



**FORGING NEW LINKS:
PROMOTING AND PROTECTING
HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

A Roundtable Discussion

Hosted by:

Amnesty International USA

Center for International Environmental Law

EarthRights International

Human Rights Advocates

Natural Heritage Institute

Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development

Sierra Club

January 14, 1998

San Francisco, California



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AGENDA

- I. 9:00 – 9:30
Introductions and presentation of Roundtable purpose
- II. 9:30 – 10:45
Cases Studies of Human Rights and Environment Abuses
Facilitated by Sierra Club, Amnesty International and ERI
- Featured Presentations:
- **Owens Saro-Wiwa**, Spokesperson for Ogoni people, Nigeria
 - **Ka Hsaw Wa**, Burmese activist; Co-Founder of ERI
- Group Discussion
- III. 10:45
BREAK
- IV. 11:00 – 12:15
Monitoring, Evaluating and Reforming Corporate Practices
Facilitated by: The Natural Heritage Institute, Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development, and Human Rights Advocates
- Group Discussion
- V. 12:15 – 12:30
Closing Remarks from Host Groups
- VI. 12:30 – 1:30
LUNCH – Provided for Participants
- VII. 1:30 – 3:00
Press Briefing
- V. 4:00 – 6:00
Reception



1. INTRODUCTION

On January 14, 1999, seven non-governmental organizations are launching their national human rights and environment programs by convening a Roundtable dialogue on the key issues for the coming millenium. This Roundtable on "Forging New Links: Promoting and Protecting Human Rights and the Environment," is being hosted by Amnesty International USA, the Center for International Environmental Law, EarthRights International, Human Rights Advocates, the Natural Heritage Institute, the Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development, and the Sierra Club and will include the participation of environment, human rights, and development organizations.

Today, the impact of globalization is felt not only on trade markets but on the political and social practices and policies of developing countries. Foreign policy decisions, multinational corporate practices, international trade agreements, transnational investment contracts, and multilateral lending arrangements can serve to support government repression where it exists and promote the abuse of human rights and the natural environment. Some argue that globalization will increase the standard of living globally, while others suggest that it will increase the divide between haves and have-nots, exacerbating the suffering of those who are caught at the bottom of the global economic ladder compounding the strain on already scarce natural resources. Either way, the protection of human rights and establishment of sustainable environmental norms are challenges brought by globalization which exist now.

While government repression remains a pervasive problem in parts of the world, increasingly social activists are facing problems resulting from the actions, or failure to act, of large global corporations. Many corporate actors from developed countries are now doing business in countries with abusive regimes, in some cases contracting with the government not just for operations but for security from para-military units. These units have been used to suppress environmental campaigns and their defenders that threaten economic production. At home, Americans are learning that their elected officials are all too willing to cast these concerns aside when trade relations are at stake. Yet, these concerns must be addressed if economic development is to be durable.

The Roundtable will bring together experts from the Bay Area and national human rights, environment and development groups together with representatives of affected communities overseas to exchange ideas and information on these issues. It is anticipated that these groups will lay the foundation for a coalition to promote reforms in government policy and corporate behavior during the *next 50 years* of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

This briefing document provides a summary of information relevant to the Roundtable discussion, and of the hosting organizations and the programs they are launching in this arena. An agenda of the January 14 events related to the Roundtable, including the press briefing and reception, is also included.

In launching these programs, we would like to express our deep appreciation to The Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund for its support of this effort and its continued dedication to reducing human and environmental abuses worldwide.

II. **ROUNDTABLE AGENDA**

9:00-9:30

Presentation of human rights/environment projects by the hosting organizations

9:30-10:45

Case Studies of Human Rights and Environmental Abuses

Group Discussion facilitated by Sierra Club, Amnesty International USA, and EarthRights International.

1. Presentations

The following will provide presentations on their communities affected by environment/human rights abuses, their advocacy efforts, and their needs for information, assistance and support from developed country partners. For biographies of the speakers, please see Section IV.

- **Dr. Owens Wiwa, spokesperson for the Ogoni people of Nigeria**
- **Ka Hsaw Wa, Burmese environmental and human rights activist**

1. Issues for the discussion:

- *How can groups in the U.S. help these and other affected communities abroad?*

One potent way help protect the environment abroad is to speak out for those defending it from within their own societies:

“When the first two hundred letters came the guards gave me back my clothes. Then the next two hundred letters came and the prison director came to see me. When the next pile of letters arrived, the director got in touch with his superior. The letters kept coming and coming: three thousand of them... The President called the prison and told them to let me go.”

–Trade union leader Julio de Pena Valdez, imprisoned by authorities in the Dominican Republic in 1975

This avoids the pitfall of attacks on protesting from outside of a given society which cannot be leveled at local environmental defenders.

- *What are the opportunities for local action?*
- City/State regulations
 - Public Advocacy/Letter writing campaigns
 - Lobby elected officials
 - Protests/demonstrations
 - Boycotts
 - Letters to the editor/media outreach

- *What about selective purchase laws? The regulatory tactic is an important, politically salable tool which may now be threatened by challenges under world trade agreements. What are the strategic priorities raised by the following case?*
- * Burmese democratic forces have called for the use of purchasing sanctions, applied successfully in the case of South Africa (and, it has been noted, the Boston Tea Party) to break oppressive regimes, to fight human rights abuses by the military dictatorship in Burma and bring them to the negotiating table. The State of Massachusetts adopted such trade and investment sanctions; soon after, Congress and the President also imposed sanctions on new investment by U.S. corporations. The apparent green light from the White House notwithstanding, a federal district court delivered a victory to private corporations and the European Union who had challenged the Massachusetts law, overturning it on the grounds that it violates trade agreements under the World Trade Organization (WTO). The case is being appealed by the Massachusetts Attorney General.

The U.S. Justice Department upheld state purchasing boycotts of South Africa as constitutional (against President Reagan's wishes). The Supreme Court has already decided that Congress, not the courts, should decide whether to preempt state laws which have an impact on foreign affairs, and Congress has already provided sovereignty measures within the WTO agreements to prevent the use of federal courts by foreign governments or private parties to sue a state.

11:00-12:15

Monitoring, Evaluating and Reforming Corporate Practices

Group Discussion facilitated by the Natural Heritage Institute, Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development, and Human Rights Advocates.

One of the largest challenges in the field of human rights and the environment is the evaluation of corporate behavior, including so-called "self-regulation" in the form of *voluntary initiatives* and *codes of conduct*. Citizen activists often lack information crucial to their monitoring of corporate practices, particularly to determine the credibility of corporate claims about "best practice." There is a dearth of data on the identity of the worst corporate actors and practices on the one hand, and on the other, the best corporate models. Moreover, a lack of integrated vision of the links between environmental and human rights issues has reduced the effectiveness of citizens groups which tend to focus on one or the other issue.

To integrate human rights and environment concerns in an overall corporate accountability campaign, it is crucial to identify the set of concerns among the environmental, human rights and corporate communities, and develop a set of "criteria" for evaluating corporate claims and performance. To date, there is little consensus on such criteria. Yet, developing this evaluative tool could enhance the capability of citizen groups and officials to measure corporate performance in fulfilling environmental and

human rights responsibilities. One concern is that relatively few fora exist to bring human rights and environmental advocates together for dialogue.

This part of the Roundtable agenda will focus on three key questions:

- 1) What is the common ground between human and environmental activists on issues of corporate accountability?
- 2) What should be the criteria for evaluating corporate performance?
- 3) What mechanisms would enhance the credibility of corporate claims about “best practice”?

Over the past several years, various methods and criteria for evaluation have been proposed and debated. These have occurred in international fora, including the U.N. Commission on Sustainable Development, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and among non-governmental organizations in the human rights, religious and environmental communities.

The following is a summary of issues and criteria compiled from both the official and NGO sectors. An appendix with the principles and criteria developed by these groups is attached for further review. We have omitted actual codes of conduct and voluntary initiatives adopted by the business community in order to focus the participants on the issues and concerns that they believe should be addressed by such codes and practices.

Summary of Criteria/Issues of Concern for Evaluating Corporate Conduct

- Performance Based Standards: are the codes/practices adopted by the corporation, and the monitoring and evaluation, based upon measurable indicators of performance?
- Transparent Monitoring and Reporting: are the codes/practices and their implementation, monitoring and evaluation made public or reported to a public agency or other body for review by affected groups?
- Consensus Based: are the codes/practices adopted developed through consensus among affected groups? Environmental or human rights organizations? Industry organizations? UN or International agencies? Regulatory bodies?
- Comprehensive Coverage: are the codes/practices adopted by the corporations comprehensive in addressing the potential impacts to the environment, human health and human rights of the affected communities?
- Company-Wide Coverage: are the codes/practices implemented in one area of the corporation’s work or geographic locations of its subsidiaries or general activities?
- Accountability: is the corporation accountable to any entity (regulators, the public, its shareholders) for its implementation of the codes/practices it develops? Are there penalties for failure to comply? Or incentives to perform?
- Community Relations: do the codes/practices address the manner of relationship to be forged between government and/or corporate entity with the affected communities in which it is operating?

Attached in the Appendix are summaries of selected reports providing proposed criteria for evaluating environmental and/or human rights practices. These are:

- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- NGO proposal for the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 6)
- US Department of Commerce
- International Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development (ICHRDD)
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- New Directions Group

12:15-12:45

Closing Remarks from Host Groups

III. BIOGRAPHIES OF SPEAKERS

- **Dr. Owens Wiwa, spokesperson for the Ogoni people of Nigeria**

Dr. Owens Wiwa is the brother of the late Nigerian writer and environmentalist Ken Saro-Wiwa, who was president of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP). Ken Saro-Wiwa was executed by the Nigerian military government on November 10, 1995. Owens Wiwa, a medical doctor and a human rights activist, escaped from Nigeria a few days after his brother's execution. In his medical practice, Dr. Wiwa has been a resident in hospitals in Port Harcourt, in Rivers State, and Bori and Taaban, in Ogoni. In 1990 he established two private rural health centers in Ogoni to care for the needs of the Ogoni People. In so doing he treated hundreds of Ogoni men, women and children injured as a result of the ongoing military repression in Ogoni. As a political activist, Dr. Wiwa has documented human rights abuses perpetrated upon the Ogoni by the Nigerian Army, as well as environmentally-related diseases among the Ogoni. He is a member of the Steering Committee of MOSOP and has held other posts in the Ogoni movement, including the chairmanships of the Ogoni Health and Social Welfare Committee and the Ogoni Relief and Rehabilitation Committee. Dr. Wiwa, who recently received his Masters in Public Health from Johns Hopkins University, now resides in Canada where he teaches at the University of Toronto. He is married and has one child.

- **Ka Hsaw Wa, Burmese environmental and human rights activist**

Ka Hsaw Wa is a co-founder and Director of EarthRights International (ERI). He has been working for human rights and democracy in his home country, Burma, since he fled following a military crackdown in 1988. Since 1988, he has been documenting human rights and environmental abuses by the Burmese military dictatorship against ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in Burma where abuses such as extrajudicial killing, torture, rape, forced labor and forced relocation of villages are commonly associated with natural resource exploitation. As Field Coordinator of ERI, Ka Hsaw Wa has traveled extensively in the resource-rich frontier regions of Burma--often at great risk to his safety and life--and interviewed thousands of witnesses and victims of human rights abuses associated with oil and gas development, logging, fishing and mining. He has also played an integral role in a groundbreaking lawsuit in which ERI is representing indigenous farmers from Burma against two transnational petroleum corporations for human rights abuses associated with the development of a natural gas pipeline in Burma. The lawsuit, *John Doe I et. al. v. Unocal Corporation, et. al.* represents the first case in which a US Federal Court has granted jurisdiction over a private corporation for human rights abuses committed in a foreign country. His grassroots experience in Burma and other Southeast Asian countries gives him a unique and personal insight into the connection between human rights and the environment.

IV. SUMMARY OF PROGRAMS BEING LAUNCHED BY HOSTING ORGANIZATIONS

Amnesty International USA and the **Sierra Club** have initiated a collaborative effort to instigate and support a crucial campaign to fight for the rights of citizens worldwide who risk their lives by speaking out to protect our environment. This “defend the defenders” campaign will require the determined efforts of many individuals and organizations. This three-year campaign will implement a first-of-its-kind joint program to achieve significant and visible progress toward stopping human rights abuses of environmentalists, by increasing pressure on the US government and providing direct support for threatened activists through letter writing, rallies, media work and other focused and intensive grassroots involvement.

The **Natural Heritage Institute**, **Human Rights Advocates** and the **Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development** are collaborating on an effort to raise the level of accountability for U.S. multinational corporations on both human rights and environment issues. The consortium will begin its program by producing an exposure report for officials and the public on the worst offenders and greatest leaders in environment and human rights protection among California based multinationals in the oil, electronics and finance sectors. The consortium will also establish a corporate responsibility clearinghouse for data collected worldwide.

EarthRights International is launching a new Human Rights and Environment Resource Center in Washington D.C. which will involve leading an initiative to establish a coalition of groups that coordinate work toward specific human rights and environment goals. The Resource Center will 1) inform and organize human rights and environment contingencies around their shared interests; 2) coordinate and conduct media outreach; 4) provide technical assistance, including litigation support to organizations operating in these fields; and 4) create a clearinghouse and database of related literature, case studies, and materials.

The **Center for International Environmental Law** is developing a new program on Human Rights and Environment. The program will identify, develop and utilize theoretical and practical legal tools for addressing specific threats to citizens and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as broader structural threats to environmental justice and sustainable development. In order to do this CIEL will undertake collaborative research and other skill-sharing activities with Southern and Northern NGOs, including public interest law groups. CIEL will also develop advocacy strategies, including litigation, for assisting individuals and groups confronting human rights and environmental challenges. Based on the research performed and the experiences gained through this program, CIEL will introduce a new course on human rights and the environment as part of CIEL’s joint program with the American University’s Washington College of Law and make these teaching materials available to other law schools throughout the world.

IV. ABOUT THE HOSTING ORGANIZATIONS

Amnesty International USA is a worldwide voluntary movement that works to prevent some of the gravest violations by governments of people's fundamental human rights. The main focus of its campaigning is to free all prisoners of conscience, ensure fair and prompt trials for political prisoners, abolish the death penalty, torture and other cruel treatment of prisoners, and extrajudicial executions and "disappearances". Amnesty International USA recognizes that human rights are indivisible and interdependent, and works to promote all the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international standards. Amnesty International USA is comprised of over 1,100,000 members, subscribers and regular donors, with over 6,000 local groups worldwide.

The **Center for International Environment Law (CIEL)** is a public interest, non-profit law firm that promotes environmentally and socially sustainable societies. CIEL believes that the processes shaping economic globalization should and can be broadened and enriched by the democratization of international and national laws, especially by connecting legal processes to grass-roots human rights and environmental concerns. Since its founding in 1989, CIEL has promoted this belief by supporting public interest movements around the world, educating and training public-interest lawyers, and striving to develop and implement strategies for incorporating fundamental principles of ecology and democracy into international and national laws and law-making processes.

EarthRights International (ERI) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization which combines the power of law and the power of the people in defense of human rights and the environment. With offices in Bangkok, Washington, DC, and Seattle, ERI works at the forefront of efforts to link human rights and environmental movements and has formulated a coherent action agenda for the advancement of their mutual concerns. ERI's signature campaigns focus on Southeast Asia, where exploitation of natural resources threatens indigenous cultures and crucial information about environmental degradation is withheld from affected communities. In particular, ERI works to investigate, monitor, and expose human rights abuses and environmental problems occurring in the name of development; increase transparency and accountability of governments, transnational corporations, and International Financial Institutions (IFI); and ensure biodiversity, conservation, and ecological integrity.

Human Rights Advocates (HRA) has for over twenty years served as a platform for human rights advocacy within the United Nations system, through fact-finding missions, litigation in U.S. courts, and human rights education. HRA has been involved in a wide range of issues involving the intersection of human rights, environment and development, including work on the United Nations Sub-Commission's report on human rights and environment, on social and economic rights, and on the human rights implications of toxic wastes. HRA has sponsored fact-finding missions to areas ranging from the U.S. (Navajo lands) to the territories of the former USSR and has provided amicus briefs to state and federal courts on issues involving international human rights. HRA members are active in coalitions on women's rights, children's rights, international criminal law, migrant workers' rights, and others. HRA operates on these issues in collaboration with a wide network of contacts in the U.S. and international communities.

The Natural Heritage Institute is a non-profit natural resources law and technical consulting firm committed to improving the management and conservation of natural resources around the world. To this end, NHI focuses on capacity building, economic analysis, scientific investigation and public policy development. NHI areas of expertise include human rights, natural resource

management, international development, land use planning, institution-building and sustainable growth. In most of its projects NHI has used collaborative and consensus-building processes to resolve conflicts that have arisen in the context of natural resources management. NHI works with a wide array of partners including conservation organizations, NGOs, community groups, government officials, and international agencies, and currently advise over twenty resource management and regulatory agencies at the local, state, national and international levels.

The Nautilus Institute for Security and Sustainable Development is a non-profit research organization whose main Program areas are Northeast Asia Peace and Security which focuses on nuclear weapons abolition and on nuclear non-proliferation on the Korean peninsula; Energy, Security and Environment, which focuses on promoting regional cooperation for ecologically sustainable energy management and investment in Asia, especially Northeast Asia; and Globalization and Governance, which focuses on promoting environmental and human rights norms in international trade and investment. The Institute provides high-quality intellectual and informational resources to forward-looking people in a variety of sectors who influence opinion and policymaking, including researchers, NGOs, media, and government. Nautilus utilizes the Internet intensively as a method of enhancing policy discussion and of building a community of influence and has developed significant human and technological capacities to provide information on the Internet.

The Sierra Club has been the world's premier citizens' organization for more than 100 years, working for the protection of wilderness and the natural environment. The Club is composed of 550,000 members in 65 chapters, and some 400 local groups nationwide. Lobbying at the federal legislative and administrative level is coordinated by our Washington, DC staff. *Sierra* magazine is published six times a year and enjoys a readership of over one million people. The Club's Books program is the largest such nature publishing program in the world. Appreciation and enjoyment of the out-of-doors were offered to members through our extensive domestic and international Outings program, which was established in 1902.

APPENDIX

SUMMARY OF CONCERNS/CRITERIA FOR INTER-GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL GROUPS

1) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP):

These guidelines were developed to be of use to industry, governments and NGOs in the development and implementation of voluntary initiatives. This effort builds upon UNEP's on-going consultations with industry, government and NGOs and review of existing codes, since the 1992 Earth Summit.

UNEP's 5 CRITICAL ASPECTS AND 17 KEY INGREDIENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE VOLUNTARY INDUSTRY CODE OF CONDUCT					
	Phase 1 early planning	Phase 2 developing principles	Phase 3 dissemination and guidance	Phase 4 early implementation	Phase 5 continuous implementation
<u>I. Commitment</u>	1. Establish a clear sense of purpose				
	2. Identify reasons for members to implement a code				
	3. Involve members				
	4. Involve society				
<u>II. Content</u>	5. Cleaner production approach				
	6. Company management elements				
	7. Social responsibilities				
<u>III. Collaboration</u>	8. General information dissemination				
	9. Guidelines and management tools				
	10. Education and training				
	11. Peer support and networking				
<u>IV. Check</u>	12. Check members' awareness				
	13. Check implementation				
	14. Check environmental results				
<u>V. Communicate</u>	15. Listen to the public				
	16. Communicate implementation				
	17. Communicate environmental results				

2) International Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development (ICHRDD):

In a comparative study of labor and human rights standards in Canada and the United States, Craig Forcese of the ICHRDD sets forth several principles for evaluation and development of codes to protect the human rights of employees.

- All groups involved should be able to participate in the on going process to augment and improve the codes;
- Administrative procedures of the code are to be transparent;

- All interested parties are to actively participate in the administration and regulation of these codes (make sure they are being complied with);
- The government will play a participatory role in the administration of the codes to the end that this will give credibility;
- These codes will address all activities of a company, and all sectors of each industry;
- Sanctions/”punishment” are an option not only in the case of non-compliance by an employee, but also in cases of non-compliance by the company or its subsidiaries;
- The public will be informed regarding everything related to the augmentation and improvement of the codes, the procedures for filing a complaint, respect for the code and identified violations; types of sanctions and corrective response;
- Annual reports to be published that deal with the application and success/failure of the codes are to be made available to all interested parties;
- Everyone will be kept apprised of possible sanctions for non-compliance;
- The code and the public documents will be formulated in clear and concise language.

Certain norms should also be included in these codes that pertain directly to respect of international human rights:

- Freedom to associate and the right to organize for collective negotiations; - All employees should have the right to organize according to their choice without having first to obtain authorization from the employer. Employees should also have the right to organize and negotiate without repercussions.
- Non-discrimination; All employees should not be subject to discrimination based on race, color, nationality, sex, religion or other beliefs, political or other opinions. Discrimination based on sexual orientation may also be added to this list.
- Regulation of child labor; All employees should not be younger than 14 years old or younger than the legal working age in the cases where the age is above 14 years old. The OECD is also very concerned with the “exploitation of child labor”; in fact, this should be the subject of an entirely separate international convention.
- Regulation of forced labor; All employees should not be forced to work for the employer nor forced to manufacture objects used solely by the company;
- Right to health and safety at work; All employees should work under good hygienic conditions, in a safe environment, and should not be exposed to factors or elements that put their health or life at risk.
- Fair salary; Salaries and wages should, even at their minimum rates, permit the employee to meet his/her basic needs and livelihood. Employees should not earn less than the legal minimum wage, even if the legal wage is higher than what is needed to meet basic needs.
- Regulation of hours worked as well as over-time; Salaried employees should not work more than a 48 hour week, except in special circumstances, and then only under the condition that they will receive appropriate compensation for over-time.

3) Proposal Under Discussion by NGOs in Preparation for the U.N. Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 6):

- Substance (content and language)
- Inclusiveness (participation of stakeholders)
- Motivation (incentives for compliance)
- Integration (social and environmental values in measure of success)
- Transparency (independent monitoring, reporting)
- Credibility (verification and related methods)
- Accountability (degree of liability/responsibility to comply)

Additional criteria were agreed upon in the 19th Special Session:

- Efficiency (minimizing the economic costs of achieving desired impacts)
- Equity (distributional effects)
- Acceptability (political considerations)
- Legitimacy (credibility issue)
- Participation (number and scope)

4) The New Directions Group (Canada):

New Directions is a multi-stakeholder group that was formed to conduct a review of voluntary initiatives in Canada. The following criteria for effective voluntary initiatives have been suggested by the Group. Voluntary initiatives should be:

- Participatory in their development and implementation
- Transparent in their design and operation
- Performance based (specific goals, measurable objectives, milestones)
- Specific regarding rewards or consequences for good or bad performance
- Flexible (encourage innovation to meet goals/objectives)
- Clear regarding monitoring and reporting requirements
- Able to verify performance of all participants
- Encouraging of continual improvements

5) United States Department of Commerce – Global Business Practices Program:

Voluntary initiatives should reflect the following principles:

- Provision of a safe and healthy workplace
- Fair employment practices, including avoidance of child and forced labor and avoidance of discrimination based on race, gender, national origin, or religious beliefs; and respect for the right of association and the right to organize and bargain collectively;
- Responsible environmental protection and environmental practices;

- Compliance with US and local laws promoting good business practices, including laws prohibiting illicit payments and ensuring fair competition;
- Maintenance, through leadership of all levels, of a corporate culture that respects free expression consistent with legitimate business concerns, and does not condone political coercion in the workplace; that encourages good corporate citizenship and makes a positive contribution to the communities in which the company operates; and where conduct is recognized, valued, and exemplified by all employees.

6) Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) – Draft Corporate Governance Guidelines:

Though primarily aimed at governments, the guidelines will also provide guidance for stock exchanges, investors, private corporations, and national commissions on corporate governance as they elaborate best practices, listing requirements and codes of conduct. The draft guidelines will be considered by the OECD ministers at a meeting in May 1999. The guidelines were drafted under supervision of the Secretary General and cover five (5) broad headings:

- Rights and responsibilities of shareholders – the corporate governance framework should promote and protect shareholders' rights.
- Role of stakeholders in corporate governance – the corporate governance framework should recognize the responsibility of the corporation to stakeholders and society at large, and encourage active cooperation between corporations and stakeholders in creating wealth, jobs, and the sustainability of financially sound enterprise.
- Equitable treatment of shareholders – the corporate governance framework should ensure the equitable treatment of all shareholders including minority and foreign shareholders. All shareholders should have the opportunity to obtain effective redress for violation of their rights.
- Disclosure and transparency – the corporate governance framework should ensure that timely and accurate information is disclosed to shareholders and the public, on all material matters regarding financial situation, performance, ownership, and governance of the company.
- Duties and responsibilities of the boards – the corporate governance framework should ensure the effective oversight of the company by the board and the accountability of the board of shareholders.