

Open-ended intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights

Fifth session (14-18 October 2019)

Closing statement

This statement is made on behalf of WILPF and members¹ of the #Feminists4BindingTreaty. Our organisations also support the collective statement delivered by the Clean Clothes Campaign.

We welcome the progress in the negotiations of the binding Instrument and commend the commitment of you, Mr. Chair-Rapporteur, and your team to this process. We also welcome the fact that many States and experts have raised and provided concrete drafting suggestions on, *inter alia*, the importance of the integration of a gender dimension into the binding Instrument, the need for stronger provisions on the prevention of business-related human rights abuses in armed conflict-affected areas, including situations of occupation, for stronger provisions on the protection of human rights defenders, and on the need for terminology relating consultation with indigenous peoples to be aligned to the internationally recognised standards of free, prior and informed consent.

However, we reiterate that an Instrument that is gender transformative needs to go beyond addressing sexual harassment or sexual and gender-based violence. The drafting recommendations made by our group reflect feminist analysis that highlights lived experiences and perspectives, with an emphasis on women and gender issues as well as on marginalised voices generally. We put an emphasis on systemic and structural issues that perpetuate lack of accountability in relation to business-related human rights abuses and violations. In this regard, Mr. Chair-Rapporteur, we urge you to ensure that in the group of experts referred to in paragraph 1 (e) of the agreed recommendations of the Chair-Rapporteur, there be gender balance and gender expertise. And that women from affected communities, as experts of their own lived realities, be also invited to offer their expertise and advice on the draft text.

In closing, Mr. Chair-Rapporteur, we reiterate, once again, our call on all States that are committed to advance women's rights, to all States that have made commitments "to leave no one behind", particularly under SDG 5 on gender equality, to constructively engage in the future negotiations and to integrate gender analysis into your country's position on the draft Instrument. Corporate human rights abuse is a women's rights issue.

¹ ActionAid International, Anima Mundi Law Initiative, AWID (Association for Women's Rights in Development), CaL (Coalition of African Lesbians), CAWEE (Center for Accelerated Women's Empowerment), CELS (Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales, Argentina), Centre for Applied Legal Studies, DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New era), Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA Kenya), FIAN International, FIDH, Franciscans International, Gender and Development Network, Manushya Foundation, Altsean-Burma, NAPE (National Association of Professional Environmentalists), NAWAD (National Association for Women's Action in Development), PODER (Project on Organizing, Development, Education, and Research), SIHA Network - Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa, Womankind Worldwide, WILPF - Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.