



Franciscans International
A voice at the United Nations

55th Session of the UN Human Rights Council
Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on
human rights and the environment
6 March 2024

Delivered by Mr Blair Matheson

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Thank you, Chairperson,

Franciscans International would like to express our appreciation and thanks for your work, Mr. Special Rapporteur, during your time as mandate holder. We note your tireless efforts towards recognition of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, both at the Human Rights Council and at the UN General Assembly. We acknowledge and appreciate your openness in engaging with civil society during your tenure.

We continue to witness, with our local partners throughout the world, the adverse impacts of business activities and operations on the right to a healthy environment and other human rights. In parallel, we find State authorities prioritizing business interests, and failing to hold businesses accountable. States often fail to provide any recourse for affected individuals and communities. We echo your calls in support of an international legally binding instrument on business and human rights, and underscore the urgent need for States to uphold their obligation to respect and protect human rights from business abuses. With continued impunity, and without any real change to economic and development models and other systems, our future will be marred by further environmental degradation by businesses.

Chairperson,

We would like to take particular note that environmental degradation often leads to conflict, and in parallel, conflict furthers environmental degradation. We underscore the role that businesses, ranging from weapons manufactures to extractive industries, have in driving both conflict and violations of the right to a healthy environment. We hope that the issue of armed conflict and the right to a healthy environment, including as related to business enterprises, is taken up by the next mandate holder.

Thank you.