

# **OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises must be improved**

## **Joint statement from a Seminar in Yaoundé, Cameroon, 28 – 30 January 2008**

From 28.-30.1.2008, 35 representatives of civil society organisations from Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Liberia, Nigeria, Chad, France and Germany gathered in Yaoundé, Cameroon, to take part in a seminar on the corporate accountability of multinational enterprises. The seminar was organized by Bread for the World, MISEREOR and OECD Watch. Its main topics included the questions: "How can we hold corporations accountable for human rights violations ?" and "How can we make the best use of existing international instruments for corporate responsibility and accountability?" A particular focus in this context was placed on the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

The participants of the seminar have all been involved in work on extractive industries - such as oil, gas and mining, or in work in other sectors, such as rubber or palm oil. All participants are concerned with and working to avoid, repair or redress the negative impact of such business activities on local communities and their development, especially the negative impact on human rights and on other social and environmental standards.

The participants emphasised the need for an authoritative and binding instrument to hold multinational enterprises accountable for environmental, social and human rights abuses. Such an instrument was seen as one means to be able to more effectively protect the rights of local communities affected by multinational companies operations and activities.

The participants also strongly recommended that governments in host countries as well as home countries take concrete and tangible actions to hold companies to account for their activities in all countries in which they operate.

Against this background, the participants analysed the effectiveness of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and made recommendations for improved and more transparent implementation of the OECD Guidelines.

National Contact Points (NCPs) are crucial for implementing the OECD Guidelines. This must be reflected in their structure. Participants of the OECD Seminar in Yaoundé therefore ask National Contact Points, the Investment Committee of the OECD, Parliaments in OECD and adhering countries, as well as the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on business and human rights to implement and support the following demands and recommendations:

- NCPs must be **independent** from the economic interests of the national government. The NCP should not be part of the organisational structure of the government agency responsible for the promotion of business and foreign direct investment.
- NCPs need a credible and transparent structure of **accountability**. A **supervising committee**, such as the one recently established by the UK NCP, or a structure similar to the Dutch NCP or an NCP that is structured along the model proposed by OECD Watch, should be established.
- NCPs should guarantee that the **views of NGOs and civil society** are taken into account. Appropriate mechanisms should be put in place to allow for **NGO participation** in the work of NCPs. Experiences from multi-stakeholder bodies, such as the **Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI)** or the Kimberly process Certification scheme, and from **peer review** mechanisms should be taken into account.
- NCPs must be **well equipped**. They must have the **resources** as well as the **capacity** to carry out their task of resolving cases. This involves mediation, the investigation of cases and the issuing of a final statement.
- NCPs must put in place mechanisms to effectively **monitor** the implementation of statements issued as an outcome of the complaints procedure and thus ensure the agreements reached are put into practice. Monitoring should include a review process involving all stakeholders concerned, including civil society.
- Adequate steps should be taken to raise **awareness** and strengthen governments and civil society organizations in host countries to use the OECD Guidelines to mediate complaints about abuses by multinational enterprises.

On behalf of the participants of the seminar,

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Green Advocates, Liberia

Honoré Ndoumbe  
FOCARFE, Cameroon

Father John Patrick Ngoyi  
Justice Development and Peace Commission,  
Nigeria

Jean Claude Katende  
ASADHO, DR Congo

27. March 2008

## List of participants of the seminar in Yaoundé

Name	Organisation	Country
Abba Ayemi	CSCR - Centre for Social and Corporate Responsibility	Nigeria
Alfred Brownell	Green Advocates	Liberia
Amuli Mwanuka	RAPY – Réseau des Associations Autochtones Pygmées du Congo	DR Congo
Arnaud Ngarédjimi Ngarmian	BELACD de Doba	Chad
Augustine Toe	National Justice and Peace Commission	Liberia
Axel Müller	SNJP – Service National Justice et Paix	Cameroon
Banat Mamout	CEFOD - Centre d'Étude et de Formation pour le Développement	Chad
Boika Barthélémy	CEDEN/COD	DR Congo
Boniface Dumpe	CSCR - Centre for Social and Corporate Responsibility	Nigeria
Birgit Morgenrath	Rheinisches JournalistInnenbüro	Germany
Brice Mackosso	Justice et Paix Pointe Noire	Congo-Brazzaville
Christian Mounzeo	RTPDH – Rencontre pour la Paix et les Droits de l'Homme	Congo-Brazzaville
Cornelia Heydenreich	Germanwatch/ OECD Watch	Germany
Delphine Djiraibe	CSAPR - Comité de Suivi à l'Appel à la Paix et à la Réconciliation	Chad
Djetarem Mianyo Agathange	CREMP	Chad
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Dupleix Kuenzob	WDYP/DMJ- World Dynamics of Young People/Dynamique Mondiale des Jeunes	Cameroon
Elisabeth Strohscheidt	Misereor	Germany
Emmanuel Umpula	ACIDH – Action Contre l'Impunité pour les Droits Humains	DR Congo
Firmin Semleung Lang	FOCARFE – Fondation Camérounaise d' Actions Rationalisées et de Formation sur l'Environnement	Cameroon
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Martin Petry	Bread for the World	Germany
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Nadji Nelambaje	CPPL - Commission Permanent Pétrole Local	Chad
Pierre Mboka	PWYP Cameroon	Cameroon
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Valery Nodem	RELUFA - Réseau de Lutte Contra la Faim au Cameroun	Cameroon
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