

Global South warns EU will fail workers and environment worldwide if it walks back on key corporate accountability law

18 February 2025

We, the undersigned human rights, environmental, and social justice organisations from the Global South and other countries beyond the European Union (EU), are deeply concerned by reports that the European Commission may reopen the EU's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), potentially reducing the number of companies that will be subject to it, the scope of the due diligence obligations, and removing its mandatory nature. This law has set a new global standard and has the potential to transform the global economy and ensure that multinational corporations respect human rights and the environment in our countries. We urge the European Commission to discard this option and commit to a full and timely implementation of the CSDD.

For years, civil society from the Global South and other non-EU countries have called for the adoption of mandatory due diligence laws that oblige multinational corporations to respect human rights and the environment across their global value chains, and hold them accountable for the failure to do so. We have seen firsthand how voluntary initiatives have failed to end business practices that harm people and the environment, particularly in our countries. While the CSDDD is not perfect, it is a unique opportunity to expand mandatory due diligence laws across the world. Key provisions—such as the binding nature of due diligence, the inclusion of civil liability and administrative sanctions, and the coverage of adverse impacts throughout the value chain beyond tier-1 suppliers—are essential to safeguarding workers and the environment.

When it committed to this groundbreaking legislation, the EU positioned itself as a world leader. It demonstrated that it was committed to shifting the global economy toward a model that prioritised shared prosperity and respect for human rights and the environment. Even before it came into force, many of us have been able to leverage the CSDDD to engage with businesses in our countries, leading to better practices on the ground. Others use it as a model to follow when we advocate for better protections for workers and the environment in our own countries. If the EU delays or casts doubts on the CSDDD, its potential to incentivise changes in business practices and to serve as a standard for other jurisdictions will be lost, to the detriment of people and the planet.

We are shocked by the opaque and hurried process through which the decision to reconsider the CSDDD is being made. It is unacceptable that so far this process has excluded the voices of communities and civil society from the Global South and other non-EU countries - often those most affected by harmful business practices. This stands in stark contrast to the extensive consultative process that led to the CSDDD's adoption, which incorporated input from over 174,000 persons and civil society organisations from outside the EU. It is also troubling that the CSDDD is being reopened before its implementation has begun, denying us the opportunity to assess its impact.

Contrary to the message spread by some corporations, delaying or watering down the CSDDD will not enhance economic growth or international trade. On the contrary, it will only perpetuate a status quo in which companies are incentivised to turn a blind eye on the harms caused by their operations and value chains. The competitiveness of the European economy should not rely on business practices that profit from social and environmental exploitation in our countries.

Reopening the CSDDD through this opaque process would be a deep disappointment for communities in the Global South and other countries outside the EU. But regardless of the EU's ultimate decision, our organisations remain steadfast in our commitment to advocating for corporate accountability in global value chains, and for the protection of the environment and workers worldwide.

1. Aaprabasi Mahila Kamdar Samuha, Nepal
2. Action Labor Rights (ALR), Myanmar
3. Action Mines Guinée, Conakry-Guinea
4. African Coalition for Corporate Accountability (ACCA), South Africa
5. AMDH, Morocco
6. Anukatham Unorganised Workers union, India
7. Association "Novi put", Bosnia and Herzegovina
8. ASTRA-Anti trafficking action, Serbia
9. Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity- BCWS, Bangladesh
10. Bangladesh Garments & Industrial Workers Federation- BGIWF, Bangladesh
11. Bangladesh Revolutionary Garments Workers Federation-, Bangladesh
12. Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyzstan
13. Brigada Callejera de Apoyo a la Mujer, E.M. A.C., Mexico
14. Buliisa Initiative for Rural Development Organisation (BIRUDO), Uganda
15. Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions (CATU), Cambodia
16. Center for Alliance of Labor and Human Rights (CENTRAL), Cambodia
17. Center for Trade Union and Human Rights (CTUHR), Philippines
18. Clean Clothes Campaign East Asia Coalition, East Asia
19. Core Care Africa, Cameroon
20. Dabindu Collective, Sri Lanka
21. Dynamique des femmes des mines DYFEM-RDC, République démocratique du Congo RDC
22. Ecumenical Institute for Labor Education and Research (EILER), Philippines
23. Enda Lead Afrique Francophone, Senegal

24. Endorois Welfare Council, Kenya
25. Fairtrade Africa, Africa (several countries)
26. Fairtrade Network of Asia & Pacific Producers, Singapore (several countries)
27. Federación de Asociaciones de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos, Latinoamérica
28. Federasi Serikat Buruh, Indonesia
29. Free Trade Zones & General Services Employees Union, Sri Lanka
30. Fundación Libera contra la trata de Personas y la Esclavitud en Todas sus Formas, Chile
31. Global Rights, Nigeria
32. Green Advocates International, Liberia
33. GSBI - Gabungan Serikat Buruh Indonesia (The center of Indonesian Labor Struggle), Indonesia
34. Home Based Women Workers Federation, Pakistan
35. HomeNet International, Global - Network of 71 organisations across 30 countries
36. Human Rights and Development Foundation, Thailand
37. Initiative for Social and Economic Rights, Uganda
38. Instituto Cordilheira, Brazil
39. Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU), Philippines
40. La Coordinadora Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Pequeños(as) Productores(as) y Trabajadores(as) de Comercio Justo (CLAC), Latin America (several Countries)
41. Labour Education Foundation, Pakistan
42. Legal and Human Rights Centre, Tanzania
43. Ligue Burundaise des Droits de l'Homme ITEKA, Burundi
44. Lumière Synergie pour le Développement, Senegal
45. MAP Foundation, Thailand
46. Movimento Nacional de Direitos Humanos, Brazil
47. National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF), Bangladesh
48. Observatoire des droits de l'homme au Rwanda (ODHR), Rwanda
49. Ofure Centre for Peace and Development, Nigeria
50. Organisation Guinéenne de Défense des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen (OGDH), Conakry-Guinea
51. Organisation Nationale des Droits de l'Homme, Senegal
52. Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program (OKUP), Bangladesh
53. Plataforma Chilena de la Sociedad Civil sobre Derechos Humanos y Empresas, Chile
54. Plataforma de Sociedad Civil sobre Empresas y Derechos Humanos de Perú (PSCEDH), Peru
55. Plataforma Latinoamericana sobre Empresas y Derechos Humanos, Latinoamérica
56. Plataforma WFTO Ecuador, Ecuador
57. Plataforma WFTO Peru, Peru
58. Proyecto de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales (ProDESC), México
59. Proyecto sobre Organización, Desarrollo, Educación e Investigación (PODER), México
60. Rights education and development centre (READ), India
61. Social Awareness and Voluntary Education, India
62. Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI) Uganda., Uganda

63. Tejiendo Redes Infancia en América Latina y el Caribe, México y LAC
64. The Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights, Tunisia
65. Trade Union Rights Centre, Indonesia
66. Uganda Consortium on Corporate Accountability, Uganda
67. Visayas Human Development Agency Inc., Philippines
68. Women Forum for Women in Nepal (WOFOWON), Nepal
69. Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), Global
70. Women in Struggle for Employment, Empowerment and Emancipation (Women Wise 3), Philippines
71. Workers Assistance Center (WAC), Philippines
72. Workers Hub For Change (WH4C), Malaysia
73. Workers Rights Watch, Kenya
74. World Fair Trade Organization Africa & Middle East
75. World Fair Trade Organization Latin America, Latin America

