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Bhopal Principles on corporate accountability

1. Implement Rio Principle 13

States shall as a matter of priority enter into negotiations for a legal international instrument national laws to operationalise and implement Principle 13 of the Rio Declaration, to address compensation for the victims of pollution and other environmental damage.

2. Extend corporate liability

Corporations must be held strictly liable without requirement of fault for any and all damage any of their activities that cause environmental or property damage or personal injury, including remediation. Parent companies as well as subsidiaries and affiliated local corporations must be held liable for compensation and restitution. Corporations must bear cradle to grave responsibility for products. States must implement individual liability for directors and officers for actions or omissions of a corporation, including for those of subsidiaries.

3. Ensure corporate liability for damage beyond national jurisdictions

States shall ensure that corporations are liable for injury to persons and damage to property, biodiversity and the environment beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, and to the global atmosphere and oceans. Liability must include responsibility for environmental cleanup and

4. Protect Human rights

Economic activity shall not infringe upon basic human and social rights. States have the responsibility to safeguard the basic human and social rights of citizens, in particular the right to life; the right to healthy working conditions; the right to a safe and healthy environment; the right to medical care; the right to compensation for injury and damage; the right to information and the right of access to justice for individuals and by groups promoting these rights. Corporations must respect and uphold the rights of individuals and groups. States must ensure effective compliance by all corporations of these rights and provide for implementation and enforcement.

5. Provide for public participation and the right to know

States shall require companies routinely to disclose to the public all information concerning their operations and environment from their respective facilities as well as product composition. Commercial confidentiality shall not outweigh the interest of the public to know the dangers and liabilities associated with a product, whether in the form of pollution by-products or the product itself. Once a product enters the market, there should be no restrictions on public access to information relevant to environment and health on the basis of commercial secrecy. Corporate responsibility and accountability shall be promoted through environmental management accounting and environmental reporting which gives a clear, concise and public report of environmental and social impacts of corporate activities.

6. Adhere to the highest standards

States shall ensure that corporations adhere to the highest standards for protecting basic human and social rights including health and the environment. Consistent with Rio Declaration Principle 14, States shall not permit multinational corporations to deliberately apply lower standards of operation and standards where health and environmental protection regimes, or their implementation, are weaker.

7. Avoid excessive corporate influence over governance

States shall co-operate to combat bribery in all its forms, promote transparent political financing mechanisms and eliminate corporate influence on public policy through election campaign contributions and/or non-transparent corporate-led lobby practices.

8. Protect Food Sovereignty over Corporations

States shall ensure that individual States and their people maintain sovereignty over their food systems including through laws and measures to prevent genetic pollution of agricultural biological resources.

genetically engineered organisms and to prevent the patenting of genetic resources by cor

9. Implement the precautionary principle and require environmental impact assessm

States shall fully implement the Precautionary Principle in national and international law. All States shall require corporations to take preventative action before environmental damage are incurred, when there is a threat of serious or irreversible harm to the environment or health activity, a practice or a product. Governments shall require companies to undertake environmental assessments with public participation for activities that may cause significant adverse environmental impacts.

10. Promote clean and sustainable development

States shall promote clean and sustainable development, and shall establish national legislation to control the use, discharge and emission of hazardous substances and greenhouse gases, and pollution, to use their resources in a sustainable manner, and to conserve their biological diversity.

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