

(b) Capacity-building

84. Particular attention should be given to strengthening the capacity of each of the tripartite social partners (Governments, and employers' and workers' organizations) to facilitate greater collaboration towards sustainable development.]

VII. STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

(Section III, chapter 7, of Agenda 21)

85. Business and industry, including transnational corporations, play a crucial role in the social and economic development of a country. A stable policy regime enables and encourages business and industry to operate responsibly and efficiently and to implement longer-term policies. Increasing prosperity, a major goal of the development process, is contributed primarily by the activities of business and industry. Business enterprises, large and small, formal and informal, provide major trading, employment and livelihood opportunities. Business opportunities available to women are contributing towards their professional development, strengthening their economic role and transforming social systems. Business and industry, including transnational corporations and their representative organizations, should be full participants in the implementation and evaluation of activities related to Agenda 21.

86. Through more efficient production processes, preventive strategies, cleaner production technologies and procedures throughout the product life cycle, hence minimizing or avoiding wastes, the policies and operations of business and industry, including transnational corporations, can play a major role in reducing impacts on resource use and the environment. Technological innovations, development, applications, transfer and the more comprehensive aspects of partnership and cooperation are to a very large extent within the province of business and industry.

87. Business and industry, including transnational corporations, should recognize environmental management as among the highest corporate priorities and as a key determinant to sustainable development. Some enlightened leaders of enterprises are already implementing "responsible care" and product stewardship policies and programmes, fostering openness and dialogue with employees and the public and carrying out environmental audits and assessments of compliance. These leaders in business and industry, including transnational corporations, are increasingly taking voluntary initiatives, promoting and implementing self-regulations and greater responsibilities in ensuring their activities have minimal impacts on human health and the environment. The regulatory regimes introduced in many countries, the growing consciousness of consumers and the general public and enlightened leaders of business and industry, including transnational corporations, have all contributed to this. A positive contribution of business and industry, including transnational corporations, to sustainable development can