Dear Mr Chair,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the Irish Coalition for Human Rights, Trócaire, Oxfam Ireland, Christian Aid Ireland, the Irish Congress for Trade Unions, and our other members.

Our coalition is encouraged that the EU is increasing its engagement at this year’s session, based on the draft Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence directive. However, we are deeply disappointed that eight years into this process, the EU has still failed to develop a formal position on the UN Treaty and has not secured a mandate to negotiate. Ireland has also maintained a disappointing lukewarm position on the Treaty.

If regions legislate in an uncoordinated way and come up with diverging standards of conduct for companies, this could lead to an uneven patchwork of rules worldwide. Creating a more complex situation, new loopholes for companies to escape responsibility, and regulatory uncertainty. But most importantly it will not protect people and the planet from human rights and environmental harms.

Furthermore, while the CSDD Directive has yet to be finalised by the EU’s institutions, the draft from the European Commission contains significant shortcomings. For example, it will cover only 1% of EU businesses and their value chains, and barriers to access to justice remain unaddressed.

A UN Treaty could fill one of the major gaps left by the EU directive on access to justice for victims, for example, by setting international standards on applicable law in article 9, which is a major barrier for communities who seek justice through transnational court cases against companies.

As such, it is important the EU and other states support strengthening Article 9. It is most important that the victim has a choice regarding the jurisdiction that will hear their case, and as such the LBI should explicitly offer them the choice of jurisdiction that shall hear their claim.

Thank you