** Track company and government actions to ensure respect for human rights and the environment.
- **Awareness and education:** Disseminate knowledge on human rights and business, and participate in shaping public policies related to reconstruction.
- **Partnerships and collaboration:** Work with the private sector and government to develop practical and comprehensive solutions, and support initiatives adhering to social and environmental standards.
- **Support marginalised groups:** Promote social and economic inclusion of women, persons with disabilities, and marginalized populations, and the most vulnerable in recovery and reconstruction projects.



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The Syrian Legal Development Programme (SLDP) also offers tailored advisory services to help businesses and investors operate responsibly in Syria. As the only Syrian NGO with a dedicated business and human rights focus, we offer a combination of extensive legal expertise with contextual knowledge to support clients in meeting their human rights responsibilities under international law. We welcome partnerships with those ready to align profit with responsibility.

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