

**Speaking notes for Richard Lambert:  
John Ruggie event, 19 February 2007**

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Thank you, Michael. And thank you to Clifford Chance & the UNA for making this event possible.

On behalf of CBI & for me personally, it is a real pleasure to share a platform with John Ruggie this evening.

CBI's involvement in this event is a continuation of our leadership role in the international business community on the crucial issues in John's mandate. As you have heard already, he has covered a great deal of ground since his appointment as the SRSG. I would like to take this opportunity to say in public that his balanced, open-minded approach to his work has been a significant factor in making this much progress.

We will continue to support that work strongly. In this regard, it is vital that the UN Human Rights Council, which meets in Geneva in the spring, renews the mandate for one year in order for John to complete the tasks that he was originally given. I can assure you that we see it as mission-critical to maintaining the integrity of the SRSG process in this area.

If I may, I would now like to use the rest of my time to reinforce some core concepts from the business community's perspective. And I think it is important to do so because there are still occasions when the roles & responsibilities of all actors in society are not as clearly defined as they could be, a theme that came through very strongly in John's remarks.

Business & human rights are not competing against each other. They are mutually supportive. Good governance, the rule of law, open markets, & sound economic, social & environmental policies are both building blocks for business success & for the success of the societies of which businesses are a part. The role of business in promoting respect for human rights is becoming more recognised & understood, particularly when this is accompanied by dialogue & collaborative responses with other stakeholders. John's mention of the concept of "shared responsibility", reflecting the fact that business cannot or should never be a surrogate government, is compelling. Governments themselves are, of course, the primary duty bearers on human rights under international law, but society as a whole – which includes the international community –

must find ways of ensuring that states implement & enforce national laws to fulfil their obligations.

Businesses regularly find themselves in dilemmas situations, particularly in zones of weak governance. In these circumstances, responsible business conduct includes as the starting point compliance with all legal obligations but may also include corporate (social) responsibility programmes & activities. These are the voluntary actions & standards that business follow over & above legal standards. The paper that the three leading international business organisations submitted to John late last year, & which CBI had the lead drafting role, gives greater detail on the approaches businesses can & do take in such situations.

Finally, may I again thank John for his comments & for taking the time to come to London to talk to this audience. I wish him well in completing his work as SRSG. All elements in society – governments, business, organised labour, individual citizens & civil interest groups – have a stake in learning from John's mapping exercise & in contributing positively to his search for solutions. The challenges demand nothing less & the prize is one well worth having.