

**11th Session of the
open-ended intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business
enterprises with respect to human rights**

20 October - 24 October 2025

Opening Statement

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Thank you Mr. Chairperson,

I speak on behalf of ESCR-Net - a Network of over 280 members.

We are here to advance a Legally Binding Instrument to end the unchecked power of transnational corporations but we must be honest about what we have seen in 11 years of the process.

This long-awaited and hard-fought opportunity is being systematically targeted. Provisions that were designed to protect communities in conflict-affected areas, including those living under occupation, have been removed or diluted, despite repeated calls from States like Palestine, South Africa, Namibia, and others. References to international humanitarian law, to the protection of human rights defenders, and even to the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment, all are being slowly erased or softened under pressure.

This is not a coincidence. It is a strategy. And it mirrors what we see on the ground, in Palestine and across the Global South, where corporate capture of political-legislative-judicial-economic structures and gaps in international law are used to shield the powerful and sacrifice the vulnerable.

In Palestine, we know this danger well.

As documented in a recent report of the Special Rapporteur on Palestine, "From Economy of Occupation to Economy of Genocide", corporate actors are embedded in the machinery of apartheid and military aggression — from the pillaging of our resources to the poisoning of our air and water, to the fueling of warplanes that raze our neighborhoods and kill our people. For what? For profit.

These corporate actors are shamefully represented today in this room by the corporate lobby and there remains no binding mechanisms to stop them from interfering in policy-setting and perpetuation of violence. Instead, those calling for accountability are being smeared, silenced and sanctioned, but the pursuit of the truth for justice and accountability will continue. As affirmed by the ICJ in 2024 and 2025, States must not aid or assist unlawful situations, and must protect our rights. These principles must shape this treaty.

We call on States especially from the Global South to stand firm. Do not allow this treaty to become another tool of corporate greenwashing or legal evasion.

This intervention is not a plea for charity or exceptionalism. It is a demand to improve our corporate accountability laws and for the universal application of law. It's a demand for the world to stop enabling corporate profit from destruction.

Let this be the moment when this Working Group says: no more loopholes, no more voluntary codes, no more impunity.

Let this be the moment you codify justice — for people, for the planet, for Palestine.

Thank you.