Women’s human rights, environment and development organizations, and the Treaty Alliance have closely followed the IGWG debates on TNCs and human rights. We urge the need to include a critical human rights and gender analysis on the content and scope of the future UN binding treaty.

The impacts of unregulated corporate power have huge implications on how people live and work. At every step women are more affected.

The current context of trade liberalization and global supply chains push more women into precarious employment, export-oriented zones, informal and invisible work, that deepen gender, ethnic and class segregation. When states give private sector responsibility for public services, these services become less accessible to women. The agreements made between states and TNCs come with provisions such as the investor-state dispute settlement system, which protect TNCs, erode state sovereignty and compromise commitments to human rights.

There is a correlation between corporate power and violence against women. Militarization and conflicts over natural resources particularly affect women, indigenous communities and ethnic minorities.

Women Human Rights Defenders are at the forefront of struggles to challenge harmful corporate activities, labour exploitation and to defend the environment. Mining and extractive industries are the most lethal for defenders, who face criminalisation, stigmatisation, sexual and gender-based violence and intimidation of family members.

TNCs activities exclude women from negotiations and decisions that affect them. These activities that take place with the collusion of the state make it harder for women, indigenous peoples and minorities to struggle for equality and justice.

Our recommendations in this context are threefold:

1. The IGWG 3rd session should include a high-level panel with women, women’s movements and women human rights defenders from affected communities.

2. Ensure the Treaty process has an ongoing strong and meaningful consultation with communities, women, human rights defenders and affected groups.

3. Ensure that the treaty body is in coherence with other human rights bodies, taking into cognizance the core conventions on human rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and core ILO conventions.