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Interactive dialogue with the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises

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Mr. President,

APG23 thanks the Working Group for its extensive report on the lessons learned from the coronavirus disease pandemic and the moving forward.

As a civil society organization directly engaged in human rights issues both through international advocacy actions and on the ground in more than 40 Countries worldwide, APG23 has witnessed how the pandemic and its tragic consequences at all levels have particularly affected the most vulnerable peoples and communities.

Indeed, such peoples have been further exposed to human rights abuses and violations, disclosing how the impact of business operations can be harmful if not encompassed and ruled by effective, demanding and human rights-led international frameworks, to which adequate and coherent domestic measures should be aligned. In this regard, the adoption of an international legally binding instrument "to regulate, in international human rights law, the activities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises"¹ is strongly and urgently needed.

The effects of the pandemic have fully revealed the unsustainable structural limits of the current development model and the related business practices, too often driven by the only profit-seeking at any cost. The unresolved structural unbalances of the global economic and financial governance have been amplified by the socio-economic consequences of the pandemic, with the worrying increasing of inequalities at all levels and the shrunk fiscal space of most developing countries, overly hindered by the external debt burden and unfair international fiscal and trade regimes.

We cannot move forward nor face the next systemic emergencies and socio-economic crises without reframing this development model, by concretely putting people and planet first with human rights and environmental protection at the core of our economies and business practices, primarily within the framework of the incoming recovery plans.

Thank you!

¹ Resolution 26/9 of the Human Rights Council.