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Contents:

**\*\*In the News\*\***

- Mary Robinson comments on interim report by John Ruggie, UN Special Representative on Business & Human Rights
- San Francisco passes SweatFree Ordinance

**\*\*New Papers\*\***

- Implementing the Partnership for Growth and Jobs: Making Europe a Pole of Excellence on Corporate Social Responsibility. By the EU Commission
- New EU Communication on Corporate Social Responsibility: a Missed Opportunity. By FIDH and AI
- New OECD Watch's newsletter
- Guide to Instruments of Corporate Responsibility. An overview of 16 key tools for labour fund trustees. By Ran Goel
- Lifting the Lid on Foreign Investment Contracts: The Real Deal for Sustainable development. By th International Institute for Environment and Development
- CSR Issues in the ICT. A SOMO ICT Sector Report
- Business - NGO Partnerships. An Ethical Corporation Report

**\*\*New Links\*\***

- New Website "eulobbytours"

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**\*\*In the News\*\***

- Mary Robinson comments on interim report by John Ruggie, UN Special Representative on Business & Human Rights

While the Special Representative's conclusions about the UN Norms on business & human rights process and his legal analysis of the text itself reflect the opinions of some analysts and legal experts, we believe other views also need to be heard as the Special Representative continues his work.

It must be remembered that the Norms have set an important benchmark for any future normative efforts. We share the Special Representative's view that any "fair-minded discussion of standards inevitably will cover some of the same grounds" addressed by the Norms. We therefore encourage him and others to remain mindful of the Norms and reflect more on those elements which might be incorporated into future standard development processes.

The Business and Human Rights Centre has filed Robinsons reaction and also provides John Ruggie's response.

Visit the Business and Human Rights Ressource Centre's website:  
<http://www.business-humanrights.org/Links/Repository/246742>

See also Newsletter 26:

[http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/newsletter\\_archiv/april\\_2006\\_newsletter\\_26\\_relaunch.pdf](http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/newsletter_archiv/april_2006_newsletter_26_relaunch.pdf)

-- San Francisco passes SweatFree Ordinance

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously passed the San Francisco SweatFree Ordinance that requires city contractors to guarantee in writing that the uniforms, computers, and other goods they supply were not made by workers exploited in sweatshops. As part of the certification process, contractors who sign the sweatshop-free pledge would have to disclose the names of their subcontractors, where their factories are located, and what workers are paid.

Read the press release (PDF; 20 KB):

[http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/documents/2006/frisco\\_sweatfree.pdf](http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/documents/2006/frisco_sweatfree.pdf)

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\*\*New Papers\*\*

-- Implementing the Partnership for Growth and Jobs: Making Europe a Pole of Excellence on Corporate Social Responsibility. By the EU Commission

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis. It is about enterprises deciding to go beyond minimum legal requirements and obligations stemming from collective agreements in order to address societal needs. Through CSR, enterprises of all sizes, in cooperation with their stakeholders, can help to reconcile economic, social and environmental ambitions. As such, CSR has become an increasingly important concept both globally and within the EU, and is part of the debate about globalisation, competitiveness and sustainability. In Europe, the promotion of CSR reflects the need to defend common values and increase the sense of solidarity and cohesion.

Download the paper (PDF; 160 KB):

[http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/documents/2006/europe\\_a\\_pole\\_of\\_excellence\\_on\\_csr.pdf](http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/documents/2006/europe_a_pole_of_excellence_on_csr.pdf)

-- New EU Communication on Corporate Social Responsibility: a Missed Opportunity. By FIDH and AI

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and Amnesty International express their disappointment regarding the long-awaited Communication of the European Commission entitled "Implementing the partnership for growth and jobs: making Europe a pole of excellence on Corporate Social Responsibility".

By failing to make progress towards a regulatory framework that complements the voluntary aspect of corporate responsibility with a common system for

corporate accountability, the Commission has missed the opportunity to take the lead on CSR.

Download the reaction (PDF; 64 KB):

[http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/documents/2006/missed\\_opportunity.pdf](http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/documents/2006/missed_opportunity.pdf)

-- New OECD Watch's newsletter

The latest edition of OECD Watch's biannual newsletter is now available.

Download the March 2006 OECD Watch Newsletter (PDF; 154 KB):

[http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/documents/2006/ow\\_news\\_march\\_06.pdf](http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/documents/2006/ow_news_march_06.pdf)

-- Guide to Instruments of Corporate Responsibility. An overview of 16 key tools for labour fund trustees. By Ran Goel

The last fifteen years have witnessed a remarkable proliferation of corporate responsibility tools - ethics codes, principles, guidelines, standards and other instruments. Over 300 currently exist worldwide. These tools of corporate responsibility serve two primary purposes.

While the use of these tools is mostly voluntary, several could emerge as industry standards that supply the legitimacy, consistency and comparability demanded by corporations and its stakeholders. For many corporate executives, the question is no longer whether to use these tools, but which ones to use and how. There is much confusion and uncertainty regarding the role, function and quality of many corporate responsibility tools. This dilemma is similarly faced by institutional investors pursuing improved corporate responsibility practice in their equity holdings. This guidebook provides an overview of today's leading corporate responsibility instruments, principles, codes and standards for pension fund trustees.

Download the guide (PDF; 840 KB):

[http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/documents/2005/guide\\_to\\_instruments\\_of\\_corporate\\_responsibility.pdf](http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/documents/2005/guide_to_instruments_of_corporate_responsibility.pdf)

-- Lifting the Lid on Foreign Investment Contracts: The Real Deal for Sustainable development. By th International Institute for Environment and Development

Based on our initial investigations into a wide-ranging group of foreign investment projects and their associated deals in Belize, Chile, Ghana, Mali, and Pakistan, we highlight concerns about the processes through which foreign investment contracts are negotiated, the terms of the deals, and their wider implications for sustainable development.

We aim to 'lift the lid' on these types of contract; to raise awareness about them; and to alert their negotiators to the rapidly increasing civil society interest in the implications that they hold for sustainable development.

Download the briefing paper (PDF; 160 KB):

[http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/documents/2005/lifting\\_the\\_lid\\_on\\_foreign\\_investment\\_contracts.pdf](http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/documents/2005/lifting_the_lid_on_foreign_investment_contracts.pdf)

-- CSR Issues in the ICT. A SOMO ICT Sector Report

This report examines the ICT sector, a relatively young sector that often portrays itself with a clean image of highly skilled jobs and 'clean rooms' where professionals work in a controlled and dust-free environment. Who could imagine that, behind this radiant representation of young professionals building the industry of the future, we find poisonous production sites where workers assemble computers during 12-hour workdays, sometimes for months on end without a single day's rest?

In this report SOMO focuses on an industry that has continuously shifted to countries that are perceived as cheaper, producing predominantly in export zones where labour rights and environmental issues have no priority. Research done for SOMO in China and the Philippines shows that computers are produced under endemic overtime, while a lack of unions and barriers to organising means that the workers cannot negotiate improvements. Workers are hired on short term contracts for years, blacklisted and subjected to discriminatory application processes.

The extensive use of toxic chemicals in the production of ICT devices creates huge problems during the entire lifecycle of ICT products. There are subsequent problems with occupational health and safety in the production facilities as well as environmental and community problems in the vicinity of the factories and around the waste disposal sites.

Download the report (PDF; 2,88 MB):

[http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/documents/2005/sep\\_2005\\_csr\\_issues\\_in\\_the\\_ict\\_a\\_somo\\_ict\\_sector\\_report\\_1](http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/documents/2005/sep_2005_csr_issues_in_the_ict_a_somo_ict_sector_report_1)

-- Business - NGO Partnerships. An Ethical Corporation Report

This report is based on almost 100 interviews with business, NGOs, government, trade unions, consultants, partnership "brokers," think tanks and academics. The initial aim of the research was to find out if there was sufficient interest in further events.

Many interviewees said they were tired of hearing about the well-known partnering success stories, and instead wanted to know about projects that have not been so glorious. There were also plenty of interviewees who remain quite skeptical about the whole idea, believing that companies and NGOs should stick to their traditional roles rather than seeking some complicated and messy common ground.

Download the whole report (PDF; 337 KB):

[http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/documents/2005/business\\_ngo\\_partnerships.pdf](http://www.corporate-accountability.org/eng/documents/2005/business_ngo_partnerships.pdf)

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 \*\*New Links\*\*

-- New Website "eulobbytours"

Lobby watchdog Corporate Europe Observatory has launched [www.eulobbytours.org](http://www.eulobbytours.org), a new website featuring a virtual tour of the EU Quarter of Brussels.

Corporate Europe Observatory has run walking tours of the EU quarter in Brussels for several years. The virtual tour allows anyone with internet access to do the next best thing. Using advanced 3D modelling, the virtual tour and interactive map take visitors into the sights of the EU quarter in Brussels. Accompanying text demonstrates the money and influence shaping EU legislation.

Visit the website:

<http://ww.eulobbytours.org>

Greetings from

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[www.corporate-accountability.org](http://www.corporate-accountability.org) aims to facilitate the flow of information among NGOs and social movements who believe their governments, private sector and civil society need to make greater efforts to ensure the accountability of business and industry, especially Transnational Corporations, to society. It contains information about ongoing civil society campaigns on corporate accountability and about NGOs and trade unions who are active in this field. It provides comprehensive material on codes of conduct, multi-stakeholder initiatives and intergovernmental processes, as well as best and worst practice cases of corporate behaviour.

Finally, this site makes available documents and publications on corporate accountability and links to relevant research institutes and databases.

Feedback and suggestions are highly appreciated!

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Corporate-Accountability-News mailing list

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<http://lists.trilos.net/mailman/listinfo/corporate-accountability-news>