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GENDER AND BUSINESS

EDITOR'S NOTE

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Today, business and human rights or corporate social responsibilities have become popular topics of public discourses. Nevertheless, despite being an important and cross-cutting topic, the gender aspect of business is less frequently discussed, particularly in relation to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) issues. The equality between men and women is a basic national policy in China, but when China's increasing overseas investment and international aids are concerned, little attention has been paid to its gender impact. This focus address these often ignored issues by following three articles.

The first article analyzes the gender impact of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and argues that China has a human rights obligation to adopt a gender policy in its BRI to ensure that its overseas investments and aids programs respect and promote gender equality. To date, China has not developed a gender-mainstreaming or rights-based approach to its strongly promoted Initiative. Hence, this article provides a general overview of how the BRI may affect gender equality both BRI countries and globally. By reviewing the international standards on gender equality in transnational trade and foreign investment and aid projects, this article clarifies China's obligations under international law to promote gender equality through its BRI and to analyze the gap between China's practices and obligations. Finally, the article suggests some policy recommendations on achieving gender mainstreaming within the BRI.

The second article is based on a positive research on the gender impact of China's overseas textile enterprises on three Southeast Asian countries: Vietnam, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. This study clarifies how Chinese textile and apparel enterprises operate overseas and discusses the efforts that have been made to promote an equal working environment. In addition, the study analyzes the challenges and problems encountered by overseas Chinese textile and apparel enterprises in promoting gender equality and makes

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recommendations on creating an equal working environment for all workers and safeguarding female workers' rights and interests to encourage Chinese enterprises to "go global" in a responsible manner.

The third article addresses a special aspect of gender equality: equality founded on gender identity and sexual orientation. Although LGBT people constitute a significant percentage of the workforce, employment discrimination based on individuals' sexual orientation and gender identity remains pervasive in the workplace. This article presents the latest social science research on the economic costs/benefits of inclusion of LGBT people in the workplace. Based on the findings of this study, the article recommends further research on the promotion of LGBT-inclusion policies by employers and the provision of legal protection of the equal employment rights of LGBT people in China.