**4TH OEIGWG ON TNCs AND OBEs**

**ORAL STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF ESCR-NET CAWG MEMBERS**

Thank you Mr. Chair for giving me the floor to address this distinguished gathering. I am speaking on behalf of the over 70 members of the Corporate Accountability Working Group (CAWG) of the ESCR-Net (International Network of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) spread across the world.

As key actors in this crucial process from the onset, we welcome the zero draft of the proposed binding treaty and the optional protocol. We also affirm our commitment to support an open, transparent and consultative process that will yield a robust and progressive treaty capable of providing accountability for all transnational corporations and other business entities regardless of their size, sector, location, ownership and structure. The primacy of human rights, which has been our rallying call, dialogue and the drive to enhance corporate accountability, should be the anchor on which this process and the eventual treaty stand.

As we proceed with these negotiations, we reiterate the need to ground the following at the center of the discussions in this session for purposes of enhancing the zero draft and protocol:

1. Adoption of stronger safeguards against corporate capture both during the process of treaty negotiation as well as implementation
2. Recognition of the central role of human rights defenders in this process as well as in the implementation of the treaty and consequently providing them full protection
3. Recognition of the vulnerabilities of indigenous peoples, the disproportionate impacts of business operations that they suffer and measures therefore to offer these communities adequate protection and remedies, as well as ensure the application of the free, prior, and informed consent standard
4. Recognition of business-related human rights abuses on women as articulated in various human rights norms and consequently, incorporation of a feminist and gender responsive lens in this process
5. Adoption of stronger protections against corporate human rights abuse in conflict affected areas.

We look forward to constructive negotiations this week as we collectively push this process forward.

I thank you.