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**Seventh session of the OIEGWG – Legally binding instrument on business and human rights  
Opening statement**

Thank you Mr. Chair – Rapporteur, and congratulations on your election

I deliver this statement on behalf of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH). As we open the week of negotiations, we would like to share 3 general observations:

**1<sup>st</sup> observation.** A decade after the adoption of the UNGPs, a lot of efforts have been made to better protect human rights in the context of economic activities, yet little has changed for those affected by corporate abuse. Access to justice for victims remains largely an illusion and, all too often, impunity stubbornly prevails. (It has become widely accepted that the Gaps, especially pillar 3 aren't able to fix the challenges that allow this situation to sustain.)

To answer this challenge means to seek to clarify the ambiguities and regulatory gaps left by the Guiding Principles and the state of international law. The LBI constitutes the strongest and most tangible avenue available to do so, specifically *because* it presents a reasonable level of detail and attempts to tackle the concrete legal and practical barriers that victims face. We urge states to protect and strengthen these crucial elements in the current draft treaty text.

**2<sup>nd</sup> observation.** We have come a long way since the adoption of resolution 26/9. Six sessions of negotiations; the engagement of over a hundred states, experts and civil society organisations from around the world. In parallel, the consensus has shifted, and more and more states and regional institutions are adopting mandatory norms on business and human rights. The natural outcome of all this work is to guarantee an international level playing field through the treaty, not supporting weak, vague alternatives, which are less ambitious than existing or proposed national and regional legislation.

**3<sup>rd</sup> observation.** (For the first time since the beginning of the process, you have the opportunity to accelerate the pace of discussions and enter into concrete negotiations.) The draft has improved over the years and taken into account many of the issues raised by different actors and is now stabilizing. It is a sound basis for negotiation, but should be further clarified and strengthened this week and in the coming months. We urge States to take this opportunity seriously and to engage with the draft's content, as well as to make efforts to strengthen the text. FIDH will provide specific textual suggestions to do so.