

FINLAND

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Interactive dialogue: Questions to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises, Mr. John Ruggie

Mr. President,

Finland fully aligns itself with the comments and questions made earlier by the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union. Further, we would like to take this opportunity to make following additional remarks and questions.

The primary responsibility for the protection and promotion of human rights rests with the state and its representatives. The international community has its own role to promote capacities of national duty bearers and rights holders as well. However, the role of the private sector is increasingly important especially when it comes to the realization of rights of labour, consumers and local residents, like indigenous peoples. Private corporations operate in a global environment and some public services are mandated to be taken care of by private actors. This highlights, among other things, the importance of international codes of conduct that have been voluntarily created and adopted by corporations themselves; the codes of conduct created under the ILO and the OECD, as well as the Global Compact set up under the auspices of the UN.

The role of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises is pivotal in bringing together the various initiatives and actors. Finland would like to commend the excellent work of Mr. Ruggie that has, among other things, provided the basis for a global consensus on the general framework within which this issue can be dealt with. States bear the responsibility for the protection and implementation of human rights, private corporations are obligated to respect the law, and, in the case of breaches, rights-holders have adequate access to effective remedy. We would also like to thank Mr. Ruggie for his thought-provoking report, including his recommendations for a proper response to the current economic crisis, which merit careful study.

We would like to ask the Special Representative to explore possibilities to develop criteria for a grievance mechanism in case where the national legal, protection and monitoring mechanisms are inadequate. In doing so it would be interesting to hear more about the experiences gained thus far from arrangements where several companies share a grievance mechanism provided by a third party.

Thank you Mr. President.