



CANADIAN FORUM FOR
**Business and
Human Rights**

An initiative of the Marcel A. Desautels Centre for Private Enterprise
and the Law, Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS



**Corporate Accountability in Canada: At the
Crossroads of Scholarship, Legislation, Litigation,
Policy-making and Community Resistance**

In collaboration with
the Faculties of Law



SCHULICH SCHOOL OF LAW
Marine & Environmental
Law Institute



CONCEPTUAL NOTE

Amidst growing public demand for greater corporate accountability for adverse business impacts on human rights, climate, and the environment, we are witnessing the evolution of various national and international guidelines, standards, and laws around the world that address the responsibilities of businesses. Despite Canada's position as home to a large extractive industry and the long track record of adverse human rights and environmental impacts of the Canadian extractives industry both within Canada and abroad, Canada has fallen behind in taking robust regulatory action on corporate accountability. The establishment of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise was initially welcomed. However, due to the lack of powers to compel witnesses and documents, it has not yet been able to provide effective remedies for victims of corporate-related harm or to assure some form of corporate accountability. The recently adopted Bill S-211, the "Modern Slavery Act," has also been criticized for failing to mandate action by corporations to eradicate forced and child labour in their global supply chains and for its lack of robust enforcement mechanisms.

Against this background, this conference invites participants to examine Canada's international human rights obligation to protect human rights, including the obligation to provide effective remedies to victims of corporate abuse. We welcome submissions from a broad range of stakeholders and disciplines that discuss the following non-exhaustive list of themes:

- Comparative and critical perspectives: the influence of regulatory, judicial, and legislative developments outside Canada on the corporate accountability discourse in Canada.
- The potential and limitations of human rights due diligence laws, modern slavery legislation, or judicial, state non-judicial and non-state non-judicial, remedy mechanisms.
- The role of businesses, industry associations, NGOs, CSOs, and Indigenous communities in shaping corporate accountability norms and remedies.
- The role of trade, investment, criminal law, corporate governance codes, and climate and sustainability regimes in fulfilling Canada's obligation to protect human rights and Canadian businesses' responsibility to respect human rights.
- Access to effective remedies for individuals and communities affected by business activity, broadly framed.
- Human rights, environmental, and climate impacts of corporate activity from an intersectional lens, such as impacts on Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, climate-vulnerable populations, women, 2SLGBTQQIA, and racial minorities.

WORKSHOP AND CONFERENCE SUBMISSIONS

This is a 2-day in-person event comprising a workshop and a conference. The workshop will support young scholars by providing an opportunity to present and receive feedback from senior scholars on unpublished works-in-progress in English that advance critical thinking in areas of business and human rights of relevance to Canada. The Workshop will take place on November 13, 2025, immediately preceding the Conference for those who wish to attend both events. The workshop is open to doctoral students in the final stages of their PhD or those within five years of the completion of a doctoral program.

Prospective participants should submit an application in a single PDF document by January 30, 2025, to canadianforumforbhr@umanitoba.ca. Applications should be clearly identified in the subject line of the email as 'Workshop Application' and include the author's current affiliation and contact information, along with a 300-word abstract detailing the paper they wish to present at the Workshop. Selected participants will be notified by March 15, 2025, and final papers between 5,000 and 10,000 words in length must be submitted by July 15, 2025. Attendees will be encouraged to submit revised versions of their papers following the Workshop to be considered for publication as a special issue in a leading peer-reviewed journal.

The conference will take place on November 14, 2025, and will consist of panels on the above-mentioned non-exhaustive themes. Interested applicants are invited to submit proposals (not more than 300 words with five keywords) to the email above, outlining the title of their presentation and their core arguments before January 30, 2025. Participants should clearly identify the subject line of their email as 'Conference Application' and include a resume or short biography and their current institutional affiliation. Decisions will be issued on or before March 15, 2025.