

Global unions urge progress towards a strong UN Treaty on business and human rights

The 12th session of the UN open-ended intergovernmental working group on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights (IGWG) to discuss the draft binding treaty will take place on 12-16 October 2026 at the UN in Geneva.

The global labour movement welcomes efforts to advance negotiations and calls for a new draft that secures justice and accountability for workers in global supply chains.

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and Global Union Federations welcome the extensive work undertaken by the Chair-Rapporteur, the legal experts and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights between the negotiations rounds

The proposed redrafting of Articles by Chair Rapporteurs represent a genuine effort to find compromise and move negotiations forward. The proposals include positive elements for the labour movement, including on mutual legal assistance, consistency with international law and the personal scope of the instrument. However concerns reminds about provisions provisions on institutional arrangements and material scope, among others.

As arm conflicts proliferates and multilateralism face strong pressure, the Treaty process is an opportunity to strengthen international cooperation with an objective to establish binding rules that protect workers and communities from corporate abuse and prevent corporate capture of the State and public institutions, including through undue corporate influence over public policymaking, legislation, regulation and the enforcement of human rights obligation. At a time when far-right and harmful corporate interests are advancing deregulation, transnational companies continue to exploit gaps between national laws and international responsibilities across complex supply chains to evade accountability; this cannot continue.

“We welcome the Chair-Rapporteur’s efforts to find compromise and move these negotiations forward; the next draft must preserve the strongest protections for workers and other rights-holders. A strong, fair and enforceable Treaty must close the clear normative gaps that allow corporations to escape accountability and ensure that workers and communities – majority of whom are in the global south - can obtain justice when business activities cause, or contribute to human rights abuses.” (Luc Triangle)

Key aspects the treaty must address

The ITUC has been clear about the essential components for the binding treaty:

- **Comprehensive coverage of human rights:** The treaty must cover all internationally recognised human rights, including labour rights. Freedom of association, the right to organise and safe working conditions are fundamental, not optional.
- **Applicability across all businesses:** All companies, regardless of size or sector, must be held accountable. Exempting certain businesses leaves millions of workers unprotected and sets a dangerous precedent.
- **Extraterritorial regulation:** Victims of corporate human rights abuses, particularly in transnational contexts, must have access to justice wherever the abuse occurred. States must hold corporations accountable for actions abroad, ensuring avenues for redress.
- **Human rights due diligence:** Companies must adopt and implement human rights due diligence policies. Identifying, preventing and addressing human rights risks before they

materialise is crucial. Businesses must engage proactively to prevent abuses, not react only after media exposure.

- **Strong enforcement mechanisms:** A treaty without enforcement is meaningless. It must establish a robust international monitoring and enforcement system. A patchwork of voluntary standards has proven inadequate—legally binding regulation is now needed.

At this 12th session, the global labour movement renews its call for a legally binding instrument that delivers justice and accountability for millions of workers in global supply chains. To support meaningful participation and the next stage of negotiations, we call also for:

- Further consultation with civil society organisations before the redrafting exercise in early 2027; and
- Publication of the next draft earlier than usual.

The global labour movement stands ready, together with Civil Society, to engage constructively in the next phase of negotiations.

- **Draft instrument**

- [Updated draft legally binding instrument with the textual proposals submitted by States during the ninth, tenth, and eleventh sessions of the OEIGWG](#)
- [Table indicating where elements of the 3rd revised draft may be found in the updated draft legally binding instrument](#)

- **ITUC latest position.**

- [Why the Business and Human Rights Treaty must prioritise workers' rights](#) by Luc Triangle.