

The international organisations and sustainable finance

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International Geneva provides sustainable finance with its standards and its counterparts. The United Nations Environment Programme and its finance initiative, the International Labour Organization for social questions, the World Health Organization, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the World Trade Organization for trade questions and the World Meteorological Organization for climate data are established in Geneva, together with the secretariats of environmental conventions and numerous non-governmental organisations.¹ The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, adopted in 2011, like the standards of the International Labour Organization, serve as the reference for the social criteria of sustainable finance.²

This proximity gives Geneva managers direct access to experts and data, and gives the organisations access to financiers. It has enabled the creation in Geneva of initiatives bringing finance and the organisations together, of which Building Bridges is the most visible. It also creates expectations: a financial centre that hosts the organisations responsible for climate, labour and human rights is judged by the yardstick of their standards. The contradictions of its commodity trading, examined above, are more visible there than elsewhere.

1 Notes

1. See Part F: World Health Organization (constitution in force on 7 April 1948, first World Health Assembly on 24 June 1948), International Labour Organization (Centre William Rappard, 1926), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (14 December 1950), UNCTAD (1964), WTO (1995), ICRC; European Union, Delegation to the United Nations in Geneva (eeas.europa.eu): engagement with the

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Human Rights Council, the WHO, the ILO, the UNHCR, UNCTAD, WIPO and the UNECE. ↩

2. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, endorsed by the Human Rights Council in its resolution 17/4 of 16 June 2011; Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, ohchr.org (accessed September 2026). ↩

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