

Ottawa, 21 November 2024

The Honourable Mary Ng, M.P.  
Minister of Export Promotion, International Trade and Economic Development

**Regarding Canada's support for a Business and Human Rights Treaty**

Dear Minister Ng,

On behalf of the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability (CNCA), we are writing to call on your government to support progress in [upcoming talks](#) in Geneva towards an international treaty on business and human rights.

Formed in 2005, the Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability (CNCA) unites 41 human rights, environmental, labour, faith and solidarity groups, collectively representing millions of Canadians, to advocate for federal laws and regulations that will ensure Canadian corporations respect human rights and the environment when doing business around the world.

In our view, Canada in particular has an important role to play and duty to act in these talks, given the significant number of extractive industries [headquartered in this country](#) and extensive global supply chains associated with [social](#) and [environmental](#) impacts overseas.

Unlocking progress towards a new treaty would also go a significant way towards delivering [on your mandate](#) to ensure “that Canadian businesses operating abroad do not contribute to human rights abuses.”

Human rights abuses and environmental destruction connected to corporate activity continue around the world. In large part this is due to a lack of legal liability for transnational corporations, including those based in Canada, engaging in such activity. Obstacles in access to justice and remedy continue to be a problem for individuals and communities in many countries.

These upcoming talks represent a global acknowledgement that more concrete action is needed - including changes in our legislative systems to ensure that national and transnational corporations respect human rights and are held legally accountable if they do not. Top of the list for Canada would include passing new [mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence legislation](#) and [strengthening the powers](#) of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE).

Companies with responsible business practices have nothing to fear from a strengthened human rights-based regulatory framework. Indeed, many do already respect human rights and

it's only fair that others be held to the same standards. A clear and binding international human rights framework related to corporate activity creates equal standards and a level playing field, enabling corporations to compete fairly and ensuring States around the world avoid a regulatory 'race to the bottom'. The European Union has recently moved forward with new [legislation](#) to hold corporations accountable for their impacts around the world, showing the viability of such measures.

We therefore urge you to demonstrate your strong commitment to Canada's existing human rights obligations, and send a clear and supportive message to those affected by corporate human rights abuses and violations, by:

- Working with other States to ensure talks finally progress towards formal negotiations on a legally binding instrument starting in 2025;
- Supporting language suggestions in upcoming talks that prioritize the experiences and demands of communities affected by corporate abuse or violations, as the CNCA previously recommended [in 2022](#);
- Before treaty talks begin, committing to mandatory [human rights and environmental due diligence legislation](#) that holds Canadian corporations accountable for their impacts abroad;
- Before treaty talks begin, committing to finally equip the CORE with the [necessary independence, powers and resources](#) to provide meaningful remedies and prevent further human rights abuses.

The adoption of a legally binding instrument can help stop human rights violations and protect people and our planet by putting an end to corporate impunity. Our members across the country believe this is an urgent priority to address the multiple global challenges we are facing. We would be pleased to provide you with further information and look forward to constructive dialogue on these issues.

Yours sincerely,

*Shane Moffatt*

Shane Moffatt  
Director, Canadian Network on Corporate Accountability

cc:

- Mélanie Joly MP, Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Steven Guilbeault MP, Minister of Environment and Climate Change
- Ryan Williams MP, Conservative Trade Critic
- Simon-Pierre Savard-Tremblay MP, Bloc Québécois Trade Critic
- Heather McPherson MP, NDP Foreign Affairs and International Development Critic
- Mike Morrice MP, Green Party