



**10th Session of the open-ended intergovernmental working group on
transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights**

**Opening Statement
16 December 2024**

*Delivered by Blair Matheson
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With every year that passes, the need for a binding treaty becomes even more urgent. Our partners around the world continue to call attention to and work to counter the impacts of transnational and other businesses on human rights and the environment.

In Mozambique, the exploitation of natural resources by transnational corporations has led to half a million displaced people, food insecurity, destruction of livelihoods, and environmental degradation. In Indonesia, West Papua's vast natural wealth is also being unsustainably exploited for palm oil, copper, gold, logging, and natural gas. Indigenous Peoples benefit little from these projects, but almost exclusively bear their negative impacts, including contamination of water sources and subsequent health issues. Indigenous Peoples in Guatemala contend with projects that are undertaken in the absence of free, prior and informed consent, and human rights defenders are often harassed and criminalized.

In considering these and other dire contexts, we impress upon the Chair and States that important elements have been removed from the 4th revised draft. The future LBI must have strong language related to the environment, climate change, situations of conflict, and protection of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, amongst others.

We are deeply concerned over continued corporate participation and undue influence in UN spaces, and most alarmingly, in this IGWG. This normalization has only led to a shutting out of those impacted and a weakening of processes meant to protect people and the planet. We urge the Chair to move forward in a manner that will lift and center the voices of communities on the ground.

Thank you for your consideration.