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**United Nations Human Rights Council
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Agenda Item 3**

Joint Oral Statement by International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme (FIDH), Franciscans International, and Coopération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité (CIDSE)

in the Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the Working Group on business and human rights and the Special Rapporteur on the right to health

ENHANCING STANDARDS, ENSURING REMEDY: THE WAY FORWARD IN BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

11 June 2014

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Mr President,

On behalf of the signatories of this joint statement I thank the Working Group on Business and Human Rights for its report and addendums and for their work over the last three years. It has been six years since the adoption of the UN Framework "Protect, Respect and Remedy" and three since the adoption of the Guiding Principles. This is an important opportunity to take stock of the progress made but also of the obstacles and challenges faced in advancing the respect of human rights by business enterprises globally.

We note that although there are some developments in the uptake of the Guiding Principles at international and regional levels, unfortunately - in practice - we see little progress on the ground. Effective implementation of the "smart mix" approach could reduce the risk of human rights abuses, yet States have been slow to develop national frameworks for implementation on business and human rights, and little has been done in terms of revising policies, legislation and enforcement. Business' uptake of the Guiding Principles is limited and has not yet been translated into effective prevention and remediation of the actual human rights impacts of their activities.

Victims of abuse such as those in recent tragedies in Bangladesh, South Africa or Turkey continue to struggle to obtain remedy. Those acting in defence of the environment, communities and workers' rights are increasingly more vulnerable to reprisals. Communities and individuals on the ground continue to suffer from environmental degradation, social conflict, inequality, landlessness, precarious working conditions, discrimination, violence and denial of access to justice and remedies. These facts are serious signs that stronger regulatory and accountability mechanisms are needed without any further delay.

Mr President,

This is the moment to take decisive steps to protect victims and prevent further abuses. This is also the moment to demonstrate full commitment to address the negative human rights impact of unregulated economic globalization and unscrupulous business.

We call the Council to continue building on the normative and institutional progress made by the Guiding Principles, and take decisive action to start a process towards the elaboration of a legally binding instrument in the area of business and human rights.

We would like to ask the WGBHR if they support the need for a legally binding instrument in the area of business and human rights.

Thank you.

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