



CSR WORLDWIDE WEEK

THE NETHERLANDS, 3 - 10 NOVEMBER, 2004

A call for globally accountable business

Preamble

We, the Civil Society Organisation and trade union representatives from many regions across the globe, are united by our shared vision of a sustainable and an equitable world. Our group feels a sense of urgency in bringing to the Conference a call for action, and outlines below, recommendations for the EU to act upon. The CSR agenda needs to demonstrate its credibility globally, particularly in the developing country context.

We urge a move from words to action! The time has come for EU Member States, Governments, and EU Corporations to act upon their good intentions.

We oppose the abdication of State responsibilities towards guaranteeing rights as also any corporate action that subverts such responsibilities. Alone, voluntary initiatives are wholly insufficient to achieve a sustainable and equitable world.

Our recommendations to the EU Member States:

- The EU must ensure implementation and enforcement of existing corporate responsibility and accountability initiatives, notably the OECD Guidelines and ILO Tripartite Declaration.
- The EU Member States should endorse and promote the UN Norms on the Responsibilities of Transnational Corporations and Other Business Enterprises with regards to Human Rights.
- Stakeholders, particularly those from developing countries, should be equal partners and have direct influence on the development and implementation of the CSR strategies and operations. Therefore, the EU should enable Civil Society Organisations to empower those stakeholders most vulnerable in the value chain.
- Lack of accessible, timely and relevant information about corporate practices at the international, national and local level is a major impediment to achieving sustainability. Hence, it is imperative that the EU Member States ensure such stakeholder rights.
- The EU Member States as significant consumers should demonstrate leadership. This implies setting social, environmental, labour and human rights criteria for public procurement, government subsidies, trade promotion and export credit agencies.
- The EU should not shift the responsibility to achieve CSR solely to consumers. Although consumers play an important role, effective CSR requires active involvement of governments in the protection of the interests and the rights of consumers.
- In harmonising national and international law the highest available standard on social and environmental norms must be maintained. The EU should not permit corporate lobbying for the lowering of social and environmental standards.

- The EU should develop and reinforce mechanisms to hold EU corporations accountable and assure redress for affected stakeholders of corporate activities, especially those stakeholders outside of the EU.

Our involvement and commitment to the CSR agenda is contingent on action by the EU on the aforementioned recommendations.

Before mentioned points represent and reaffirm our commitment to the subject of the conference. Any effort to enhance competitiveness of the economies of the European Union should not compromise measures improving sustainable development and poverty eradication.

This statement is endorsed by the CSR Worldwide Week network, the Dutch CSR Platform (www.mvo-platform.nl) and other civil society organisations participating in this Conference

African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC), South Africa
 All India Council of Unilever Unions, India
 Amnesty International
 Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC), Hong Kong, China
 Business Watch Indonesia (BWI), Indonesia
 CEDEM, Chile
 Centre for Education and Communication (CEC), India
 Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO), The Netherlands
 CIVA Innovation Management, South Africa
 Consumentenbond, The Netherlands
 Dutch Coffee Coalition, The Netherlands
 Frente Auténtico del Trabajo (FAT), Mexico
 Fundación Vamos, Mexico
 Germanwatch, Germany
 India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN), The Netherlands
 Instituto de Defesa do Consumidor (IDEC), Brazil
 International Restructuring Education Network Europe (IRENE), The Netherlands
 Labour Awareness and Resource Centre (LARC), Kenya
 Lawyer's Environmental Action Team (LEAT), Tanzania
 Milieudefensie (Friends of the Earth Netherlands), The Netherlands
 Mpalabanda - Cabinda Civic Association, Angola
 Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa (NIZA), The Netherlands
 Novib (Oxfam Netherlands), The Netherlands
 Observatório Social, Brazil
 Partners in Change (PiC), India
 Responsible Business Initiative (RBI), Pakistan
 Rights and Accountability in Development (RAID), United Kingdom
 South Asia Alliance for Responsible Business (SARB)
 Women on Farms Project (WFP), South Africa