

Colombian government institutions. In extreme cases, the Embassy plays a key coordinating role in consular matters relating to the safety and security of Canadians, including those who may have been kidnapped by local armed actors.

Canadian companies enjoy an excellent reputation in Colombia, and the Canadian private sector has taken a leading role in opening up the discussion within Colombia on issues relating to ethical business practices and corporate social responsibility. Much of this effort has been organized by the Canada Colombia Chamber of Commerce (CCCC), with the full cooperation of the Canadian Embassy. In November 1999, the CCCC hosted the first Forum on Human Rights and Foreign Investment in Colombia. Speakers included the Vice-President of Colombia, the president of Colombia's largest mining union and the director of the Bogota office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR). This event was the first of its type ever organized by a business association in Colombia. The CCCC and the Embassy held the second Forum on Human Rights and Foreign Investment in February 2002.

In May 2000, the CCCC, with the full support and cooperation of our Embassy, also organized the first Canada Colombia Business Forum (CCBF). The Forum brought together major players from the private and public sector to discuss a range of issues related to doing business in Colombia. The Forum included six sectoral Working Groups composed of representatives from the Canadian and Colombian private sectors and governments. One of the Working Groups focussed on social development, including the theme of ethical business practices. This initiative attracted more than 50 participants ranging from local NGOs to major Canadian investors. The Working Group produced a concrete and practical list of recommendations for actual and potential Canadian investors. A second session allowed Embassy officials to present to the group the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, and an International Code of Ethics for Canadian Business developed by Nexen.

The second Canada Colombia Business Forum is scheduled to take place in Colombia in early 2003, and the Social Development Working Group will be a part of the program. Events of this type ensure that Canadian investors are better aware of the political, environmental, social and human rights dimensions of doing business in the challenging Colombian market.

Regarding EDC's participation in transactions, EDC combines an examination of country-level and project-level risks, including potential environmental as well as human rights and other social impacts of projects. Where EDC's review identifies a need to monitor a project, EDC requests monitoring reports from project sponsors during the term of EDC's support. In assessing country-level risk, EDC examines factors such as socio-economic inequality, the existence of institutions or channels for peaceful resolution of grievances, and the existence and persistence of political violence as a means of