



THE PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
TO THE
UNITED NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
IN GENEVA

December 27, 2023

Pichamon Yeophantong

Chair-Rapporteur of the Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises

Geneva, Switzerland

Ian Fry

Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of climate change

Geneva, Switzerland

David R. Boyd

Special Rapporteur on the issue of human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment

Geneva, Switzerland

Marcos A. Orellana

Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes

Geneva, Switzerland

Pedro Arrojo-Agudo

Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation

Geneva, Switzerland

Dear Special Procedures Mandate Holders,

Please find enclosed the U.S. response to your letter dated June 26, 2023.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Branka Bell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Branka Bell
Acting Deputy Permanent Representative
Human Rights Delegation

U.S. response to request for comment on U.S. businesses funding of Saudi Aramco

Thank you for your June 26 letter regarding businesses and their obligations and commitments related to climate change. We greatly value your view on this and other issues.

With respect to the series of questions raised in your correspondence, we would begin by noting that the United States works to advance human rights issues across all business sectors by engaging bilaterally, multilaterally, and via multi-stakeholder initiatives to leverage the unique resources of the public, private, and civil society sectors. We are committed to implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UN Guiding Principles).

We are also working to update and revitalize the United States' National Action Plan on Responsible Business Conduct (RBC). This provides the opportunity to deepen the conversation about responsible business conduct by highlighting best practices; enable stakeholders to make recommendations to the U.S. government on how to incentivize these practices; and develop collaborative approaches to emerging and critical issues in the RBC space. Responsible business conduct includes strengthening transparent and accountable business practices, including through conducting effective human rights and environmental due diligence, mitigating human rights and labor abuses through monitoring and verifying value chains, and identifying and addressing areas for improvement with the help of stakeholders.

As a general matter, transnational corporations do not have obligations under international human rights law. Nevertheless, the United States strongly supports accountability for corporate wrongdoing, regardless of who is affected, and implements that commitment through its domestic legal and regulatory regime, as well as its deep and ongoing engagement with governments, businesses, and NGOs in initiatives to address these concerns globally. The U.S. supports such accountability through a variety of mechanisms, initiatives, and fora, including implementation of the UN Guiding Principles and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on Responsible Business Conduct Guidelines.

The United States is committed to the promotion and protection of all human rights, including as they relate to the climate. We believe that a healthy environment supports the well-being and dignity of people around the world and the full enjoyment of all human rights. However, we note that a right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment has not yet been established as a matter of customary international law; treaty law does not yet provide for such a right; and there is no legal relationship between such a right and existing international law.

For specific questions related to the practices of the business entities noted in your letter, we would recommend contacting those entities directly.