

**Video Statement on the occasion of the first session of the working group on
a legally binding instrument on transnational corporations and other
business enterprises with respect to human rights**

Presented on Monday 6 July at 10:00

Distinguished Members of the working group, Representatives of civil society and of business, Dear colleagues,

Since 1948 when the Universal Declaration on Human Rights was adopted, the international human rights regime has been continually evolving.

Over time an increasing awareness of the role that non-State actors play with regard to human rights has emerged, leading to calls for the international human rights regime to address new challenges and risks.

The need to extend international human rights protection more effectively into the private sphere has become increasingly evident. The 2011 endorsement by the Human Rights Council of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights was an important step.

Member States have initiated this open-ended intergovernmental process to elaborate a legally binding instrument on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights as the next step.

In our view, there is no conflict between advocating for implementation of the UN Guiding Principles and supporting international legal developments to further enhance protection and accountability in the business context.

To the contrary, each of these initiatives should be viewed as positive steps in the progressive development of international human rights standards.

For our part, my office fully supports all constructive efforts to enhance the protection of human rights in the context of business activities and to ensure accountability and access to effective remedies where rights have been abused.

I encourage all stakeholders to build progressively on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and all existing human rights instruments.

Achieving these ends will require a spirit of consensus and an unwavering commitment to strengthening the protection of human rights for all people in all circumstances.

I wish you every success in your important deliberations over the coming days.

Thank you