

## SCIENCE / ENVIRONMENT

## U of T tackles sweat shop issue

BY T.E. MORGAN AND CARLA TONELLI

TORONTO (CUP) — The day before the University of Toronto's conference on sweatshops and universities began last weekend, administrators told students they will devise a new code of conduct regarding which clothing can sport the school's logo.

In a move local activists are applauding, an informal committee met and agreed to tear up the current draft of a revised policy on licensing and allow students input into the process of implementing a strict code of conduct. The school also agreed to ensure the new code of conduct goes even further than Duke University's, considered a ground-breaking clamp-down on sweatshops.

"I think it's a good move," said Kevin Thomas, a member of the Students Against Sweatshops group and the Ontario Public Interest Research Group. "Negative publicity was definitely a concern for the university. I don't think they want to be left behind on the issue of establishing a code."

With a coalition of American

universities currently establishing a combined code of conduct, including Duke University, Georgetown, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, U of T will be the first in Canada to embrace the campaign spearheaded by student groups to eliminate business for sweatshops at post-secondary institutions.

Students at American and Canadian campuses have recently raised concerns about the working conditions common in sweatshops in Indonesia, China and Honduras, where mostly female workers are paid low wages, forced to work overtime in poor conditions and denied the right to organize unions.

"We work in horrendous conditions," said Violeta Lara, a guest at last weekend's provincial conference from the Dominican Republic.

The conference, organized by U of T's Students Against Sweatshops and OPIRG, included seminars and lectures on topics ranging from acceptable university codes of conduct to corporate accountability and how to respect international labour standards.

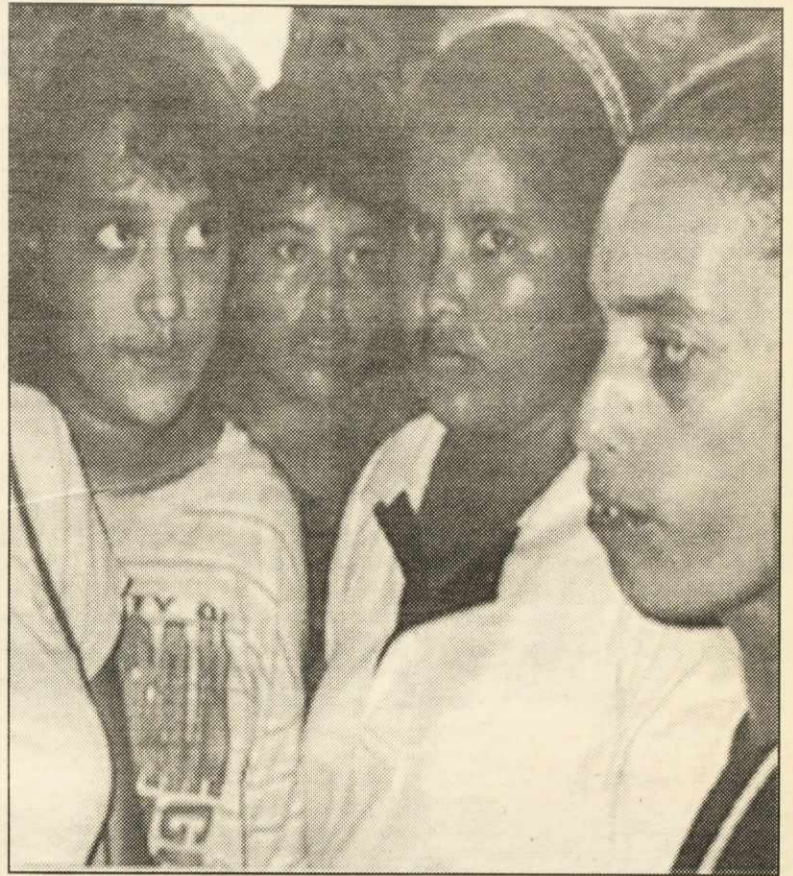
Barbara Dick, U of T's

associate director of alumni and development and one of the administrators who met with students last Friday, says while the university hopes to have a new set of guidelines in place by the summer it's taking it one step at a time.

"I think that the real challenge here is to make sure we can come up with guidelines that are meaningful, that have teeth, and that we can enforce," she said. "There's no point in having a really tough code if we're not assured there is some way to monitor and enforce those guidelines."

Dick added the research conducted by Students Against Sweatshops and OPIRG played an integral role in U of T's decision to devise the ideal code.

"From where I stand, there's no disagreement between the University of Toronto administration and student groups in terms of the objective," she said.



BLOOD SWEAT & TEARS: Women workers at a Dominican Republic "Free Trade Zone."

## Canada pledges support for UN intervention in East Timor

BY KRISHNA LALBIHARIE

WINNIPEG (CUP) — Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy announced last week Canada's support of United Nations intervention in East Timor.

"Canada believes that the UN should establish a presence in East Timor in order to enhance its effectiveness there," said Axworthy. "The most effective way to ensure progress is through meaningful and comprehensive consultations with the East Timorese."

A former Portuguese colony, East Timor proclaimed independence from West Timor, now the Republic of Indonesia, in 1975. The following year, the fledgling nation was invaded by Indonesia and subsequently annexed as the country's 27th province.

The UN never recognized the annexation and still regards Portugal as the province's administering power. UN-sponsored negotiations between Indonesia and Portugal are scheduled to resume March 9 in New York.

While applauding the upcoming talks, Axworthy raised concerns about the violent deaths of hundreds of East Timorese civilians in the last few months, alleged to have come at the hands of paramilitary groups armed by the Indonesian government.

Responding to these attacks, Axworthy called on all parties to

disarm, including civilian militias, and supported the immediate release of all political prisoners.

Last Friday's announcement follows recent Ottawa roundtable discussions — attended by non-governmental organizations and representatives from the East Timorese community — examining

**"Because of my involvement in this struggle, my family is threatened daily that they will be killed.... They need help, now"**

the federal government's continued economic support of Indonesia.

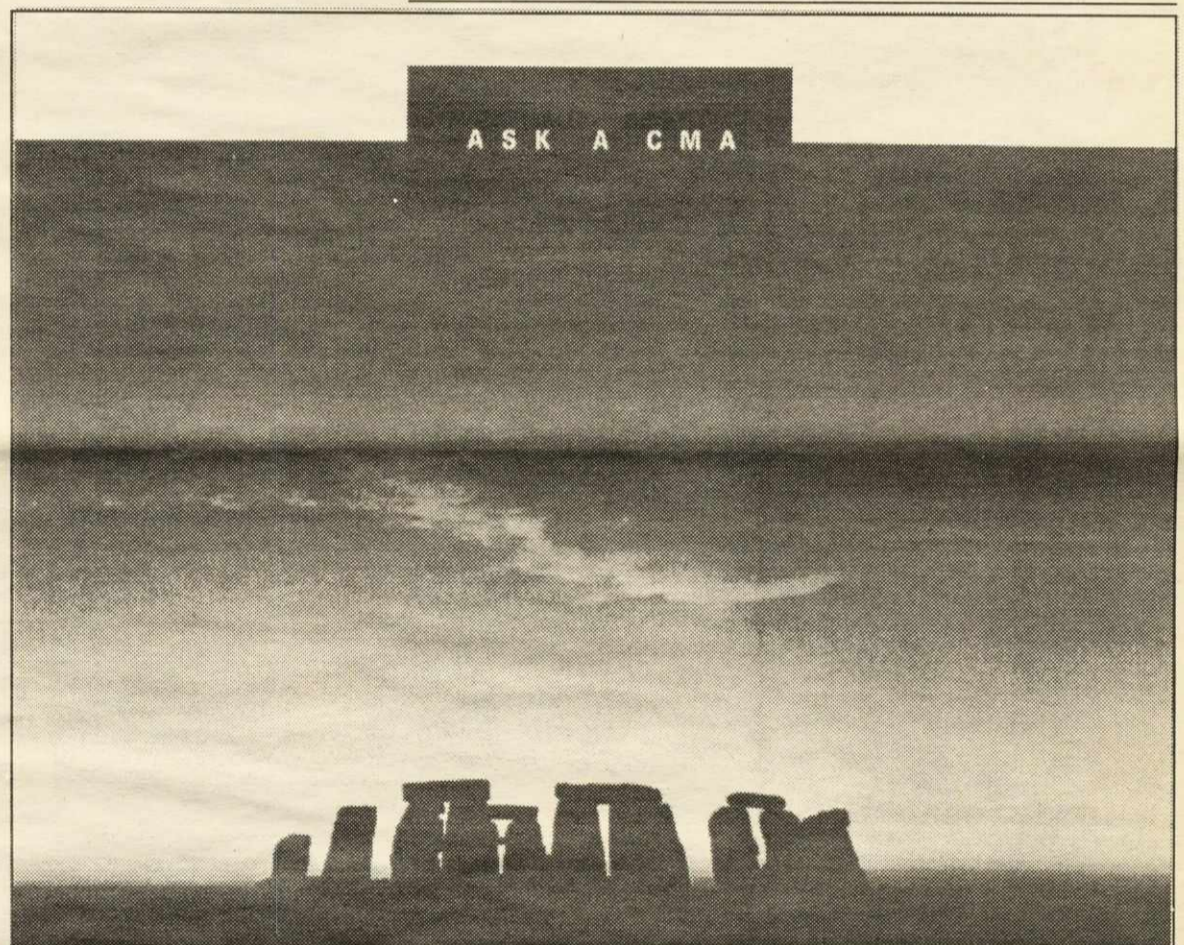
The new direction by the Grits pleased some activists.

"I'm thrilled," said Sharon Scharfe, roundtable participant and head of the International Secretariat of Parliamentarians for East Timor. "Canada has gone further now than pretty much any other country has in terms of its policy on East Timor."

But not everyone was so quick in hailing the federal Liberals.

"Now that the Canadian government has changed its foreign policies and is more positive towards the East Timor issue, I would hope that minister Axworthy's statements are not just statements, but are put into action on the ground in East Timor," said Bella Galhos, a Timorese refugee living in Ottawa and a roundtable participant.

"Because of my involvement in this struggle, my family is threatened daily that they will be killed.... They need help, now."



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