GIFA Oral Statement
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July 7, 15H-18H

Panel IV: Scope: Human rights to be covered under the Instrument

Thank you Chairperson. I am speaking on behalf of the International Baby Food Action Network and the Pesticide Action Network Asia, both members of the Treaty Alliance.

As highlighted by human rights experts as well as by our networks engaged with communities on the ground, corporate abuses affect the whole range of human rights defined in the core human rights instruments, from civil and political to economic, social and cultural rights.

Our organizations have documented a great number of cases in which people's health has been negatively affected, children's development has been jeopardized, food and water have been contaminated and natural resources depleted by activities of business enterprises. Their activities, which include the production and use of highly hazardous chemicals and pesticides, do not only cause direct harm to populations and damage the environment. They also lead to long-term negative impacts on health that are sometimes irreversible and intergenerational.

Misleading marketing causes long-term effects on people's health and development. For example, when baby food companies promote their breastmilk substitutes in violation with the WHO Code, they undermine breastfeeding optimal practices, therefore exposing infants and young children to a greater risk of mortality and compromising their future health, growth and wellbeing.

We would like to reiterate that all human rights are universal and inalienable as well as interdependent and indivisible. A treaty that would cover only a narrow scope of human rights would be meaningless to the affected people. Therefore, the future treaty should incorporate all human rights contained in the core human rights conventions as well as the relevant ILO conventions, in particular those related to labour rights, maternity protection, rights of indigenous people, and agricultural and migrant workers. Thank you.