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**John Ruggie: Investment Protection Agreements Prevent Protection of Human Rights**

John Ruggie, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the Issue of Human Rights and Transnational Corporations and other Business Enterprises, presented his recent achievements and future plans the day after his mandate was extended for another year by the UN Human Rights Council.

The Professor from Harvard University spoke at a panel discussion jointly organized by the United Nations Association of Germany and the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation in Berlin on June 25, 2007.

He announced that he will focus extensively on bilateral investment protection agreements during his next tenure. Ruggie argues that these agreements form an obstacle for the effective protection of human rights. In many states, these agreements would guarantee a general framework which prevents the national law from protecting the advancement of human rights.

Furthermore, Ruggie pointed out that he would not be an opponent of mandatory solutions. He emphasized on the different responsibilities of states and business enterprises. It would be the responsibility of corporations to respect human rights, while states are additionally obligated to protect and fulfill them. Concerning the suggestion of binding standards on an international level, Ruggie explained his concept of principled pragmatism within a short- and middle-term perspective. This concept is based on considerations, such as the adoption of human rights obligations by home states of transnational corporations when the various instruments of the states, in which businesses operate, fail, or when the corresponding governments are not willed to protect them. In addition, Ruggie pursues several sectoral approaches.

On request of the Commission on Human Rights, John Ruggie was officially nominated Special Representative by resolution 2005/69 in July 2005. During his two-year mandate, Ruggie fulfilled the difficult task to formulate consensual recommendations on the promotion of human rights within the economy and to clarify accountability of corporate responsibility.

Currently, two reports are available. Here Ruggie exposes the lack of protection of human rights through corporations and business enterprises and examines particularly the role of states during their promotion and preservation of human rights.