

Time for constructive engagement from the EU and Member States on the content of the Revised Draft of the UN Binding Treaty

More than ever, citizens are mobilizing for action to stop climate change and corporate activities damaging our shared environment, health and future. Fires in the Amazon point to complicity of mining, agribusiness and the food industry in demand and supply of products and materials causing deforestation and violence against human rights defenders and indigenous peoples. These events show why an international agreement is needed to respond to the harm that transnational corporations and global value chains can cause, and to address the insufficient regulation by national governments of transnational corporate activity.

The [Inter-Governmental Working Group](#) (IGWG) gives us a timely opportunity to make progress with a legal instrument at the international level which can complement and reinforce national and regional rules, such as with the multiple developments regarding mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence.

This week, during the [fifth IGWG session](#), governments have the chance to negotiate a treaty that requires transnational corporations and businesses from every country to respect our planet and our human rights. There now is a Revised Draft on the table, which builds on State and expert inputs, and responds to the substantive concerns which the EU previously raised.

[600.000 European citizens](#), as well as the European Parliament, are demanding that the EU and its Member States should act in good faith and work to deliver a treaty to ensure that businesses respect human rights. The Commission cannot continue to rely on procedural pretexts (i.e. criticism of the process) to hide the fact that it fails to negotiate. Member States cannot go on hiding behind the Commission. We are looking to our Member States to take up leadership to develop common positioning on issues that are a priority for citizens.

European organizations advocating for the Treaty, comprised of human rights and environmental NGOs, trade unions and faith groups, want the EU and its Member States to develop their position on the Revised Draft in a transparent, inclusive process and participate constructively in this week's formal negotiation session.

The lack of substantive EU engagement in the UN Treaty process is in stark contrast with the EU's strong push for the expansion and enforcement of investor rights in bilateral agreements. This week in Vienna, EU Member states will play an active role in the Working Group of United Nations Commission on International Trade Law. Rather than further prioritising corporate interests over people's rights and the environment, the EU should invest that level of effort and engagement for protection against harmful business activities.

The Treaty process is moving forward, the number of actors supporting the Treaty process is growing both in the EU and globally. We believe that the European Commission, MEPs and Member States have valuable expertise and experience that will help to shape an effective binding treaty. The longer the EU and Member States stay out of the negotiations, the less influence they will have on the result; while the EU, Member States and European businesses will certainly be impacted by the course of discussions.

The participation of civil society has been both a driver and a strength of this process. Civil society must continue to be able to take an active part, as they are key to moving the process forward and securing an instrument focused on the rights of affected people. We expect that the EU and its Member States will champion civil society participation throughout an open and transparent treaty process.

The 5th IGWG session in October is a crucial next step in this process. We will be present as civil society in Geneva and will keep up the pressure on all States to carry on the work through 2020 and pursue the finalization and adoption of the Treaty without delay.

Signatories:

1. 11.11.11 (Belgium)
2. ActionAid France
3. Action Solidarité Tiers Monde (ASTM)
4. Afrikagrupperna (Sweden)
5. Amis de la Terre France (Friends of the Earth France)
6. Attac Austria
7. Bread for the World
8. BUND (Friends of the Earth Germany)
9. CAFOD
10. CCFD – Terre Solidaire
11. CIDSE (International family of Catholic social justice organisations)
12. CORE Coalition
13. DKA Austria
14. Clean Clothes Campaign
15. CNCD-11.11.11 (Centre National de Coopération au Développement – Belgique)
16. CorA Network on Corporate Accountability (Germany)
17. Corporations-Zero Tolerance
18. Ekumenická akademie/Ecumenical Academy (Czech Republic)
19. Entraide et Fraternité (Belgium)
20. Environmental Justice Foundation
21. European Coalition for Corporate Justice (ECCJ)
22. Collectif Éthique sur l'étiquette
23. European Environmental Bureau
24. Fairwatch (Italy)
25. FIAN Belgium
26. FIAN International
27. Finnwatch
28. Friends of the Earth Europe
29. Focus Association for Sustainable Development
30. Global Action (Denmark)
31. Global Justice Now
32. Global Policy Forum
33. Institute of Global Responsibility (IGO) – Poland
34. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
35. Jordens Vänner (Friends of the Earth Sweden)
36. Labour Behind the Label
37. Latinamerikagrupperna
38. Maan ystävät (Friends of the Earth Finland)
39. Mani Tese (Italy)
40. Medico International Germany
41. Milieudéfensie (Friends of the Earth Netherlands)
42. National Society of Conservationists (Friends of the Earth Hungary)
43. NaZemi (Czech Republic)
44. NeSoVe – Netzwerk Soziale Verantwortung
45. New Wind Association (Finland)
46. NOAH Friends of the Earth Denmark
47. Notre affaire à tous
48. Polish Institute for Human Rights and Business (PIHRB)
49. Pro Ethical Trade Finland
50. Pro Natura – Friends of the Earth Switzerland
51. Sherpa
52. SOMO (Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO))
53. Stop TTIP CETA Italia campaign
54. Südwind Austria
55. Transnational Institute (TNI)
56. Trócaire
57. TROCA (Portugal)
58. Védegylet Egyesület / Protect the Future Hungary
59. War on Want