



**11th Session of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Working Group on
Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with Respect to Human Rights**

Opening Statement

20 October 2025

Delivered by Blair Matheson TSSF

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Mr. Chairperson,

I am speak on behalf of Franciscans International. We are part of the Treaty Alliance, ESCR-Net, and Feminists for a Binding Treaty.

Franciscans International has been engaged with the process since the establishment of the Intergovernmental Working Group, 11 years ago. Our commitment to the realization of a binding treaty stems directly from concerns raised by our partners around the world - what we experience and witness throughout UN mechanisms and processes.

Transnational corporations not only violate human rights, but are also involved in atrocity crimes. The arms industry has recorded record profits as a result of Israel's genocide in Gaza – with weapons and surveillance companies marketing their 'products' as battle-tested.

Fossil fuel corporations, extractive industries, and others profit while destroying the environment and aggravating climate change. Earlier this month, it was reported that a coalition of companies called on the EU to repeal its corporate sustainability due diligence directive, just months after the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion underscored State obligations in regard to regulation of private actors.

Companies are emboldened to disregard their responsibility to respect international human rights and humanitarian laws when their power and wealth grow in a context of impunity.

Accordingly, we appreciate efforts made by the Chair to move the process forward, including by holding intersessional meetings. We continue to call on the Chair to ensure that civil society is able to fully participate in the process, announcing the dates of intersessionals with sufficient notice or conducting them in hybrid format, and ensuring that information is shared in advance in a transparent manner so that we can adequately prepare.

We note the delayed transmission of the suggested redrafting of selected provisions that will be discussed this week. We also remain concerned over the continued participation of corporate actors throughout the process.

We urge the Chair to ensure that the concerns and voices, communities affected by transnational corporations are centered as we move forward towards a strong LBI that will serve to protect people and the planet.

Thank you for your consideration.