Success in legal practice can often be defined by the ability to appreciate subtle and noticeable changes in the legal environment and then to respond and adjust effectively to these challenges. Such adjustments can be easy when the legal practitioner is able to locate the relevant resources, in terms of international documents, statutes, cases, practices notes, etc., with which to make the transition to new professional responsibilities. The endorsement by the United Nations Human Rights Council of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) in 2011 has set the stage for the emergence of a new area of legal practice and scholarship around the intersection between business and human rights. In the midst of this change, legal professionals and bar associations around the globe are starting to look at how to overcome the challenges posed by these principles, ensure awareness around the principles themselves and integrate them into the profession. This is important regardless of whether lawyers are advising companies, governments, affected communities, and non-governmental organizations, or working as part of international organizations.

The UNGPs are set around pillars that explore the duties and responsibilities of both states and corporations. At its center we encounter hard law and soft law mechanisms that inform not only cross-sectoral dialogue, but also have a direct impact on a growing community of global practitioners from the private sector, non-governmental organizations, or working as part of an international organization.

Since the emergence of the UNGPs, the American Bar Association’s Center for Human Rights has played a leadership role in bringing experts from the legal, academic, international, and NGO communities together across legal cultures and jurisdictions, to foster and advance the conversation and practice of this emerging business and human rights field. This Sourcebook is especially welcome in that supportive tradition because it is designed to encourage and assist lawyers and bar associations to inquire and integrate the so-called environmental, social, and governance standards to their advisory services to stakeholders. I commend the editor of this volume for the astute selection of key documents that pull together the threads across environmental, social, governance, and human rights standards, and for her appreciation of the central importance of the UNGPs as the authoritative international standard based on the shared responsibilities of stakeholders. This Sourcebook is bound to become an invaluable contribution to this emerging field that aims to align a diversity of initiatives in a process of constant evolution of topics, doctrine, jurisprudence,

Foreword

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case law, evidence-based initiatives, and self-regulatory measures. Its identification of the importance of all sources of law, including hard law, soft law, and multi-stakeholder initiatives, which will continue developing and evolving as we move the conversation on business, human rights, and sustainability forward, is very perceptive.