

or in the mines of the Philippines, Canadian firms and their Canadian government promoters need to pay more attention to the impact of their activities on the lives of minorities, aboriginal peoples, and other vulnerable groups claiming to be culturally distinct.

Symptomatically, business ethics guidelines such as the International Code of Ethics for Canadian Business and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, which Canada has endorsed, contain no mention of the potential impact of foreign trade and investment on these groups, nor the fact that firms, in order to operate in particular regions, sometimes support the repressive practices of states towards such communities, whether knowingly or otherwise.

## **7. PROMOTING ETHICAL BUSINESS IN CULTURALLY DIVIDED SOCIETIES**

Is there a way to make Canadian businesses operate more ethically in Asia, in particular with respect to recognizing and responding to the demands and needs of minorities, aboriginal peoples, and other culturally distinct vulnerable groups? Our recommendations are based on the recognition that locally based pressure for ethical business practices is more likely to be accepted by the societies, governments, and firms concerned. They acknowledge that legal-style solutions may not always be the most effective way of reforming business practices in parts of the Asia Pacific where legal sanctions are not always the main means of changing human behaviour. Finally, they recognize that business links through trade and investment are valuable potential sources of policy leverage, particularly in Asia Pacific states with authoritarian governments. Our approach requires a commitment to longer-term change rather than cosmetic fixes and empty public declarations. However, it is more likely to achieve some successes.

While we recognize that business ethics guidelines are voluntary and currently have no real teeth, it is important for them to make explicit mention of the vulnerabilities of minorities, aboriginal, and other culturally distinct vulnerable groups and their particular need for protection and recognition as economies liberalise.

Policy-makers should support local non-governmental and governmental initiatives in Asia that aim to make international and local business firms more socially responsible in their operations in these countries. They should particularly direct resources to organizations that work with minorities, aboriginal peoples, and other vulnerable groups to hold business firms accountable. In doing so, it should be recognized that many Asian societies are already taking steps in this direction and that Canadian society has a good deal to learn from them as well.

Policy-makers should support MBA and business executive training programmes focusing on business ethics, ensuring among other goals that they educate future business leaders about cultural diversity and the particular needs of minorities, aboriginal peoples, and other vulnerable groups within Asian and other societies.