

political expression. In the past, examinations of those and related factors have led EDC to decline transactions based on potential environmental and social risks. Recently, EDC and DFAIT have taken steps to ensure a more timely and systematic exchange of information, enabling EDC to have more comprehensive information on changing human rights situations. EDC is also working with DFAIT to ensure that due account is being taken of the implications of Canada’s international human rights commitments for its export credit activities.

EDC works with Canadian companies to encourage best corporate social responsibility practices. This includes a direct dialogue with exporters and the NGO community, as well as Business Integrity workshops that EDC has sponsored in Canada. These workshops inform Canadian companies about EDC’s Code of Conduct, its legislative requirement for the environmental review of projects, its consideration of social impacts in its assessment of projects, its Disclosure Policy, as well as Canada’s anti-bribery and corruption laws and anti-terrorism legislation. Under the Disclosure Policy, regular reports are posted on EDC’s overall activities, as well as information on individual transactions for a range of its services. Finally, EDC has established a Compliance Officer position and has formed an Advisory Council that provides advice and guidance on best practices on corporate social responsibility.

EDC concurs with the Sub-Committee’s findings that the Canadian business community active in Colombia takes its corporate social responsibilities very seriously.

Recommendation 3

The Government of Canada should continue to strengthen its human rights work in Colombia. In particular, Canada should increase support for the UN Human Rights Office in Colombia and insist even more forcefully that the Government of Colombia work to combat both guerrilla and paramilitary groups. Finally, the Canadian Embassy in Bogotá should continue to focus on the protection of human rights defenders and indigenous peoples, as well as increase its human rights work with the Colombian military.

The protection of human rights in Colombia will continue to be a priority for the Government of Canada. We will continue to publicly condemn abuses by all armed actors and stress to the Colombian government, at the highest levels, the need for the military to sever any links with the paramilitary and to implement recommendations of the United Nations, Organization of American States (OAS), and International Labour Organization (ILO) regarding human rights. During his visit to Canada on June 20-21, 2002, President-elect Uribe pledged to oppose all forms of violence and abuse of human rights, including, with equal force, abuses committed by the paramilitaries.